

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

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



**December 7, 2025, at 9:30 am
Second Sunday of Advent
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✙ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Long-expected God,

C: **we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.
Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.**

P: God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.
✙ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

C: Amen.

*GATHERING SONG

"O Day of Peace"

ELW #711

GREETING

ELW p. 98

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. 98-99

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Glory To God”

ELW p. 99-100

THE ADVENT WREATH

Second Sunday of Advent

Hymn during wreath lighting

“He Came Down”

(Congregation will sing 1 stanza of hymn)

He came down that we may have peace;*(sing 3 times); hallelujah forevermore*

He came down that we may have hope;*(sing 3 times); hallelujah forevermore*

He came down that we may have light;*(sing 3 times); hallelujah forevermore*

P: Praise to you, O God, who gives us courage to start again.

You fasten righteousness around your waist and baptize

with the Holy Spirit's fire. Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames, and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare.

We ask that peace abound, until none hurt or destroy over all the earth.

C: Amen.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

C: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and 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: Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

- the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- ³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear,
⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;
he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.
- ⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb; the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them.
- ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.
- ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.
- ¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;
² **that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**
- ³ that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ **Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**
- ⁵ May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
- ⁶ **Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**
- ⁷ In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
- ¹⁸ **Blessed are you, LORD God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!**
- ¹⁹ And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

⁴ Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles
and sing praises to your name”;

¹⁰ and again he says,

“Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people”;

¹¹ and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you gentiles,
and let all the peoples praise him”;

¹² and again Isaiah says,

“The root of Jesse shall come,
the one who rises to rule the gentiles;
in him the gentiles shall hope.”

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alleluia”

ELW p. 102

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew the 3rd Chapter.

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

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ “I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

ELW #249

***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: In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

A: With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity among peoples. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: With counsel and might, move us to care for creation. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. We pray for international student and teacher exchanges, for our partner churches, and for the shared mission of Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who have lost hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease. Renew the spirits of those recovering from surgery and medical procedures. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and reparation, may we serve in the way of Christ. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: With joy and peace, we remember our ancestors in the faith. Fill us with the hope of the Holy Spirit now and into the ages of ages. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

“Christ, Be Our Light”

ELW # 715

(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: Nourishing God,

C: you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

**Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world
signs of your kingdom come. 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.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
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. 108

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

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.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

P: With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 112

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

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. 112-113

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: God our host,

C: at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.

***EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS**

P: In the name of God:

C: 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**

P: May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

C: Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

“Light Dawn on a Weary World”

ELW #726

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Keep awake.

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Prayer Requests

Connie Andrews, Matt Andrews & Family, Peg Books,
Family & Friends of Kandy Donahue, Sandy Fitzgerald,
Esther Gregory, Charlotte Hubbard, Paul Kopetz,
Jan Lawson, John Margias, Carla Scott, Mary Ann Stolley,
Ken Stolley, Rick Strine, 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.*

Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Minister Claire Vail
Assisting Minister	Bob Tyler
Slides	Bill Fitzgerald
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Interim Choir Director	Milton Scott
Technical Director	Mason Oliver
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Steve Wenger
Greeter	Bruce & Tami Cannon
Check-In	Mary Jo Rowley & Kris Sites
Acolyte	Gemma Berry
Communion Aide	Kris Sites
Money Counters	Karen & Steve Wenger and Carol & Ken Broeking
Flowers	The Malachowski & The Taute Families

Welcome to everyone here and to those participating on-line

Announcements

- **Exec** meets Monday, December 8th at 6pm.
- **Meet, Eat & Greet** is Thursday, December 11th at noon. Nancy & Marilyn are hosting this month and preparing Italian Beef and Pulled Pork sandwiches. Sign-up sheet is in the Narthex.

- **Finance** is meeting at 4pm on Thursday, December 11th.
- **The AMELCA** team served 56 clients on Wednesday.
- The **Cookies in a Jar fundraiser for AMELCA** will begin this Sunday. The cost for a jar will be \$15. There are 3 types of cookies available this year.
- Over the Advent season we will be **collecting items for Dove clients**. Look for a collection box near the baptism font. Please bring personal care items (soap, lotion, shampoo, hair oil...) specifically for African American needs, and feminine care items.
- **Baby Jesus donations** - You are invited to make donations of infant clothing, onesies, receiving blankets, diapers, etc. Donations will be collected thru 12/21.
- Holy Cross is planning to have an **evening meal and mid-week Advent services on Thursdays** 12/4, 12/11, & 12/18. All are invited.
- **Cookie Bakers and Carolers:** Sunday December 14th is the date for cookie delivery and caroling to our Homebound. Cookies will be packaged on that Sunday @ 9:00 AM. Bring your homemade cookies marked, "For Homebound", to the kitchen on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday from 9:00 to 4:00 during the **week of December 8th**, or no later than 9:00 on Sunday December 14th. Carolers will meet at the church at 12:30 PM and then travel to the Homebound to carol. All singers and non-singers are welcome. There will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex for those interested in joining the carolers.
- **Youth Christmas Pageant** will be Sunday, December 14th. Practice is 12/7 & 12/13.
- **Poinsettia forms** are on red paper in the Narthex. Please leave your completed form in the church office by December 14th and Poinsettia plants must be delivered to church by 10:00am, Monday, December 22nd. Thank you!
- Annual Reports are **due in the office today, December 7th**. Please email your report to the church office email, felc_decatgur@outlook.com. Thank you!
- **Please take an Advent Calendar located on the hallway table by the front door.** This cute Advent Calendar is from the ELCA. They are sent free to ELCA churches, so please take one to share with your family &/or friends. There are 3 pieces to each set; the readings numbered 1-24, the stable, and the cutouts. Each day gives instructions what to cut out & color. Please share with family & friends.

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship