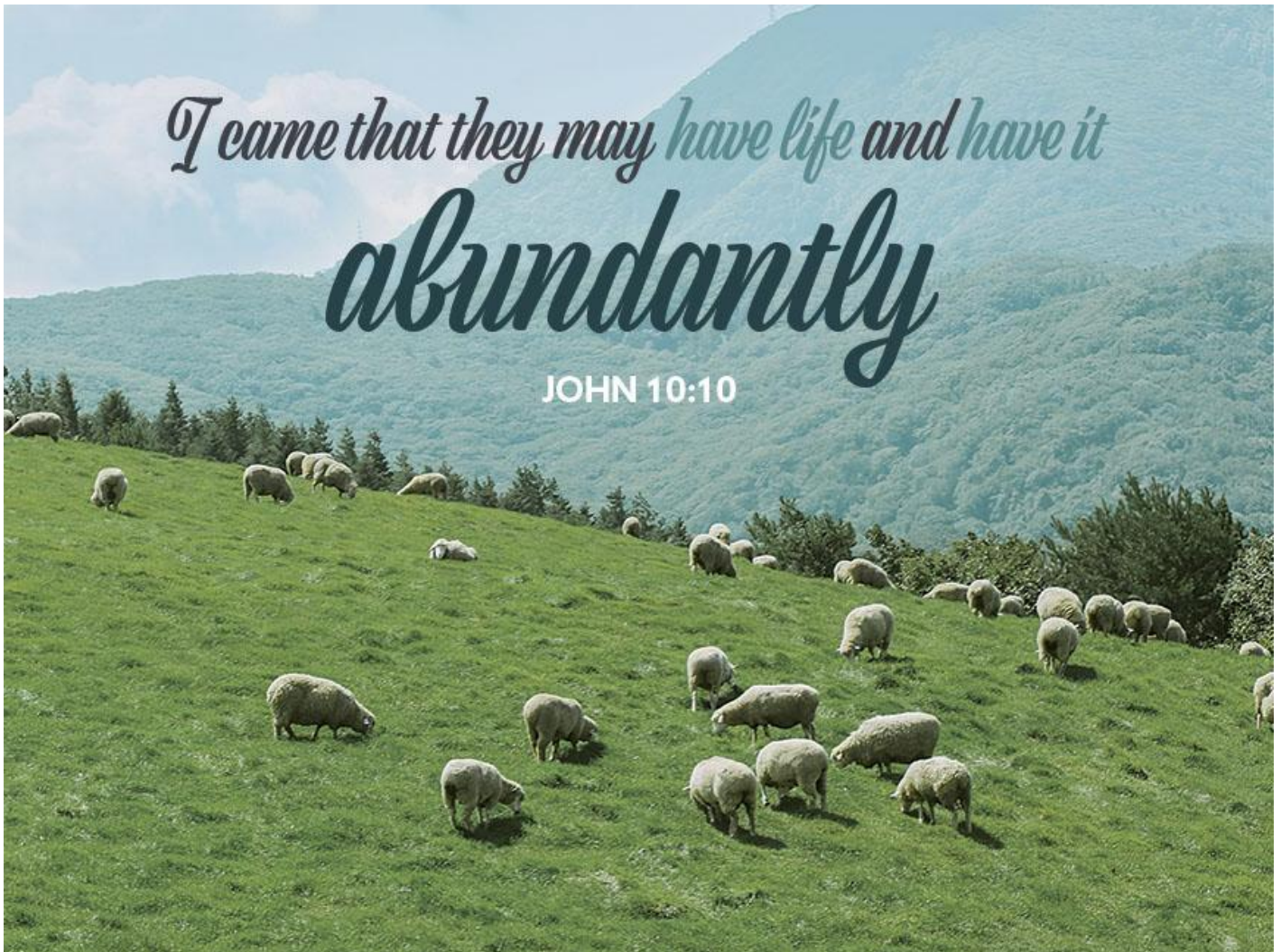


**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 W. Decatur St.
Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

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

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



**April 26, 2026, at 9:30am
Fourth Sunday of Easter
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

Today is sometimes called “Good Shepherd Sunday.” Jesus is called the “gate” of the sheep in today’s gospel. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. He anoints our heads with oil and guides us beside the still waters of our baptism. Each Sunday he spreads a feast before us amid the world’s violence and war. We go forth to be signs of the resurrection and extend God’s tender care to all creation.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

GATHERING

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

P: Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne
and to the Lamb!

C: Amen.

P: Let us give thanks for the gifts of baptism.

Water may be poured into the font as the presiding minister continues.

P: Merciful God,

you are the one who was, who is, and who is to come.

You lead us beside still waters.

We thank you for the waters of creation:

morning dew, gentle rain, roaring waves.

We thank you for the waters that nourish us. Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Jesus Christ, you are the faithful witness
who accompanies us on our journeys.

We give you thanks for your life-giving death and resurrection.

We praise you for joining us in joy and sorrow. Blessed are you.

C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Holy Spirit, you anoint our head with oil and our cup overflows.
Break down barriers that divide us.
Fill us with the breath of peace. Blessed are you.
C: You guide us to springs of the water of life.

P: Holy One, we thank you for the gifts and grace of baptism,
and for making us a new creation.
We join with saints and angels, giving you honor and praise,
now and forever.
C: Amen.

***GATHERING SONG** *“All People That on Earth Do Dwell”*

ELW #883

- 1 All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell;
come ye before him and rejoice.**
- 2 Know that the Lord is God indeed;
without our aid he did us make.
We are his folk, he doth us feed,
and for his sheep he doth us take.**
- 3 Oh, enter then his gates with praise;
approach with joy his courts unto;
praise, laud, and bless his name always,
for it is seemly so to do.**
- 4 For why? The Lord our God is good:
His mercy is forever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.**
- 5 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom heav'n and earth adore,
from us and from the angel host
be praise and glory evermore.**

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.**

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“This is the Feast”

ELW p. 140-141

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: **O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, 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: Ezekiel 34:7-15

⁷ Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: ⁸ As I live, says the Lord God, because my sheep have become a prey and my sheep have become food for all the wild animals, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves and have not fed my sheep, ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord God: I am against the shepherds, and I will hold them accountable for my sheep and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, so that they may not be food for them.

¹¹ For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. ¹² As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep, so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴ I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM

“*Shepherd Me, O God*”

Marty Haugen

(congregation joins on refrain – **ELW #780**)

Refrain
All

Shep-herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be - yond my fears, from
death in - to life. life.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on Psalm 23
Music: SHEPHERD ME, Marty Haugen
Text and music © 1986 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
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Second Reading: Acts 2:42-47

Today's reading is a description of life in the community following Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on God's people. The new community is sustained in worship and fellowship, shares what they have, and ensures that everyone has enough.

⁴² The baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³ Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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 10th Chapter.

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

Gospel: John 10:1-10

Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

Jesus said: ¹ “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“Have No Fear, Little Flock”

ELW #764

**1 Have no fear, little flock;
have no fear, little flock,
for the Father has chosen
to give you the kingdom;
have no fear, little flock!**

**2 Have good cheer, little flock;
have good cheer, little flock,
for the Father will keep you
in his love forever;
have good cheer, little flock!**

**3 Praise the Lord high above;
praise the Lord high above,
for he stoops down to heal you,
uplift and restore you;
praise the Lord high above!**

**4 Thankful hearts raise to God;
thankful hearts raise to God,
for he stays close beside you,
in all things works with you;
thankful hearts raise to God!**

Text: Luke 12:32, st. 1; Marjorie Jilson, b. 1931, sts. 2-4
Text © 1973 Concordia Publishing House

***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: Trusting in the power of Christ's resurrection to heal and redeem our broken world, let us pray for the needs of all creation

A brief silence

A: Shepherding God, draw all people to yourself and lead them in paths of righteousness. Embolden your church to enter the valleys of the world and guide us beside the still waters of your grace. We pray for military and prison chaplains serving near and far.
Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: Creator God, by the resurrection of your Son, show us your steadfast love and instruct our hearts in your ways. Help us to revere and protect the wonders of your creation.
Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: Righteous Judge, strengthen and uphold those who work for justice and advocate for human rights. Bring an end to oppression and save us from the temptation of violence or vengeance. We pray especially for peace in the Middle East and Ukraine. Send wisdom to our leaders that they may strive for peace and justice in all the world. Guard and protect those serving in the armed forces. Comfort the families who have lost loved ones in conflict. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: Great Physician, walk with those who are grieving, and anoint those who are ill or injured. Restore them to health of body, mind, and spirit. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: Good Shepherd, continually seek us out as lambs of your flock, and form us into a community where all are honored and cared for. Spread a feast before us and fill our cups to overflowing. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: Living God, we praise you for the saints who have died in faith and now dwell in your love. At our end, bring us, with them, to our heavenly home. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

P: God of resurrection power, use us and these prayers to proclaim the good news of new life to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Savior.
C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

“I Am the Good Shepherd”

John Ylvisaker

(We thank you for your time, talent, and treasure toward ministry at FELC and beyond. Please place your donation in the offering basket at the back of church, or on-line at <https://felcdecatour.org/give>, or by mail.)

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Merciful God,

C: accept the fruits of our labor, gathered to give you glory.

You have set a table before us, a glimpse of that great day when we will hunger and thirst no more.

Nourish us with the body and blood of Jesus, that goodness and mercy may follow us

and bless the world you love.

In the name of Jesus. 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,
for the glorious resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ,
the true Paschal Lamb who gave himself to take away our sin,
who in dying has destroyed death,
and in rising has brought us to eternal life.
And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter
and all the witnesses of the resurrection,
with earth and sea and all their creatures,
with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -



san-na. 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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: Holy God, mighty and merciful,
your people praise you, saying:
Your mercy endures forever.

C: Your mercy endures forever.

P: By your promise
you bound yourself to earth and all its creatures,
granting them life and calling them to flourish,
setting the sign of your bow in the clouds,
the colors of your love and faithfulness.
Your mercy endures forever.

C: Your mercy endures forever.

P: By your promise
you bound yourself to your people of old,
blessing them with family outnumbering the stars
and calling them to be a blessing to others,
showing them steadfast love in every generation
and calling them to be a light to the nations.
Your mercy endures forever.

C: Your mercy endures forever.

P: By your promise
you joined us to Jesus, your Beloved,
grafting us into your living Vine,
and calling us to bear the fruit of your self-giving love.

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.

With this bread and cup
we remember his life laid down and lifted up
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

C:

ELW p. 145



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

P: Send your Holy Spirit upon us
and these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless us to be a blessing.
Make us a sign of your faithfulness.
Send us to tend and cherish the earth
and to serve the world with mercy and love.

With all the saints in light,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God, through Christ Jesus,
in your Spirit, now and forever.

C:

ELW p. 145

A - men, a - men, a - men.

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 145

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Come to the table of new life. Receive the risen Lord.

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). 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

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.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: Holy One,

**C: through this meal you have made your home among us
and are making all things new.**

**Send us now to speak peace to anxious hearts,
to love our enemies,
and to bring your healing to the nations.**

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS**SENDING*****BLESSING**

God Almighty, who is the beginning and the end,
Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead,
and the Spirit, our advocate and peace,

✝ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

"What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine"

ELW #774

**1 What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

Refrain

**Leaning, leaning, (*Leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,*)
safe and secure from all alarms;
leaning, leaning, (*leaning on Jesus, leaning on Jesus,*)
leaning on the everlasting arms.**

**2 Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,
leaning on the everlasting arms;
oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,
leaning on the everlasting arms. *Refrain***

**3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
leaning on the everlasting arms. *Refrain***

Text: Elisha A. Hoffman, 1839-1929

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Praise the Lord. Alleluia!!

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Minister Claire Vail
Assisting Minister	Bill Fitzgerrel
Slides	Ruth Nihiser
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Interim Choir Director	Milton Scott
Technical Director	Mason Oliver
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Mike Reynolds
Greeter	Patricia Cox
Check-In	John & Lin Malachowski and Janice Isaacs
Acolyte	Ensley Dalen
Communion Aide	Carol Tyler
Money Counters	Chuck Ahlenius and Marsha & Mike Corley
Flowers	Kris & Dick Sites

Celebrating 2 yr. Baptism Anniversary of Grandsons, Brennan & Hudson

Prayer Requests

Barb Ahlenius, Connie Andrews, Matt Andrews & Family,
Peg Books, Jeanie Dennis, Darlene Ducharme, Bill Fitzgerald,
Dennis Gregory, Esther Gregory, Jan Lawson, Sharon Lindeman,
RuthAnn & Don Ruby, Sebastian (Bass) Smallwood,
Mary Ann Stolley, Ken Stolley, Rick Strine, Mary Wolf, 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.*

Announcements

- **The AMELCA TEAM** served 93 clients on Wednesday, April 22nd.
- Today we will assemble the **Finals Care Packages** for our 5 college students (Amanda Allgeier, Becca Allgeier, Maddie Kendall, Mason Oliver, Mia McCartney) Please see Molly Berry with any questions.
- **Thank you for your generous donations to LSSI Victorian Woods** last Sunday. Over \$1600 was donated. Today is LSSI Good Shepherd Sunday and we invite you to make a donation directly to LSSI via the Large Designated "LSSI GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY" donation envelopes or by making a donation to LSSI Victorian Woods via the white envelopes. Both sets of envelopes are on the table by the front door. Thank you for contributing to this valuable ministry.
- **Grief Group** meets Monday, April 27th at 11:00am in the Lounge.
- **Congregational Call Meeting – May 3rd**
A special congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, May 3, immediately following worship in the sanctuary. The purpose of this meeting is to vote on the call of a pastoral candidate and the loan vote associated with the call. All voting members are encouraged to attend and participate in this important moment in the life of our church. Zoom will be available for voting members who cannot attend in person. Please plan to stay after worship as we gather in prayerful discernment and shared responsibility for our future.
- **Communion to our homebound members** is a blessing for all who participate. **We need to expand our volunteers** for this valuable ministry. It is a once a month visit to two or three members. Please let Minister Claire know if you are interested in joining in.

- Please join **Opus 24** and several members of our own church choir on **Sunday, May 3rd at Central Christian Church** at 3:00pm for a wonderful afternoon of song. You won't want to miss a set of music with combined area church and community choirs joining voices with Opus 24 and to sing along with a couple of treasured hymns and listen to a moving piece reminding us that we all share one faith, one hope, and one Lord.
- **We are in need of Greeters for June, July & August.** Please contact Karen Reynolds via email (boga1028@yahoo.com) or call (217-874-2013) if you are available to Greet on Sunday during those months.
- **Art Workshop** will meet May 21st and that will be the last class until September 17th. The Artists will take a summer break.

Upcoming Joint Events & Worship Services

- We will **not** have Joint Worship Service on May 31st, the fifth Sunday in May
- **June 6th is C/SIS Synod Assembly** from 9:00am – 3:00pm via on-line meeting. Voting members can gather together or separately, depending on what your group has decided. HC voting members will meet at HC for the day.
- **July 12th will be Joint Worship Service and Outdoor BBQ/picnic at Holy Cross**
- **Vacation Bible School will be August 3rd – 7th** from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at Holy Cross. It is a little different this year having VBS in the evening, but we are hoping to secure a few more volunteers within that timeframe.
- **August 30th will be Joint Worship Service at FELC**
- September 13th is typically the Sunday to celebrate **“God’s Work our Hands”**. A specific date has not been determined, but an event will likely be organized around that timeframe.
- **September 19th is the WELCA Fall Gathering** held at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Decatur. Last year the event was in Champaign and we had 90 women attend the event; several from FELC and HC attended. With the event being held in Decatur, we hope to see more FELC & HC attendees. The WELCA group will send out additional information this summer.
- **October 4th is the East Central Conference ‘Synod Day’**. This is a follow-up to our June 6th C/SIS Synod Assembly. Our C/SIS Synod Office will have a variety of events. Everyone is encouraged to attend.
- **October 31st ‘Trunk ‘r Treat’** event at Holy Cross. This will be a joint event with FELC and HC.