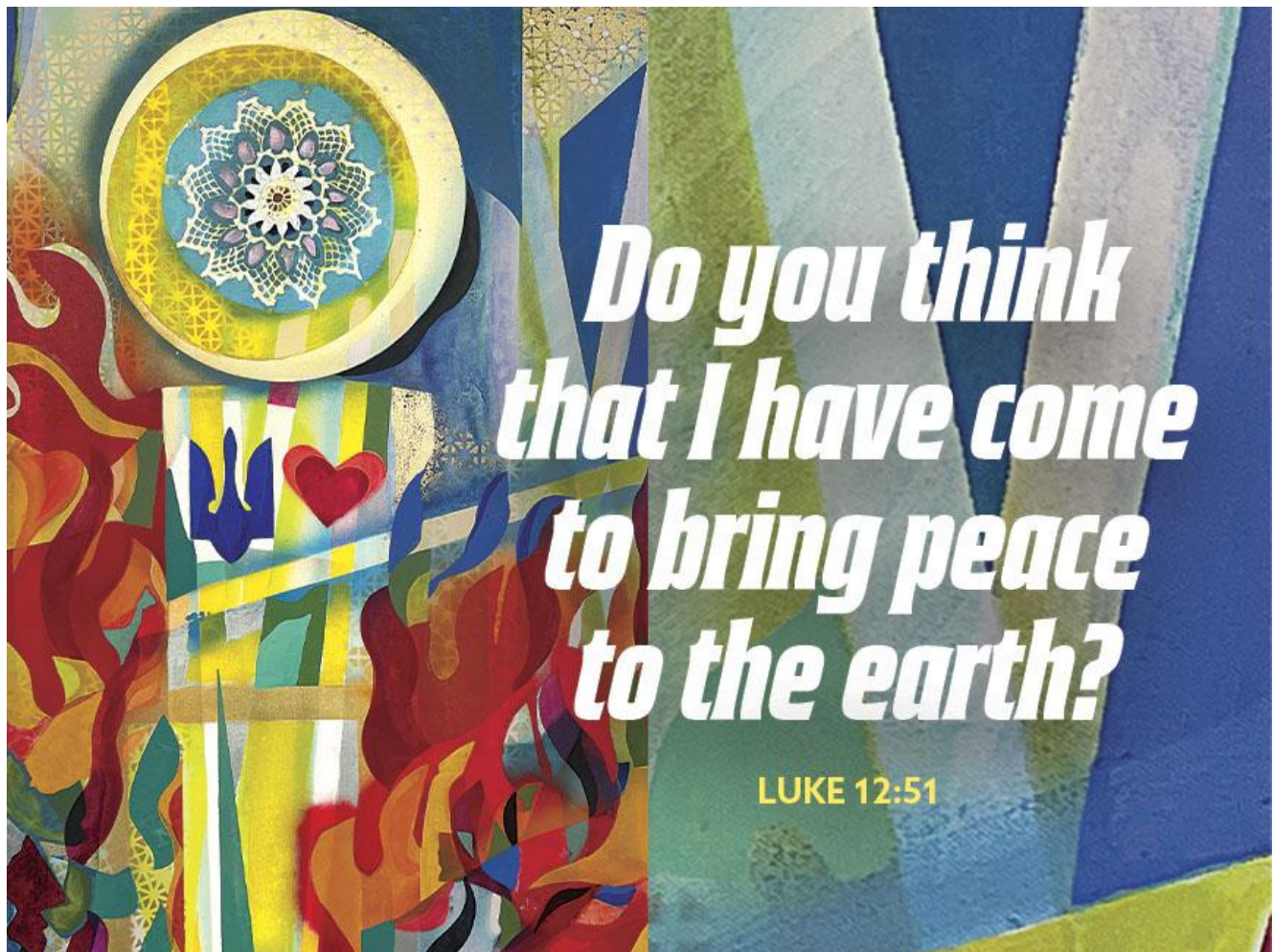


**First Evangelical Lutheran Church
250 W. Decatur St.
Decatur, Illinois
(217) 423-7783**

**Website: www.felcdecatur.org
Email: felc_decatur@outlook.com**

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



**August 17, 2025, at 9:30 am
10th Sunday after Pentecost
HOLY COMMUNION**

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

INTRODUCTION

The word of God is a refining fire. Jesus is the great divide in human history. He invites our undivided attention and devotion. Today in worship we are surrounded by a great “cloud of witnesses.” In the word and in holy communion we are invited yet again to look to Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

GATHERING

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Baptized into Christ, let us confess our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

P: Merciful God,

**C: you free us to love others,
but we neglect our neighbors and follow our own way.
You lead us by the Spirit of joy and peace,
but we turn away from the abundant life you offer.
You surround us with patience, kindness,
and generosity, but we grow weary in doing what is right.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Do not give up on us.
Heal us, break our bonds,
and show us the path of life. Amen.**

P: You belong to Christ Jesus
and you are God’s children through faith.
In the cross of ✠ Christ,
and through the power of the Holy Spirit,
your sins are forgiven.
Clothed with Christ, you are a new creation.

C: Amen.

***GATHERING SONG**

“How Firm a Foundation”

ELW #796

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.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“This Is the Feast”

ELW p. 122-123

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Let us pray,

C: O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Jeremiah 23:23-29

Because Jeremiah preaches the unpopular message of God’s judgment, he suffers rejection. Today’s reading distinguishes between the true prophet, like Jeremiah, who speaks God’s word, and the false prophet who misleads the people through dreams. One is like wheat; the other like worthless straw.

²³ Am I a God near by, says the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴ Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD. ²⁵ I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, “I have dreamed! I have dreamed!” ²⁶ How long? Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back—those who prophesy lies and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart? ²⁷ They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? says the LORD. ²⁹ Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 82

- ¹ God stands to charge the divine council assembled,
giving judgment in the midst of the gods:
- ² **“How long will you judge unjustly,
and show favor to the wicked?”**
- ³ Save the weak and the orphan;
defend the humble and needy;
- ⁴ **rescue the weak and the poor;
deliver them from the power of the wicked.**
- ⁵ They do not know, neither do they understand; they wander about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ **Now I say to you, ‘You are gods,
and all of you children of the Most High;**
- ⁷ nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,
and fall like any prince.’ ”
- ⁸ **Arise, O God, and rule the earth,
for you shall take all nations for your own.**

Second Reading: Hebrews 11:29—12:2

The author of Hebrews presents us with rich stories of faith. In a long list of biblical heroes, we find examples of trust in God that enabled them to face the trials of life faithfully. In addition to this “cloud of witnesses,” we have Jesus, the perfect model of faithful endurance.

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned to death; they were sawn in two; they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from

us, be made perfect.

^{12:1} Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

A: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Alleluia”

ELW p. 142

P: The holy gospel according to Luke the 12th Chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: Luke 12:49-56

Jesus delivers harsh words about the purifying and potentially divisive effects of obedience to God’s call. The way of the cross often leads followers to encounter hostility and rejection, even from those they love.

[Jesus said:] ⁴⁹ “I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already ablaze! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided:

father against son

and son against father,

mother against daughter

and daughter against mother,

mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, ‘It is going to rain,’ and so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, ‘There will be scorching heat,’ and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY

“If God My Lord Be for Me”

ELW #788

*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: Let us pray for the church, the creation, and the whole people of God, for God is near.

A brief silence.

A: Raise up faithful leaders for your church around the world. Inspire global missionaries with a spirit of accompaniment, as they walk alongside our partners in the gospel in solidarity, interdependence, and mutuality. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Safeguard rivers and lakes from pollution. Sustain the work of conservationists, policy makers, and advocacy groups seeking to protect fresh water sources. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Bridge divisions across partisan lines. Strengthen cooperative efforts among lawmakers who enact policies that protect our neighbors who are most vulnerable. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Embrace all who suffer in isolation: for those who are incarcerated or detained, those who are fleeing from unsafe environments, and those who are sick or homebound. Reassure them of your care in all times and places. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: Guide the leaders of this congregation. In these late summer weeks, inspire their planning for a new program year ahead. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration and support for their work. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: With thanksgiving, we remember the cloud of witnesses who surround us. By the example of their faith, enable us to run with perseverance the race set before us, until that day when we join their unending praise. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

P: Confident in God's presence and promise, we entrust our prayers to the one who always receives them; through Jesus Christ, our wisdom and companion.

C: Amen.

***PEACE**

MEAL

OFFERING SONG

"Goodness Is Stronger than Evil"

ELW #721

(We thank you for your time, talent, and money toward ministry at FELC and beyond. Please place your money donation in the offering basket at the back of church, or on-line at <https://felcdecatur.org/give>, or by mail.)

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Creator God,

**C: in your wisdom you bring forth all that is good
and the harvest is plentiful.**

**Strengthen us at your table with these gifts of the earth
and our labor, that we may work for the good of all;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior. 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 every 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,
and with angels and archangels,
cherubim, and seraphim,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW p. 130

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P: 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: The kingdom of God is set before you. Eat and rejoice.

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). You are also welcome to pick up a disposable chalice containing wine or juice at the back of the church. 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. 135

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P: Mothering God,

**C: you gathered us to your table
and we drank deeply of your grace.
Send us out by your Spirit
to love our neighbors as ourselves
and proclaim your love in Jesus' name. Amen.**

SENDING***BLESSING**

P: The love of God abound in you;
the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ fill your hearts;
and the life of the Spirit
✠ bless you and give you peace.

C: Amen.

***SENDING HYMN**

"God, When Human Bonds Are Broken"

ELW #603

***DISMISSAL**

A: Go in peace. Live by the Spirit

C: Thanks be to God.

***POSTLUDE**

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Prayer Requests

Connie Andrews, Matt Andrews & Family, Galen Arnold,
Dave Bachmann, Peg Books, Brandon Ellison,
Esther Gregory, Kevin Gregory, James Jackson, Paul Kopetz,
Jan Lawson, Jarrod Renfro, Pastor Barbara Stroud-Borth,
Dennis Tangney, Mary Ann Stolley, Ken Stolley,
Rick Strine, Renee Wiedenkiller, Rudy Zucker Sr.

*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.*

Welcome to everyone here and to those participating on-line

Announcements

- **Welcome to Pastor Janet Lepp** who is preaching and presiding this morning.
- **Have you sent your photo to Abbey for the congregation picture directory?** Abbey has graciously accepted the task of creating a congregation picture directory for us. If you don't have a photo, Kay is happy to take your picture if you stop by the office during the week. And Abbey or Molly are happy to take your picture on Sunday at church. Send your photo to Abbey at akjordan90@gmail.com or call her on 217-494-3993 with questions.
- **The AMELCA team served 96 clients on Wednesday, August 13th.**

- **Grief Group** will meet Monday, August 18th at 11:00am – 12:30pm in the Lounge.
- **Church Council** will meet Monday, August 18th at 6:00pm in the Lounge.
- **Millikin Day of Service** is Thursday, August 21st. We will have 20+ Millikin students working at FELC from 9:30am – 12:00pm.
- **Art Workshop** will meet Thursday, August 21st from 1:00pm – 2:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.
- **August 31st is our next Joint Worship Service** with Holy Cross, held here at FELC. Pastor Amy Zietlow and Deacon Jason Fisher will be preaching & presiding. And we have Son Rise Café after worship. All are welcome!
- **Bell Choir** Rehearsal will begin September 3rd. More details to follow.
- **“God’s Work, Our Hands”** project at DOVE will take place on Sunday, September 7th after Son Rise. To volunteer, please email felc_decaturn@outlook.com or call Sheryl Brilley on 217-855-5715. Looking forward to having many volunteers.
- **Youth Faith Formation begins Sunday, September 14th**. Ms. Abbey will be conducting the younger group’s first lesson class. That same day the older group will be having their first Music class with Mr. Rick. On the 21st, Ms. Molly will be having our first craft/bulletin board session. On the 28th Ms. Kris will be having our first lesson class with the older group while the younger group will be having their first Music class with Mr. Rick. Mom & Dad, Grandma & Grandpa, please mark your calendars and bring your children so they can join in on the fun. Faith Formation’s full calendar will be in the September FLAME.

- **New Book Study** is scheduled to begin September 15th at 12:15pm in the Lounge. The book we will be reading is “*The Mary We Forgot*” by Jennifer Powell McNutt. Please email (felc_decatur@outlook.com) or call (217-423-7783) the church office if you would like to attend or want a copy of the book. The books have arrived, so if you have signed up, please stop by the office to pick up your copy. Thank you!
- **Son Rise Café** needs hosts & hostesses! Nothing elaborate is required – just the desire to extend a little fellowship. Some suggestions have been fruit, or cheese & crackers, baked goods, etc. There’s a new signup sheet on the bulletin board, so I hope you feel ‘nudged’ to sponsor a Sunday. Thank you for your contribution!
- We still have dates available for anyone that would want to sponsor **Altar Flowers** on a Sunday. The flower chart is hanging on the bulletin board.

Let us Prepare our Hearts and Minds for Worship

Participants

Presiding and Preaching	Pastor Janet Lepp
Assisting Minister	Carol Tyler
Slides	Bob Tyler
Organist/Bell Choir Director	Rick Strine
Interim Choir Director	Milt Scott
Technical Director	Mason Oliver
Audio/Visual	Abbey Jordan & Audio/Visual Team
Bell Ringer	Steve Wenger
Greeter	Karen & Mike Reynolds
Check-In	Marsha Corley & Carol Tyler
Acolyte	Karen Reynolds
Communion Aide	Susan Peters
Money Counters	Gary Beck, Larry Haab, Sheryl Brilley