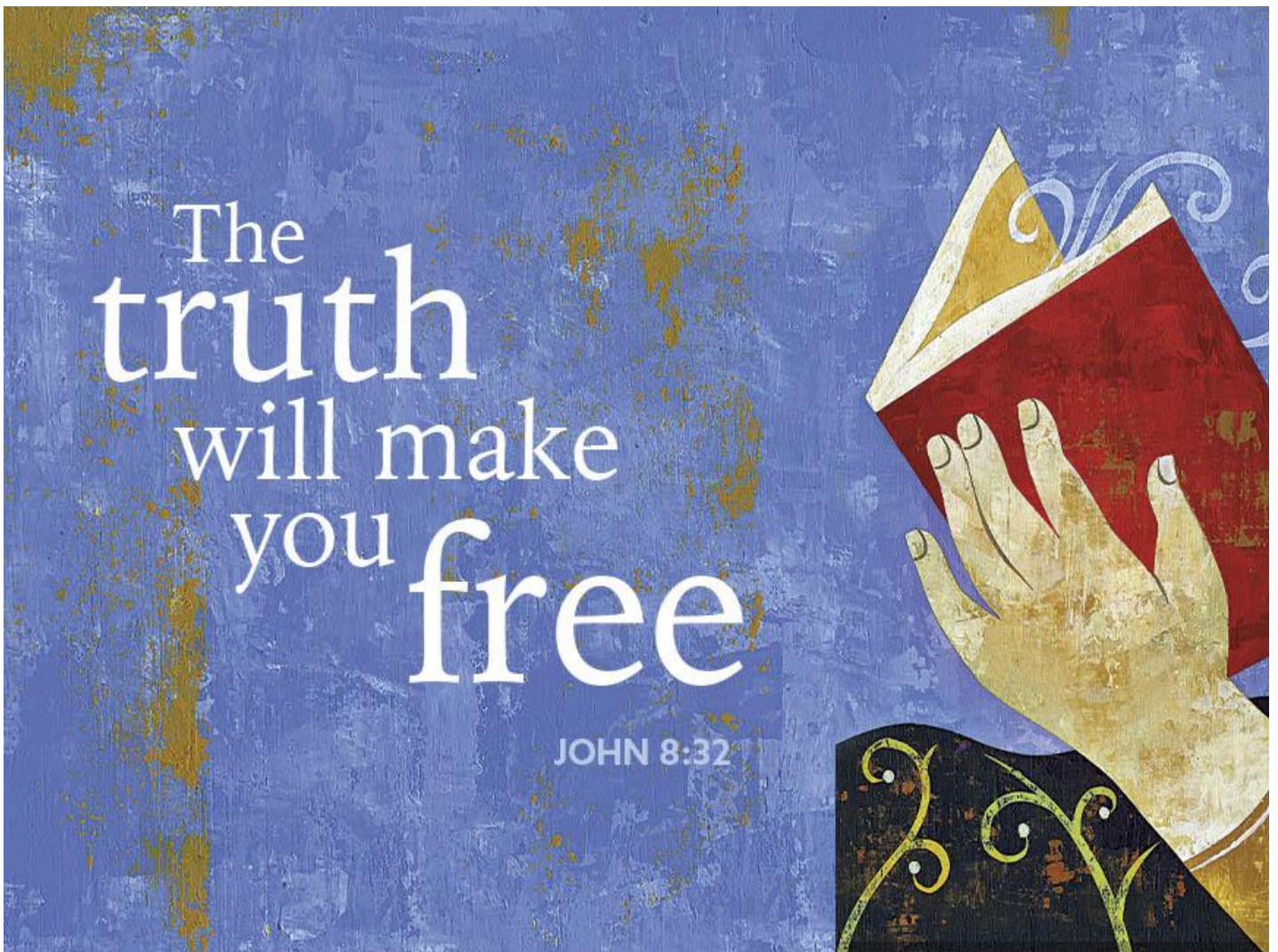


**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 W. Decatur St.
Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

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

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



**October 26, 2025, at 9:30 am
REFORMATION SUNDAY
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

Rooted in the past and growing into the future, the church must always be reformed in order to live out the love of Christ in an ever-changing world. We celebrate the good news of God's grace, that Jesus Christ sets us free every day to do this life-transforming work. Trusting in the freedom given to us in baptism, we pray for the church, that Christians will unite more fully in worship and mission.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

"Jesu, My Strength, My Hope"

J.S. Bach

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: Almighty and merciful God,

we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.

We have offended against your holy laws.

We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;

and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.

O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare those who confess their faults.

Restore those who are penitent, according to your promises declared to the world in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And grant, O merciful God, for his sake, that we may live a holy, just, and humble life for the glory of your holy name. 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**

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

ELW #504

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. 138-139

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“This Is The Feast”

ELW p. 140-141

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: Almighty God, gracious Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit renews the church in every age. Pour out your Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your word, protect and comfort them in times of trial, defend them against all enemies of the gospel, and bestow on the church your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

WORD

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The renewed covenant will not be breakable, but like the old covenant it will expect the people to live upright lives. To know the LORD means that one will defend the cause of the poor and needy (Jer. 22:16). The renewed covenant is possible only because the LORD will forgive iniquity and not remember sin. Our hope lies in a God who forgets.

³¹ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³ But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 46

- ¹ God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- ² **Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
and though the mountains shake in the depths of the sea;**
- ³ though its waters rage and foam,
and though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
- ⁴ **There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.**
- ⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be shaken;
God shall help it at the break of day.
- ⁶ **The nations rage, and the kingdoms shake;
God speaks, and the earth melts away.**
- ⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.
- ⁸ **Come now, regard the works of the LORD,
what desolations God has brought upon the earth;**
- ⁹ behold the one who makes war to cease in all the world;
who breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, and burns the ¹ shields with fire.
- ¹⁰ **“Be still, then, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.”**
- ¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Second Reading: Romans 3:19-28

Paul's words stand at the heart of the preaching of Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders. No human beings make themselves right with God through works of the law. We are brought into a right relationship with God through the divine activity centered in Christ's death. This act is a gift of grace that liberates us from sin and empowers our faith in Jesus Christ.

¹⁹ Now we know that, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

²⁰ For no human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, ²² the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³ since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴ they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement

by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? That of works? No, rather through the law of faith. ²⁸ For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alleluia”

ELW p. 142

P: The holy gospel according to John the 8th Chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: John 8:31-36

Jesus speaks of truth and freedom as spiritual realities known through his word. He reveals the truth that sets people free from sin.

³¹ Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

³³ They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free’?”

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. ³⁶ So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”

ELW #597

***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: Renewed in God's everlasting grace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all creation.

A brief silence.

A: Free your church, O God, with grace, mercy, and love to be transformed by your word. Direct your church to be united in word and deed so that all creation knows the uniting and transforming power of the gospel. God of grace,

C: Receive Our Prayer

A: Renew creation, O God, so that all living creatures thrive together. Guide those who work to restore and renew creation. Preserve and care for endangered species throughout the world. God of grace,

C: Receive Our Prayer

A: Bring peace among the nations, O God, so violence and terror are not the norm on your earth. Inspire leaders of communities to work for peace and justice. Unite our politicians with a common mission and purpose. God of grace,

C: Receive Our Prayer

A: Heal all who suffer, O God, and bring them peace. Draw near to people who are incarcerated. Give hope to people experiencing housing or employment insecurity, oppression, or discrimination. Heal those who are ill. Be our stronghold at all times. God of grace,

C: Receive Our Prayer

A: Forgive us our sins, O God, and grant us your grace. Move us to understanding and reconciliation between people of other faiths and other Christian traditions in our community. Mend hurt feelings and heal wounds we have caused one another. God of grace,

C: Receive Our Prayer

A: We give you thanks, O God, for the life and witness of all your saints. Give us hope in your son's victory through the cross. God of grace,

C: Receive Our Prayer

P: We offer our prayers, O God, trusting in your everlasting grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

"Do Justice"

**Choir Anthem
Bob Tyler - Narrator**

(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.
Who on this day overcame death and the grave,
And by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
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 p. 144

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Blessed are you, O God, creator of heaven and earth.
You rescued your covenant people, led them on all their journeys,
and taught them by the prophets.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

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.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C: Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

P: Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal,
and make us one in this community of faith
and with your people throughout the world.

Glory and praise to you, O God, Author of life,
Word made flesh, Power of the Most High, now and forever.
C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 145

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. 146

***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.

POST COMMUNION

(see insert)

"We Walk by Faith"

**Choir Anthem
with Congregation**

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.

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Do not lose heart.

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching

Minister Claire Vail

Assisting Minister

Karen Wenger

Slides

Bob Tyler

Organist/Bell Choir Director

Rick Strine

Interim Choir Director

Milton Scott

Musicians

Trevor Stout, Mike McDonald, Tom Little,

Stephen Schepper, & Eric Brindle

Technical Director

Mason Oliver

Audio/Visual

Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team

Bell Ringer

Mike Reynolds

Greeter

Carolyn Renton

Check-In

Ruth Nihiser & Marsha Thornhill

Acolyte

Gemma Berry

Communion Aide

Kris Sites

Money Counters

Gary Beck, Larry Haab, Sheryl Brilley

Flowers

Molly Berry in Memory of Dante Berry

Prayer Requests

Connie Andrews, Matt Andrews & Family,
Peg Books, Bob Cloney, Sandy Fitzgerald,
Esther Gregory, Charlotte Hubbard, Paul Kopetz, Jan Lawson,
John Margias, Carla Scott, Mary Ann Stolley, Ken Stolley, Rick Strine

*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

- Council has approved a resolution to have a **special meeting of the congregation immediately following the worship service on 11/16/2025**. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the sale of 80 acres bequeathed to First Lutheran and Millikin University.
- **Thank you for your generous donations to the noisy offering last Sunday.** Our Youth enjoyed collecting your donations in the buckets and the money counters had a difficult time carrying the heavy bucket of coins to the bank. Between coins, dollars & checks, \$968 was collected.
- **Youth Faith Formation (YFF)** will meet after worship service today. Our Older group will have class and our Younger group will have a music lesson. The full YFF schedule is in the FLAME.
- **The AMELCA** team served 114 clients on Wednesday, October 22nd. Next Sunday, November 2nd, is “First Fruits” Sunday for AMELCA donations.
- **Book Study** meets Monday October 27th at 12:15pm in the Lounge. Please read chapters 5 & 6 in “*The Mary We Forgot*”. Please join the group for lively conversation.
- **Bells** meets Wednesday October 29th at 6:15pm.
- **Adult Choir** meets Wednesday October 29th at 7:00pm.
- Our Annual **Thanksgiving Potluck will return on Sunday, November 23rd, following worship service**. A sign up will be posted in the Narthex. We look forward to bringing back this fellowship opportunity.

- **Toys for Tots collection boxes will be in the Narthex and by the lower door during November.** WAND-TV will be hosting their “Day of Giving” on December 5th. Once again First Lutheran will be collecting unwrapped, new toys to be distributed to over 3,000 Decatur children.
- **Work on the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) has been completed** and was presented at the Church Council meeting on Monday evening. The MSP was unanimously approved and we will move onto the next step. The team that has worked for months on this project took the information provided by the congregation at all of our Discover and Invite sessions and condensed it into the format that will be sent to the Synod. There are a number of steps that the Synod will take in the next few weeks and we expect that our pastoral vacancy will be posted before the end of the year.
- **Pastor Jon Fry**, University of IL campus ministry, will be a guest speaker here at FELC on Sunday, November 16th. More to follow.
- **We are not having a joint worship service at Holy Cross on 11/30.** We will have a regular worship service here at FELC. We have moved the joint worship service at Holy Cross to Epiphany Sunday, January 4th.
- **Meet, Eat & Greet hosts are scheduled** for the remainder of 2025: November (FELC - fried chicken) & December (Nancy & Marilyn – Roasted Chicken). The 2026 MEG sign-up sheet is out, so I hope you consider signing up for one of the luncheons next year.
- FELC would be 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!
- The First Sunday in Advent is 11/30. **Holy Cross is planning to have a meal and mid-week Advent services on Thursdays 12/4, 12/11, & 12/18.** All are invited.
- With the change of weather, **our front door isn’t latching properly.** There have been 2 occasions where I approached the front door and it looked closed but it wasn’t latched. And leaving the building, the door looked closed, but it was open enough to where it didn’t latch. Whether you are entering or leaving, please pull on the door to ensure it is latched. Thank you!!

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship