

**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>*



**September 9, 2026, at 9:30am
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

Continuing to remember our identity in who we are, the third word of our name as FELC is Lutheran. Martin Luther never intended to have a church body form and have his name be used when he posted his 95 Thesis in 1517 challenging the theology of the day. However, his name used for our own, reminds us of the uniqueness we embody in today's world! Lutheran reminds us of Luther's faith journey in his shift from believing he must achieve enough good in himself to be worthy of God's love to discovering that it is only by God's grace that he could be saved. God's unlimited grace cannot be earned or achieved; rather, it can only be given to you because of who God is and how God chooses to act. What a gift of unlimited grace given to you to also give to others! This grace is needed so badly in our world today!

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,
who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth.

C: Amen.

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

P: Compassionate God,

**C: we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness
in the world and in our own hearts.**

Creation groans from overuse.

Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships.

Indifference keeps us from seeking justice.

**Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love
to others.**

Turn our hearts back to you.

Restore our world and reconcile us to one another.

**Renew us to live as your holy people,
following the way of Jesus Christ.**

Amen.

P: Hear this good news:

We have peace with God through ✝ Jesus Christ,
in whom there is no condemnation,
but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.
Receive freely this healing gift of grace.

C: Amen.

***GATHERING SONG**

“As We Gather at Your Table”

ELW #522

- 1 As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's vict'ry known.**
- 2 Turn our worship into witness
in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.**
- 3 Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.**

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944

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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: O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy.

Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

WORD

First Reading: Jonah 3:3-10

³ So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. ⁴ Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵ And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

⁶ When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: “By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. ⁸ Humans and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. ⁹ Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish.”

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them, and he did not do it.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 51:1-10

¹ Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy,
blot out my transgressions.

² **Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ **Against you, you alone, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.**

⁵ Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

⁶ **You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.**

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.**

⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.**

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

¹ You were dead through the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³ All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, doing the will of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else, ⁴ but God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alléluia”

ELW p. 142

P: The holy gospel according to Luke the 15th Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Luke 15:11-24

¹¹ Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.’ So he divided his assets between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant region, and there he squandered his wealth in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that region, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that region, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to his senses he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” ’ ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a

robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.
²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate, ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

“Unlimited Grace that Reforms”

***HYMN OF THE DAY** *“Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”* **ELW #779**

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
 that saved a wretch like me!
 I once was lost, but now am found;
 was blind, but now I see.**
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
 and grace my fears relieved;
 how precious did that grace appear
 the hour I first believed!**
- 3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares
 I have already come;
 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
 and grace will lead me home.**
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me;
 his word my hope secures;
 he will my shield and portion be
 as long as life endures.**
- 5 When we've been there ten thousand years,
 bright shining as the sun,
 we've no less days to sing God's praise
 than when we'd first begun.**

***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.

P: God, we praise you.... Merciful God,

C: Your mercy is great.

**A: Forming God, renew the cycles of your creation that provide for the needs of all.
Protect grasslands, marshes, swamps, and all places of transition. Heal communities
crying out after disaster. Hear us, O God.**

C: Your mercy is great.

**A: Governing God, turn all who create, enforce, or interpret legislation away from
selfish gain and toward your promise of good for all, especially the good of all who labor.
Hear us, O God.**

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Attending God, wake us up to any around us who are in need. Restore broken relationships, failing health, frayed emotions, and the hurts we carry with us. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Gathering God, resolve conflicts in this community through your righteousness and grace. Reconcile us to each other, making your good news known even through our imperfections. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Loving God, all who die in faith have life with you. We give you thanks for the nearness of your salvation for all who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.

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: God of creation,

C: you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.

All blessings are from you;

make us generous with what we have.

Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts

in service to you and in love to our neighbors,

today and always.

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.

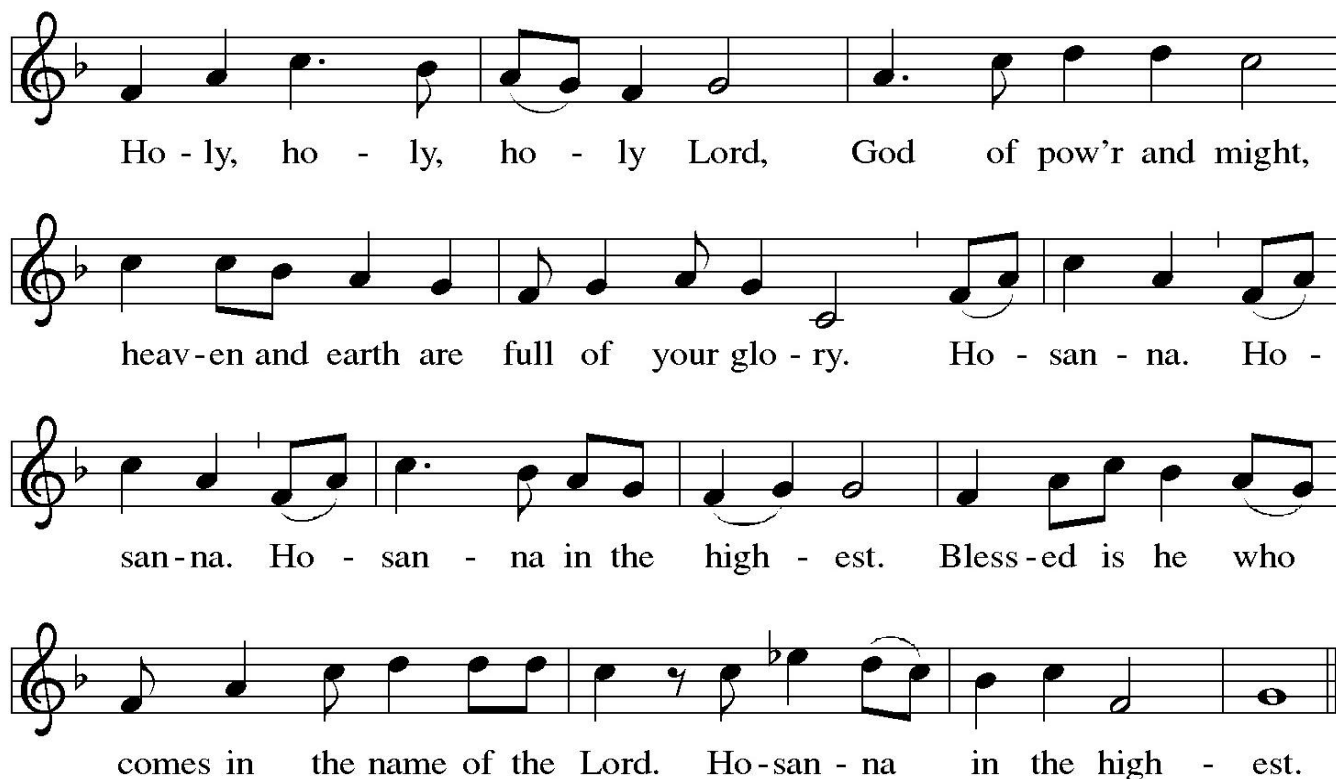
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

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...

C: Amen

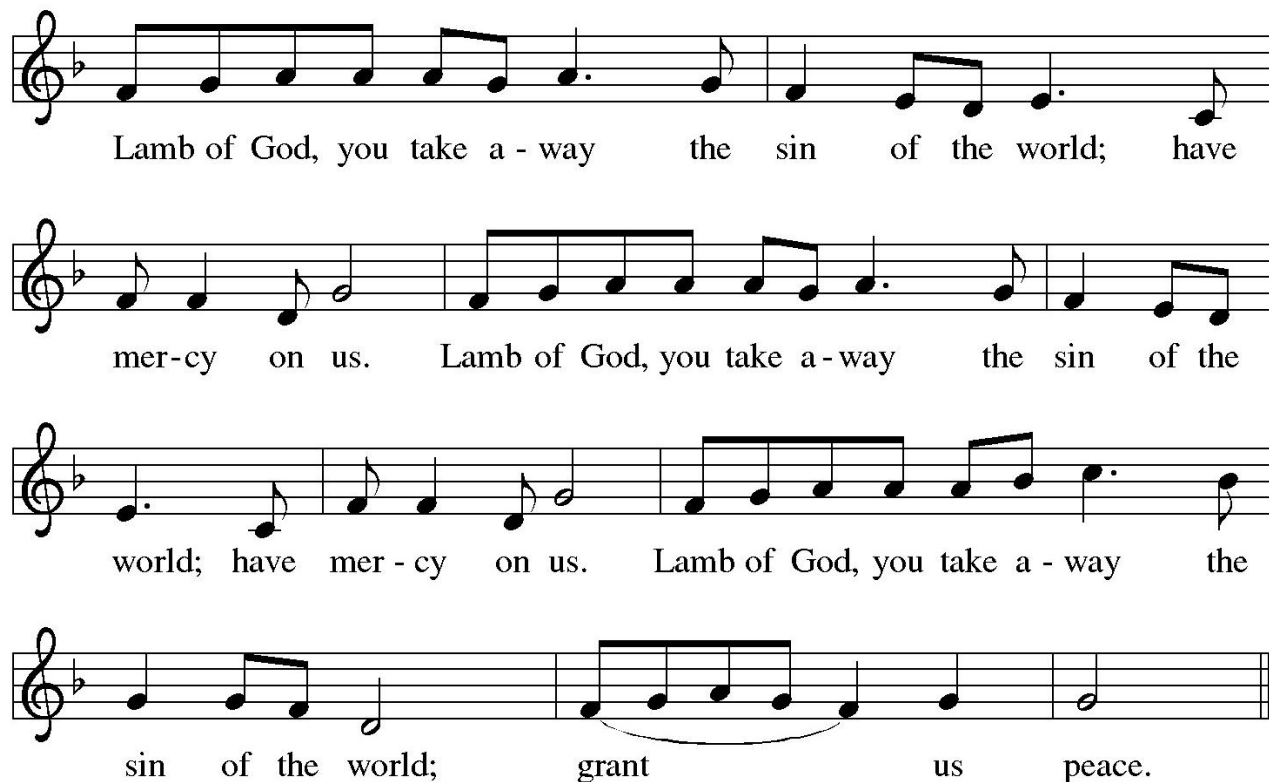
LORD'S PRAYER

ELW p. 145

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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: Sustaining God,

C: with this bread and cup,

you nourish us with mercy and abundant life.

By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world.

Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love,

following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.

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: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
✠ one God, bless, heal, and hold you
today and always.

C: Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

“Earth and All Stars”

ELW #731

- 1 Earth and all stars! Loud rushing planets!**
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Hail, wind, and rain! Loud blowing snowstorm!
Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*

Refrain

God has done marvelous things.
I too sing praises with a new song!

- 2 Trumpet and pipes! Loud clashing cymbals!**
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Harp, lute, and lyre! Loud humming cellos!
Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*
- 3 Engines and steel! Loud pounding hammers!**
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Limestone and beams! Loud building workers!
Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*
- 4 Classrooms and labs! Loud boiling test tubes!**
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Athlete and band! Loud cheering people!
Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*
- 5 Knowledge and truth! Loud sounding wisdom!**
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Daughter and son! Loud praying members!
Sing to the Lord a new song! *Refrain*

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace praying constantly, serving joyfully, and telling the story of Christ!

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Participants

Presiding and Preaching
Assisting Minister
Slides
Organist/Bell Choir Director
Choir Director
Technical Director
Audio/Visual
Bell Ringer
Organist
Greeter
Check-In
Acolyte
Communion Aide
Money Counters
Indoor Plant Watering
Flowers
SonRise Café

Pastor Sarah Cordray
Karen Wenger
Jim Oettel
Rick Strine
Milton Scott
Lucas Reynolds
Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Mike Reynolds
Steve Wenger
Bruce & Tami Cannon
Bob & Carol Tyler
Gemma Berry
Carol Tyler
Jim & Judy Oettel and Dick & Donna Donahue
Gail Rotz
The Allgeier Family, in Honor of the Girls' Birthdays

Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews & Family, Peg Books, Tonya Deberry,
Bill Fitzgerald, Scott Geiger, David Goldsborough, Esther Gregory,
Jan Lawson, Marilyn Oftedal, Dale Pelz(Brother of Nancy Salefski), Bill Voss
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

- **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. Please let the office know by October 10th if you would like to participate.

Announcements

Listening Post Days with Pastor Sarah

(You are welcome to come to only one or more! The same set of questions will be asked at each one, but the Spirit will stir up unique responses for each listening post!)

Wednesday, September 2nd, 3 to 4:30 p.m. at Panera Bread, Decatur

Thursday, September 3rd, 6 to 7:30 p.m. at FELC

Wednesday, September 9th, 3 to 4:30 p.m. at Panera Bread, Decatur

Thursday, September 10th, 6 to 7:30 p.m. at FELC

Week of September 15-18—Time to be announced as I will listen if another time and day that is more convenient for others is needed.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

- The AMELCA Team served **94 clients** on **Wednesday, September 2nd**.
- **Book Club** meets in the Lounge every other **Monday** at **12:15 pm** - next meeting **September 14**
- **Service opportunities available!** We especially need **Greeters, Acolytes and Bell Ringers** - contact Karen Reynolds 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.**