

# **First Evangelical Lutheran Church**

**250 W. Decatur St.**

**Decatur, Illinois**

**(217) 423-7783**

**Website: [www.felcdecatur.org](http://www.felcdecatur.org)**

**Email: [felc\\_decatur@outlook.com](mailto:felc_decatur@outlook.com)**

*We have a livestream option on our website!*

**<https://felcdecatur.org/live>**



**January 7, 2024, at 9:30 am**

**HOLY COMMUNION**

*Come Experience God's Unlimited Grace, in a Most Welcoming Place*

# WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## PRELUDE

### GATHERING

#### **\*CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
the Word made flesh, our life, and our salvation.

**Amen.**

Trusting the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior,  
let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of life,  
**you promise good news of great joy for all people,  
and call us to be messengers of your peace.**

**We confess that too often we hoard our joy,  
our resources, and our security.**

**We nurture conflict and build barriers.**

**We neglect the needs of our neighbors  
and ignore the groaning of creation.**

**Have mercy on us.**

**Where we are self-centered, open our hearts.**

**Where we are reluctant, give us courage.**

**Where we are cynical, restore our trust.**

**Renew us with your grace  
and give us again the hope of eternal life in you.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news:

We are children of God and heirs of God's promises  
through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

In † Jesus you are forgiven and redeemed.

Sing with joy, for all the ends of the earth  
shall know the salvation of God.

**Amen.**

#### **\*GATHERING SONG**

*"Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"*

**ELW #310**

#### **GREETING**

**ELW p. 138**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be  
with you all. **And also, with you.**

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray,

**O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**WORD**

**FIRST READING:**

**ISAIAH 60:1-6**

*Jerusalem is assured that nations will make a pilgrimage to her because the light of God's presence is in her midst. The bountiful food of the sea and the profits of international trade will come streaming to Jerusalem and thereby declare God's praise.*

<sup>1</sup>Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

<sup>2</sup>For darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and his glory will appear over you.

<sup>3</sup>Nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

<sup>4</sup>Lift up your eyes and look around;  
they all gather together, they come to you;  
your sons shall come from far away,  
and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

<sup>5</sup>Then you shall see and be radiant;  
your heart shall thrill and rejoice,  
because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you,  
the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

<sup>6</sup>A multitude of camels shall cover you,  
the young camels of Midian and Ephah;  
all those from Sheba shall come.  
They shall bring gold and frankincense,  
and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

**PSALM 72:1-7, 10-14**

<sup>1</sup>Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to the king's son;

<sup>2</sup>**that he may rule your | people righteously  
and the | poor with justice;**  
<sup>3</sup>that the mountains may bring prosperity | to the people,  
and the | hills, in righteousness.  
<sup>4</sup>**Let him defend the needy a- | mong the people,  
rescue the poor, and crush | the oppressor.**  
<sup>5</sup>May he live as long as the sun and | moon endure,  
from one generation | to another.  
<sup>6</sup>**Let him come down like rain upon | the mown field,  
like showers that wa- | ter the earth.**  
<sup>7</sup>In his time may the | righteous flourish;  
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall | be no more.  
<sup>10</sup>**May the kings of Tarshish and of the | isles pay tribute,  
and the kings of Sheba and Seba | offer gifts.**  
<sup>11</sup>May all kings bow | down before him,  
and all the nations | do him service.  
<sup>12</sup>**For the king delivers the poor who cry out | in distress,  
the oppressed, and those who | have no helper.**  
<sup>13</sup>He has compassion on the low- | ly and poor,  
and preserves the lives | of the needy.  
<sup>14</sup>**From oppression and violence he re- | deems their lives,  
and precious is their blood | in his sight.**

## SECOND READING:

## EPHESIANS 3:1-12

*What had been hidden from previous generations is now made known through the gospel ministry of Paul and others. In Christ both Jews and Gentiles participate in the richness of God's promised salvation.*

<sup>1</sup>This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—<sup>2</sup>for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you,  
<sup>3</sup>and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, <sup>4</sup>a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. <sup>5</sup>In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: <sup>6</sup>that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

<sup>7</sup>Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. <sup>8</sup>Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, <sup>9</sup>and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; <sup>10</sup>so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. <sup>11</sup>This was in accordance with the eternal purpose

that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, <sup>12</sup>in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (sung)**

**ELW p. 142**

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**\*GOSPEL READING:**

**MATTHEW 2:1-12**

*God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a faraway land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.*

<sup>1</sup>In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup>When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup>and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup>They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup>"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.' "

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup>Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup>When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup>When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup>On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup>And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **SERMON**

**GOD IN CHRIST** From: Crossings - Meditations for Worship by Susan Palo Cherwien

"God in Christ. God in flesh. God in human form.

The impact of the Christ story should startle, and delight us;

it should form our lives and our desire,

it should turn our heads.

For God entered creation in a new way:

God sat at table and shared bread,

God laughed and God wept,

God savored sunsets and felt damp sand on the soles of feet,

God suffered, God risked, God danced,  
And thus, God blessed human life.  
There should be no more doubt.  
Life is blessed. Life is holy."

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY**

*"As with Gladness Men of Old"*

**ELW #302**

**APOSTLES CREED**

**ELW p. 105**

**\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Trusting in God's good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves.

*A brief silence.*

A: Humble the hearts of your faithful people, that we seek to be servants of your gospel and witnesses to your mysteries. Give us boldness in faith, that we make the good news of Christ's birth known to all people.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Establish justice on earth for all its inhabitants. Lead us to protect fragile ecosystems and endangered species. Empower the work of all who research, engineer, and make accessible alternative and renewable sources of energy. Make us careful stewards of your creation.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Nations shall come to your light and kings to your dawning. Remove corruption and fear from the hearts of leaders and authorities. Lead governments to expand policies and resources that care for refugees and all migrants. Strengthen the work of resettlement agencies.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: Defend the cause of all who are in need, all facing poverty, and all who are oppressed. Come quickly to those who feel that their lives and livelihoods are fragile. Give them strength and lead them forth with hope.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: As the magi offered gifts to the Christ child, empower us to give generously. Prosper the work of ministry partnerships in our community. Together, help us share what we have to ensure that our neighbors have enough food, resources, and opportunities.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: You have redeemed the lives of your faithful departed. Through the love of Christ, gather us into one body with them, and reveal to us the mystery hidden for ages in the One who created all things.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace.  
**Amen.**

**\* PEACE**

**MEAL**

**OFFERING**

*(We thank you for your time, talent, and money toward ministry at FELC and beyond. Please place your money donation in the offering basket at the back of church, or on-line, or by mail.)*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray,  
**God of abundance,  
receive and bless these gifts we have offered.  
Join our hearts with the song of the angels,  
and gather us at your table of celebration.  
Strengthen us to share with all the world  
the abundance of your grace upon grace,  
poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.  
Amen.**

**\*THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**ELW p. 144**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ;  
By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations;  
In the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son,  
And in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**HOLY, HOLY**

**ELW p. 144**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**LORD'S PRAYER**

**ELW p. 145 (right side)**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

*At each worship service FELC celebrates communion around the altar rail using non-alcoholic sacramental wine so that all present may receive God's Grace in this sacrament. If anyone is unable to come to the altar, the Pastor and assistants will bring the sacrament to you. (If possible, please alert the Pastor or Assistant prior to Worship service if you want communion at your seat). You are also welcome to pick up a disposable chalice containing wine or juice at the back of the church. If you are taking communion at the rail and feel less steady on your feet, feel free to come to the front of the communion rail rather than walking around toward the back.*

## COMMUNION

*"Lamb of God"*

**ELW p. 146**

## \*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray,  
**God our redeemer,  
you have fed us at this table  
with gifts of grace, truth, and life.**

**As you have gathered us in joy,  
send us forth as messengers of your peace.  
Make us shine with the good news of your glory,  
born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.**

## \*EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

P: In the name of God:  
**We send you forth with Word and Sacrament to our homebound,  
that they may share with us in the communion of Christ's Body and Blood.  
We who are many are one body, because we all share one bread,  
one cup in Christ Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.**

## SENDING

## \*BLESSING

God bless you and keep you,  
✠ Jesus grant you grace and truth,  
and the Spirit send peace upon your hearts,  
now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## \*SENDING SONG

*"Arise, Your Light Has Come"*

**ELW #314**

## \*DISMISSAL

Christ the Savior is born!

Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **\*POSTLUDE**

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## *Prayer Requests*

Matt Andrews and Family, Whitley Blankenship,  
friends & family of Tom Brennan, Mary Ellen & Tom Burns,  
Debra Jones, Jan Lawson, Barbara Lemen, Doris Oliver, Sandy Pawsey,  
family of Ryan Snyder, Hailey Stark, Rick Strine, Patty & Ken Tague, Anna Young

*If you'd like to add someone to the Prayer Request list, please contact Kay at the office.  
Prayer requests remain on the list for 3 weeks and can be extended longer at your request.*

## *Participants*

Presiding and Preaching	Pastor Rita Augsburgur
Assisting Minister	Peg Allgeier
Coordinator of Music and Technology/Organist/Handbells	Rick Strine
Choir Director	Sarah Boline
Technical Director	Jeremy Hahn
Audio/Visual	Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Bob Tyler
Greeters	Bob & Carol Tyler
Check-In	Donna Donahue & Jean Mikels
Communion Aide	Carol Tyler
Money Counters	Judy & Bob Carney and Mike Corley
Acolyte	Leighton Oliver
Flowers	Donated by Svendsen's Florist

## **Welcome to all of you here and to those participating on-line**

### *Announcements*

1. The AMELCA Team served 56 clients on Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>.
2. Youth Faith Formation is meeting after Worship this morning.
3. The next Grief Group meeting is Monday January 8<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am-12:30pm in the Lounge.
4. Church Council meets Monday at 7pm.
5. Please join us for Meet, Eat and Greet on Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Spaghetti, garlic bread & torpedo sandwiches from LaGondola will be provided; please sign-up to bring a side dish or dessert.
6. Church History Class is being offered at no charge. Classes are on Saturdays beginning January 20<sup>th</sup> via zoom from 9:00am-12:00pm. See more details on the back side of the bulletin.
7. Art Workshop will start up again on January 18<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm-2:30pm in the fellowship hall. Please contact Kay or Pastor Rita to sign-up.
8. Annual Congregational Meeting will be January 28<sup>th</sup> following Worship Service.
9. Please support the FELC Youth in their “Souper Bowl” food drive/fundraiser for our AMELCA Food Pantry. See the back of the bulletin for more information.
10. The Laity Listening Session for church members of Central/Southern Illinois Synod will be February 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. This session will give you an opportunity to share your experiences with the Church in all three expressions (congregations, synods, churchwide) – both your struggles and your joys, as well as the places you have experienced the movement of the Holy Spirit, and your hopes for the church in the future. The zoom link: <https://wartburgseminary.zoom.us/j/7221406601?pwd=bOJtkH8pbsbDW04JHqSncvkSNk7AWp.1>
11. Altar Guild Meeting/Luncheon will be February 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am for current Altar Guild members as well as anyone interested in learning more about serving on FELC’s Altar Guild. See additional details on the following page.
12. And before you know it, Lent will be here. Ash Wednesday is February 14<sup>th</sup>. We will have Worship Services at 12:15pm and at 6:00pm.
13. Please see the Suggestion/Question Box on the Greeters Table in the Narthex. We need your Suggestions for 2024 Goals and Welcome your questions about shared ministry. Forms are located on the side pocket of the box. Including your name is optional, however, it’s helpful for follow-up.

**Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship**

## UPCOMING DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR

### MEET, EAT & GREET (MEG)

#### Upcoming MEG Luncheons

##### Second Thursdays at Noon

*Jan. 11	*May 9	*Sept. 12
*Feb. 8	*June 6	*Oct. 10
*Mar. 14	*July 11	*Nov. 14
*Apr. 11	*Aug. 8	*Dec. 12



**THE GRIEF GROUP** meets on Mondays from 11:00am-12:30pm in the lounge on the following dates:

- Jan 8, 15, 29
- Feb 12, 26
- Mar 11, 25
- April 8, 22



**ART WORSHIP CLASSES** will begin again in January. Classes will be in the fellowship hall from 1:00pm-2:30pm the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month:

*January 18	*March 21	*May 16
*February 15	*April 18	

Please contact Kay in the office or Pastor Rita to sign up.



A luncheon meeting for all Altar Guild members, and anyone interested in learning more about serving on FELC's Altar Guild, will be held on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Because a light lunch will be served, attendees are asked to confirm their attendance by contacting Carol Tyler via text at 217-620-1356 or email at [cjtyler5@msn.com](mailto:cjtyler5@msn.com). Those attending are also asked to bring their own beverage of choice. Please note, in case of inclement weather, Saturday, February 17<sup>th</sup> is the back-up date.

A course offering of the Faith Formation Committee  
of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod – ELCA

## Church History Survey

Saturdays Online via ZOOM 9:00 AM to Noon

January 20 & 27

February 10 & 24

March 9 & 23

**There is no cost for this class thanks to a generous gift  
from a congregation in our synod.**

**Pr. Luanne Cantrell – Course Instructor**

### **Course Description:**

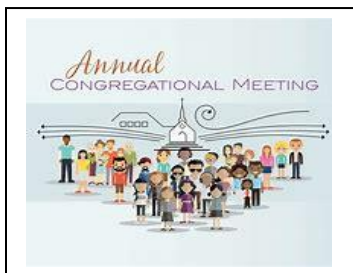
As with any history course, this course will be looking at events that have shaped the world in which we now live. Specifically, the events that have shaped the Church as we know it today. The course will take us on a journey through time where we will discover both the triumphs and mistakes which will provide us the opportunity to learn their impact on the Church itself.

Below is the link to register for this class.

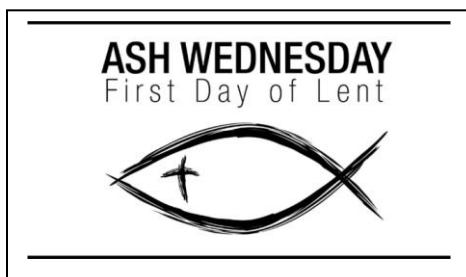
[Adult Faith Formation: Church History Survey - Central/Southern Illinois Synod \(csis-elca.org\)](https://csis-elca.org)

### **Souper Bowl for AMELCA**

FELC Youth will be sponsoring a “Souper Bowl” food drive/fundraiser to help support our AMELCA Food Pantry. There will be tubs in the narthex starting Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> for your donations. Beginning on Sunday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, we will also have “Soup Mixes in a Jar” available for purchase. If you have supported our “Cookies in a Jar” fundraiser and have an extra jar at home, please consider returning it and we will reuse it for this current fundraiser. As always we appreciate your support. – Peg Allgeier



Please plan to attend the  
**Annual Congregation Meeting**  
on January 28, 2024.  
The meeting will be held after  
Worship Service.



Please mark February 14, 2024 on your  
calendar to attend **Ash Wednesday**  
**Worship Services at 12:15pm and 6:00pm.**