

**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>*



**WOMAN,
GREAT
IS YOUR
FAITH!**

MATTHEW 15:28

**August 16, 2026, at 9:30am
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

In Isaiah we hear that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all people and that God will gather the outcasts of Israel. The Canaanite woman in today's gospel is a Gentile, an outsider, who is unflinching in her request that Jesus heal her daughter. As Jesus commends her bold faith, how might our church extend its mission to those on the margins of society? In our gathering around word and meal we receive strength to be signs of comfort, healing, and justice for those in need.

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,
whose compassion endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin to God.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Compassionate God,

C: we confess to you all our sins.

Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves.

In your mercy, call us back to you.

Your yoke is easy and your burden is light.

Restore us to dwell in your peace.

In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

P: Jesus says, "Come to me,
all you who are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest."

In the name of God,

Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,
your sins are forgiven. Rest in God's love.

C: Amen.

- 1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!**
- 2 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.**
- 3 The name of Jesus charms our fears
and bids our sorrows cease,
sings music in the sinner's ears,
brings life and health and peace.**
- 4 He speaks, and list'ning to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.**
- 5 Look unto him, your Savior own,
O fallen human race!
Look and be saved through faith alone,
be justified by grace!**
- 6 To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever giv'n
by saints below and saints above,
the church in earth and heav'n.**

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

***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: God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON**WORD****First Reading: Isaiah 56:1, 6-8**

The prophet calls upon Israel to do justice in view of God's imminent intervention to save. Righteousness and obedience define who belongs to the Israelite community—not race, nationality, or any other category.

¹ Thus says the LORD:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come
and my deliverance be revealed.

⁶ And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath and do not profane it
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar,
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸ Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 67

¹ May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.

² **Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.**

³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

⁴ **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations on earth.**

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

⁶ **The earth has brought forth its increase;
God, our own God, has blessed us.**

⁷ May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

Second Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

God has not rejected Israel. Rather, the call and gifts of God are irrevocable so that, while all have been disobedient, God has mercy upon all.

Paul writes: ¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a} God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so also they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they also may now receive mercy. ³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

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 15th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 15:10-28

Jesus teaches his disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches him for help.

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹² Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” ¹³ He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶ Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me,

Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.”²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”²⁶ He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed from that moment.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“In Christ There Is No East or West”

ELW #650

- 1 In Christ there is no east or west,
in him no south or north,
but one community of love
throughout the whole wide earth.**
- 2 In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere
their high communion find;
his service is the golden cord
close binding humankind.**
- 3 Join hands, disciples of the faith,
whate'er your race may be.
All children of the living God
are surely kin to me.**
- 4 In Christ now meet both east and west,
in him meet south and north;
all Christly souls are one in him
throughout the whole wide earth.**

Text: John Oxenham, 1852-1941, alt.

***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: With bold trust in God's unfailing provision, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

A: For believers around the world who stream to your holy mountain, that all be united in faith and harmony in the body of Christ. Let your church on earth be a witness to the beloved community of your heavenly kingdom. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: For your wondrous creation, that it thrives and flourishes as you intend. Raise up wise stewards to defend the natural world against carelessness and destruction. Safeguard endangered species and their habitats. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

A: For the nations of the world and all in authority, that they heed the cry of the outcast and ensure care for the most vulnerable. Give wisdom to leaders of countries, congregations, and communities, that they lead and serve justly. We pray 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: For all who are lonely, grieving, or struggling with chronic pain, that they find comfort, community, and hope. Send relief to all who struggle with illness of any kind. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: For this congregation, for visitors and those new to this faith community, that all may recognize the presence of Christ in each new face. Draw this community together in love and strengthen it in unwavering faith. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

A: For the saints before us whose work is done, that their faithful example continues to direct your church. May their witness remind us that your gifts and calling are irrevocable, whether in life or death. Merciful God,
C: receive our prayer.

P: Receive our prayers and answer, O God, as you have promised. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING

(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: Loving God,

C: we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts.

**Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love,
so that all creation can taste your abundance.**

**We ask this in the name of Jesus,
through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. 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.

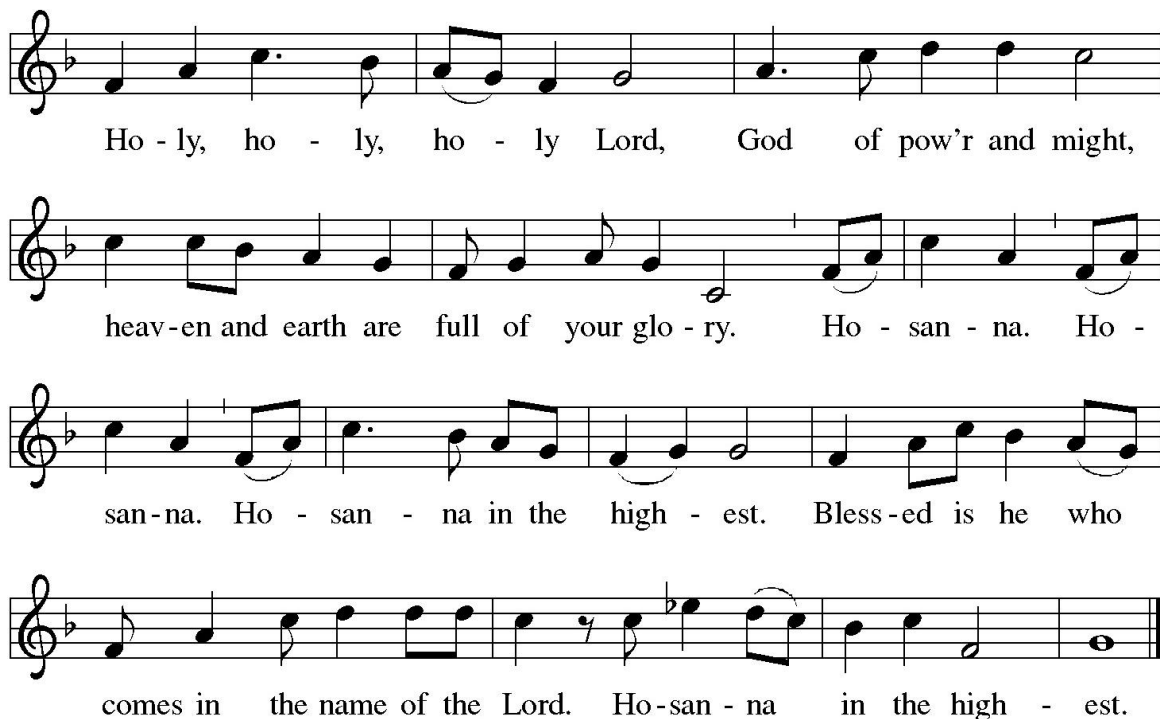
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

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

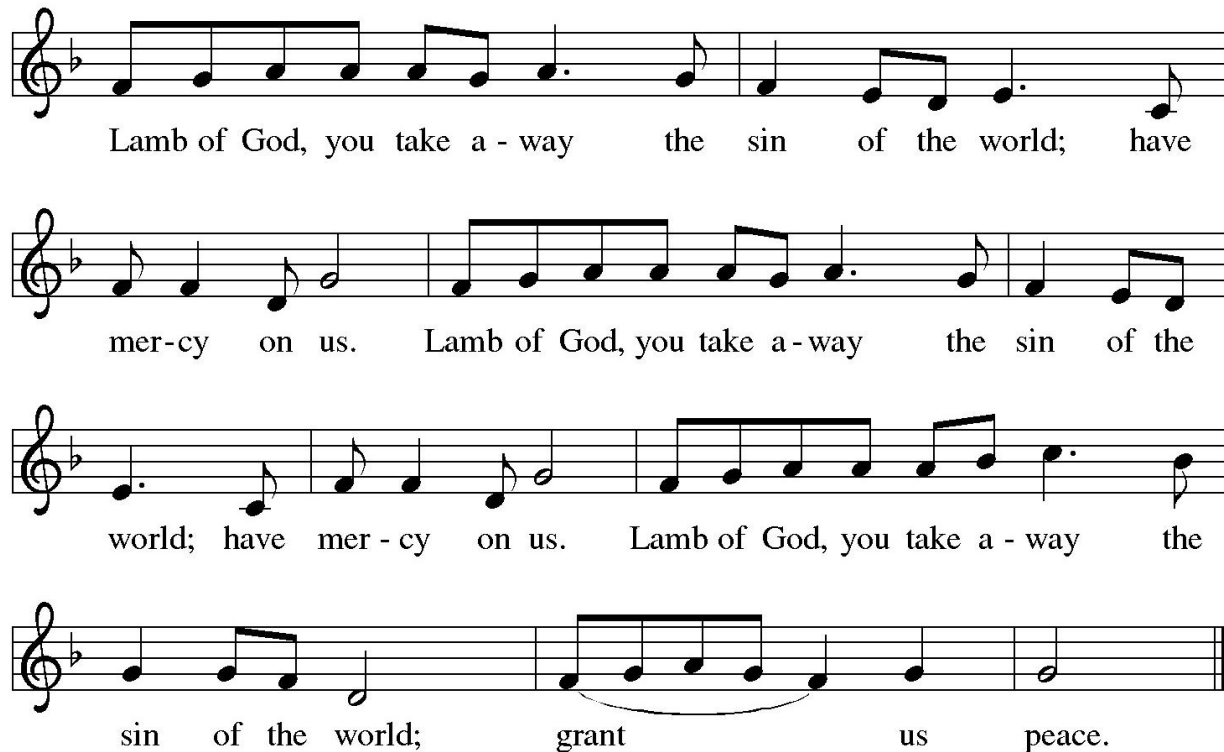
***LORD'S PRAYER**

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: Compassionate God,

C: through the gifts of bread and wine

our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love.

Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal,

may share your love freely, as you have shared with us.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,

through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. Amen.

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

P: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,

✝ one God, bless, heal, and hold you
today and always.

C: Amen.

- 1 My faith looks up to thee,
thou Lamb of Calvary,
Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray,
take all my guilt away,
oh, let me from this day
be wholly thine!**
- 2 May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me,
oh, may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be,
a living fire!**
- 3 While life's dark maze I tread
and griefs around me spread,
be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day,
wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray
from thee aside.**
- 4 When ends life's transient dream,
when death's cold, sullen stream
shall o'er me roll;
blest Savior, then, in love
fear and distrust remove;
oh, bear me safe above,
a ransomed soul!**

Text: Ray Palmer, 1808-1887

***DISMISSAL**

A: Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Pastor Knight Wells
Assisting Minister	Terri Arnold
Slides	Galen Arnold
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Choir Director	Milton Scott
Technical Director	Lucas Reynolds
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Mike Reynolds
Greeter	Dick & Donna Donahue
Check-In	Mary Jo Rowley & Kris Sites
Acolyte	Gemma Berry
Communion Aide	Jane Cade
Money Counters	Gary Beck, Larry Haab, Sheryl Brilley
Indoor Plant Watering	Karen Wenger

Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews & Family, Peg Books, Tonya Deberry,
Bill Fitzgerrel, Scott Geiger, David Goldsborough, Esther Gregory,
Jan Lawson, Marilyn Oftedal, Dale Pelz(Brother of Nancy Salefski)
Sebastian (Bass) Smallwood, Mary Ann & Ken Stolley,
Rick Strine, Kay Wolken, and former FELC Pastor Rich Wolf

*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.*

Upcoming Joint Events & Worship Services

- **August 30th will be Joint Worship Service at FELC.** We will schedule a service project for “**God’s Work our Hands**”. Please see the progress poster that is displayed in the Narthex!
- **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: *The Foolishness of Trying to Save Your Church: Letting Go So We Can Go!* (Led by Bishop Greg Busboom); *Jesus Journeys and Faithful Field Trips* (Led by Deacon Jason Fisher); *Body Building with Love: Tools for Adaptability* (Led by Pastor Kristen Schmid); *Here I Am, Send Me!: A Vocational Workshop* (Led by Pastor Amy Zietlow). Register online at CSIS-ELCA.org/synoddays26. The cost is \$10 per Adult (18 and over) and \$5 for youth (3-17). Registration closes on September 28.
- **Friday, October 30th ‘Trunk ‘r Treat’** event at Holy Cross. This will be a joint event with FELC and HC.

Announcements

● **Next Sunday** is Pastor Sarah's first Sunday with us. The Call Committee is sponsoring this celebration during **Son Rise Café** next Sunday. Everyone is welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall **after worship on 8/23!**

● The AMELCA Team served **84 clients** on **Wednesday, August 12.**

● **Book Club** meets every other week on **Monday at 12:15 p.m.** starting on **August 17th** at FELC

● **Church Council** meets **Monday, August 17, at 6 p.m.** in the Lounge.

● **Book Study** meets in the Lounge on **Monday, August 24, at 12:30 p.m.**

● **Foundation Board** meets via zoom on **Thursday, August 20, at 5:30 p.m.**

● **Meals on Wheels** volunteers are needed to deliver meals Monday, August 31st - Friday, September 4th. 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**

● **Service opportunities available!** We especially need **Greeters, Acolytes, and Bell Ringers** – contact Karen Rynolds to sign up! **217-874-2013**

● **Kay is out of the office** recovering from knee replacement surgery. Office hours will be limited. Please use your building key for entrance to the church.

● **AA Love's Home Group** meets Thursdays at **6:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall.

● **AA Back to Basics** meets **daily** in the Fellowship Hall:

○ Monday–Friday: **7:30–9:15 a.m.**

○ Sunday: **6:00–7:00 p.m.**

● **Pastor Sarah Cordray** is expected to begin at FELC the week of **August 17.** Her first day in the office will be **Tuesday, August 18.** She will lead worship for the first time on **Sunday, August 23,** and her **Service of Installation** is scheduled for **Sunday, September 13.**