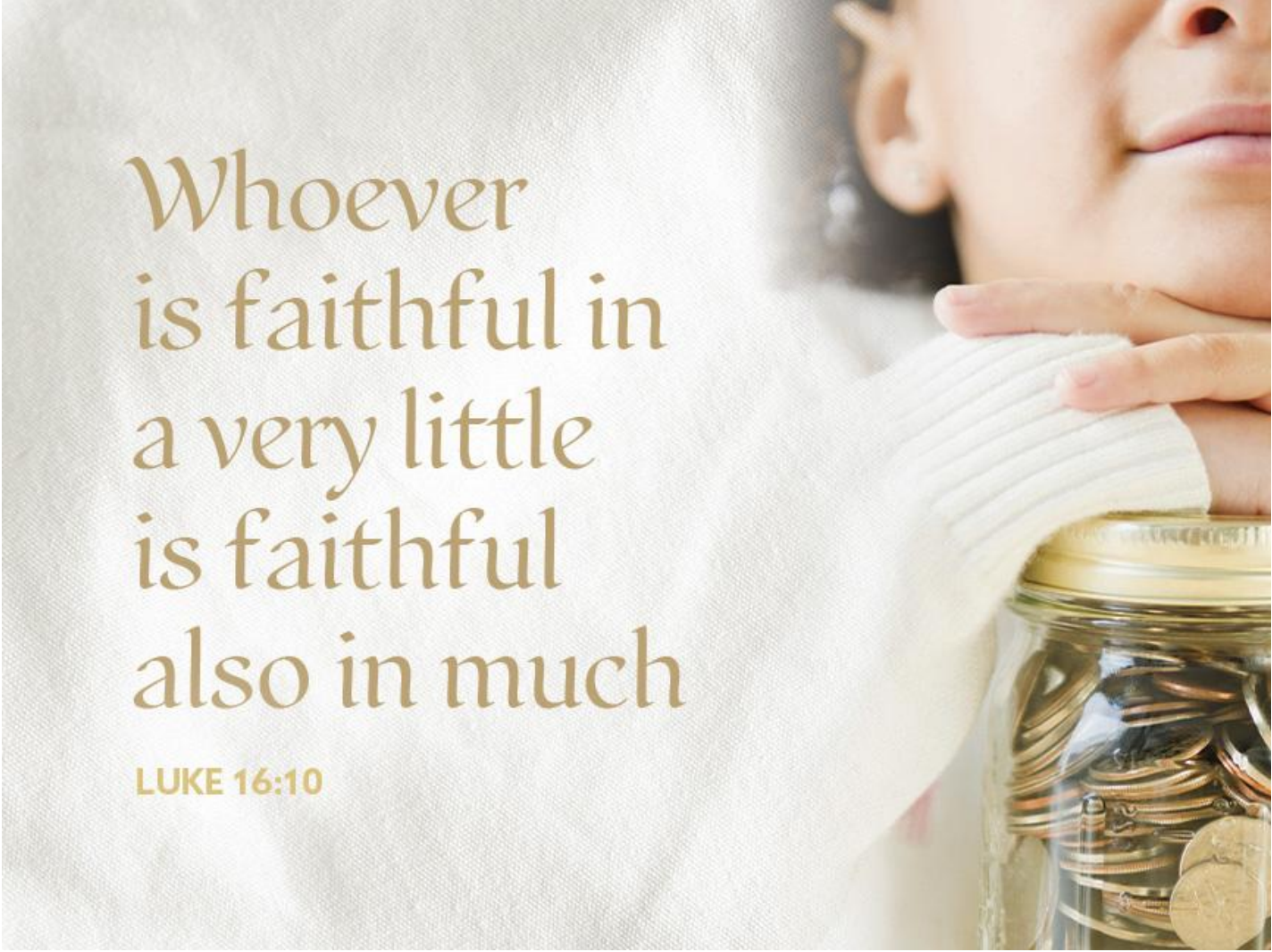


**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 W. Decatur St.
Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

**Website: www.felcdecatur.org
Email: felc_decatur@outlook.com**

*We have a livestream option on our website!
<https://felcdecatur.org/live>*



Whoever
is faithful in
a very little
is faithful
also in much

LUKE 16:10

**September 21, 2025, at 9:30 am
15^h Sunday after Pentecost
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

As we are invited today to consider what it means to be managers (rather than owners) of all that we have, it is crucial to recognize that we are bought with a price. “Christ Jesus, himself human, . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” Apart from the generosity of God we have nothing—we are nothing. By God’s gracious favor we have everything we need.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
our maker, our helper, and our keeper.

C: Amen.

P: Trusting in God’s mercy, let us confess our sin
in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful and loving God,

C: we are your stiff-necked people.

We trample on the needy.

We grumble about your grace to others.

We turn away from the poor.

Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.

**Rejoice over us as ones who were lost
and have been found. Amen.**

P: Even when we are faithless, God remains faithful.

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

You who were lost have been found.

In the name of † Jesus, your sins are forgiven!

C: Amen.

*GATHERING SONG

“As Saints of Old”

ELW #695

GREETING

ELW p. 138

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

C: And also, with you.

*KYRIE

ELW p. 184-185

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Glory to God in the Highest”

ELW p. 185-186

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

C: God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

CHOIR ANTHEM

“Take Root In My Heart”

Vicki Courtney

WORD

First Reading: Amos 8:4-7

Amos was called by God to prophesy in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Peace and prosperity in Israel led to corrupt business practices and oppression of the poor. The prophet declares that God will not tolerate such a situation.

⁴ Hear this, you who trample on the needy,
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,

⁵ saying, “When will the new moon be over
so that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath,

so that we may offer wheat for sale?

We will make the ephah smaller and the shekel heavier
and practice deceit with false balances,

⁶ buying the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”

⁷ The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 113

¹ Hallelujah! Give praise, you servants of the LORD;
praise the name of the LORD.

² **Let the name of the LORD be blessed,
from this time forth forevermore.**

³ From the rising of the sun to its going down
let the name of the LORD be praised.

⁴ **The LORD is high above all nations;
God's glory above the heavens.**

⁵ Who is like the LORD our God,
who sits enthroned on high,

⁶ **but stoops to behold
the heavens and the earth?**

⁷ The LORD takes up the weak out of the dust
and lifts up the poor from the ashes,

⁸ **enthroning them with the rulers,
with the rulers of the people.**

⁹ The LORD makes the woman of a childless house
to be a joyful mother of children. Hallelujah!

Second Reading: 1 Timothy 2:1-7

The pastoral epistles offer insight into how early Christians understood many practical matters, such as church administration and worship. The church's focused prayer for others is an expression of the single-minded passion God has toward us in Jesus.

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and acceptable before God our Savior, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For

there is one God;

there is also one mediator between God and humankind,
Christ Jesus, himself human,

⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all
—this was attested at the right time. ⁷ For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth; I am not lying), a teacher of the gentiles in faith and truth.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The holy gospel according to Luke the 16th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 16:1-13

Jesus tells the curious story of a dishonest manager who cheats his employer and then is commended by him for having acted so shrewdly. Jesus wonders why his own followers are less creative and diligent in their stewardship given that they are managers of a far more valuable household.

¹ Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. ² So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.’ ³ Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’ ⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’ ⁷ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’ ⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly, for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹ And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

¹⁰ “Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹ If, then, you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹² And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³ No slave can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: Gracious God, we come to you in prayer for the church, the world, and all in need.
A brief silence.

A: O God, teach your church to act in solidarity with the poor, frustrating the efforts of those who trample on the needy and practicing justice in our own life and community.
God of grace,

C: SM #178 "Hear Our Prayer"

A: Almighty Creator, we pray for an end to the misuse of the earth and its resources, that all people may benefit from your abundant gifts and that our stewardship of creation would be marked by justice and sustainability. God of grace,

C: SM #178 "Hear Our Prayer"

A: Holy One, embolden elected leaders to pursue policies of economic justice for the benefit of all, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. Persuade them by your example of generosity and compassion. God of grace,

C: SM #178 "Hear Our Prayer"

A: Compassionate God, we pray for all facing illness, those near death, or those grieving the loss of loved ones. May they find comfort and strength in your love. Prepare us to surround them with your healing care. God of grace,

C: SM #178 “Hear Our Prayer”

A: God of love, motivate our congregation to enact economic justice through tangible action, prioritizing the needs of our community and sharing resources generously through our outreach and justice ministries. God of grace,

C: SM #178 “Hear Our Prayer”

A: Gracious God, we give thanks for the saints who now join the heavenly chorus in praising your name. Lift us up from the dust of grief and remind us of your promise of new life. God of grace,

C: SM #178 “Hear Our Prayer”

P: We entrust these prayers to you, O God, in the name of Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.

C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

“Give Thanks”

Vicki Courtney

(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 at <https://felcdecatur.org/give>, or by mail.)

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Lord of the harvest,

C: we return to you a portion of what you have given to us.

**Turn us to set our hope not on the uncertainty of riches,
but on you, who richly provides for us.**

**Multiply what we have gathered
to bless all who are suffering and in need,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: 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.
Fulfilling the promise of the resurrection,
you pour out the fire of your Spirit,
uniting in one body people of every nation and tongue.
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter
and all the witnesses of the resurrection
With earth and sea and all their creatures,
and with angels and archangels,
cherubim, and seraphim,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p. 190

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 191

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Come to this meal of mercy.

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. 191

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: O God,

**C: through this meal you have strengthened us
and appointed us to be your servants. Send us to do good and to share our
possessions with all in need. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

SENDING

*BLESSING

P: The God of righteousness,
who gives justice to the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry,
who sets the prisoners free,
✠ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

*SENDING HYMN

"All Depends on Our Possessing"

ELW #589

*DISMISSAL

A: Go in peace. Do not lose heart.

C: Thanks be to God.

*POSTLUDE

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Prayer Requests

Connie Andrews, Matt Andrews & Family, Peg Books,
Bob Cloney, Sandy Fitzgerrel, Esther Gregory,
Friends & Family of Kevin Gregory, James Jackson,
Jan Lawson, John Margias, Judy Oettel, Jarrod Renfro,
Dennis Tangney, Mary Ann Stolley, Ken Stolley, Rick Strine,
Renee Wiedenkiller, Rudy Zucker Sr.

*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.*

Welcome to everyone here and to those participating on-line

Announcements

- **The AMELCA team served 96 clients on Wednesday, September 17th.**

A message from the AMELCA Team:

AMELCA Food Pantry wishes to thank the congregation for all your support in the past 27 years. Your funds, soap pods, toilet paper, and items for the bags have allowed us to continue to support those in need. We have experienced a large increase in those seeking help from the pantry (up 40%) in recent months. With this increased need we are asking for additional help. Items needed: canned vegetables and fruit, canned soup, canned tuna, ramen noodle packs, canned pork and beans, boxed saltines, boxed mac and cheese, laundry pods, and toilet paper. As an alternative we could use dollars to purchase items as needed. We have received money from WSOY food drive in the past, but at this time we don't know if or how much that might be for this year. That's why your help is needed. Please consider giving a donation or bringing items listed above. If you bring items, please place them in the AMELCA box located in the Narthex, next to the Sanctuary doors. If making a financial donation, please make your check payable to AMELCA and place in the collection basket. Your generosity is sincerely appreciated!!!

- **Youth Faith Formation** will create their first craft/bulletin board today with the help of Miss Molly. On the 28th Ms. Kris will lead the older group with their first lesson class while the younger group will have their first Music class with Mr. Rick. Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa, please mark your calendars and bring your young ones so they can join in on the fun. Faith Formation's schedule of events is in the September FLAME & will also be in the October FLAME.
- **Grief Group** will meet Monday, September 22nd from 11am – 12:30pm.
- **Minister Claire** will be out of the office attending the **Fall Theological Conference** from September 22 - 24.
- **Worship & Music team** will meet with Minister Claire at 3:30pm on Wednesday, September 24th.
- **The Explore Teams of FELC & HC** will meet at Holy Cross on Wednesday, September 24th at 5:30pm. We will discuss ways to share ministry in 2026. If you have ideas or suggestions, please contact one of the Explore Team members so your suggestion can be discussed.
- **Our New Book Study** began this past Monday. Please read the Forward, Introduction and Chapters 1 & 2 prior to the next meeting on Monday, September 29th at 12:15pm in the Lounge. At our last meeting, we had a very interesting conversation about Mary Magdalene. All are welcome at Book Study; join in on the conversation!
- Church Council has approved for **“Back to Basics” Alcoholics Anonymous** group to meet here at FELC in the Fellowship Hall. They are a 12-step discussion group that meets daily in our Fellowship Hall. Meeting times are 8:00am – 9:15am Monday – Saturday and 6:00pm – 7:00pm Sunday. As I arrive each morning, there are several cars in our lower parking lot, indicating many attendees. What a blessing!
- **Meet, Eat & Greet hosts are scheduled** for the remainder of 2025: October (Ruth - chicken tacos), November (FELC - fried chicken) & December (Nancy & Marilyn – entrée to be announced). The 2026 MEG sign-up sheet is out, so I hope you consider signing up for one of the luncheons next year.

- **October 19th** is the **Blessing of the Quilts**. As a gentle reminder, there will be a noisy offering during worship service. Donations from the noisy offering are used to help with shipping fees. The quilts will likely be placed on the sanctuary chairs on Thursday, October 16th. Anyone that would like to view the quilts on Friday, October 17th, is welcome between 9:00am-4:00pm. It will likely be quiet in the sanctuary, so feel free to find a favorite quilt, sit in that chair and have some quiet prayer time.
- FELC is thrilled to host your activity, meeting or event. Please contact the office to secure a **building use request** form 2 weeks prior to your activity or event. Thank you!

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship

Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Minister Claire Vail
Assisting Minister	Lucas Reynolds
Slides	Bill Fitzgerald
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Interim Choir Director	Milton Scott
Flutist	Colleen Hillyer-Pacey
Technical Director	Mason Oliver
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Steve Wenger
Greeter	Marilyn Oftedal
Check-In	Nora Beck and Mary Jo Rowley
Acolyte	Ella Taute
Communion Aide	Jane Cade
Money Counters	Jim & Judy Oettel and Gary & Carolyn Likins
Flowers	Janice Isaacs