

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

250 W. Decatur St.

Decatur, Illinois

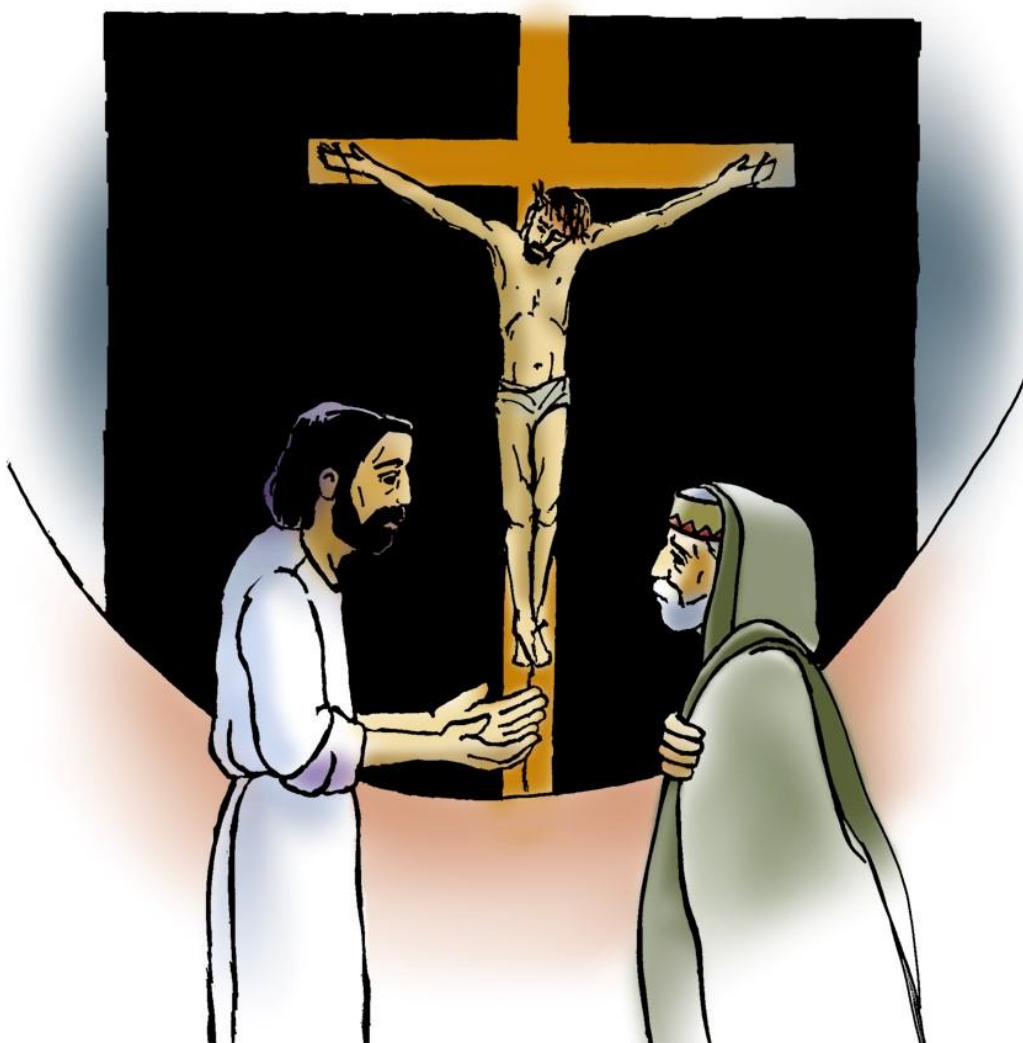
(217) 423-7783

Website: www.felcdecatur.org

Email: felc_decatur@outlook.com

We have a livestream option on our website!

<https://felcdecatur.org/live>



March 10, 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,
who writes the law on our hearts,
who draws all people together through Jesus.
Amen.

Held in God's mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Holy God,
**we confess that we are caught in snares of sin
and cannot break free.
We hoard resources while our neighbors
are hungry and cold.
We speak in ways that silence others.
We are silent when we should speak up.
We keep score in our hearts.
We let hurts grow into hatred.
For all these things and for sins only you know,
forgive us, Lord.
Amen.**

Here is a flood of grace:
Out of love for the whole world,
God draws near to us,
breaks every snare of sin,
washes away our wrongs,
and restores the promise of life through † Jesus Christ.
Amen.

***GATHERING SONG**

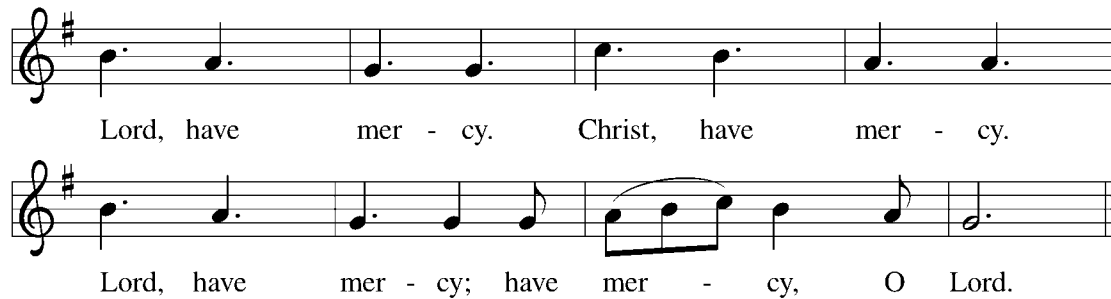
"Give to our God Immortal Praise!"

ELW #848

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.**



Music: *Mass No. 1*, Avon Gillespie
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***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray,

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.

⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good,
for God's mercy endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim
that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

³gathering them in from the lands;
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were fools and took rebellious paths;
through their sins they were afflicted.**

¹⁸They loathed all manner of food
and drew near to death's door.

¹⁹**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD
and you delivered them from their distress.**

²⁰You sent forth your word and healed them
and rescued them from the grave.

²¹**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love
and your wonderful works for all people.**

²²Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving
and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.

¹You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”



The proper verse may be sung by a leader. Then the acclamation is repeated.

Music: Richard Proulx, b. 1937
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The holy gospel according to John the 3rd Chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: John 3:14-21

To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.

[Jesus said:] ¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

In the bible, the Old Testament is more than a history of Israel, it is also a history of the covenant in which God reveals over time, God's character, God's plans, and purposes for humankind. Two covenants God made (one with Noah and one with Abraham) are listed below.

The **Noahic** Covenant – Genesis 9:13 - is unconditional and everlasting.

The **Abrahamic** Covenant – Genesis 17:7 – is unconditional and everlasting.

A third covenant is the **Mosaic** (sometimes called the Sinai) covenant. This is a conditional covenant (both sides are to fulfill their agreements) made between God and the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-24). God had chosen Moses to lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt to the promised

land and at the “third month after the Israelites left Egypt they came to the Desert of Sinai and camped at the foot of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, ‘*This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.*’ Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, **“We will do everything the Lord has said.”** (Exodus 19:1-9)

Questions to Ponder and Reflect On:

What does it mean to believe that God is invested in your future?

What does it mean to pursue and live in to a promise of hope and restoration?

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

ELW #335

APOSTLES CREED

ELW p. 105

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Trusting in God’s promise to reconcile all things, let us pray for the church, the well-being of creation, and a world in need.

A brief silence.

A: Gracious God, your love unites. Give vision to the global church and foster cooperation in mission. Increase inter-religious understanding and ecumenical dialog. Make your church a sanctuary for all fleeing persecution, disaster, and war.

Hear us, O God. (*Response: “Hear Our Prayer” ELW SM #178*)



Hear our prayer, hear our prayer, Lord, make us whole:



peace to all peo - ple, hope for each soul.



God of grace, in this place, hear now our prayer.

A: Creating God, your love enlivens. Restore balance to the earth's fragile habitats. Preserve wilderness lands, rainforests, and wildlife. Cleanse oceans and rivers. Make us good stewards of the earth.

Hear us, O God. (*Response: ELW SM #178*)

A: Righteous God, your love liberates. We give thanks for those who courageously witness to your liberating love. Free all people from the evils of racism, religious strife, and hatred.

Hear us, O God. (*Response: ELW SM #178*)

A: Merciful God, your love heals. Care tenderly for all whose loved ones perished from pandemic disease in every nation. Strengthen health care workers, first responders, and caregivers. Relieve all who live with chronic illness and pain.

Hear us, O God. (*Response: ELW SM #178*)

A: Incarnate God, your love enlightens. Open our hearts and minds to fresh understandings of our faith. Deepen our love for you and for one another. Teach us to pray for our enemies.

Hear us, O God. (*Response: ELW SM #178*)

A: Abiding God, your love saves. Those who died in the faith are made alive in Christ. We give thanks for your promise that we also will be raised to newness of life.

Hear us, O God. (*Response: ELW SM #178*)

P: Accompany us on our journey, God of grace, and receive the prayers of our hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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,

**Jesus, you are the bread of life
and the host of this meal.**

**Bless these gifts that we have gathered
that all people may know your goodness.**

**Feed us not only with this holy food
but with hunger for justice and peace.**

We pray this in your name.

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.

You call your people to cleanse their hearts
and prepare with joy for the paschal feast,
that renewed in the gift of baptism,
we may come to the fullness of your grace.

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, HOLY

ELW SM #193

The musical score is written on five staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff ends with a half note, the second with a quarter note, the third with a half note, the fourth with a quarter note, and the fifth with a half note. The final staff ends with a double bar line.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the
high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 145 (right side)

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Bread for the journey.

A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

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 SM# 195

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Music: *Bread of Life*, Jeremy Young, b. 1948
Music © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray,

Generous God,

at this table we have tasted your immeasurable grace.

As grains of wheat are gathered into one bread,

now make us one loaf to feed the world;

in the name of Jesus, the Bread of life.

Amen.

SENDING

***BLESSING**

Beloved,
we are God's own people,
holy, washed, renewed.
God bless you and keep you,
shower you with mercy,
fill you with courage,
and ✠ give you peace.
Amen.

***SENDING SONG**

"Lift High the Cross"

ELW #660

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share your bread.
Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching

Pastor Rita Augsburg

Assisting Minister

Bill Fitzgerald

Coordinator of Music and Technology/Organist/Handbells

Rick Strine

Choir Director

Sarah Boline

Technical Director

Jeremy Hahn

Audio/Visual

Audio/Visual Team

Bell Ringer

Larry Osborne

Greeters

Jackie Murphy & Larry Osborne

Check-In

Bob & Judy Carney

Communion Aide

Jane Cade

Money Counters

The Wengers & The Broekings

Acolyte

Emmy Murphy

Flowers

Donated by Svendsen's Florist

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

Announcements

- Maundy Thursday Service on March 28th will be held at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall with appetizers and liturgical communion service. Good Friday Service on March 29th will be held at 6pm and will be back up in the sanctuary.
- The AMELCA Team served 51 clients on Wednesday, March 6th.
- Attention: For those of you that have Thrivent Choice Dollars to designate, the 2023 Thrivent Choice Dollars must be directed by March 31st.
- Easter Flower Memoriam &/or Honorarium forms are available in the hallway by the entrance. Please return them to the office by March 18th.
- Please be advised, the City of Decatur Parking Enforcement Officers are policing parking lots for handicap parking violations. Only those with a handicap license plate or a handicap placard are allowed to park in the FELC handicap parking places. All others are subject to a \$250 ticket. Also, there is no parking in the 'dashed line area' of handicap parking.
- Darlene Dixson was overwhelmed with gratitude to those that made generous contributions toward the parking citation received in the FELC parking lot. \$246 was collected toward the \$250 citation. Thank you for your love and support.

This Week:

- The Grief Group meets Monday, March 11th from 11am-12:30pm in the Lounge.
- Lent Study meets Wednesday, March 13th from 12:15pm-1:15pm in the Lounge.
- Meet, Eat & Greet luncheon is on Thursday, March 14th at 12:00pm. Sign-up sheet is in the Narthex. All are Welcome!

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship

Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews & family, Mary Ellen & Tom Burns, Jan Lawson, Sandy Pawsey, Rick Strine, friends & family of Jim Summers, Patty & Ken Tague, Marie Van Cura (Pr. Rita's niece)

*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.*

UPCOMING DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR

MEET, EAT & GREET (MEG)

Upcoming MEG Luncheons Second Thursdays at Noon

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



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

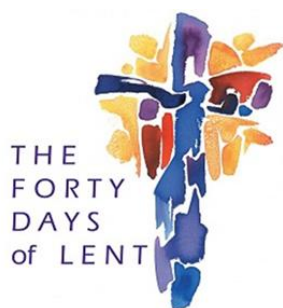
- Mar 11, 25
- April 8, 22



ART WORKSHOP CLASSES will be in the fellowship hall from 1:00pm-2:30pm the 3rd Thursday each month:

- *March 21
- *April 18
- *May 16

Please contact the office or Pastor Rita to sign up.



- **Mid-Week Lenten Study Wednesdays 12:15pm - 1:15pm**
 - March 13 & 20
- **Palm Sunday - March 24 - 9:30am**
- **Maundy Thursday - March 28 - 6:00pm**
- **Good Friday - March 29 - 6:00pm**
- **Easter - March 31 - 9:30am**