

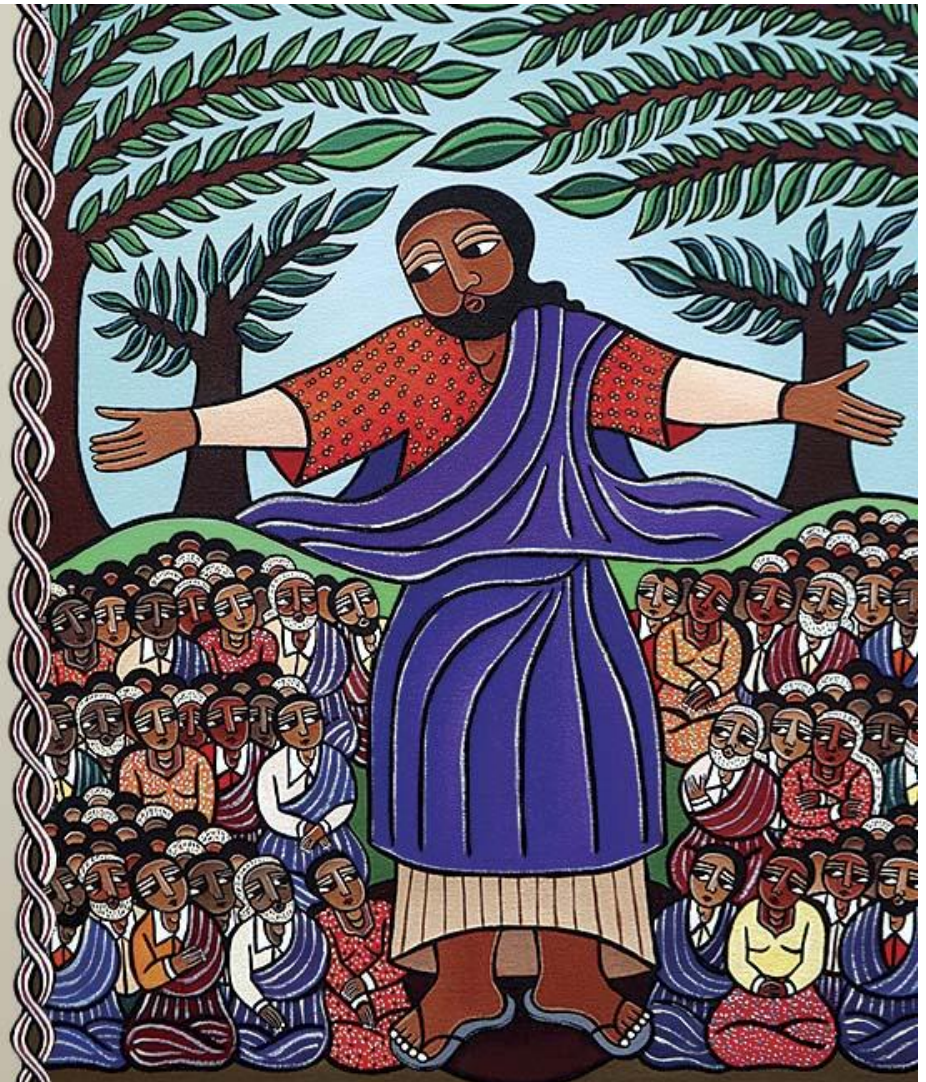
**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 W. Decatur St.
Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

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

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

*I will
give you
rest*

MATTHEW 11:28



**July 5, 2026, at 9:30am
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

The mystery of God's ways is sometimes hidden from the wise and intelligent. Jesus associates with those often excluded from the religious community. Like Paul, we struggle with our own selfish desires and seek God's mercy and forgiveness. We gather to be refreshed by Christ's invitation: "Come to me, all you that are weary." Gathered around word, water, and meal, we find rest for our souls.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
source of hope in every nation,
rest for the weary, glory and peace to the ends of the earth.

C: Amen.

P: Let us bring every burden to God.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of all mercy,

**C: we have sinned against you,
our neighbors, and your creation.
Within ourselves and our communities,
our desire to do what is good
is at war with the evil that dwells in us.
We lament the evil that holds us captive.
We repent of the evil we have done,
and the evil done on our behalf.
Rescue us, forgive us, and restore us
for lives of compassion and courage
through our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.**

P: All-merciful, Almighty God
forgive you all your sins
through the grace of ✝ Jesus Christ,

and by the Spirit's power
strengthen you in doing what is good.

C: Amen.

***GATHERING SONG**

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

ELW #742

- 1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit;
oh, what needless pain we bear--
all because we do not carry
ev'rything to God in prayer!**
- 2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged--
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness--
take it to the Lord in prayer.**
- 3 Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.**

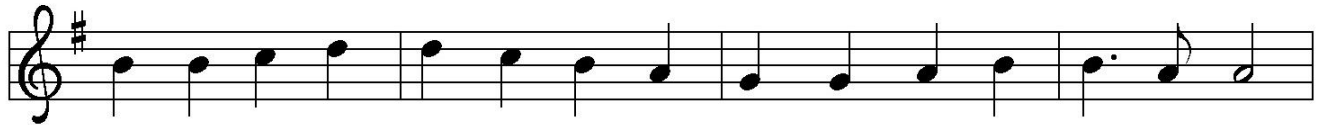
Text: Joseph Scriven, 1820-1886

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.



- 1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: Lord of all the worlds, guide this nation by your Spirit to go forward in justice and freedom. Give to all living in these lands the blessings of well-being and harmony, but above all things give us faith in you, that our nation may bring glory to your name and blessings to all peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

CHILDREN'S SERMON

WORD

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-12

The coming messianic king will inaugurate an era of disarmament and prosperity. Because of God's covenant with Israel, the people are designated as "prisoners of hope."

⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you;

triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

¹⁰ He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations;
his dominion shall be from sea to sea
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 145:8-14

⁸ The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ **LORD, you are good to all,
and your compassion is over all your works.**

¹⁰ All your works shall praise you, O LORD,
and your faithful ones shall bless you.

¹¹ **They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your power,**

¹² that all people may know of your power
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³ **Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout
all ages. You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your
works.**

¹⁴ The Lord upholds all those who fall
and lifts up those who are bowed down.

Second Reading: Romans 7:15-25a (*NRS updated edition*)

Life captive to sin is a catch-22 existence in which we know good but do not do it and do things we know to be wrong. Through Jesus Christ, God has set us free from such a futile existence.

¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ But in fact it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that the good does not dwell within me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do the good lies close at hand, but not the ability. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that, when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand.

²² For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched person that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

^{25a} Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Second Reading: Romans 7:15-25a (*Paraphrase from The Message*)

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ I can anticipate the response that is coming: “I know that all God’s commands are spiritual, but I’m not. Isn’t this also your experience?” Yes. I’m full of myself—after all, I’ve spent a long time in sin’s prison. What I don’t understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can’t be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God’s command is necessary. ¹⁷⁻²⁰ But I need something *more*! For if I know the law but still can’t keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t *do* it. I decide to do good, but I don’t *really* do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time. ²¹⁻²³ It happens so regularly that it’s predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God’s commands, but it’s pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. ²⁴ I’ve tried everything and nothing helps. I’m at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn’t that the real question? ²⁵ The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alléluia”

ELW p. 142

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew the 11th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Jesus chides people who find fault with both his ministry and that of John the Baptist. He thanks God that wisdom and intelligence are not needed to receive what God has to offer.

Jesus spoke to the crowd saying: ¹⁶ “To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷ ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

¹⁸ “For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; ¹⁹ the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶ yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

- 1 This is my song, O God of all the nations,
a song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my heart is;
here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;
but other hearts in other lands are beating
with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.**
- 2 My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,
and sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine.
But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,
and skies are ev'rywhere as blue as mine.
So hear my song, O God of all the nations,
a song of peace for their land and for mine.**
- 3 This is my prayer, O God of all earth's kingdoms,
your kingdom come; on earth your will be done.
O God, be lifted up till all shall serve you,
and hearts united learn to live as one.
So hear my prayer, O God of all the nations;
myself I give you; let your will be done.**

Text: Lloyd Stone, 1912-1993, sts. 1-2; Georgia Harkness, 1891-1974, st. 3

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***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 God's steadfast love, let us pray for the church, the nations, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

A: Gathering God, send your Spirit on the church you have called out from every nation. Knit us together into one body and heal the divisions we have caused. Overcome our timidity to witness and act in the public square when your purpose is being thwarted. Bless rostered and lay leaders with clarity and courage as they center your people in the gospel. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: All your works praise you, O God. From the Arctic to the Caribbean, from the Atlantic to the western islands, these lands and waters have sustained its peoples over many centuries. As we take our part in creation's praise, revive our wonder at what you have fashioned, and enliven our will to ensure its health for future generations. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: Holy Trinity, you show us the splendor of diversity and the beauty of unity in your own divine life. We come from many nations with many languages; make us a united people that delights in our many different gifts. As the United States of America marks its declaration of independence, give those whom we have entrusted with authority the spirit of wisdom, and curb every abuse of that trust, so that both here and abroad, justice, humility, and peace may flourish. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: We remember before you those who have died in every generation: Jan Hus, executed for protesting the ecclesial system; Benedict, teacher of a prayerful life; and those who have died ensuring the freedoms of this country: people in the armed services, peace officers, advocates, and activists. Gather us, together with those who have gone before us, and with saints of every tribe and nation, into the holy city you have prepared. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our guide, we do not always have the strength to do the good we wish to do. Free us from the cycles of violence that bind us, that all know your liberation. God of grace,

C: hear our prayer.

A: God our home, you model freedom through the love shared across communities of trust and goodwill. As we remember those now gone to eternal rest, we thank you for the gifts of life together. God of grace,
C: hear our prayer.

P: Grateful for your abundant provision and trusting in your goodness, we cast all our cares upon you, through the abundant grace of Christ Jesus.
C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

“All Who Are Thirsty”

ACS 981

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff is for the Leader and the second and third are for the All. The lyrics are: All who are thirst - y, come to the wa-ters. All who are hun - gry, come here and eat. All who are thirst - y, come to the wa-ters. There's e - nough for all.

Leader All

All who are thirst - y, come to the wa-ters. All who are hun - gry,

come here and eat. All who are thirst - y, come to the wa-ters.

There's e - nough for all.

Text: Brian Wentzel, b. 1979

Music: ALL WHO ARE THIRSTY, Brian Wentzel

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

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Blessed are you, O God,

C: for waves of grain and harvesters, fruitful vines and winepresses, for our labor and our rest, for the gifts of your hand in this land. Transform us and what we offer into the banquet of your compassion, serving your love without limits through Jesus Christ, our Savior. 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.

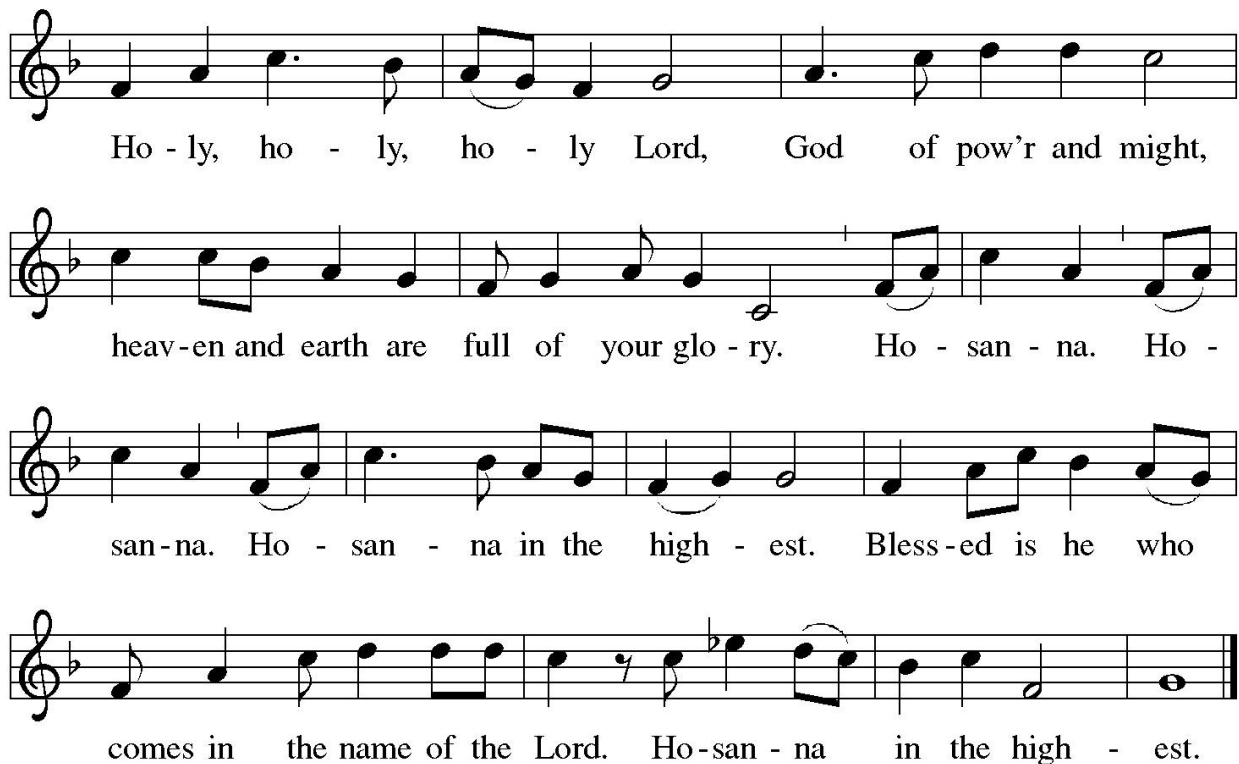
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

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 ev'ry 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,
with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p. 144



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, mighty, and merciful Lord,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,
who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,
who preached good news to the poor,
and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.
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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever.

C: Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 145

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

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.

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: We thank you, God of heaven and earth,

C: that you fill our deepest need with the very gift of Jesus Christ, broken and poured out for us. Pour us out into a broken world. Channel our common life toward the common good, following the way our Savior leads us now and forever. 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

***BLESSING**

P: The Author of life, the Word of salvation,
the Breath of new birth, ✝ one God,
bless you and equip you for living and serving,
today and every day.

C: Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

ELW #697

Refrain

**Just a closer walk with thee,
grant it, Jesus, is my plea;
daily walking close to thee,
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**1 I am weak but thou art strong:
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I'll be satisfied as long
as I walk, let me walk close to thee. *Refrain***

**2 Through this world of toil and snares,
if I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. *Refrain***

**3 When my feeble life is o'er,
time for me will be no more;
guide me gently, safely o'er
to thy kingdom shore, to thy shore. *Refrain***

Text: North American traditional

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Seek liberty and justice for all.

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews & Family, Peg Books, Bill Fitzgerald,
Scott, Geiger, David Goldsborough, Esther Gregory,
Jan Lawson, Marilyn Oftedal, Sebastian (Bass) Smallwood,
Mary Ann & Ken Stolley, Rick Strine, Jeff Vail

*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	Jim Oettel
Guest Organist	Milt Scott
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Choir Director	Milton Scott
Technical Director	Mason Oliver
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Steve Wenger
Greeter	Tami & Bruce Cannon
Check-In	Rick Strine & Jayne Svendsen
Acolyte	Ensley Dalen
Communion Aide	Gary Beck
Money Counters	Jim & Judy Oettel and Gary & Carolyn Likins
Flowers	Bruce & Tami Cannon
Indoor Plant Watering	Linda Williams

Announcements

- **The AMELCA Team** served 81 clients on Wednesday July 1st.
- **Meals on Wheels** volunteers are needed to deliver meals Monday, July 27th – Friday, July 31st. Please contact Judy Carney if you are available to deliver meals. Below is Judy's contact information:
 - Home#: 217-429-0547
 - Cell#: 217-454-3901
 - Email: jcarney329@comcast.net

- **We are collecting donations for our service project at our Joint Worship on July 12th.** Envelopes are in your bulletin and **sign-up sheets for the picnic** are on the table by the front door. Please see below for additional details.
- **Minister Claire's last Sunday with us is July 26th.**
- **AA Love's Home Group** meets Thursday evenings at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.
- **AA Back to Basics** meets 7 days a week in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Pastor Sarah Cordray** is expected to begin at FELC the week of August 17th. Her first day in the office will be Tuesday, August 18th. Her Installation is scheduled for Sunday, September 13th.

Upcoming Joint Events & Worship Services

- **Join us on July 12th for our Joint Worship Service and picnic at Holy Cross.** Grilled Brats & Hot Dogs will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share. The meal will be served indoors in the fellowship hall. In addition to worship and food, there will be games (with prizes) and a service project for all ages to enjoy. Envelopes for contributions toward supplies for the service project are in your Sunday bulletin. Weather permitting, worship and games will be held outdoors, so please bring a lawn chair. Please note that some of the children's games may include water activities. We look forward to a wonderful day of worship, fellowship, service, and fun!!
- **July 23rd Explore Team meeting** at Holy Cross at 5:30pm.
- **Vacation Bible School will be August 3rd – 7th** from 6:00pm – 8:00pm at Holy Cross. The theme is Rainforest Falls. VBS in the evening is a little different this year because we are hoping to secure a few more volunteers.
- **August 30th will be Joint Worship Service at FELC.** We will schedule a service project for **"God's Work our Hands"**.
- **September 13th is Pastor Sarah Cordray's installation.** Bishop Greg Busboom will join us and Holy Cross is invited to join in with the celebration.
- **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'.** It will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, 313 S. Prospect Ave., Champaign from 2:00pm-7:00pm. This is a follow-up to our June 6th C/SIS Synod Assembly. Our C/SIS Synod Office will have a variety of events including Cross-generational worship, Activities for children & families, Shared meal, State of the synod video, Q&A with the synod staff, Mission moments from each conference, & Four "Spirit Labs" workshop options.
- **Friday, October 30th 'Trunk 'r Treat'** event at Holy Cross. This will be a joint event with FELC and HC.