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



October 18, 2026, at 9:30am
HOLY COMMUNION

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

INTRODUCTION
With the flip of a coin, Jesus stuns those who seek to entrap him in a "darned if you do and darned if you don't" type of question. Two unlikely groups who do not get along work together in order to accomplish their hopes of putting an end to this Jesus who claims God's authority and claims a kingdom unlike their earthly kingdom. With a surprising response, Jesus flips the coin on them as he exposes their hypocrisy and motives, and as he exposes their god of their society—a false idol—Caesar, which means Lord. Jesus' question also causes us to wonder, "What is the coinage of God's kingdom that is so different than that of our society's? How can we convolute things of today's society with those of God's, and suddenly find ourselves worshipping an idol?" Be surprised in Jesus' response today as his flip of the coin draws you back to him!

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: 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.

***GATHERING SONG** *"You Servants of God"* **ELW #825**

1 You servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name, all-victorious, of Jesus extol;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all!

2 Ascended on high, almighty to save,
yet still he is nigh, his presence we have.
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus, our king!
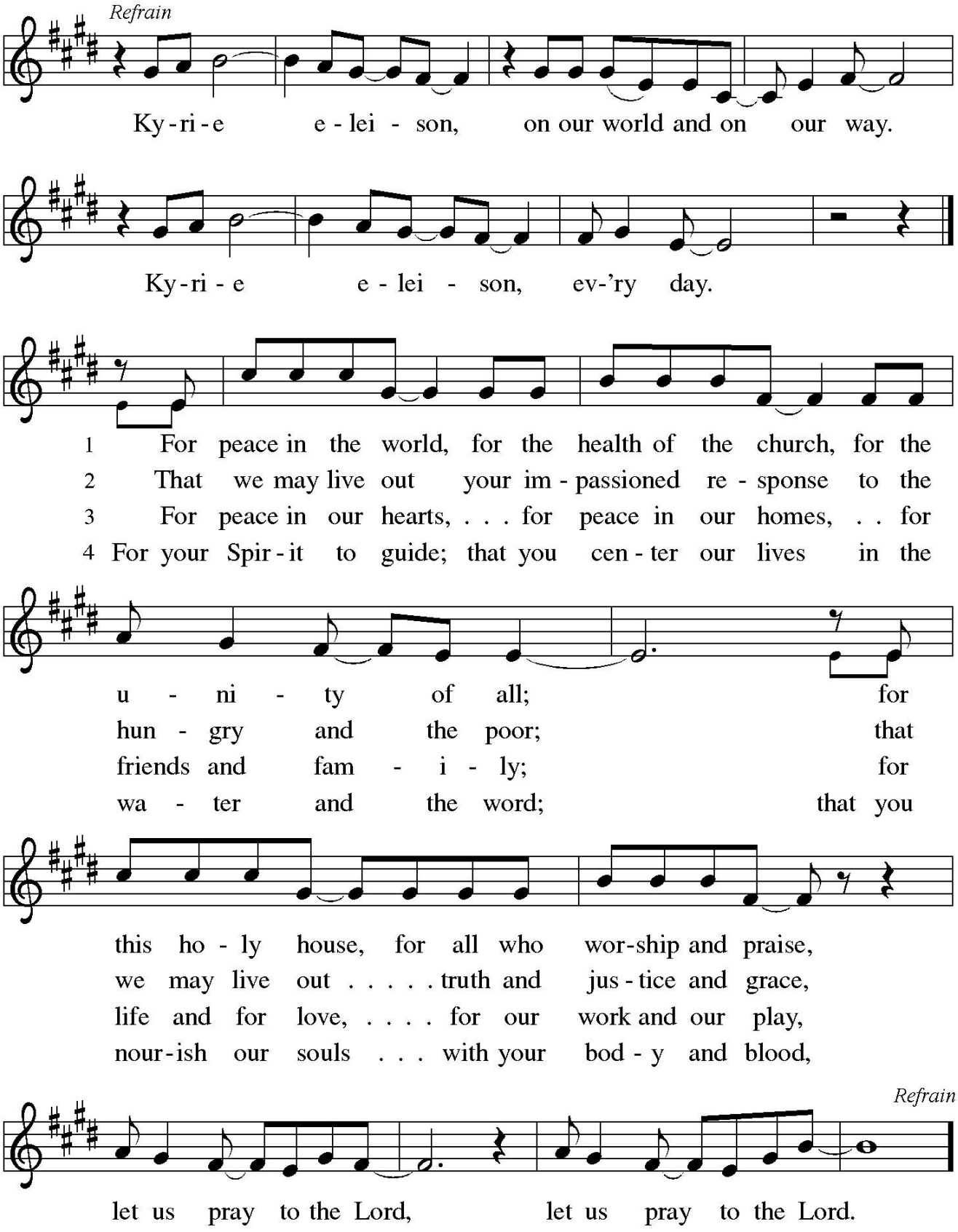
3 Salvation to God who sits on the throne!
Let all cry aloud and honor the Son.
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

4 Then let us adore and give him his right,
all glory and pow'r and wisdom and might,
all honor and blessing, with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing, and infinite love!
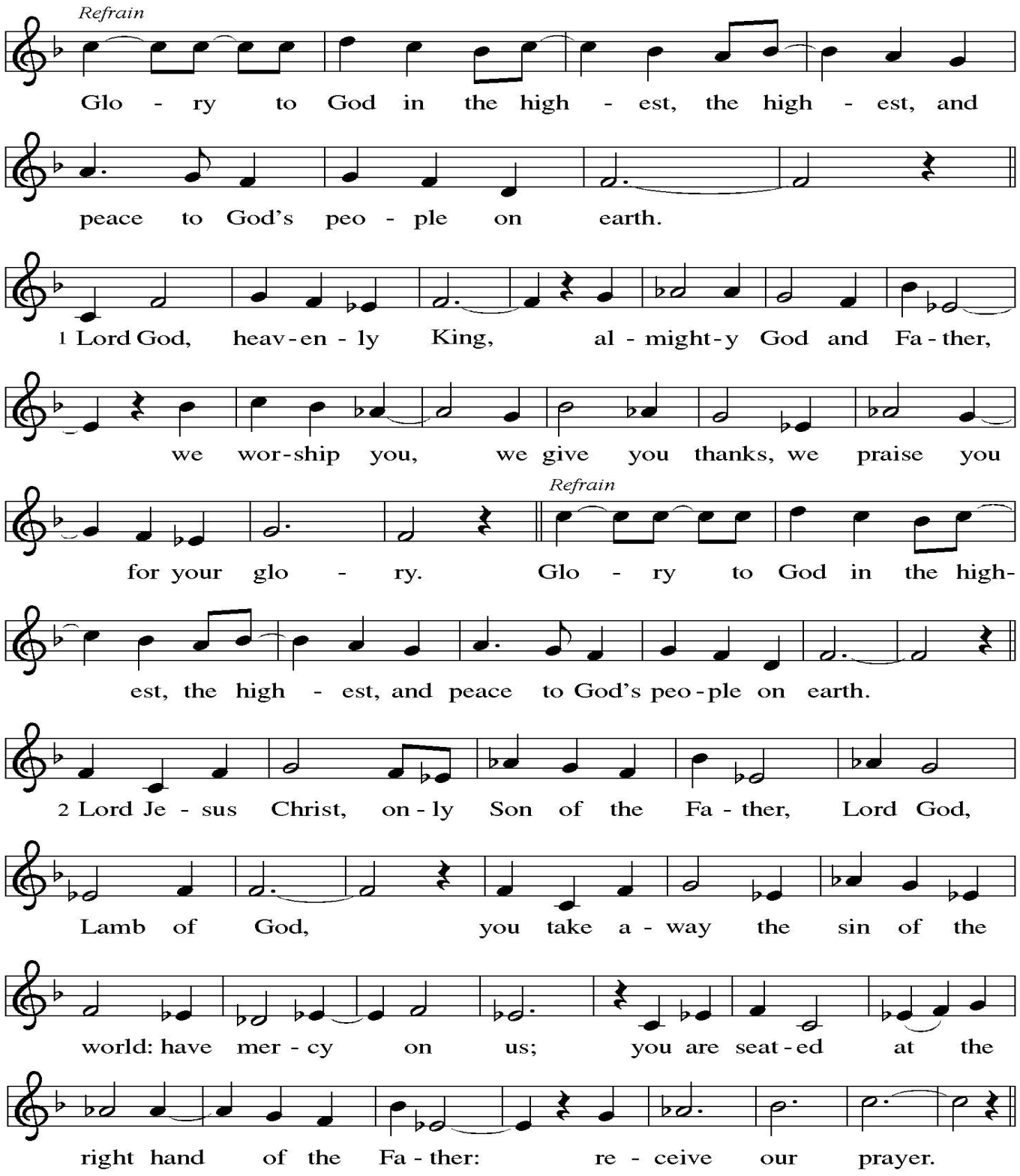
Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, alt.

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.
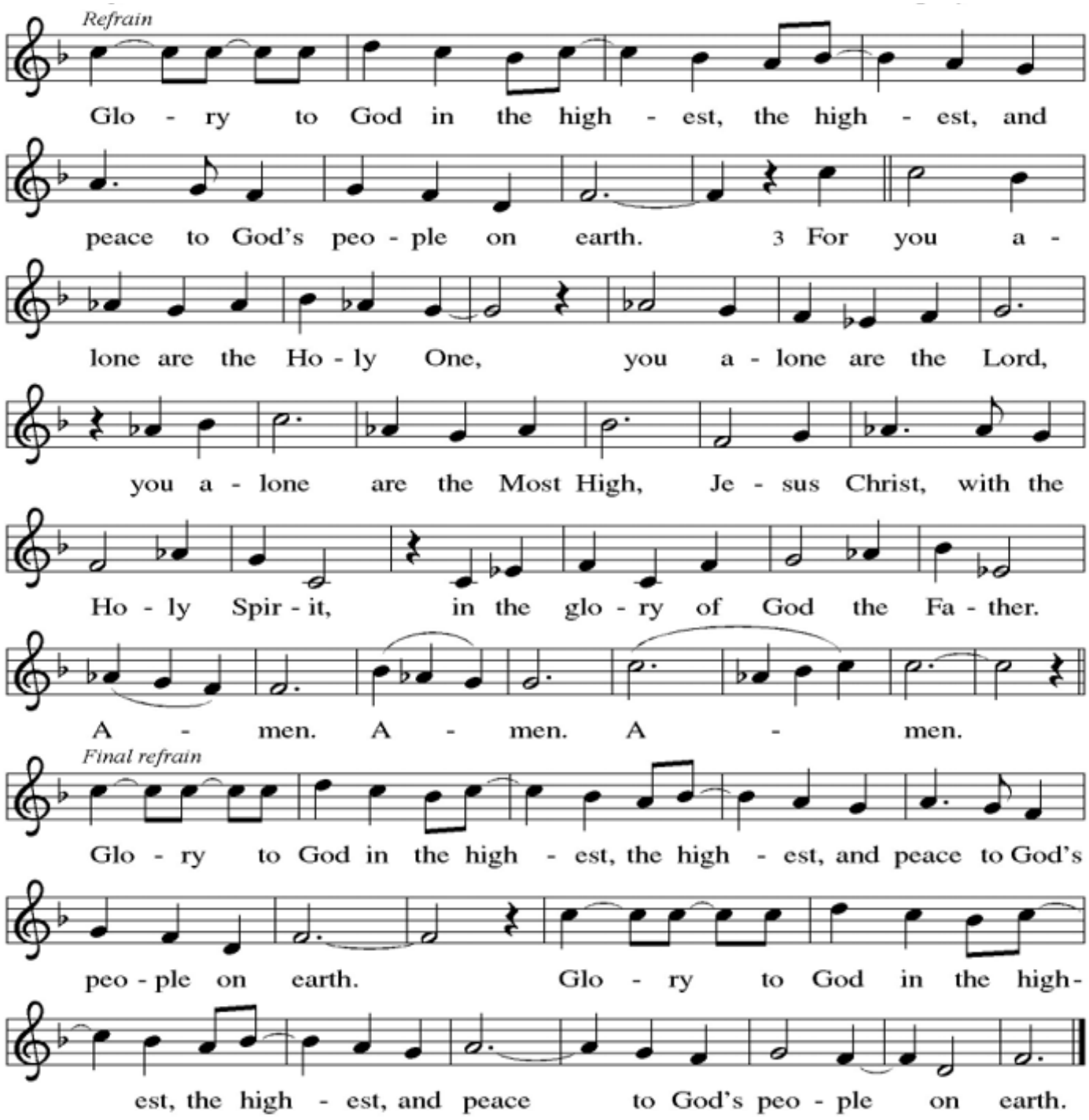
***KYRIE** **ELW p. 184-185**



***HYMN OF PRAISE** *"Glory to God in the Highest"* **ELW p. 185-186**



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



***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: Sovereign God, raise your throne in our hearts. Created by you, let us live in your image; created for you, let us act for your glory; redeemed by you, let us give you what is yours, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

CHILDREN'S SERMON

ANTHEM *"Come Share the Bread"*

First Reading: Isaiah 45:1-7

The prophet announces that Cyrus the Persian emperor is the one the LORD has anointed to end Israel's exile. The LORD makes this choice so that the whole world will recognize this LORD as the only God. Persia had a god of light and a god of darkness; the LORD claims sovereignty over both light and darkness.

1 Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him
and to strip kings of their robes,
to open doors before him—
and the gates shall not be closed:
2 I will go before you
and level the mountains;
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron;

3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches hidden in secret places,
so that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
4 For the sake of my servant Jacob
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name;
I give you a title, though you do not know me.

5 I am the LORD, and there is no other;
besides me there is no god.

I arm you, though you do not know me,

6 so that they may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is no one besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
7 I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe;
I the LORD do all these things.

A: The Word of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 96:1-13

1 Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2 **Sing to the LORD, bless the name of the LORD;**
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.
3 Declare God's glory among the nations
and God's wonders among all peoples.
4 **For great is the LORD and greatly to be praised,**
more to be feared than all gods.
5 As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;
but you, O LORD, have made the heavens.
6 **Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;**
power and splendor are in your sanctuary.
7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD honor and power.
8 **Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the holy name;**
bring offerings and enter the courts of the LORD.
9 Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness;
tremble before the LORD, all the earth.
10 **Tell it out among the nations: "The LORD is king!**
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge
the peoples with equity."
11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.
12 **Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,**
for you come to judge the earth.
13 You will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with your truth.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Most likely this letter is the first written by Paul. Paul gives pastoral encouragement and reassurances to new Christians living in an antagonistic environment. Their commitment of faith, love, and hope makes them a model for other new Christian communities.

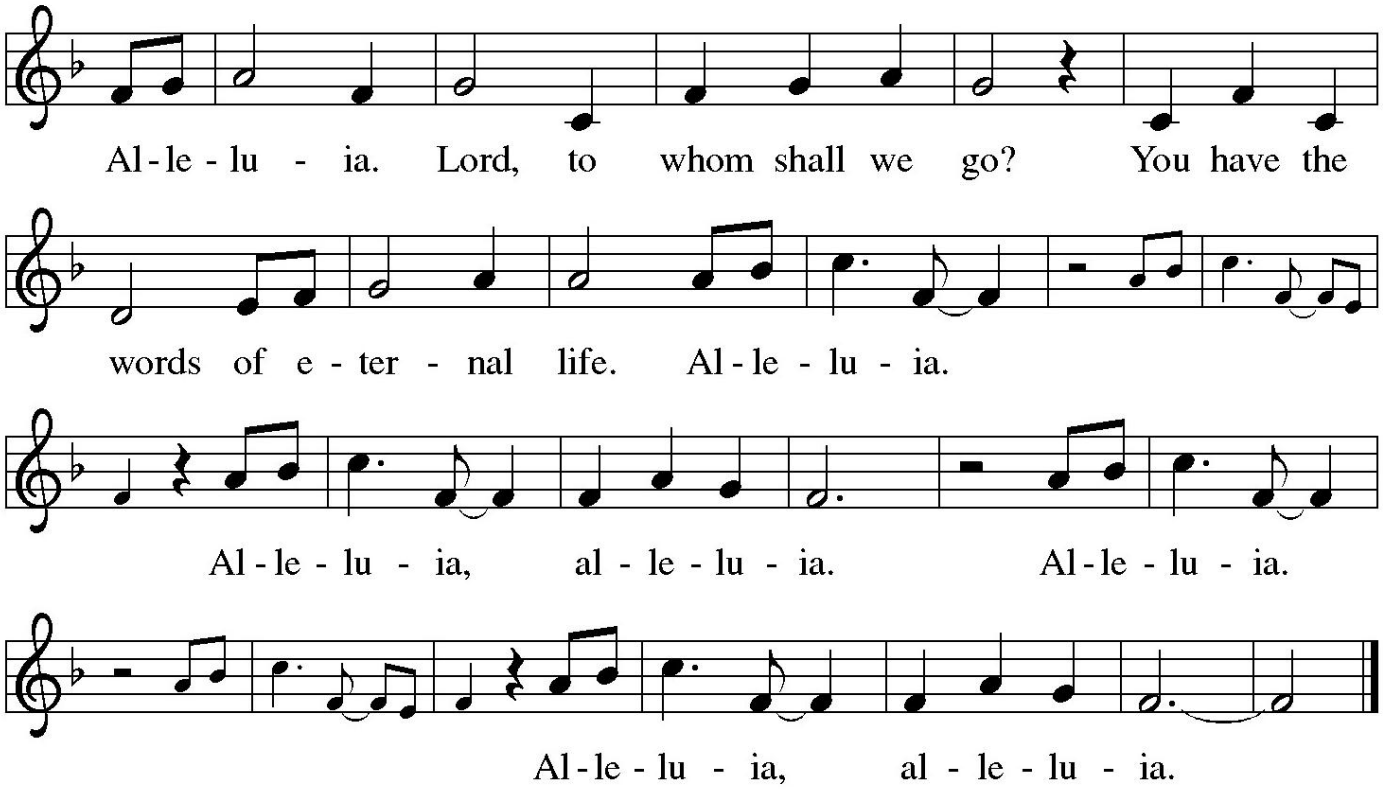
1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers,
constantly 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love
and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers and sisters
beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our message of the gospel came to you
not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as
you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you
became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word
with joy from the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in
Macedonia and in Achaia.

8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia
but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak
about it. 9 For they report about us what kind of welcome we had among you and how
you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God 10 and to wait for his Son
from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming
wrath.

A: The Word of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** *"Alléluia"* **ELW p. 188**



P: The holy gospel according to Matthew the 22nd Chapter.
C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 22:15-22
After Jesus begins teaching in the temple, religious leaders try to trap him with questions. First they ask if God's people should pay taxes to an earthly tyrant like Caesar.

15 The Pharisees went and plotted to entrap [Jesus] in what he said. 16 So they sent their
disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are
sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no
one, for you do not regard people with partiality. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it
lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are
you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax." And
they brought him a denarius. 20 Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose
title?" 21 They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the
things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard this,
they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

P: The gospel of the Lord.
C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON - "Surprising Responses"

***HYMN OF THE DAY** *"We Give Thee but Thone Own"* **ELW #686**

1 We give thee but thine own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from thee.

2 May we thy bounties thus
as stewards true receive,
and gladly, as thou blessest us,
to thee our firstfruits give.

3 The captive to release,
to God the lost to bring,
to teach the way of life and peace—
it is a Christlike thing.

4 And we believe thy word,
though dim our faith may be:
whate'er we do for thine, O Lord,
we do it unto thee.

Text: William W. How, 1823-1897, alt.

BLESSING OF THE QUILTS (insert)

P: God, our neighbors around the world are in need of hope. Your Spirit is a mighty force, your whispers of hope bring light into the world. Open our hearts and hands to see your presence in our neighborhoods and across the world.
C: Jesus, help us speak words of hope to our neighbors.

P: God, we give you thanks for the pieces of fabric, thread, sewing machines, and the items collected for the kits. May their presence be a sign of hope, may these quilts wrap our neighbors in unending love, and may these kits offer dignity and healing.
C: Jesus, help us reach out in hope to our neighbors.

P: God, we give thanks for all the hands that fashioned hope into a quilt, for the hands that collected and sorted, for the hands that continually open wider so that no one feels left out.
C: Jesus, help us see hope in our neighbors.

P: God, we ask you to guide the staff and partners at LWR. May their voices and hands be a beacon of hope. Keep them safe. Keep them filled with your strength and perseverance.
C: Jesus, help us share a taste of hope with our neighbors.

P: God, be with our neighbors who will receive these gifts. May they be wrapped in love, may they taste your goodness, may they touch signs of your hope. Whether or not we know their names or where they live, they are our neighbors, our brothers and sisters in Christ. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the One who is our hope.
C: Amen.

P: Recognizing God's abundant hope, go and be a sign of hope to our neighbors near and far: offering hands to hold, sweet scents of justice, and a feast of God's goodness. In the name of the Father, + the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
C: Amen.

NOISY OFFERING

***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: Living and true God, you inspire us to share the message of the gospel. Give your spirit of love to seminarians and those beginning their lives in ordained ministry. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We give you thanks for the majesty of our oceans. Protect the abundant life within them and sustain all those who work to preserve them. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We seek your wisdom in all things. Direct all who hold positions of authority around the world, that they act with compassion, seeking the good of all. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We pray for all people who work in dangerous or degrading environments. Grant them safety and courage, and heal all those who are injured, sick, or suffering. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We ask your blessing on those who do the quiet, unseen work of the church. Encourage them in their work of faith and labor of love. Hear us, O God.
C: Your mercy is great.

A: We thank you for our ancestors who have been called home to you. 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.

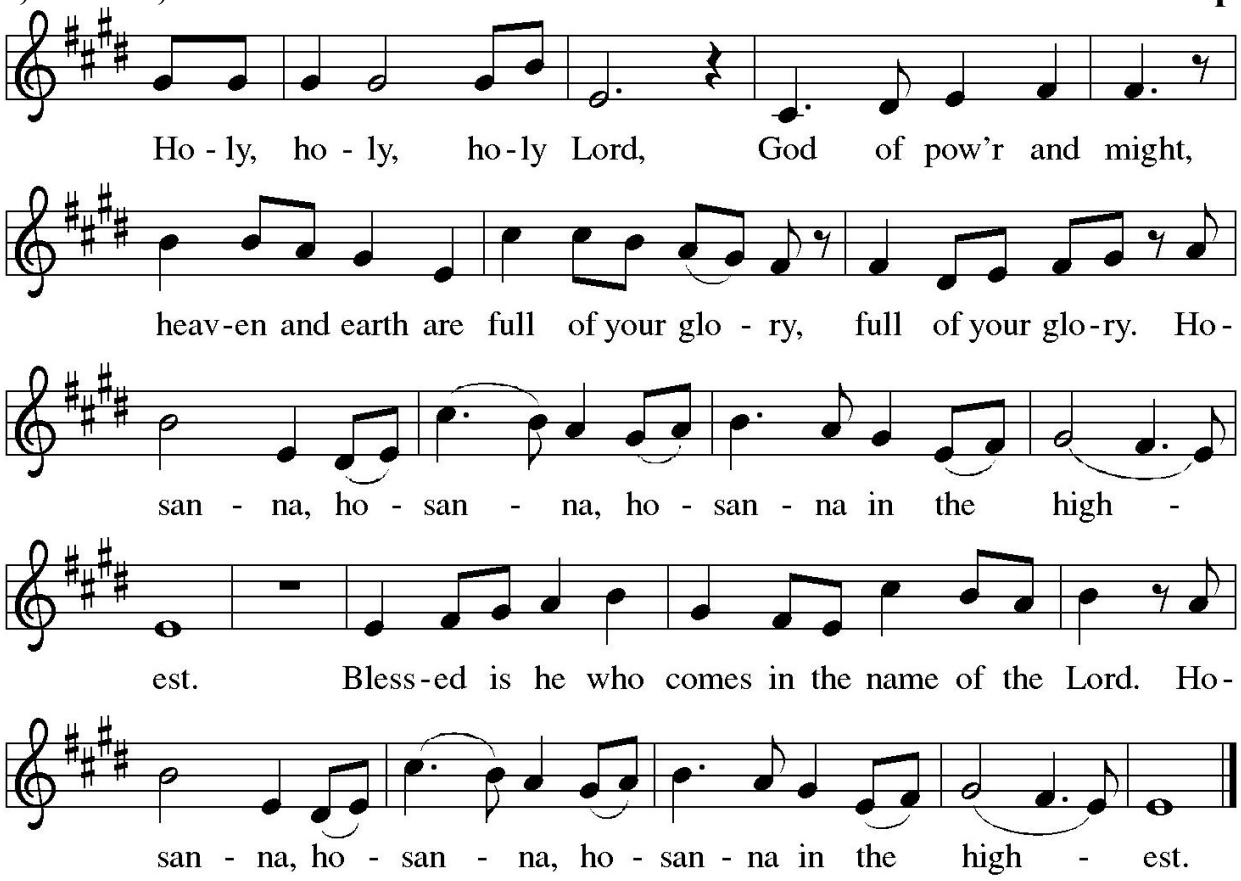
GREAT THANKSGIVING
P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.

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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY **ELW p. 190**



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.

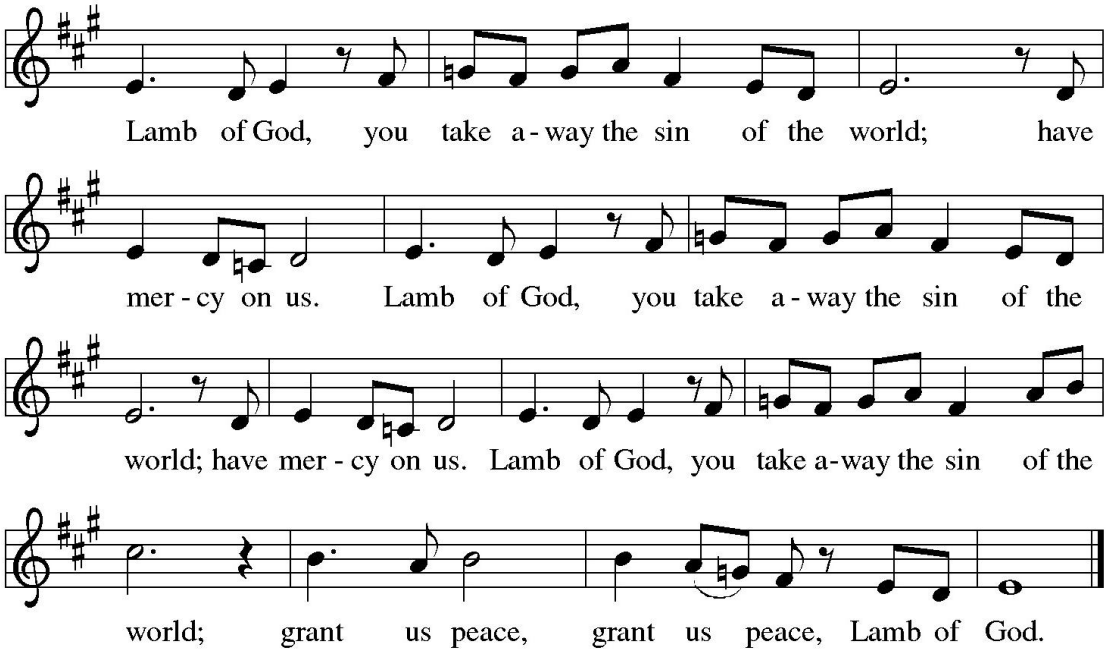
Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.
Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord…
C: Amen

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**



***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** *"How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord"* **ELW #580**

1 How clear is our vocation, Lord,
when once we heed your call
to live according to your word
and daily learn, refreshed, restored,
that you are Lord of all,
and will not let us fall.

2 But if, forgetful, we should find
your yoke is hard to bear;
if worldly pressures fray the mind
and life itself cannot unwind
its tangled skein of care:
our inward life repair.

3 We marvel how your saints become
in hindrances more sure;
whose joyful virtues put to shame
the casual way we wear your name,
and by our faults obscure
your pow'r to cleanse and cure.

4 In what you give us, Lord, to do,
together or alone,
in old routines or ventures new,
may we not cease to look to you,
the cross you hung upon,
all you endeavored done.

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903-2000
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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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Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Rev. Dr. Sarah Cordray
Assisting Minister	Isaac Ford
Slides	Bill Fitzgerrel
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	Nancy Salefski
Check-In	Ruth Nihiser & Marsha Thornhill
Acolyte	Gemma Berry
Communion Aide	Sheryl Brilley
Money Counters	Gary Beck, Larry Haab, & Sheryl Brilley
Indoor Plant Watering	Carol Broeking
Flowers	Lin & John Malachowski

Prayer Requests

Matt Andrews & Family, Nora Beck, Peg Books, Mary Broomfield,
Bill Fitzgerrel, Scott Geiger, Esther Gregory, Janice Isaacs, Jan Lawson,
Marilyn Oftedal, Dale Pelz (Brother of Nancy Salefski),
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.

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 service will begin at 9:30am and there will be fellowship following Worship. All are welcome!!!

FELC Announcements

- **Blessing of the Quilts & Noisy Offering** is this morning.

- The **AMELCA** Team served 120 clients on Wednesday, October 14th.

- **FELC Church Council** meets Monday, October 19th at 6:00pm in the Lounge.

- **Pastor Sarah will be out of the office** on Thursday, October 22.

- **Reformation Sunday** is next Sunday, October 25th. We will have special music with Trumpets during Worship Service and we will be welcoming our **NEW MEMBERS:**
  - David & Hayley Helpingstine
  - Julia Tuck
  - Judy Tyler
  - Joey Wall

- **Mission Spending Plan outlines for 2027** have been emailed to the various committees. If you haven't sent your completed MSP to Molly, please do so at your earliest convenience.

- The **church office will be closed every Friday through the end of the year.** Kay is still going to physical therapy a couple times a week and will be taking vacation time on those days.

- **Thank you to everyone that participated in the Ham & Bean AMELCA fundraiser at Holy Cross on Saturday, October 17th.**

- **Time Change - Fall Back 1 hour on November 1st.**

- And November 1st is **First Fruits Sunday**. Please remember to make a contribution to AMELCA.

- **Pastor Sarah** will be out of the office in **training at Dove from Monday, November 2- Friday November 6.**

- **Decatur Area Horn Club** will be playing during Worship Service on Sunday, November 8th.

- **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.