

FELC Friendship Pads

Please fill out the Friendship Pad when asked during worship. If the church office does not currently have your contact information or it has changed, please indicate that in the appropriate column.

Nursery Care

The nurseries at both sites are open for family use during all services. The Downtown Site Nursery is located across from the Library in the Gathering Area. The North Site Nursery is off the main hallway, across from the restrooms. Please ask an usher for assistance.

Hearing Assistance

If you are in need of a personal receiver, ask a Downtown Site usher, or a North Site soundboard technician.

Large-print Resources

If you are in need of a large print Bible or bulletin, ask an usher at the Downtown Site, or a greeter at the North Site.

AED Units on Site

Automated external defibrillators are outside the Downtown Site Usher's Room and next to the North Site sound booth.

Video Recording

The 8 a.m. Downtown Site worship service is video-recorded to share with our homebound members upon request.

In Need of Prayer?

For additions to the prayer chain, email or call the church office (felc@felc.com; 733-2303) or email Pastor Mary (mbauer@felc.com).

More Information

For detailed information on these and more FELC events, opportunities and ministries, pick up a newsletter in the Gathering Area, visit our website at www.felc.com, or check the bulletin boards and kiosks in the Gathering Area.

The Week of Sept. 17, 2017 At-A-Glance

Sunday, Sept. 17

8, 9:15 & 10:30 a.m. Worship, DS
8:15 & 10:30 a.m. Worship, NS
8:50 a.m. Cherub/Angelus Choir Rehearsal, DS 220/Choir Room
9:15 a.m. Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge
9:15 a.m. Confirmation Youth Group, NS Activity Center & Youth Room
9:15/9:25 a.m. Children's Learning Time, DS/NS
11:45 a.m. New & Review Session Two, NS Lower Level

Monday

5:15 p.m. Congregational Life Ministry Team, DS 114
8:15 p.m. Pick Up Basketball, NS Activity Center

Tuesday

6:15 a.m. High School Girl's Breakfast Club, Copper Rock North
6:30 a.m. Men's Ministry, NS Library
5 p.m. Executive Committee, DS Lounge
5 p.m. Personnel Committee, DS Office Workroom
6 p.m. Ministry Team Fall Kickoff, DS 110-113
7 p.m. Finance Committee, DS 110
7 p.m. Invitation & Hospitality Ministry Team, DS 115
7 p.m. Library Committee, DS Library
7 p.m. Worship & Music Ministry Team, DS Lounge

Wednesday

10:30 a.m. Bible Study with Pastor Mary, DS 221
5:30 p.m. Apple Picking Before reFUEL Grades 10-12, Hofacker's Orchard
5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
6 p.m. reFUEL Grades 10-12, NS Fire Pit
6:15 p.m. Wednesday Worship, DS Sanctuary
6:30 p.m. Parish Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
6:30 p.m. Knitting for Charity Life Group, DS Lounge
7 p.m. Confirmation First Day of Class All Grades, Large Group Rooms
7 p.m. Kid's Life, DS 014
7:10 p.m. *Together by Grace-Introducing the Lutherans*, DS 114
8:05 p.m. Seraphim Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room

Thursday

6 a.m. Early Risers Women's Bible Study, DS Lounge
9 a.m. Adult Bible Study, DS Lounge
5 p.m. Arts & Environment Committee, NS Library

Friday

6:30 a.m. Men's Ministry, NS Library

Sunday, Sept. 24

8, 9:15 & 10:30 a.m. Worship, DS
8:15 & 10:30 a.m. Worship, NS
8:50 a.m. Cherub/Angelus Choir Rehearsal, DS 220/Choir Room
9:15 a.m. Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge
9:15 a.m. Confirmation Youth Group, NS Activity Center & Youth Room
9:15/9:25 a.m. Children's Learning Time, DS/NS
11:45 a.m. New & Review Session Three, Pastor Jeff's Home

DS = Downtown Site NS = North Site



First English Lutheran Church
www.felc.com felc@felc.com

Downtown Site

Sunday Worship: 8, 9:15, & 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Worship: 6:15 p.m.
Office Hours: M-Th: 8:30 a.m.- 4 p.m.
F: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Announcements
Week of Sept. 10, 2017

North Site

Sunday Worship: 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.
Office Hours: M-Th: 3-6:30 p.m.

Love Jesus. Live your call.

Sunday at FELC

Altar Flowers

The first Downtown Site altar flower arrangement is provided by the Gerald Bubolz family in honor of Walt and Milly Rugland's 56th wedding anniversary on Sept. 2.

The second arrangement is provided by Bill and Julie Nussbaum in honor of their 50th wedding anniversary on Sept. 16.

A Message from the Pastors

 There is something new happening at the Downtown Site 9:15 a.m. worship service beginning on Sunday Sept. 17. Sunday School children will join their parents and 9:15 a.m. worshipers for the final 10 minutes of the service in the Sanctuary. This means that shortly after 10 a.m. the children will enter the Sanctuary, and together we'll have a recap of their scripture story for the day. This will not only reinforce what worshipers and students have heard in that hour, but give families food for conversation on the way home and throughout the week. It is a new thing we are trying in order to bridge the disconnect there seems to be between Sunday School and the worshiping community. Our goal is to enrich the faith life of both children and adults. Most importantly, it helps fulfill the promise that the church makes to each child at baptism: "We promise to support and pray for you in your new life in Christ."

~Pastors Jeff and Mary

Fall Study: "Together by Grace"

This fall we are commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Martin Luther's work to reform the Catholic church of his day had an enduring impact that continues to invite us into a life of reformation. Our fall study is *Together by Grace: Introducing the Lutherans*. This six-week study is more than a description of what happened to prompt the Reformation, it looks at ways the spirit of renewal has been kept alive throughout the last five centuries. Our hope is that people will take this study as a starting point, a springboard for helping us determine the ways that we are being called to reform the church in order to minister to all those who need to hear the gospel. This study will look back at history and forward to where Christ is calling us today.

- Sunday morning class (begins today), 9:15 a.m. in Downtown Site Lounge
- Tuesday, Sept. 12, Monthly Men's Study group 7-8:30 p.m. in DS Room 221
- Thursday, Sept. 14 - Oct. 20, Adult Study group 9 a.m. in DS Lounge
- Wednesday, Sept. 20 - Oct. 26, Pastor Jeff 7:05 p.m. in DS Room 114

Looking Ahead

We Need YOU!

If you loved the *God's Work. Our Hands.* event, consider being part of the task force for next year's event. Go to www.felc.com/forms to add your name to those interested in making next year's *God's Work. Our Hands.* even better!

Thank You Carol

FELC and the Echoes team would like to thank Carol Struck for her many years of service as Assistant Manager. We thank her for her dedication to serving the community of Echoes which Carol realized was a very important ministry of this congregation. Thank you Carol and best wishes.

Want to Be More Involved in Ministries?

Have you thought about joining a ministry team, committee, or task force of our congregation but was not sure what type of commitment was required? Here is your chance to find out AND enjoy delicious pizza and good company. Please join us for a Fall Kickoff Celebration on Tuesday, Sept. 19 at the Downtown Site. The kickoff begins at 6 p.m. in Rooms 110-113 with pizza and all the trimmings to celebrate the start of another season of ministry and a chance to socialize. A short orientation will then be led by Pastor Jeff. Please consider attending to learn more about FELC's ministry teams, committees and task forces and what is expected when joining a team. Hopefully you will find an opportunity to share your gifts in a fresh way!

Knitting for Charity Life Group

Join a group of knitters and share your talents with the world! The group will be focusing on charity knitting, but individual projects are very welcome. Beginning knitters are welcome to attend; you will have a teacher so you can participate. We will meet the 3rd Wednesday of every month starting Sept. 20 from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge. Please bring your own supplies. Questions? Contact Sheryl Stidham-Gebert at gebstid@new.rr.com.

Echoes Hours Change

September through the month of October, Echoes will be open Tuesday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. The store will be closed Sunday and Monday. If you are interested in volunteering at Echoes, please call Kathy at the store, 920-882-8172 or email echoes@felc.com.

NS Office Closing Early

The North Site will be closing at 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 19 due to staff attending the Ministry Team Kickoff.

Road Construction Near the North Site Begins Soon

The Outagamie County Highway Department has begun a resurfacing and intersection improvement project on Ballard Road (County E/County EE) beginning north of County JJ and ending just south of County O. Improvements also include southbound right turn lanes at Broadway Drive and Mackville Road, a northbound bypass lane at Werner Road, as well as 5-foot paved shoulders between County JJ and Apple Hill Blvd. The road will be closed starting as early as Sept. 17, until the end of October. The detour will be County JJ, WIS 47, County S. Questions? Call (920)832-5673.

Back for a Limited Time Only! Reformation 500 Bookstore

Sunday, Oct. 15 & 22
All Morning, Both Sites

Wednesday, Oct. 18 & 25
4:30-7:30 p.m., Downtown Site

The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation is almost here! Discover a variety of resources on Martin Luther and the Reformation for readers of all ages. Thirty-five of the most recently published books about Martin Luther will be available to order at half price, and with NO shipping charge. What a great Christmas gift idea!

Stop by the tables in the Gathering Area on the dates, times and locations above. Hope to see you there.

50+ Event: LaClare's Goat Farm

Sept. 19 is the date to visit the LaClare Goat Farm. Please meet at the Downtown Site parking lot at 9:30 a.m.; the group will leave at 9:45 a.m. A buffet lunch is scheduled for 11 a.m. at a cost of \$9.95 plus beverage, tax, and tip. After lunch we will board a wagon and tour the farm: goat barn, cheese making house, and gift shop. A fee of \$5 is charged for the wagon ride. Please sign up on the kiosk in the Downtown Site Gathering Area.



50+ Annual Soup Buffet

Oct. 19 is the date for the annual soup buffet. A signup sheet is on the kiosk also in the Downtown Site Gathering Area. Please sign up if you know what kind of soup you will be sharing. This event will begin at noon in the Downtown Site Fellowship Hall.



ELCA Missionary in Cambodia

FELC is sponsoring a new missionary through the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship program. FELC's Outreach & Social Ministry Team has committed to sponsoring Stephanie Olson, now that the Rev. Tessa Moon, whom we previously supported, has returned with her family to the U.S. Stephanie is the niece of members Bob and Anita Damon. She is serving as the ELCA Country Coordinator for Cambodia, supervising seven persons in the ELCA *Young Adults in Global Mission* program. Stephanie will serve in companionship with the six-year-old Lutheran Church in Cambodia and with *Life with Dignity*, a long-standing partner development organization. It is interesting to note that the average age of Cambodians is 26 years old. For more information, check out the bulletin board in the Gathering Area.

Prayer Connection

Prayer connects us to each other in this community of faith and to Christ. To be included in the list of prayers, submit names to the church office or the First English staff. Names are removed after one month, but can always be extended by request. Please remember these First English members, friends and families in prayer in the coming week:

Prayers of Healing, Wholeness & Peace

- Nathan Meissner
- Angel Manos
- Todd Hollenberger
- Mary Lou Garnsworthy
- Brooklyn Ann Converse
- Jacob Schwab
- Justin Schwab
- Laurie Niles
- Lynn Boenker
- Debra Boushley
- George Krempin
- David Heindel
- Doug Hansen
- Amy Ponomarev
- Moore Peregrine
- Harold Rohlfing
- Jacob Frerking
- Tom Roy
- Melissa Heins
- Je'Ann Johnson
- Paul Henrikson
- Kathy Skaar
- Bob Gauerke
- Juanita Gauerke
- Judith Schmidt
- Murl Hahs

Prayers of Comfort

Families of:

- Mary Pirsig
- Sandra Raasch

Prayers for Those Called to Serve in Other Countries

- Stephanie Olson

Prayers for Those in the Military

- BM3 Kyle Kramer, USCG
- LCPL Robert Kopesky II
- PFC Samuel Sinclair

Calling all Creative Writers!

We are bringing back the FELC Advent Devotional booklet - written by, and for, the FELC community. If you are interested in writing a short devotional based on a chosen scripture verse, please contact Alyssa Douglas at 364-0006 or douglas.alyssa@gmail.com. We are hoping to have all 23 dates assigned by Oct. 1. Thank you for your consideration.



High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Sept. 17, 2017

reFUEL

For Grades 10-12

9/20: **5:30-6pm** *Special event reFUEL night*
Meet at Hofacker's Hillside Orchard (W3964 Wege Rd, Appleton)

6-7pm bonfire at NS
Caramel apples with tons of toppings

9/27: **7-8pm** at DS Youth Room "When Jesus hits you in the face"



Seraphim Choir returns to its old place and time!

8:05-8:30 p.m.

DS Choir Room

Open to 7-12 grade students Begins THIS Week-Sept. 20

with new leadership: Ellen Klug and Nathan Birkholz

Thank you Barb Tengesdal and Deb Blank for your years of service and passion for music!



National Youth Gathering Houston, TX 2018

June 27-July 1

Open to students currently in grades 9-12

Did you miss the information sessions and have questions?

Contact Heidi

hschreiner@felc.com

Commitment form due to Heidi by Sept. 27

Upcoming fundraisers for the National Youth Gathering:

Octoberfest Parking

Lot fundraiser:

Sept. 29: 5:45-8pm

Sept. 30: 8:30am-4pm

Bake Sale:

Oct. 1: Between all services at both sites

Sept. 17, 2017



Information for FELC Youth and Families
Grades K-12

Hey, Hey, Hey, Stewardship Brunch Is On The Way And We Need Helpers!

Oct. 15 is Stewardship Sunday and it is a celebration for our entire congregation as we find ways to share our gifts! Regular Sunday School time is replaced with a call to all families to join us that morning at either site as we dine and dream together. To make the brunch a success we need helpers to set-up, make assigned dishes, and clean-up at both sites. This is a great opportunity for a Confirmation family assignment and another way for any and all to get together and enjoy doing God's Work.

Fill out your Count Me In form in your announcements today and let us know how you'd like to help!



Find us on Social Media Outlets

Instagram: felc.youth Facebook: FELC YOUTH

Connect with FELC Youth Staff

Kirsten Owens, Faith Formation Coordinator: kowens@felc.com

Heidi Schreiner, Youth & Summer Ministry Coordinator: hschreiner@felc.com

Love Jesus. Live your call.



Elementary Sunday School, Song, And Special News



Confirmation and Middle School Scoop



**Yay! What A Terrific Rally Sunday!
Thanks For Doing God's Work
With YOUR Hands!
Now Let's Get Learnin'!**



TODAY DOWNTOWN CHOIRS & CLASSES BEGIN AT BOTH SITES

Angelus Choir (grades 3-6) meets in the Downtown Site Choir Room and
Cherub Choir (K-grade 2) meets in Downtown Site Room 220.
Both meet at 8:50 a.m.

Sunday School students (age 3-grade 6) will be meeting for an opening assembly in either Fellowship Hall (9:15 a.m.) or the North Site Lower Level (9:25 a.m.). Then during the last 10 minutes of class students will come upstairs to sit with their families in the Sanctuary, hear the Pastor Chat for a recap of the Sunday School story of the day and give a prayer and blessing for families to use. *Please note that all sign-in of children will be done at the opening assembly, sign-out will be done up by the altar at the end of Pastor Chat.*

PARENTS DON'T FORGET TO BE IN THE SANCTUARY BY 10:00 A.M. AT DOWNTOWN SITE OR 10:10 A.M. AT NORTH SITE FOR PASTOR CHAT AND TO PICK-UP YOUR CHILDREN AFTER. PASTOR CHAT IS INTENDED FOR FAMILIES, STUDENTS, & THE WHOLE CONGREGATION!

Kids Life Starts Sept. 20
Students grades K-6 are welcome to join us at the Downtown Site from 7-8 p.m. in room 014 for some faith talk time plus we'll do cool projects, watch movies, have holiday parties, and more! Come have fun with your faith family on Wed. nights!



Angelus Choir
Sings Sept. 24 at
the 9:15 a.m.
worship! Don't miss
this chance to sing
sweetly!



And Away We GO!!!

Ok, we've prepped and primed you, now
it's time to get cookin'!

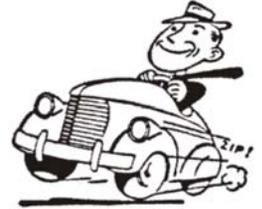
Classes start for all Confirmation students this
Wed. (Sept. 20) at the Downtown Site.

We begin with large group. Here are your rooms:

7th grade large group is in Rooms 010-013

8th grade large group is in Rooms 110-113

9th grade large group is in Fellowship Hall



Families should have:

7th grade - Read Chapter 1 (Pages 1-6)

8th grade - Read Chapters 1 & 2 (Pages 1-12)

9th grade - We begin talking about Christ first, works second

We Could Still Use Some Helping Hands In Sunday School



Jump on in and be part of Sunday morning learning while helping a teacher and being a cool person to look up to for the younger folks in our Faith Family. Contact Kirsten to help!

CYG Starts Today!

Any 7th - 9th graders looking for something to do on Sundays?

Come to Confirmation Youth Group at the

North Site! We will meet in the NS Activity Center for open gym from 9:15-9:45 a.m. then move to the Youth Room downstairs until 10:15 a.m. Please direct any questions to Hannah Sprenger at hsprenger@felc.com.



Have questions or want to volunteer?

Contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com or 733-2303.



What is Count Me In? Count Me In is a periodic emphasis to lift up volunteer opportunities within FELC, the community and the world. Take a look - some will be short term obligations while others may be ongoing worship roles that are in need of more volunteers.

SEPTEMBER'S COUNT ME IN

Name: _____

Phone Number and Email: _____

Service I/We tend to worship at: _____

Stewardship Receptions Sunday Sept. 15

Setup

Downtown Site (Sat. Sept. 14, 1 - 2:30 p.m.)

North Site (Sun. Sept. 15, 8 a.m.)

Prepare dish at home (Recipe provided- bring to church Sunday morning to be warmed up)

Downtown Site (by 8 a.m.)

North Site (by 8 a.m.)

Serving & Kitchen Help

Downtown Site (8 - 11:30 a.m.)

North Site (8 - 10:30 a.m.)

Clean up

Downtown Site (10 a.m. - noon)

North Site (10 - 11 a.m.)

Octoberfest Parking Lot NYG Fundraiser Sept. 30

8:30 - 10:30 a.m.

10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Soundboard (Training Provided)

Downtown Site North Site

Sunday School Story Teller (occasional)

Downtown Site

North Site

Nursery Assistance (paid and volunteer)

Downtown Site

North Site

Music Opportunities

At the Downtown Site

Cherub Choir (Grades K-2)

Angelus Choir (Grades 3-6)

Seraphim Choir (Grades 7-12)

Parish Choir (High school students and adults)

Handbell choir (All ages)

At the North Site

North Site Music Team (All ages)

Bake Sale Donations NYG Oct. 1 Fundraiser
(Drop off either site Sat. Sept. 30 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.
or Sun. Oct. 1 by 8 a.m.)

Board Games Guild Life Group

Downtown Site Altar Guild

Funeral Guild

Offering Counters - Downtown Site

North Site Media Tech (Training Provided)

TV Room Filming/Editing (Training Provided)

Finance Committee Member

Invitation & Hospitality Ministry Team Member

God's Work. Our Hands. 2018 Task Force

FELC DS Engage Page: September 17, 2017

Matthew 18:21-35 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as 7 times?" Jesus said to him, "Not 7 times, but, I tell you, 77 times. "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him 10,000 talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Sun., Sept. 17: Family Project: Our families are where we learn over and over the importance of forgiveness. Talk about what it means to forgive, and what makes it so difficult. With younger children, learn together the chorus from "Seventy time Seven" from Ktunez Praise. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VDYn8L-c0w) If your children are older discuss the themes of forgiving deep disappointment and pain from the song "7 X 70" by Chris August. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5-Q1zAhqA>)

Mon., Sept. 18: What does it do to our hearts when we are not forgiven or when we aren't able to forgive? What does it do to us when we become so accustomed to sin that we no longer think to ask for forgiveness? Use a rite of confession and forgiveness to open your heart.

Tues., Sept. 19: Caroline Lewis shares some definitions of forgiveness. Which challenges you? "For example, "Dumbledore says people find it far easier to forgive others for being wrong than being right." -J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince. Or, "Forgiveness is not an occasional act, it is a constant attitude." -Martin Luther King, Jr. Or, "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you" -C.S. Lewis. A few years ago, at the end of my yoga class, the instructor shared a definition of forgiveness that made me think, "oh, now I think I might get it" -- "Forgiveness is letting go of the hope that the past can be changed." <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=3322>

Wed., Sept. 20: [Jonah 3:10-4:11](#) Do you remember teachers who always were merciful, giving more time for assignments or multiple chances to those who misbehaved? I remember thinking, "Don't do that. You're simply teaching that actions don't have consequences, and that they can get away with obeying only those rules that are convenient." At heart, I must have been a lot like Jonah—wishing for the predictable order of judgment for those God declared to be wrong. It seems unwise and unfair for God to change his mind simply because someone has admitted that they were wrong and vowed to do better. It's messy. And perhaps it's messy because the cross is messy, declaring forcefully that God's ultimate goal is salvation, forgiveness and love. It is when we are in need of forgiveness that we realize this merciful mess is good news for sinners like you and I.

Thurs., Sept. 21, [Psalm 145:1-8](#) The psalmist writes, "One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts." (v. 4) Where did you "catch" the faith? I remember Sunday School teachers and youth workers making it clear that their faith brought joy and love into their lives. I remember sitting in the kitchen with my Grandma as the smell of freshly baked cookies filled the air. She would open the bible and show me where to find the stories of faith that I learned on Sunday mornings. And of course, we would share a cup of tea. Find a way to celebrate "the fame of your [God's] abundant goodness" with those of a different generation.

Fri., Sept 22: [Philippians 1:21-30](#) Paul writes, "For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain." These words are echoed by Christian martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer in a sermon written twelve years before his execution. His words and actions go on to show the power of the cross over death itself. "No one has yet believed in God and the kingdom of God, no one has yet heard about the realm of the resurrected, and not been homesick from that hour, waiting and looking forward joyfully to being released from bodily existence...Death is hell and night and cold, if it is not transformed by our faith. But that is just what is so marvelous, that we can transform death." (Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy, Eric Metaxas (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010) p. 517.

Sat., Sept. 23: [Matthew 20:1-16](#) One point that we can draw from this parable is that we won't have special favor with God even if we have lived our entire life as a Christian. We will not be "paid" extra. Jesus is just as willing to welcome into his presence someone who has only followed him for a short time. Then why not put off following Jesus until after we have done every bad thing we might want to do? Then we can repent and ask forgiveness when we're old. To answer this question, we must remember Jesus' promise to give us an abundant life here and now. An abundant life is filled with love and service that leaves us satisfied and hopeful at day's end and makes the world a better place. A life of faith is its own reward.

For an online discussion of these and other questions concerning the texts, go to our Facebook FELC Engage Page: <https://www.facebook.com/FELC-Engage-Page-Downtown-Site>.

FELC NS Engage Page: September 17, 2017

Matthew 18:15-20 *"If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."*

Sun., Sep 17: Family Project: Jesus stresses that whatever his disciples loose on earth or bind on earth will be loosed or bound in heaven. We know it's an important topic since he says it twice! Get a container of bubbles and a wand for everyone in the family. Discuss what it means to bind something and what it means to loose something. Then spend some time loosing wonderful feelings and attitudes all over your house and one another. Fill your bubbles with love and forgiveness and watch as they burst out their blessings.

Mon., Sep 18: Confrontation. Many of us get sick to our stomach just thinking of it. We are conditioned at an early age to avoid confrontation at all costs. However, that attitude can get in the way of healthy relationships, preventing us from working out misunderstandings and resulting in loss of trust. Is there someone who you have been avoiding? Did they do something that hurts or angers you? If you want an open relationship, it is your responsibility to let them know. Pray about how to follow Jesus in fearless and loving openness.

Tues., Sep 19: As a National Guard officer in 1931, Elbert Tuttle was sent to Elberton, Georgia to help restrain a lynch mob calling for the death of a black man accused of rape by a white woman. He watched as the man was found guilty and subsequently executed on mostly contrived evidence. Years later, Elbert became a chief justice for the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. Stanley Saunders writes, "Elbert Tuttle, ... bound himself to the cause of a black man wrongly accused and sentenced to die. ...[H]e bound himself to the ongoing struggle to loose the shackles of racism that still plague our country. Tuttle became...the chief jurist not only of the Fifth Circuit, but of the Civil Rights revolution of the 1950s and '60s. This is binding and loosing at its best and most powerful."

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3392

Wed., Sept. 20: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 The Israelites have been conquered and exiled to Babylon. They blame their situation on the sins of their parents and believe the saying, *"The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"*. (v.2) Those in exile would like to blame their predicament entirely on their ancestors. The Lord tells them that he will not punish a son for the sin of the father. *"It is only the person who sins that shall die."* (v.4) Even after a long explanation, the children of Israel hold onto their proverb, saying *"Why shouldn't the son suffer for the sin of the father?"* (v.19) They would like to continue to see themselves as victims of circumstances, since this absolves them of responsibility. Looking back at the sins of our fathers, particularly in the area of racism, may we not blame our ancestors in a way that absolves us of guilt or of responsibility. May we seek out and turn away from the ways that we have become comfortable with this evil in our land. The Lord says, "Turn, then, and live." (v.32)

Ideas from http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2187

Thurs., Sept. 21, Psalm 25:1-9 Back in the 70's, the praise choruses of the day included many psalms that were set to music. Psalm 25 was one of my favorites (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtmMM6w_Kww) and we would sing it in a call and response manner. Perhaps it's fitting that a memory from my teens includes a psalm with the prayer, *"Do not remember the sins of my youth"*. Usually, it is we ourselves who call the sins of our youth to mind, holding them over our own heads. This psalm invites us to confess them to the Lord, not wallowing in guilt, but living a life of praise and service to our God. We can use our past mistakes to teach us, but they do not define us.

Fri., Sept 22: Philippians 2:1-13 This passage ends, *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* (v.12-13) At first glance these two verses seem to be at odds with one another. If we are working out our own salvation, how can it actually be God's work? Just as we cannot claim responsibility for our intelligence, we cannot claim responsibility for a will to do right—both are gifts from God. Our call then is to humbly recognize that they are gifts, and use them in service to others.

Sat., Sept. 23: Matthew 21:23-32 This is a parable that challenges me as a pastor. Am I one of those people who says "Yes" to my Lord and then goes my own way? So many others who do not wear the outer trappings of Christianity act in a manner more generous or loving or forgiving. I am reminded of the saying, "If you are going to talk the talk, you have to walk the walk." My shortcomings often happen when I am afraid of the crowd as the chief priests and elders were. I am tempted to allow the opinions of others to prevent my taking a stand for my faith. I pray for a single-minded devotion to the work of Jesus and a steadfast belief in his authority.

For an online discussion of these and other questions concerning the texts, go to our Facebook *FELC Engage Page*: [https://www.facebook.com/FELC Engage Page-North Site](https://www.facebook.com/FELCEngagePage-NorthSite).