

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 Downtown Site Nursery (located across from the Library in the Gathering Area) is open for family use during all services and staffed during the 9:15 a.m. service. The North Site Nursery (off the main hallway, across from the restrooms) is staffed at both services. 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 Feb. 18, 2018 At-A-Glance

Sunday, Feb. 18

8:50 a.m.
9:15 a.m.
9:15/9:25 a.m.
9:30 a.m.

Cherub/Angelus Choir Rehearsal, DS 220/Choir Room
Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge
Children's Learning Time, DS/NS
Women's Study Group, NS Library

Monday

9 a.m.
Noon
6:30 p.m.
8:15 p.m.

Monday Morning Quilters, DS Fellowship Hall
Intern Enrichment Ministry Team, DS Lounge
GriefShare, DS Lounge
Pick Up Basketball, NS Activity Center

Tuesday

6:30 a.m.
5:30 p.m.
6:45 p.m.

Men's Ministry, NS Library
Executive Committee, DS Lounge
Finance Committee, DS 110

DS=Downtown Site
NS=North Site

Wednesday

9:30 a.m.
10:15 a.m.
Noon
4:45 p.m.

Lenten Morning Service, DS Sanctuary
Lenten Study with Pastor Mary, DS 221
Noon Hour Philosophers, DS Fellowship Hall
Lenten Meal, DS Fellowship Hall
Handbell Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
Lenten Evening Services, DS Sanctuary
Parish Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
Confirmation General Session, DS Assigned Small Group Rooms
Kid's Life, DS 014
reFUEL Grades 10-12, DS Youth Room

Thursday

6 a.m.
9 a.m.
6:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.

Early Risers Women's Bible Study, DS Lounge
Adult Bible Study, DS Lounge
ATC Open Basketball, NS Activity Center
Ukulele Combo Rehearsal, DS Choir Room

Friday

6:30 a.m.
6:30 a.m.
9 a.m.
6:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.

Men's Ministry, NS Library
MacDowell Male Chorus, NS
Cherub/Angelus Choir Rehearsal, DS 220/Choir Room
Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge
Children's Learning Time, DS/NS
Women's Study Group, NS Library

Sunday, Feb. 25

8:50 a.m.
9:15 a.m.
9:15/9:25 a.m.
9:30 a.m.

Cherub/Angelus Choir Rehearsal, DS 220/Choir Room
Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge
Children's Learning Time, DS/NS
Women's Study Group, NS Library

Mark Your Calendars for the Fox River Chamber Fest

The Fox River Chamber Fest returns to First English this summer, building on last year's success. Founded and directed by Appleton native Joseph Hauer, this event is hosted by The Arthur Krempin School of Music & Art. The Fest's musicians are accomplished professionals, all with local roots or connections. They'll present four different concerts in eight days: Friday, July 13, Sunday July 15, Thursday, July 19 and Saturday, July 21. All performances will be at the FELC Downtown Site at 7 p.m., except Sunday's which will be at 3 p.m. The concerts are free and open to the public. Make plans now to attend!



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.

North Site

Sunday Worship: 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.
Office Hours: W: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Announcements
Week of Feb. 18, 2018

Love Jesus. Live your call.

Sunday at FELC

Scrip Sale!

If you ordered a SCRIP card last week, please pick it up today in the Gathering Area from which it was purchased. The youth heading to the ELCA Youth Gathering this summer thank you for your support!

Help for the Homeless

FELC is collecting NEW hygiene and cleaning items for local crisis agencies through The Family radio's annual *Help for the Homeless* hygiene drive, today through Mar. 11. Please place your donations in the *Help for the Homeless* collection box located in the Gathering Area by Mar. 11. Most urgently needed items are cleaning supplies, laundry soap, garbage bags, dental and hair care, baby diapers, paper products, and feminine care. Thank you!

Engage Page Writers Needed

The First English Engage Page has become important to many in our congregation. As Pastor Mary prepares for a sabbatical this summer, she is hoping that many in our congregation would be willing to write one or two 110 word devotions for the time that she is gone. If you would be willing to help out by writing a short devotion, please contact Pastor Mary at 733-2303 or mbauer@felc.com.

2018 Congregation Council

Please welcome the new members to the Congregation Council who were elected at the Annual Meeting, Feb. 11. They are Dayton Henderson, Deni Kuchler and Dave Lindenstruth. Hollie Holtebeck was voted in by the congregation to fill the remaining term of the Council seat vacated by John Zweig's resignation. Please thank them for serving our congregation in this very important role. Also, a sincere thank you to the Council members whose terms have ended for their years of gracious service: Colny Gretzinger, Jon Hagen, Derek Jones, Chris Kennedy, Allison McGinnis and John Zweig. For further details of items discussed at the meeting, pick up a copy of the Annual Report in the Gathering Area.

Prayer Shawls

The prayer shawl ministry at First English is a way to have something tangible to grasp during time of prayer, grief, sorrow, joy, or any time you are in need of a comforting prayer. The shawls have been knit with patience and love, blessed by a pastor and inscribed with a First English tag. They are free to gift to anyone you may know that could need a loving gesture in the name of Jesus our Lord. Take a shawl and a prayer card and give the gift of presence. Prayer shawls are located at both sites in the Gathering Area or Church Office.

Sunday at FELC

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Meditations on Psalms

Join others for an ongoing discussion of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *Meditations on the Psalms* on Sunday mornings from 9:15-10:15 a.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge.

Looking Ahead

Ukulele Combo Rehearsal

Join the First English Ukulele Combo! An extension of the previously offered Ukulele class, the Combo focuses on learning songs to play for Worship. The next rehearsal is Thursday, Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m. in the Downtown Site Choir Room. For those of you who would feel more comfortable with continued learning rather than performance, or for more information, please contact Rodney McComb at rmccomb@felc.com.

Confirmation Rehearsal Meal Helpers Needed

Every year we celebrate the completion of the Confirmation journey of the year's Confirmands with a rehearsal meal for students and their families. We have been grateful for the help of many in the congregation with this event in the past. This year the rehearsal dinner is Wednesday, Apr. 11 at the North Site. We need folks to help set-up, serve food, and clean-up after. You can choose the shift that works for you at www.felc.com/forms. Our helpers find this is a fun way to serve and celebrate with our Confirmation families.

Summer Chamber Music

Are you or your child interested in being in a summer chamber music group? Download a registration form at www.felc.com/forms. Sponsored by The Arthur Krempin School of Music & Art.

We Need Faith Interviewers!

Each 9th grade Confirmation student is required to participate in a faith interview as part of their final preparation for Affirmation of Baptism. This is an important opportunity for students to give voice to their ideas about faith. Every interview is given by two or three members of the congregation that have given their time to have kind, open ears to hear our students' thoughts. We need interviewers for the evenings of Tuesday, Apr. 3 and Wednesday, Apr. 4 at the Downtown Site. Interviewers do not need to be available both dates and all times to participate. You can see and select your preferred times via the First English webpage at www.felc.com/forms.

Help With Our Communion Class Seder

Each year our students grades 2 and higher participate in an educational Seder meal as part of their Communion Class. This is a fun activity that the student and their parents appreciate. This year the meal is served on Monday, Mar. 12 at the Downtown Site. The meal is brief, only about 30 minutes. We are looking for a few folks who can help prepare the simple dishes ahead of time, set tables, serve, and clean-up. To help go to www.felc.com/forms to choose your role.

GriefShare

GriefShare is a nation-wide ministry that helps people cope with the death of a loved one. This 13-week video curriculum is followed by a discussion where people are able to share their own experiences with grief. The spring session of GriefShare runs through the months of March and April. You are encouraged to join at any point in the curriculum. Sessions are on Monday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge.

Noon Hour Philosophers

The Noon Hour Philosophers meet for an hour at noon in the Downtown Site Fellowship Hall each Wednesday. If you have questions please contact Mary Poulson at mmaryjep@att.net or (920)734-8137.

Feb. 21: The Important Conservation Work of the Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust

Stephanie Vrabec, Board Member and Chair of the Development, Outreach, and Education Committee for the Northeast Wisconsin Landtrust

Prayers For Community Care

Each week we will be lifting up an organization in our area that works to provide vital services in our community. We are partners with many of these groups that show the light of God to those in need. Consider praying and possibly volunteering for the groups we mention. If you would like more information on any of these groups, please visit www.felc.com/outreach. This week's focus:

Appleton Police Department

Contact: Beth Jasiak, Assistant to the Chief
(920)832-5512; beth.jasiak@appleton.org

Don't Miss Out on Wednesday Lenten Meals at FELC

The Lenten meals have been a long standing tradition at FELC. Each Wednesday during the Lenten season, a meal is sponsored by one of the church ministry or fellowship teams. The meals start this Wednesday from 4:45-6 p.m., followed by worship in the Sanctuary at 6:15 p.m. All are welcome. A free will offering will be collected.

Feb. 21: BBQ Pork Sandwiches, sponsored by the 50+ Ministry group and the Miriam Circle, at the Downtown Site.

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
- David Heindel
- Doug Hansen
- George Krempin
- Amy Ponomarev
- Moore Peregrine
- Tom Roy
- Je'Ann Johnson
- Paul Henrikson
- Karen Reeck
- Juanita Gauerke
- Robb Schaefer
- Karen Schultz
- Walter Seacotte
- Barb Kuenzi
- Dean Peterson
- Kim Norland

Prayers of Comfort

- Families of:
- Roy Bartz
 - Bob Hinkens
 - Roger Karn
 - Ruth Rucks
 - Bill Vanden Elzen

Prayers for Those Called to Serve in Other Countries

- Stephanie Olson

Prayers for Those in Seminary

- David Shudy

Prayers for Those in the Military

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

AA Corner

If you are or someone you know could use some confidential help with stopping drinking, please call Dale R. at (920)419-2794.



High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Feb. 18, 2018

reFUEL

DS YOUTH ROOM
WEDNESDAYS 7-8 P.M.
For Grades 10-12



During the season of Lent, we will be expanding on topics that each speaker gives messages on during the Wednesday night worship services

2/21: Special Speakers Abby VanderLoop and Matt Hechel to discuss the mental health needs of our church community

2/28: Taco night! Nacho average youth group!

Father, help me to see this holy season of Lent as a time of spiritual renewal, rather than a time of deprivation. Motivate me to reach a new level of experiencing your grace, Amen.

ELCA Youth Gathering Updates

Fundraisers:

Today Sunday, Feb. 18: Scrip Pick Up

Payment schedule:

3rd Payment Installment (\$200) was due Feb. 15. Please get this to Heidi asap.



Questions? Contact Heidi
(hschreiner@felc.com)

Do you love Summer Intern Ministry and want to find a way to give back? We have the perfect opportunity for you! Offer on-site babysitting for this year's *Make an IMPACT!* fundraiser! The event is Friday, Mar. 2, 6:30-9:30 p.m. at The Outer Edge Stage. Babysitting will take place in the lower level of the venue which contains Sunday school classrooms. Contact Heidi Schreiner if you're interested in donating your services! (hschreiner@felc.com)

Feb. 18, 2018



Information for FELC Youth and Families
Grades K-12

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO SERVE TOGETHER?



◆ Help with the Communion Class Educational Seder Meal on Mar. 12. Make a simple dish in advance, set tables and do basic clean-up.

◆ Help with the 9th grade Confirmation Rehearsal Meal on Apr. 11. Help with set-up, serving, & clean-up.



Both are great service opportunities for Confirmation Family Assignments. Even if your child isn't in Confirmation service is always a great thing to do together!

Sign-ups are available at www.felc.com/forms.

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



We're In Lent and It's a Big Deal



The 40 days prior to Easter mark the season of Lent. Although many love the Advent and Christmas seasons, Lent and Easter remain the most essential in our understanding of Christ as our Savior. The color associated with Lent is purple which not only symbolizes Jesus' suffering for our sins, but also claim him as our King as purple is the color of royalty. Unlike many other traditions, ELCA Lutherans do not usually practice giving up things for Lent. Instead, we put away the word Alleluia and wait to joyfully resurrect it with Jesus on Easter, reflect on the impermanence of our worldly experience, and look to the radical love of Christ as he makes his way to the cross. Consider making these 40 days special in your home. We'll provide some easy exercises on the Pastor Chat sheets so be on the lookout!

Kid's Life Is Back This Week Don't Miss it!

A reminder that Kid's Life for ages K-grade 6 is back this week. Meet us this Wednesday from 7-8 p.m. in Downtown Site



Room 014 for a fun night of connecting and cool activities. Friends are always welcome!

Choir Corner Mark your calendars for our next Sundays to sing.

- ◆ Cherub will sing on Mar. 4 at 9:15 a.m. worship
- ◆ Angelus will sing on Mar. 11 at 9:15 a.m. worship. (Don't forget we spring ahead for daylight saving time.)

Going to miss church next week?
Don't forget that Pastor Chat sheets are now available online!

Confirmation Small Group for 7th & 8th Large Group for 9th



>7th grade students should have a Question to Ponder for chapter 8 completed in their journal

>8th grade students should have a Question to Ponder for chapter 8 completed in their journal

>9th grade students and interested parents will have a QPR (Question, Persuade, & Refer) Suicide Prevention presentation in Fellowship Hall



9th Grade Students:



links were sent out with faith interview and rehearsal meal sign-ups. Please let Kirsten know if you did not receive them.

Compassion Pantry Drive on Mar. 7 & 14



Now's the time to start stocking up on quick or no prep food items and basic hygiene products for our Compassion Pantry

More Snacks Than Swimmers

Right now we have more folks that signed up to bring snacks for the Pool Party on June 19 than swimmers. Don't forget to r.s.v.p. online at www.felc.com/forms.

Drive on Mar. 7 & 14. This has been an extremely popular service event in the past where we donate items for local students that have a gap in their basic needs. Granola bars and feminine hygiene products are the most often taken.

Have questions or want to volunteer?
Contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com or 733-2303.

Make an **IMPACT!**

Benefiting the Summer Intern Ministry of First English Lutheran Church

An evening of Celebration, Fellowship and Fundraising

Friday, Mar. 2, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Outer Edge Stage in Appleton | \$25/Ticket

Celebrity Appearances:

Bartending, Music, and Special Speakers:

Hailey Birling, Ben Cieslik, Abbey DesRochers,

Megan DesRochers, Tyler DesRochers, Sally Eronson,

Jordan Gross, Laurie Gross, Morgan Haefner,

Joe Hujet, Julia Hujet, Dave Lyle, and McKenna Rakestraw

Can't make the event?

**Everyone can participate in the
Pre-event raffle!**

Drawing held at noon on Feb. 26!

Ticket Prices: 1 for \$5, 5 for \$20 or 15 for \$40!

Purchase tickets now through Feb. 25:

Apple Series Watch 3

Valued at: \$359

*Water Resistant up to 50M *Built-in GPS *Capacity 8GB

*Easy to Use *Great Display *Speaker and Microphone

*Heart Rate Sensor *Faster Dual-core Processor

*Accelerometer, Altimeter, and Gyroscope

Make an **IMPACT!**
Benefiting the Summer Intern Ministry of First English Lutheran Church

How YOU Can Help Make an IMPACT!

Be a Sponsor:

Gold \$1,000 Cash Sponsor: Listed as major sponsor on event advertising, Recognized in event digital presentation, Website exposure, 4 admission tickets

Silver \$500 Sponsor: Listed as sponsor on all event advertising, Recognized in event digital presentation, Website exposure, 2 admission tickets

Donate an Item: We are looking for new, unused items, services, gift cards, and fellowship activities to be used for the silent auction, as a raffle item, or to create the many raffle baskets, at the committee's discretion.

Attend the Event: Tickets \$25 and are being sold in the Gathering Area between services and online at www.felc.com/impact.

I would like to be a Cash Sponsor

___ Gold \$1,000 Cash Sponsor

___ Silver \$500 Cash Sponsor

___ Cash Sponsor in the amount of \$___

I would like to Donate an Item:

Description:

Purchase Event Tickets

___ Number of Tickets \$___ Total

Contact Info:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please deliver this form and donation by Feb. 21, 2018, to the Downtown Site Office. Please make checks payable to FELC, and write IMPACT in the memo line. **We are grateful for your support!**

Lent 2018

Shaped By The Cross

*Meditations on
the Sufferings of Jesus*
Ken Gire

We are all the work of Your hand.
Isaiah 64:8



Do you ever come to church and wonder if you belong?

We are all people who struggle and *Shaped by the Cross* calls us to be open about those struggles and how God has used them to become people of hope and healing in the world.

Through study and by hearing the stories of others, we will grow to see how we are shaped by the hand of the Master, and how Christ calls us into community to help and be helped as we deal with challenges, suffering, loss, identity, and acceptance.

Wednesday

Worship Times:

9:30 a.m.
Downtown Site

6:15 p.m.
Downtown Site
2/21, 2/28, & 3/7

North Site
3/14 & 3/21

Lenten Meals:

4:45 p.m.
Downtown Site
2/21, 2/28, & 3/7

North Site
3/14 & 3/21

First English Lutheran Church

Downtown Site:
326 E North St., Appleton

North Site:
6331 N. Ballard Rd., Appleton

When one of us hurts, we all struggle.

Dig deeper into the topics presented by the speakers by joining us in study or by coming to a panel discussion. The panel discussions will include participants who have either dealt with the issue being discussed or who have family members dealing with that issue.

- Feb. 21 Stacey Dudley
We Are Made in the Image of God
Being Christian and gay
- Feb. 28 Jim Lain
We Are Becoming the Image of Christ
Lessons in living with cerebral palsy
- Mar. 7 Megan DesRochers
Our Wounds Open Us to Christ's Mercy
Living with anxiety
- Mar. 14 Dianne Droster
Surrendering Control of Those We Love
Living through divorce
- Mar. 21 Rev. Kara Roote (video)
Shaped in the Body of Christ
Becoming a community of mutual love

If you know someone who would benefit from hearing speakers on issues surrounding homosexuality, genetic conditions, mental health, or divorce, please consider inviting them to attend this series.

Wednesday

Panel Discussions:

7 p.m.
Downtown Site
2/21, 2/28, & 3/7

North Site
3/14 & 3/21

Shaped by the Cross Studies:

Wednesday, 10:15 a.m.
Downtown Site
2/14-4/4

Thursday, 9:30 a.m.
Downtown Site
2/15-4/5

Thank you, Lord,

*Thank you for the day of my
separation from the quarry.
Thank you for the holes and for
those who drilled them.
Thank you for the wedges and for
those who drove them.
Thank you for the ropes and for
those who held them.
Thank you for the rollers and for
those who moved them.
So many people played such
important parts in bringing me to you.
Most of all, Lord,
thank you for pointing your finger at the
stone and saying,
"That one. I want that one."*

Ken Gire
Shaped By the Cross. P. 27

FELC DS Engage Page: Lent 1, February 18, 2018

Mark 1:9-15 *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; I with you I am well pleased." And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; I repent, and believe in the good news."*

Sun, Feb 18: Family Project: Today our Old Testament lesson told the story of Noah and his family getting off the ark and God's promise to them that there would never again be a flood to destroy all the earth. Do some rainbow art, and with your completed project, name some of the promises of God that we can remember whenever we look at a rainbow. (*online examples: <https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/gods-promises-verses-in-the-bible/>*) Write those promises next to your rainbow and discuss which the ones you find particularly comforting or meaningful.

Mon, Feb 19: Jesus is at the center of God's plan for the world. When God's heavenly voice proclaims Jesus is His Son, it's as if He is saying, "Watch out! Notice what is going on here." Then Jesus is sent out into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. This experience of hardship right on the heels of exaltation can be mirrored in our own lives. When we experience God in a significant way, we can begin to think that nothing will bother us any more. Lent reminds us to turn our hearts to God every day instead of trusting past experiences. What is God asking you to notice today?

Tues, Feb 20: Prof. Matt Skinner describes the gospel of Mark. "We see that this gospel aims to paint Jesus' ministry as confrontational. He has come to combat and perhaps defeat forces determined to counteract God's intentions for human well-being. The first...incident of his public ministry in Mark will be an exorcism...The antagonists in Mark are not human ignorance and religio-political authority; they are spiritual forces, things that oppress human bodies and minds and defy human attempts to subdue them."* Lent asks us to abandon the division between spiritual and worldly concerns and to confront all evil. http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2342

Wed., Feb 21, Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16 Elizabeth Webb describes the importance of Abram and Sarai receiving new names. "Whoever we may think we are (dirty, shameful, broken), God knows who we really are, and frees and calls us to live into the name that God has given us. To know our true name is, as it was for Abraham and Sarah, to turn, to reorient ourselves according to that name, and to live it. Just as God's naming of Abraham and Sarah was also a calling, in naming us God is calling us to discipleship, casting off the old names by which we've been known, and living into (and maybe "up to") the name that God bestows." Remember every day that you have been named a child of God! http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1223

Thurs, Feb 22, Psalm 22:23-31 It is good for us to remember how this psalm starts. The psalmist cries out the words that Jesus will echo from the cross. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Firstly, as James Limburg reminds us, it is good to know "If Jesus believed himself forsaken, far from God, it should not be surprising that ordinary believers feel that way at times!" He also reminds us, "There are questions that we shall never have answered. Many of them begin with "Why?"... The psalm suggests that the place to bring these questions is before God, in the company of the gathering of believers."* So often it is in the gathering of the community we are encouraged, and can say with the Psalmist, "I will live for him." *Limburg, James, Psalms (Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, 2000) p. 498.

Fri, Feb 23, Romans 4:13-25 What is possible with faith? For Abraham, faith in God let him believe that he would have many descendants even at a time when he was childless. William Barclay relates a story about Mother Theresa. "Once Saint Theresa set out to build a convent with a sum the equivalent of half a crown as her complete resources. Someone said to her, "Not even Saint Theresa can accomplish much with half a crown." "True," she answered, "but Saint Theresa and half a crown and God can do anything." Where is God calling you out in faith? Are you being prompted to share the love and grace of Christ with someone? Trust God and step out in faith! *Barclay, William, The Letter to the Romans (Westminster Press, Philadelphia) p. 69.

Sat, Feb 24, Mark 8:31-38 How difficult it must have been for Peter to hear this public reprimand given by Jesus! We know Jesus acted out of mercy and grace, so we must wonder why this reprimand wasn't given in private. I imagine Peter was only saying what everyone was thinking. There are times when we are tempted to stop those who we love from doing what God is calling them to do. Because we set our minds on our own feelings of loneliness or concern, we can prevent our loved ones from fulfilling their call. When counseling family and friends, remember Peter and set your mind on God's call and not your own desires.

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

FELC NS Engage Page: Lent 2 February 18, 2018

Mark 8:31-38 *Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."*

Sun, Feb 18: Family Project: Names are important! Simon's name is changed to Peter and Abram and Sarai become Abraham and Sarah when they are caught up in the work of God. What names define you? Listen to "Hello, My Name Is" by Matthew West. Then make nametags for yourself, both what you would like to be called and what you fear being called. Finally make a nametag for each person, using names they are given by God. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuJWQzjfU3>

Mon, Feb 19: In truth, I would probably be right there with Peter, reprimanding Jesus, and asking him to quit talking about death. I would be tempted to place my trust in the positive reputation and respect that Jesus was being given by those he had healed or taught or freed. Instead, Jesus demands that we walk right past prestige and right towards our cross. When we lay down our lives to follow God's plan; when we lay down worldly acclaim in pursuit of humble service; when we pick up our cross and walk after Jesus, it's then that we realize the joy of finding our life hidden in Christ

Tues, Feb 20: Prof. Michael Rogness discusses what it means to take up your cross. *"The 'theology of the cross' or 'to deny oneself' does not mean a contrived kind of humility. We do not follow Jesus by demeaning ourselves. We are called upon to do the very best we can with the talents and abilities God has given us. To 'deny oneself' means to keep one's priorities in harmony with what Jesus told us in the two 'great commandments' -- love God and love your neighbor."* http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2316

Wed., Feb 21, Gen. 9:8-17 After the flood, God sets the rainbow in the sky as a sign of the promise he makes to never destroy the earth by a flood. God says, *"This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."* (v.17) It is clear that God's intention is to make the earth a place where all creation flourishes, birds, animals, and all living creatures. We are called to become part of this flourishing of all creation, realizing that the promise in the rainbow is not simply a promise *to us* but also a promise *through us* to the earth itself. However you are called, find ways that you can live out the promise of the rainbow by keeping this planet a place where life thrives.

Thurs, Feb 22, Psalm 25:1-10 When my son was five and beginning to learn violin, his teacher would have him start each lesson by bowing to her and saying, "Teach me to learn." The psalmist displays this attitude of respect and humility that is the first step in being teachable. When I am full of myself and my own abilities, it is very hard for anyone to break through with new information. As this psalm begins, the writer magnifies God, proclaiming his greatness and might. He goes on to confess his own shortcomings and to ask for mercy. The writer is asking God to teach him how to learn, how to be open and accepting of the Lord's lessons. This Lent, ask God to teach you how to be a humble and expectant learner.

Fri, Feb 23, I Peter 3:18-22 In this passage, Peter does not suggest Noah and his family were saved *from* the water of the flood, but rather *through* or even *by* water. Peter shows that the underlying symptom of sinfulness was more of a threat than the waters of the flood. Similarly, God uses the cleansing waters of baptism to prepare a people with hearts that can differentiate between wrong and right, and who desire to follow Jesus. The waters of baptism do not strengthen your ability to deal with sin on your own, but those waters are a cleansing flood and they wash everything in their path. This Lent, confess your sins and look to your baptism as a flood of righteousness that can dislodge the most stubborn stains.

Sat, Feb 24, Mark 1:9-15 Caroline Lewis suggests we look at Jesus going to face temptation armed only with the word of God, and asks us to acknowledge our one true temptation—believing that God is not present. Jesus enters the wilderness, *"Not with fighting skills, not with self-help strategies, not with techniques for passing the tests, but only his personal knowledge...that God will be there."* Whether we are tempted by alcohol, food, or an inability to forgive, we are asked during Lent to give up the mindset that we face these struggles alone. We are asked to believe that we are beloved children of God, and participants in the power of the resurrection! * <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=3537>

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