

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. 24, 2017 At-A-Glance

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
9:15/9:25 a.m.	Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge/NS Library
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

Monday

9 a.m. Monday Morning Quilters, DS Fellowship Hall
Noon Intern Enrichment Ministry Team, DS Lounge
8:15 p.m. Pick Up Basketball, NS Activity Center

Tuesday

6:15 a.m. High School Girl's Breakfast Club, Chefo's in Kimberly
6:30 a.m. Men's Ministry, Angel's Restaurant
5:30 p.m. Outreach & Social Ministry Team, NS Office
6:30 p.m. Congregation Council, NS Library

Wednesday

10:30 a.m. Bible Study with Pastor Mary, DS 221
5:30 p.m. Handbell Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
6:15 p.m. Wednesday Worship, DS Sanctuary
6:30 p.m. Parish Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
7 p.m. Confirmation General Session, DS Assigned Small Group Rooms
7 p.m. Kid's Life, DS 014
7 p.m. reFUEL Grades 10-12, DS Youth Room
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 Study *Together by Grace*, DS Lounge
9 a.m. Adult Bible Study *Together by Grace*, DS Lounge
1 p.m. Daytime Women's Book Club, DS Lounge
7:30 p.m. Ukulele Class, DS Choir Room

Friday

6:30 a.m. Men's Ministry, NS Library
5:45 p.m. *License to Cruise* Parking Fundraiser, DS Parking Lot

Saturday

8:30 a.m. Octoberfest Parking Fundraiser, DS Parking Lot

Sunday, Oct. 1

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
9:15/9:25 a.m. Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge/NS Library
9:15 a.m. Confirmation Youth Group, NS Activity Center & Youth Room
9:15/9:25 a.m. Children's Learning Time, DS/NS

The Grateful Plateful

Join us at the Fox Valley Warming Shelter's annual fundraiser, the Grateful Plateful, Wednesday, Oct. 4, from 5-8 p.m. at Liberty Hall in Kimberly. Meal, silent and live auction, entertainment and a program, all for only \$50; a table of 10 for \$450. Register on our website at www.foxvalleywarmingshelter.org or call Connie at 419-0928.



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.

Love Jesus. Live your call.

Sunday at FELC

Day on the Mission Field

Sept. 17-23 are sponsored by Bob and Anita Damon in honor of Stephanie Olson.

Sunday Learning Time

At the Downtown Site: The adult learning time (9:15 in the Lounge) is focusing on teachings in the book *Together by Grace*. Each week is independent, so come and learn any of the weeks that the topic appeals to you. This week, Roberta Albrecht will guide us through the chapter, *From the Sixteenth Century to Today*. In her years as a professor, Roberta nurtured an enduring interest in history, and she will be introducing us to influential individuals who spread Lutheranism from a small movement in Germany throughout the world. Learn more about Martin Luther himself along with others, including 21st century peace activist and Nobel Prize winner, Leymah Gbowee from Liberia.

At the North Site: We are beginning a new learning time called, *Connecting with the Word*. Pastors Jeff and Mary will lead this discussion time in the Library at 9:25, using the "Engage Page" that is included every week in our bulletin. The goal will be making connections with the texts for the week and our day to day lives. In the process we will get to know one another better, making connections also with our church family. Come and connect with one another and with the Word.

Announcements
Week of Sept. 24, 2017

North Site

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

Looking Ahead

YOU ARE INVITED!
STEWARDSHIP BRUNCH
Family friendly event; open to all ages
Sunday, Oct. 15, 2017

Enjoy the company of your church family along with the pastors for a special time of fellowship, reflection and giving thanks to God in celebration of our FELC ministries. Brunch for the entire family will be served at both sites on Sunday, Oct. 15.

During this fellowship event, we will reflect upon our own faith life and share how we are called to give as a way of life. Please plan to attend!

Downtown Site - Fellowship Hall
Serving at 9:10 & 10:30 a.m.

North Site - Gathering Area
Serving at 9:15 a.m.

To RSVP, please visit www.felc.com,
call the church office, or sign up in the
Gathering Area.

Nursery care will be provided upon request.

Assistance is needed in the preparation and implementation of this event: volunteers to help with setup, cleanup, cooking, baking, and serving. If you are interested in helping with this important event, please contact Becky Kallio at bkallio@felc.com or call (920)738-0299.

Equal Exchange Coffee Project

When considering having a cup of coffee, give some thought to the plight of the small farmers who produce it. Equal Exchange cuts out the middlemen and provides fresh coffee to you by always paying a fair price to the farmer co-ops, EE helps build and protect sustainable farming communities in Latin America and Africa. We are selling fairly traded products next Sunday Oct. 1. Hope to see you there.

50+ Annual Soup Buffet

Oct. 19 is the date for the annual soup buffet. A signup sheet is on the kiosk 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.



We Need Towels!

Thanks to many contributors, we have enough items for 15 more Health Kits but we do need towels (light-weight, dark colored, bath size) to complete them. Can you help us out? Watch for sales - use coupons. Just place them on the donation table in the Gathering Area.

God's Work: Quilting With Our Hands

The Monday morning quilters meet weekly from 9-11:30 a.m. in the Downtown Site Fellowship Hall. Please drop by any part of the morning to help cut fabric, tie knots, iron, lay-out fabric squares or sew seams. All quilts made are donated to those in need in the local community and world.

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.

The Sun Sets on Faith Family Sundays

In the past the Sunday School curriculum has included Faith Family Sundays in an attempt to encourage families to worship together. This year, instead of taking the first Sunday of each month off for Faith Family Sunday, we have incorporated "no Sunday School" dates in the calendar when families can celebrate our common mission together as a faith family by attending Stewardship Brunch and Palm Sunday Brunch or on holiday weekends when we know people are scattered far, like Thanksgiving. This new structure says when we are together we worship and learn together as a community every chance we get. When you come, we will meet you.

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.

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.



Next summer, FELC youth and their chaperones will gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, TX. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives. Please support this important mission trip. You can:

Park. The annual License to Cruise and Oktoberfest events in downtown Appleton are Friday, Sept. 29 and Saturday, Sept. 30. Please support the youth attending the gathering by parking in the First English lot for these events. Friday: 5:45 - 8 p.m. and Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. The cost is \$5.

Bake. A bake sale will be held at both sites on Sunday, Oct. 1. Please consider baking for the sale. Drop off is at the Downtown Site on Saturday morning Sept. 30 from 9-11 a.m. Oktoberfest parking volunteers will be happy to take your donation inside for you if you would like "drive through drop off."

Buy and Eat. Shop at the bake sale. All proceeds will go toward the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering trip expenses.

Pray. Pray for safe travels, deepened relationships among the group and life changing experiences during the week.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

This is an educational program designed to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend. Class meets for two hours once per week for six weeks on Wednesdays, Oct. 4-Nov. 8 from 1-3 p.m. at FVHO Health & Wellness, 3925 N. Gateway Dr., Appleton. There is no cost. To register contact Jean Monson at (920)702-4816 or jmonson@fvho.org by Sept. 29.

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
- Karen Schultz
- Walter Seacotte

Prayers of Comfort

- Families of:
- Sandra Raasch
 - Ada St. John

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Baptism of:

- Clara Marie Gavin

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

Fox Valley Lutheran Homes Annual Pie, Ice Cream, & Silent Auction

Oct. 1, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Check out the wonderful silent auction items and have your dessert before dinner!




High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Sept. 24, 2017

reFUEL

DS YOUTH ROOM
WEDNESDAYS 7-8PM
For Grades 10-12

- 9/27: "When Jesus hits you in the face" Expect to get messy!
- 10/4: Prayer, obedience, and following Jesus National Mental Illness Awareness Week
- 10/11: Trivia Night: Bible Stories Emoji Edition 



Seraphim Choir returns to its old place and time!
8:05-8:30 p.m.
DS Choir Room

Open to 7-12 grade students
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

Commitment form due to Heidi by Sept. 27

Questions? Contact Heidi hschreiner@felc.com

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. 24, 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. Contact Kathy Larson (klarson@felc.com) 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



A BUNCH MORE JUST LIKE BEFORE

Hey, families, you did great last Sunday learning the new Sunday School routine! This structure - Opening Assembly in Fellowship Hall or the North Site Lower Level, student class time, and then family and congregation wrap-up with Pastor Chat in the Sanctuary - is the new way we will be learning each Sunday. So, meet us in Fellowship

Hall at 9:15 a.m. or the North Site Lower Level at 9:25 a.m. this morning, again in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m. at the Downtown Site

or 10:10 a.m. at the North Site,

and give us a bunch of Sundays more just like before!

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.



Kids Life is Up & Runnin' Don't Miss It!

Last Wednesday students grades K-6 started their first week of Kids Life. At Kids Life we talk about faith, do cool projects, watch movies, have fun holiday parties, and more but most importantly, we MAKE NEW FRIENDS! All are welcome to join us any week on Wednesdays at the Downtown Site from 7-8 p.m. in room 014.

Friends are always invited to attend. Come have fun with your faith family on Wednesday nights!



Did You Know? You Can Always Go!

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

New singers are always welcome. So, no matter the Sunday we welcome your voice!



Confirmation and Middle School Scoop



Back In The Swing Of This Confirmation Thing



The first week is under our belt and we are back in the swing of things. Here's what you should have done for this Wednesday.

- ⇒ 7th grade families should have read Chapter 1. The student should have one of the Questions to Ponder completed in their journal for small group.
- ⇒ 8th grade families should have read Chapters 1 & 2. The student should have one of the Questions to Ponder completed in their journal for small group.
- ⇒ 9th grade students will be watching the documentary *Fox2-O* and talking about God's call for us to be good stewards of the environment.

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 Today!

Any 7th - 9th graders looking for something to do on Sundays? Come to Confirmation Youth Group at the North Site! We 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.

FELC DS Engage Page: September 24 2017

Mat. 20:1-16 *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; & he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, & I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. When he went out again about noon & about 3 o'clock, he did the same. And about 5 o'clock he went out & found others standing around; & he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers & give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about 5 o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."*

Sun., Sep 24: Family Project: Make a deal with your children, "I'll give you \$5.00 if you mow for 3 hours, \$5.00 for 2 hours, or \$5.00 for 1 hour. Which do you choose?" Then do the same with an activity they love—for example, "I'll give you \$5.00 and you can go swimming for 1 hour, for 2 hours, or 3 hours. Which do you choose?" In this parable, does it make a difference if we think of the payment being for something we enjoy? Our "work" for Jesus brings abundant life.

Mon., Sep 25: In his song "Broken Things", Matthew West reminds us that "Grace is a kingdom with arms open wide" singing that "the first will be last and the last get a crown." Let the words of this song heal your heart if you feel beyond the grace of God. God's economy isn't run on power and prestige, and his honor doesn't depend on popularity. If you feel you are among the last, take comfort that God uses "broken things." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdUu6ZsdVfM>

Tues., Sep 26: In order to be fair, people should have to pay for the bad choices they make. We want to believe that living with integrity will be rewarded—if not in this life then in the next. However, keeping track of whether we deserve a reward or others deserve punishment can be exhausting, taking the joy out of the moment. Live as God calls, being generous with love and leaving judgment to God.

Wed., Sept. 27: 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. 28, 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 29: 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. 30: 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-Downtown-Site>.

FELC NS Engage Page: September 24, 2017

Matthew 21:23-32 *When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.*

Sun., Sept., 24: Family Project: In this passage, one brother says no to his father and goes to work anyway, while another says yes and doesn't go. In it we are strongly challenged to have the words we speak about our faith match the actions that we do in our lives—a sentiment expressed in this reggae song by Rocky Dawuni. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVPENCDxpEs> Listen to the song and then discuss ways to make your faith walk match your talk. How do we incorporate messages from sources that aren't explicitly Christian, but live out and express Jesus' teachings?

Mon., Sept. 25: My daughter started talking later than most (she has since made up for lost time), and when she was in Early Childhood classes wasn't speaking much at all. Over half way through the year, she made a breakthrough when a classmate took her spot at the front of the line. "You are not the leader!", she said clearly and forcefully. There isn't much that angers us more than someone usurping authority that isn't rightfully theirs. Jesus' authority, however, is firmly established on the cross. At the foot of the cross, we can say to Jesus, "You are my leader!"

Tues., Sept. 26: I am struck by how hard the chief priests and elders have to work to come up with a response to Jesus' question. How can they speak truthfully without offending anyone? Instead, they avoid the question. I have to admit to trying to be "*not offensive to anyone*". The trouble is that the gospel often offends in its radical inclusion and grace. May we have the strength to proclaim it compassionately but truthfully.

Wed., Sept. 27: [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. 28, [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 29: [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. 30: [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/FELCEngagePage-NorthSite>.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE HURRICANE HARVEY

AUGUST 2017

ELCA.org/disaster

Hurricane Harvey hit the Gulf Coast of the United States on Aug. 25, 2017, threatening millions of people in coastal Texas and Louisiana with multiple days of heavy rain, winds and rising tides. While many have evacuated, significant damage is still expected, and thousands of people may be housed in shelters for an extended period of time.

be there to accompany those affected through every phase of this disaster.

We invite you to stand by our neighbors on the Gulf Coast during this time. Your gifts ensure that our church will be able to provide help and hope for those left homeless or otherwise affected by this disaster for years to come.

Lutheran Disaster Response's affiliate is actively present, collaborating with community leaders and officials to initiate the proper responses, particularly the long-term recovery efforts. Together, we have a strong history of working with Disasters in the Gulf Coast area. The road to recovery will be long, and Lutheran Disaster Response will

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response designated for "Hurricane Response – United States" will be used entirely (100 percent) for this disaster until the response is complete. Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support. Give today to support the needs in this response and others like it.

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YES, I WANT TO HELP!

Lutheran Disaster Response: *Hurricane Response, U.S.* \$ _____ DDG0073

Lutheran Disaster Response: *Where Needed Most, U.S.* \$ _____ DDG0010

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP code _____

Email Address _____

Give through your congregation or make your check out to Lutheran Disaster Response and send to: **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gift Processing Center P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009**

Write "*Hurricane Response, United States*" or "*Lutheran Disaster Response, U.S.*" on your check's memo line.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.