

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

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



*Everything is ready;
come to the
wedding banquet*

MATTHEW 22:4

**October 11, 2026, at 9:30am
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

To be invited and be too busy seems unimaginable ... unless you have business to do, tasks to accomplish, other activities to attend! This truly doesn't seem too far from our lives today where so many activities are scheduled on Sunday morning or Wednesday night! Yet the One who does the inviting to the banquet still welcomes all, especially surprising guests who aren't those usually invited. And, as they are invited and participate they are transformed, except one ... one who wants to do this his way.

WELCOME

PRELUDE

“Joyous Dawn”

Jason W. Krug

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: Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.
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.

- 1 The trumpets sound, the angels sing,
The feast is ready to begin.
The gates of heav’n open wide,
And Jesus welcomes you inside.**
- 2 Tables are laden with good things;
Oh, taste the peace and joy he brings.
He’ll fill you up with love divine;
He’ll turn your water into wine.**
- 3 The hungry heart he satisfies,
Offers the poor his paradise.
Now hear all heav’n and earth applaud
The amazing goodness of the Lord.**

Refrain

**Sing with thankfulness songs of pure delight.
Come and revel in heaven’s love and light.
Take your place at the table of the King,
The feast is ready to begin;
The feast is ready to begin.**

Text: Graham Kendrick, b.1950

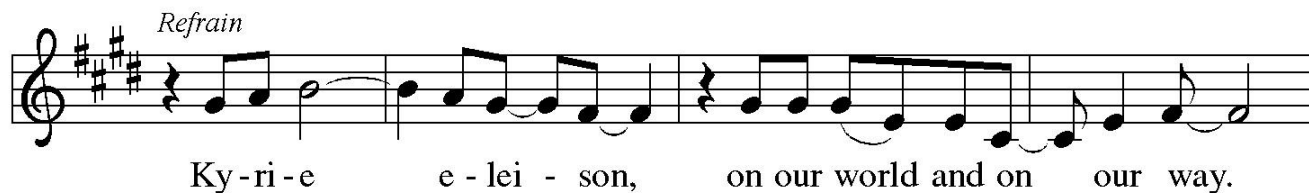
Music: Graham Kendrick

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.

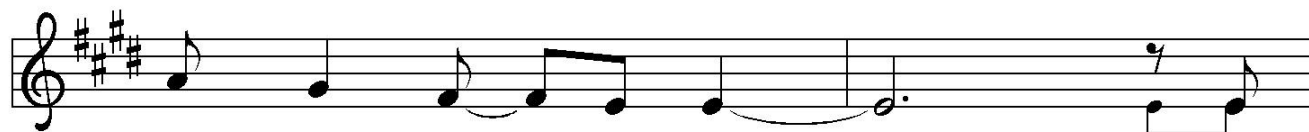
C: And also, with you.



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



hun-gry and the poor; that

friends and fam-i-ly; for

wa-ter and the word; that you



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.

Refrain

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.

***HYMN OF PRAISE** (*continued*) “Glory to God in the Highest” ELW p. 185-186

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: Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

After a hymn of praise acknowledging God as a shelter for the poor, the prophet portrays a wonderful victory banquet at which death—which in ancient Canaan was depicted as a monster swallowing up everyone—will be swallowed up forever. The prophet urges celebration of this victory of salvation.

¹ O LORD, you are my God;

I will exalt you; I will praise your name,
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

² For you have made the city a heap,

the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of foreigners is a city no more;
it will never be rebuilt.

³ Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

⁴ For you have been a refuge to the poor,

a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.

When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,

⁵ the noise of foreigners like heat in a dry place,
you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
the song of the ruthless was stilled.

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples

a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain

the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the covering that is spread over all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,

“See, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the LORD for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 23

¹ The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

² **The LORD makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³ You restore my soul, O LORD,
and guide me along right pathways for your name's sake.

⁴ **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶ **Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

Second Reading: Philippians 4:1-9

Though writing from prison and facing an uncertain future, Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice and give thanks to God no matter what the circumstance. God's peace is with us and binds together our hearts and minds in Jesus Christ, especially when things around us do not seem peaceful.

¹ My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by

prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alléluia”

ELW p. 188

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 22:1-14

Jesus tells a parable indicating that the blessings of God's kingdom are available to all, but the invitation is not to be taken lightly.

¹ Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his slaves to call

those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON - “Surprising Guests”

*HYMN OF THE DAY

“Now We Join in Celebration”

ELW #462

- 1 Now we join in celebration
at our Savior's invitation,
dressed no more in spirit somber,
clothed instead in joy and wonder;
for the Lord of all existence,
putting off divine transcendence,
stoops again in love to meet us,
with his very life to feed us.
- 2 Lord, as round this feast we gather,
fill our hearts with holy rapture!
For this bread and cup of blessing
are for us the sure possessing
of your loving deed on Calv'ry,
of your living self, our vict'ry,
pledge of your unfailing presence,
foretaste here of heav'nly gladness.

**3 Lord, we share in this communion
as one fam'ly of God's children,
reconciled through you, our brother,
one in you with God our Father.
Give us grace to live for others,
serving all, both friends and strangers,
seeking justice, love, and mercy
till you come in final glory.**

Text: Joel W. Lundeen

Text © Joel W. Lundeen, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

***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: Seeking the Spirit of God who makes all things new, we pray for the church and the world.

A brief silence.

P: God, we praise you Lord Hear us O God,

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Holy God, we remember your promise of unity on your holy mountain. Empower the World Council of Churches and all those working across religious difference, that the world may know your undivided love. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We remember your promise of green pastures and quiet waters. Preserve all places of natural beauty and restore our relationship with the land. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We remember your promise to not abandon us amid storm and disaster. Renew all communities facing disasters and give your courage to those leading relief efforts. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We remember your promise to wipe away every tear. Heal and console all who are sick or suffering. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We remember your promise of a banquet open to all people. Challenge this congregation to open wide our doors and welcome everyone to the table. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: We remember your promise to swallow up death forever. We give thanks for those who have gone before us. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Trusting in your boundless grace, O God, we lift up these spoken prayers and those in our hearts; through 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: 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:

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

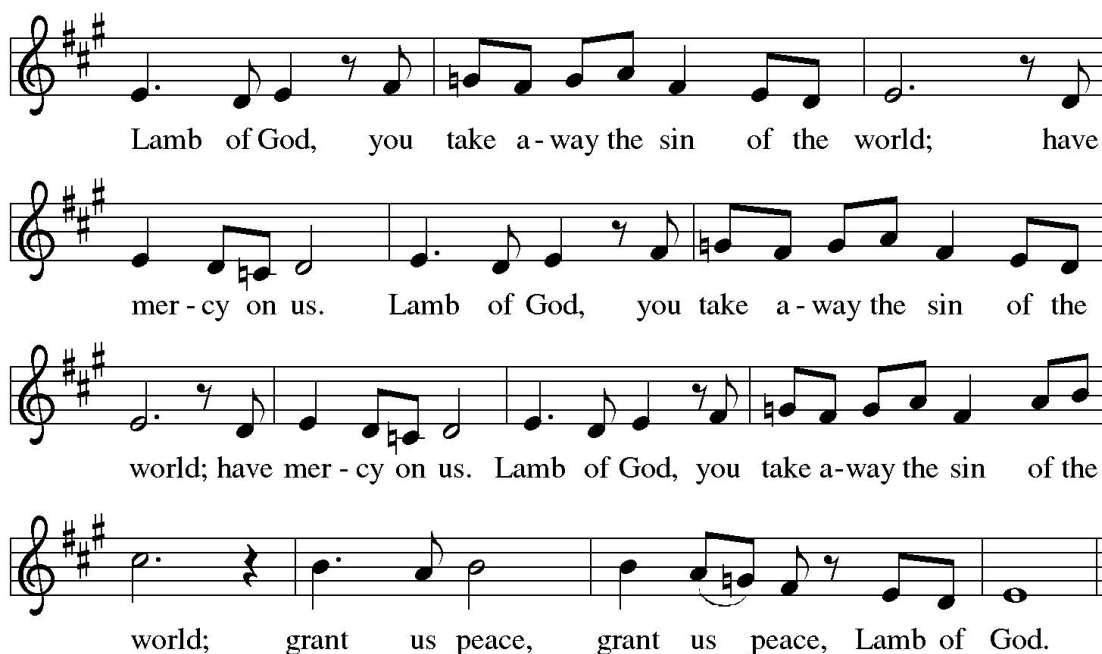
P: Christ invites you to this table. All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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.

BELLS

"Mercy"

Jason W. Krug

***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**

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

ELW #547

**1 Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.
The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.**

**2 With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living,
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us,
with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.**

Text: Omer Westendorf, 1916-1997, alt.

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***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, Mary Broomfield,
Tonya Deberry, Bill Fitzgerrel, Scott Geiger, David Goldsborough,
Esther Gregory, Janice Isaacs, Jan Lawson, Marilyn Oftedal,
Dale Pelz (Brother of Nancy Salefski), Bill Voss,
Sebastian (Bass) Smallwood, Mary Ann & Ken Stolley, Rick Strine

*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	Rev. Dr. Sarah Cordray
Assisting Minister	Carol Tyler
Slides	Bob Tyler
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	Jeff Kopetz
Check-In	Ruth Nihiser & Marsha Thornhill
Acolyte	Ensley Dalen
Communion Aide	Gary Beck
Money Counters	Gary Beck, Larry Haab, & Sheryl Brilley
Indoor Plant Watering	Carol Broeking
Flowers	Molly Berry in Memory of Dante Berry
SonRise Café	Congregation Forum & Potluck

Upcoming Joint Events & Worship Services

- **Thursday, October 29th “TRUNK ‘R TREAT”** event from 5:00pm-7:00pm in the parking lot at First United Methodist Church, 201 W. North St. Rather than putting on the event with only Holy Cross, we have decided to join forces with other churches and organizations in the area. **We need volunteers from both FELC and HC.** So many creative things can be displayed and things handed out to the kids. Partner with another member or family and together come up with a theme for decorating the trunk of your car. Some suggestions for handouts are Christian coloring books, pens or pencils with our church name & address, glow sticks and much more – and we cannot skimp out on the candy!! That’s the main event!! **Please consider donating candy &/or a small toy.** A plastic bin is in the Narthex for your donations. This is going to be so much fun and it provides for a safe trick or treat experience!! Please sign-up on the **“TRUNK ‘R TREAT”** sheet in the Narthex. **Everyone is invited to participate!!!**
- **Sunday, November 29th is joint Worship Service** at Holy Cross. Worship will begin at 9:30am and there will be fellowship following Worship. All are welcome!!

FELC Announcements

- Today there will be a **Congregation Forum with SonRise Café potluck** after worship service in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a brunch item to share as we discuss important FELC topics.
- The **AMELCA** Team served 111 clients on Wednesday, October 7th.
- **October 12th is Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day, and most banks are closed. Our Money Counters** may want to consider counting on Wednesday when the banks are open.
- **“Red State Christians” for book study** has arrived. Pick up your copy in the office area, on the counter across from the copier. The next Book Study will be Monday, October 12th at 12:15pm in the Lounge. Please join the group for thought-provoking conversation.
- **Exec** meets Monday, October 12th at 6:00pm via Zoom.
- **Mission Spending Plan outlines for 2027** have been emailed to the various committees. Please return your 2027 MSP to Molly Berry by October 12th.
- **Art Workshop** meets on Thursday, October 15th at 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to participate in the workshop. Jennifer Stout leads the workshop the third Thursday every month.
- The **church office will be closed on Friday, October 9th, 16th, 23rd, & 30th**. Kay is still going to physical therapy a couple times a week and will be taking vacation time off on those days.
- **AMELCA fundraiser at Holy Cross on Saturday, October 17th from 4:00pm-7:00pm.** Ham & Beans, cornbread, beverage & dessert will be served. Eat-in at Holy Cross or Carry-out. 100% of the Freewill donations will be given to AMELCA. All are Welcome!!
- **Blessing of the Quilts** will be on **Sunday, October 18th**. Please come to church a little early and walk around the sanctuary to view all of the beautiful quilts our quilters have created. We will also collect the **Noisy Offering** during worship, to offset the cost of shipping. We accept both noisy and soft offerings!!

- **Time Change - Fall Back 1 hour on November 1st.**
- **Harvest Fest Potluck is November 8th** after Worship Service in the fellowship hall. Please bring a brunch item to share as we celebrate the Autumn season. Contact Nancy Salefski or Mary Jo Rowley for more information.
- **Christmas Tree Assembly is after worship service on Sunday, November 22nd.** We need MANY volunteers to assemble and decorate the tree. Pizza will be served to all the volunteers.
- **Children's Christmas Program will take place during worship service on Sunday, December 13th.** And we will celebrate with SonRise Café after worship service.
- **Christmas Tree take down will be Sunday, January 10th,** after worship service. MANY volunteers are needed to assist with taking down the decorations and tree.
- **Our Grief Group** will resume meeting January 11th, 2027. This group meets every other Monday from 11:00am-12:30pm in the Lounge.
- **Annual Congregational Meeting will be held after worship service on Sunday, January 31st.** All voting members are encouraged to attend. Your vote counts!!



TRUNK 'R TREAT

October 29th 5:00pm-7:00pm
at First United Methodist Church
201 W. North St.

Sign-up to decorate your trunk
and/or pass out candy.