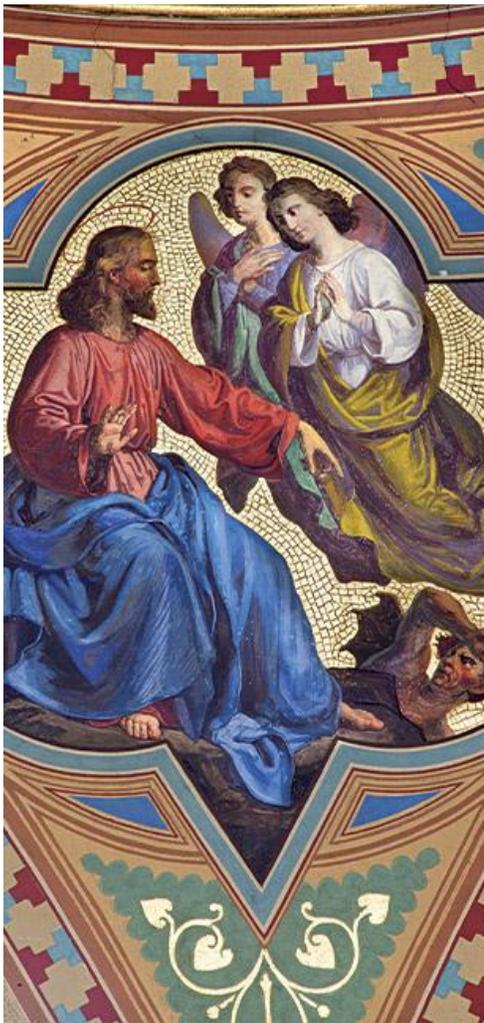


**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 W. Decatur St.
Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

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

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



WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD

MATTHEW 4:10

**February 22, 2026
at 9:30am
First Sunday in Lent
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

Today's gospel tells of Jesus' temptation in the desert. His forty-day fast becomes the basis of our Lenten pilgrimage. In the early church Lent was a time of intense preparation for those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil. This catechetical focus on the meaning of faith is at the heart of our Lenten journey to the baptismal waters of Easter. Hungry for God's mercy, we receive the bread of life to nourish us for the days ahead.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin before God, who removes our guilt
and blots out all offenses.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For seeking worldly delights that deceive us and dishonor you:
Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For desiring self-reliance instead of hungering for your word:
Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For failing to recognize your coming reign,
and for hindering the work of the Spirit: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For drawing from the well of self-serving ambition,
and for disdaining the living water Christ offers: Gracious God,

C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For disregarding voices from the margin,
and for distrusting signs of your healing and hope in the world:
Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: For dwelling in tombs of self-pity and discontent,
and for disregarding Christ's call to come forth to life:
Gracious God,
C: have mercy on us according to your steadfast love.

P: God's steadfast love, grace, and forgiveness abound.
Through faith, the free gift of God,
you have been clothed in the righteousness of Christ.
In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.
The Spirit of the One who raised Christ from the dead
dwells in you, pours God's love into your hearts,
and gives you life and peace.
C: Amen.

***GATHERING SONG** *“Eternal Lord of Love, Behold Your Church”* **ELW #321**

**1 Eternal Lord of love, behold your church
walking once more the pilgrim way of Lent,
led by your cloud by day, by night your fire,
moved by your love and toward your presence bent:
far off yet here—the goal of all desire.**

**2 So daily dying to the way of self,
so daily living to your way of love,
we walk the road, Lord Jesus, that you trod,
knowing ourselves baptized into your death:
so we are dead and live with you in God.**

**3 If dead in you, so in you we arise,
you the firstborn of all the faithful dead;
and as through stony ground the green shoots break,
glorious in springtime dress of leaf and flow'r,
so into life and glory shall we wake.**

GREETING

ELW p. 203

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. 203

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray,

C: **Lord God, our strength, the struggle between good and evil rages within and around us, and the devil and all the forces that defy you tempt us with empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your word, and when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, 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: Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7

Human beings were formed with great care, to be in relationship with the creator, creation, and one another. The serpent's promise to the first couple that their eyes would be opened led, ironically, to the discovery only that they were naked.

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

^{3:1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" ² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' " ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 32

¹ Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,
and whose sin is put away!

² **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

³ While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,
because of my groaning all day long.

⁴ **For your hand was heavy upon me day and night;
my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.**

⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

⁶ **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble;
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

⁷ You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

⁸ **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;
I will guide you with my eye.**

⁹ Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;
who must be fitted with bit and bridle, or else they will not stay near you."

¹⁰ **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

¹¹ Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Through Adam's disobedience, humanity came under bondage to sin and death, from which we cannot free ourselves. In Christ's obedient death, God graciously showers on us the free gift of liberation and life.

¹² Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned ¹³ for sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam, who is a pattern of the one who was to come.

¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like the effect of the one

man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the gift following many trespasses brings justification. ¹⁷ If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. ¹⁹ For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

"We Are Turning"

ELW p. 205

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew the 4th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus experiences anew the temptations that Israel faced in the wilderness. As the Son of God, he endures the testing of the evil one.

¹ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ² He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. ³ The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

⁴ But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple,

⁶ saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

'He will command his angels concerning you,'
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, ⁹ and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

P: The gospel of the Lord.
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY** *“Bless Now, O God, the Journey”* **ELW #326**

**1 Bless now, O God, the journey
that all your people make,
the path through noise and silence,
the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert
and winds the mountain round,
then leads beside still waters,
the road where faith is found.**

**2 Bless sojourners and pilgrims
who share this winding way;
your hope burns through the terrors,
your love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom
while often we are bound;
together we are seeking
the road where faith is found.**

**3 Divine eternal lover,
you meet us on the road.
We wait for land of promise
where milk and honey flow,
but waiting not for places,
you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written
on roads, as faith is found.**

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955-1993
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INSTALLATION OF 2026 FELC COUNCIL MEMBERS

(Council members are invited to come to front of church)

Introduction

The assembly is seated. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

The following people have been elected by the congregation to positions of leadership:

Marty Brilley – President
Peg Allgeier – Vice President
Bill Fitzgerrel – Secretary
Molly Berry – Treasurer
Minister Claire Vail - Interim

Bruce Cannon
Larry Osborne
Mike Reynolds
Mary Jo Rowley
Nancy Salefski
Kathy Scott

We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these sisters and brothers will lead us in our common life and our mutual mission as a congregation.

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

- You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.
- You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church.
- You are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.
- You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.
- You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you:

Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices to which you have been elected?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

The assembly stands. Those being installed face the assembly. The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

People of God, I ask you: Will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

Response: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Those being installed face the presiding minister, who addresses them.

I now declare you installed as council members of this congregation.

Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ. **Amen.**

***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: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

A brief silence.

A: God of all grace, grant faith to your church. Give to all the baptized the will to resist temptation and to worship and serve you alone. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all creation, tend this earth. When human greed and disobedience threaten this planet and the life it contains, lead us by your Spirit into ways of reverence, awe, and gentleness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all nations, preserve us from trouble. Surround all living in places of violence with your steadfast love and give resilience to all who work for peace. Grant courage to those who challenge, especially around issues of racism and systemic oppression. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all healing, mend our wounds. Bring wholeness to all who are sick, give peace to all who groan in grief, and send companions to all who are lonely or isolated. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all people, provide for our community. For any among us who hunger for bread, bring nourishment. For any among us who hunger for truth, speak your life-giving word. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: God of all life, bring us to you. We thank you for your free and abounding grace, and for those who, by that same grace, now rest eternally in you. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

C: 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 at <https://felcdecatour.org/give>, or by mail.)

OFFERING

“Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery”

ELW #334
st. 1-3 & Lent 1

- 1 **Tree of Life and awesome myst'ry,
in your death we are reborn;
though you die in all of hist'ry,
still you rise with ev'ry morn,
still you rise with ev'ry morn.**

- 2 **We remember truth once spoken,
love passed on through act and word;
ev'ry person lost and broken
wears the body of our Lord,
wears the body of our Lord.**

- 3 **Christ, you lead and we shall follow,
stumbling though our steps may be;
one with you in joy and sorrow,
we the river, you the sea,
we the river, you the sea.**

Lent 1

**From the dawning of creation
you have loved us as your own;
stay with us through all temptation,
make us turn to you alone.**

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 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 p. 207

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

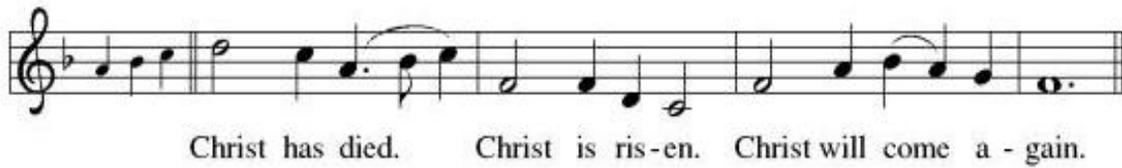
P: God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,
but guided us into the path of love and light.
In every age you sent your prophets
to make known your loving will for all humanity.

The cry of the poor has become your own cry;
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant
to preach good news to the afflicted,
to break bread with the outcast and despised,
and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.



P: Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,
we await the day when Jesus shall return
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.

C: Amen.

P: Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.

C: Amen.

P: Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every age,
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.



LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 208

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come to the table. Feast on God's goodness and 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. 208

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: God of our salvation,

**C: we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.**

**Through the body and blood of your Son,
may we become Christ's body in the world,
bearing witness to your love for all creation,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

***BLESSING**

P: Receive the blessing of the holy Trinity:

God, who calls all things into existence,
Jesus Christ, who redeems us,
and the Holy Spirit, whose breath sustains creation,
✠ bless you now and always.

C: Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

"Jesus Still Lead On"

ELW #624

- 1 Jesus, still lead on,
till our rest be won;
and, although the way be cheerless,
we will follow, calm and fearless;
guide us by your hand
to the promised land.**
- 2 If the way be drear,
if the foe be near,
let no faithless fears o'ertake us,
let not faith and hope forsake us;
safely past the foe
to our home we go.**
- 3 When we seek relief
from a long-felt grief,
when temptations come alluring
make us patient and enduring;
show us that bright shore
where we weep no more.**

**4 Jesus, still lead on,
till our rest be won;
heav'nly leader, still direct us,
still support, console, protect us,
till we safely stand
in the promised land.**

Text: Nicolaus L. von Zinzendorf, 1700-1760; tr. Jane L. Borthwick, 1813-1897, alt.

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching

Assisting Minister

Slides

Organist/Bell Choir Director

Interim Choir Director

Technical Director

Audio/Visual

Bell Ringer

Greeter

Check-In

Acolyte

Communion Aide

Money Counters

Flowers

Minister Claire Vail

Peg Allgeier

Ruth Nihiser

Rick Strine

Milton Scott

Mason Oliver

Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team

Mike Reynolds

Gary & Nora Beck

Bob & Carol Tyler

Ensley Dalen

Bill Fitzgerrel

Arlene Mannlein & Gary Beck

Jay & Mary Jo Rowley

Prayer Requests

Connie Andrews, Matt Andrews & Family, Peg Books, Jeanie Dennis,
Esther Gregory, Paul Kopetz, Jan Lawson, Sharon Lindeman,
Friends & Family of John Margias, Marilyn Oftedal, RuthAnn & Don Ruby,
Sebastian (Bass) Smallwood, Mary Ann Stolley, Ken Stolley,
Rick Strine, Ann Thompson, Linda Williams, 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 107 clients on Wednesday, February 18th.
- **Girl Scout Cookies are here!!** Ensley Dalen will be selling cookies before & after church. Cookies are \$6 a box. Thank you for your support!!
- **Grief Group** meets Monday, February 23rd at 11:00am in the Lounge.
- **Mid-week Lent Services** begin Wednesday, February 25th. The Theme is Baptismal Promise. We will have 2 services each Wednesday during Lent. Lenten Services will be at 12:00pm and a soup supper at 6:00pm followed by Evening Prayer & Homily at 7:00pm.
- **Lenten Wednesday night Soup Supper Sign-up sheets** are in the Narthex. We would like 2 to sign-up for soup, 2 to bring bread, & 2 for clean-up.
- **We need Hosts for MEG!** We need hosts to sign up for our upcoming Meet, Eat & Greet monthly lunches. The church will reimburse you for your expenses. The Sign-up sheet is on the table by the front door. Our next lunch is scheduled for February 12th. Please consider signing up as a Host. Thank you!!

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship