

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

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Email: felc_decatur@outlook.com**

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



**September 20, 2026, at 9:30am
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

First.Evangelical.Lutheran.CHURCH-Our name, indeed, saves the best for last OR at least the most important for last, as it reminds us WHAT we are. We are not a business. We are not a social club. We are not a building. We are not a competitive, attracting agency. We are Christ's church, who are members of the body who are gathered to be fed and nourished and sent out as the Church into this world God so loves. This also reminds us that FELC is not my church or our church, but Christ's. Remember this: God's mission has a church with each congregation having it's own unique call/vocation. You, FELC, are truly unique! Living out God's mission as Christ's church as FELC gives us the gift to fully live out the call to pray constantly, serve joyfully, and tell the story of Jesus! You are the CHURCH as you live and give of your gifts! We are the CHURCH as we live and give of our gifts! We are Christ's CHURCH wherever we go!

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**

“Lord of All Hopefulness”

ELW #765

- 1 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy:
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.**
- 2 Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe
be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.**
- 3 Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.**
- 4 Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.**

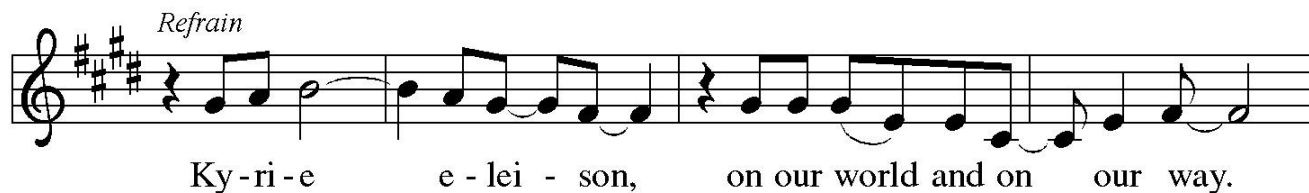
Text: Jan Struther, 1901-1953
Text © Oxford University Press 1931.

GREETING

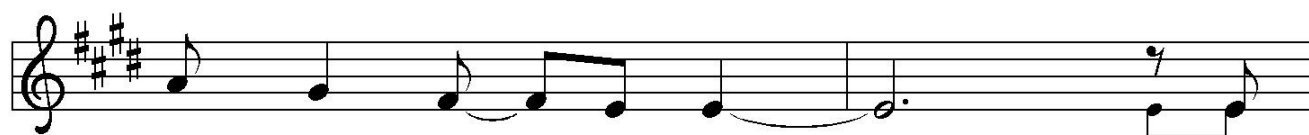
ELW p. 184

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 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
- 2 That we may live out your im-passioned re-sponse to the
- 3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for
- 4 For your Spir-it to guide; that you cen-ter our lives in the



u - ni - ty of all; for
 hun - gry and the poor; that
 friends and fam - i - ly; for
 wa - ter and the word; that you



this ho - ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,
 we may live out truth and jus - tice and grace,
 life and for love, for our work and our play,
 nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod - y and blood,



let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

Refrain

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and
 peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

1 Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,
 we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you
Refrain
 for your glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high -
 est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,
 Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
 world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat - ed at the
 right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.
Refrain
 Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and
 peace to God's peo - ple on earth. 3 For you a -
 lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,
 you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the
 Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.
 A - men. A - men. A - men.

Final refrain
 Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and peace to God's
 peo - ple on earth. Glo - ry to God in the high -
 est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: O Lord God, you are the holy lawgiver, you are the salvation of your people. By your Spirit renew us in your covenant of love, and train us to care tenderly for all our neighbors, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

WORD

First Reading: Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

¹The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

²“Speak to all the congregation of the Israelites and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.

¹⁵“You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand idly by when the blood of your neighbor is at stake: I am the Lord.

¹⁷“You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 1:1-6

¹ Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or take the path that sinners tread or sit in the seat of scoffers,

² **but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night.**

³ They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.

⁴ **The wicked are not so but are like chaff that the wind drives away.**

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous,

⁶ **for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:4-12

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, ⁵ and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Alléluia"

ELW p. 188

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "Al-le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." The score ends with a double bar line.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

P: The holy gospel according to Matthew the 22nd Chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 22:34-46

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, an expert in the law, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ He said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet” ’?

⁴⁵ “If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON - “*The Unlearning, Living Church*”

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“Take My Life, That I May Be”

ELW #583

Refrain

Take my life, that I may be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

1 Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee. *Refrain*

2 Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose. *Refrain*

**3 Take my voice and let me sing
always, only for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee. *Refrain***

**4 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart, it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne. *Refrain***

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, adap.; Spanish text: Vicente Mendoza, 1875-1955

***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 Lord Merciful God,

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Guide scientists and researchers studying responses to the climate crisis so that all your creation may inspire us to give thanks for your great goodness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Show employers the benefits of equal pay standards for all their employees. Reconcile conflicts between employees. Fill places of employment with camaraderie, and bring an end to employment disparity. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Encourage any who cannot work or who cannot work a full day with the truth that their value comes from your everlasting love for them. Provide for those who are injured, ill, and for all in any need. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Strengthen all those in this congregation whose labor serves the needs of others in the community. Inspire all in this congregation to support community endeavors with our time and talents. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Comfort us with the promise of the resurrection as we remember all our loved ones whose desire to be with Jesus is fulfilled. 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. 190

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, 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, ho - san - na, 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. 191

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

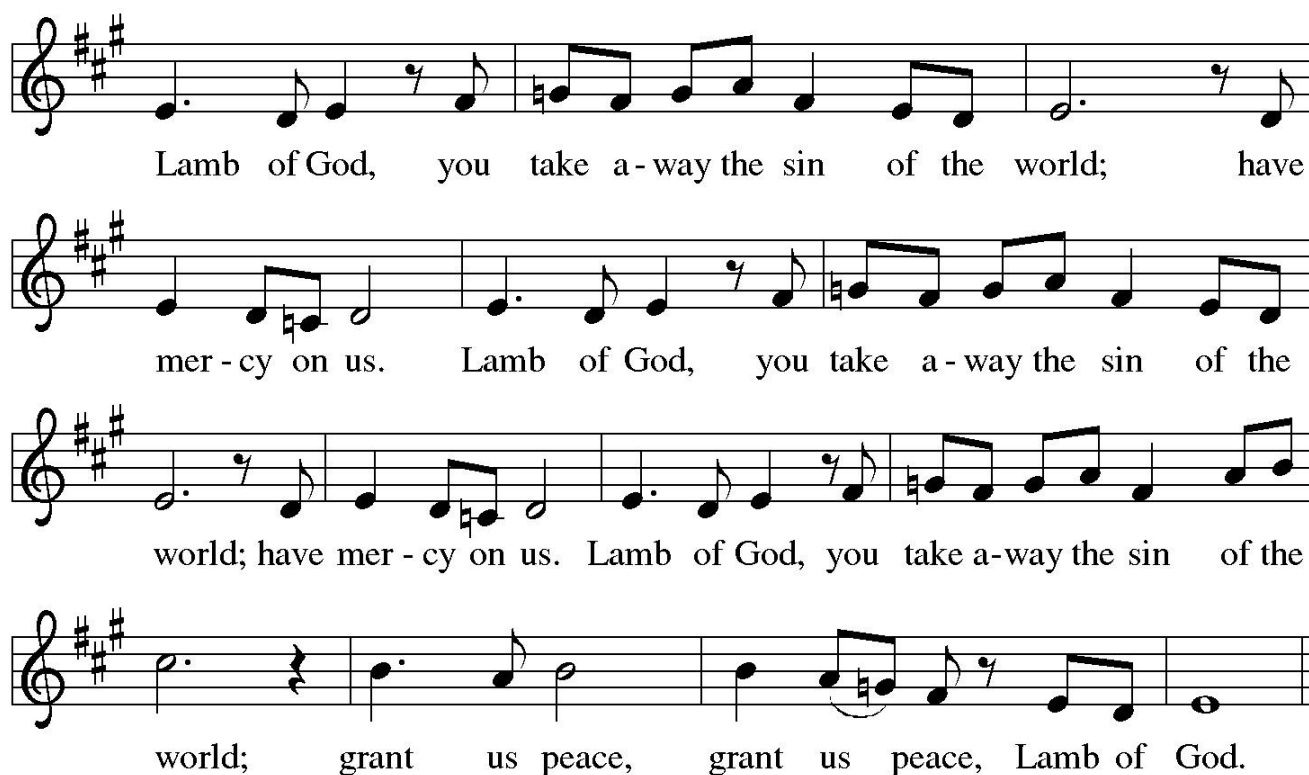
P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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.

COMMUNION

"Lamb of God"

ELW p. 191



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, grant us peace, Lamb of God.

*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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

*BLESSING

P: The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.

C: Amen.

P: The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: The God of grace ✝ bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

“Go, Make Disciples”

ELW #540

**"Go, make disciples,
baptizing them, teaching them.
Go, make disciples,
for I am with you till the end of time.
Go, be the salt of the earth.
Go, be the light for the world.
Go, be a city on a hill,
so all can see that you're serving me.
Go, make disciples."**

Text: Handt Hanson, b. 1950

Text © 1996 Prince of Peace Publishing, Changing Church, Inc., admin. Augsburg Fortress.

***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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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,
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.*

Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Pastor Sarah Cordray
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	Steve Wenger
Greeter	Nancy Salefski
Check-In	Bob & Carol Tyler
Acolyte	Gemma Berry
Communion Aide	Jane Cade
Money Counters	Jim & Judy Oettel and Dick & Donna Donahue
Indoor Plant Watering	Gail Rotz
Flowers	Given by Linda Williams in Memory of Son Stephen & Husband Mike In Honor of their Birthdays

Upcoming Joint Events & Worship Services

- **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.

- **Sunday, November 29th is joint Worship Service** at Holy Cross. Worship service will begin at 9:30am and there will be fellowship following Worship. All are welcome!!!

Announcements

- **We are in need of Communion Aides for the remainder of September.** Please contact Karen Reynolds if you are able to serve. Her number is **217-874-2013**. Thank you for serving!!
- The **AMELCA** Team served 119 clients on Wednesday, September 16th.
- **Wayne Banfield, AMELCA President,** wants to thank everyone for the outstanding collection of items for our food pantry clients. The clients are so very grateful to have personal items along with the food. He also wants to give the congregation an update on AMELCA operations.
- **Art Workshop** started again this past week. The Workshop is held the 3rd Thursday each month from 1:00-2:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. Jennifer Stout is the Art instructor. All are welcome to participate!!
- **Church Council meets today, September 20th,** for a retreat and monthly meeting after worship service in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Book Club** meets in the Lounge every other **Monday at 12:15 pm** - next meeting **September 28th**. The Book that is being read & discussed is "*Red State Christians*". There's still time to join in on the thought-provoking conversations.
- **Our Grief Group** will resume meeting January 11th, 2027. This group meets every other Monday from 11:00am-12:30pm in the Lounge.
- **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: