

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 Mar. 4, 2018 At-A-Glance

Sunday, Mar. 4

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

Monday

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

Tuesday

6:30 a.m.
1 p.m.

Wednesday

9:30 a.m.
10:15 a.m.
Noon
4:45 p.m.
5:30 p.m.
6:15 p.m.
7 p.m.
7 p.m.
7 p.m.
7 p.m.

Thursday

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

Friday

6:30 a.m.

Sunday, Mar. 11

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

DS = Downtown Site NS = North Site

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
Confirmation Camp Registration/Deposit Deadline
Monday Morning Quilters, DS Fellowship Hall
Intern Enrichment Ministry Team, DS Lounge
GriefShare, DS Lounge
Board Games Guild Life Group, NS Library
Pick Up Basketball, NS Activity Center

Men's Ministry, NS Library
Judith Circle, DS 114

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
Lenten Study & Panel: *Shaped by the Cross*, DS Lounge
Parish Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
Confirmation General Session, DS Assigned Rooms
Kid's Life, DS 014
reFUEL Grades 10-12, DS Youth Room

Early Risers Women's Bible Study, DS Lounge
Adult Bible Study, DS Lounge
ATC Open Basketball, NS Activity Center

Men's Ministry, NS Library
Daylight Savings Time Begins
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
New Horizon's Orchestra Concert, NS Sanctuary

Mark Your Calendars for the New Downtown Site Summer Hours!

This summer First English is trying something new: two worship services on Sunday morning at the Downtown Site instead of three. The times will be 8:30 and 10 a.m. beginning May 27 and continuing through Sept. 2. With Pastor Mary being on Sabbatical, this is a perfect opportunity to see if one fewer service on Sunday in the summer is a good fit. Regular worship times will return after Labor Day.



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.

Love Jesus. Live your call.

Sunday at FELC

Altar Flowers

The Downtown Site altar flowers are provided by the Geberts in honor of Katrina's birthday.

Day on the Mission Field

Mar. 1 was sponsored in honor of Julie Damon's birthday.

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.

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. Urgently needed items are cleaning supplies, laundry soap, garbage bags, personal care, baby diapers and paper products.

Thank You!

The Intern Enrichment Ministry Team would like to thank everyone who helped to make the *Make an IMPACT!* fundraiser a success! Watch for details and photos in the April newsletter. Also, thank you to all who purchased raffle tickets for the pre-raffle event. The winner of the Apple Watch was Curt Dhein. Congratulations Curt!

Fair Trade Coffee Project Sunday

When having a cup of coffee, give some thought to the plight of the small farmers who produce it. For if you buy an ordinary brand of coffee, you are inadvertently maintaining a system which keeps small farmers poor, while lining the pockets of powerful middlemen. Equal Exchange, provides an alternative. It cuts out the middlemen and provides fresh coffee for 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. Stop in the Gathering Area and make a purchase!

North Site Women's Study Group

Today the North Site Women's Study Group begins discussing Brene Brown's book, *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are*. The group meets at 9:30 a.m. and works its way through the 10 guideposts that Brown uses to help us "engage our minds, hearts and spirits" and help us "explore how we can cultivate the courage, compassion, and connection to wake up in the morning and think, *No matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough...I am worthy of love and belonging.*" Books are available for \$9. Today will be an overview of the book and a video introduction of the author. We hope to see you there! For more information, contact Deni Kuchler at deni.kuchler@gmail.com.

Announcements
Week of Mar. 4, 2018



High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Mar. 4, 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

- 3/7: Lent Topic: Our Wounds Open Us to Christ's Mercy
Speaker: Megan DesRochers
- 3/14: Lent Topic: Surrendering Control of Those We Love
Speaker: Dianne Droster

"Lent is about becoming, doing, and changing, whatever it is that is blocking the fullness of life in us right now."

-J. Chittister

ATTENTION GRADUATING SENIORS!

FELC offers four different scholarships for graduating seniors. All scholarship qualifications and applications can be found at www.felc.com/forms under the High School column. Applications can be sent to Heidi. Questions, contact Heidi Schreiner (hschreiner@felc.com).

ELCA Youth Gathering Updates

March Calendar

Mar. 11: Scrip Sale

Mar. 18: Scrip Pick Up

Mar. 25: Palm Sunday Brunch Helpers

Sign up Geniuses are out!



Questions? Contact Heidi
(hschreiner@felc.com)

Mar. 4, 2018



Information for FELC Youth and Families
Grades K-12

VBS PLANNING TEAM NEEDS YOUR NOODLE!



Each year we find that pre-packaged Vacation Bible School curriculum is both expensive and often doesn't meet our needs. This year we are unpacking the FELC VBS program and building a version from the ground up that will hopefully incorporate more family involvement and spark our congregational creativity. We will be meeting soon to start coalescing ideas and crew.



Please go to the www.felc.com/forms page to let us know if you can help. We will send a Doodle survey out to find the time that works best for those interested to meet. We need your noodle to brainstorm an exciting new program!

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



Turn Around in Lent

During Lent we are offering a different one day family activity each week to help focus on this special time of year. The activity will be on the back half of the Pastor Chat sheet.

During Lent we don't just look at ways to take things out of our lives, we also look at ways to acknowledge and replicate the ways of Jesus.

This week the family Lent activity is kindness bombing for a day.

- >Hand out wrapped candies while you're at a sports game
- >Send a text or note to a friend or family member telling them something you admire about them
- >Read uplifting passages in the Bible to one another
- >Bring a cupcake or cookie to your teachers/bosses

The possibilities to show Christ's love in the world are limitless. When we jam-pack a day with kindness we are reminded that Christ showed us the way to be kind to all.

Communion Class Is Filling Up

If you have a student grade 2 or higher that is ready to learn about and receive this sacrament, please register in advance at www.felc.com/forms. This class is on Monday, Mar. 12 from 6-8 p.m. for students & parents at the Downtown Site.



**Remember Kid's Life on Wednesday Nights,
7-8 p.m. Downtown Site Room 014.**

Those Voices Are Ready to Sing!

Cherub Choir sings TODAY at 9:15 a.m. worship.

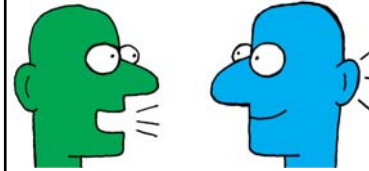
Angelus Choir sings Sunday, Mar. 11 at 9:15 a.m. at the Downtown Site and Wednesday, Mar. 14 at 6:15 p.m. at the North Site



Confirmation

Grades 7 & 8 Small Group

Grade 7: Students should have a chapter 9 question done in their journals



Grade 8: Students should have a chapter 9 question done in their journals

Grade 9 Large Group

Faith Statement Review in large group



Compassion Pantry Drive on Mar. 7, 14 & 21

Now's the time to start stocking up on and basic hygiene items quick or no prep food products for our Compassion Pantry Drive on Mar. 7, 14 & 21.

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. This year our donations will be going to students at Appleton East High School. Here are some items that are needed: Toothbrushes, tooth paste, deodorant, soap, feminine hygiene products, and granola bars are in greatest demand for this school, as well as, fruit cups, microwave noodle or soup cups, single serving cold or hot cereal, fruit leather, individual packages of crackers, etc. Please, no items that need an oven or stove to prepare.

Eek! How did that happen? Missed the camp deadline? Contact Kirsten!

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



Summer Chamber Music

Musicians, mark your calendars and make plans now to join the **Summer Chamber Music Program**. This summer's 8-week session begins during the week of June 11 with weekly practice sessions (no classes the week of July 4), concluding with a performance on Aug. 5. Laura Kenney Henckel, principal cellist of the Fox Valley Symphony and Xavier Middle and High School Orchestra Director will be leading the weekly rehearsals.

Whether you've been playing for a year or a lifetime, all are welcome. This is a perfect way to continue playing during the summer while learning great music together - with groups that are tailored to individuals' instruments and experience.

Simply fill out the form below and return it to: The Arthur Krempin School of Music & Art, c/o First English Lutheran Church, 326 E. North Street, Appleton, WI, 54911 or contact Laura Kenney Henckel at kenneycello@gmail.com or (920)739-8604. Cost of the program is \$100 per person; limited grants are also available so don't hesitate to participate. Enroll now and encourage your friends and family, too.

Summer Chamber Music Registration (Due Date is June 1, 2018)

Name: _____

Phone: Daytime _____ Evening _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____ Age: _____

Instrument(s):

Primary _____ Number of years _____

Other _____ Number of years _____

Previous musical experience:

Private lessons: Yes ___ Number of years ___ No ___

Most recent music groups / organizations:
_____ Number of years _____

Please list times on Tuesday through Thursday to avoid rehearsing if possible:

Our family will be on vacation _____

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 gather to present four different concerts on the following days:

- Friday, July 13
- Sunday July 15
- Thursday, July 19
- 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!

Sponsored by
The Arthur Krempin
School of Music & Art



Looking Ahead

Board Games Guild Meets Tomorrow

This life group meets the first Monday of every month in the North Site Library from 6:30-8 p.m.



Bring your favorite board game and a friend and meet us on Mar. 5. Questions? Please contact Cathy Jokela at cattymaejo@aol.com.

Lenten Series

This Lent, allow yourself to be *Shaped by the Cross*. Drawing on analogies from Michelangelo's statue, *The Pieta*, we will focus on how God uses struggles to conform us to the image of Christ. On Wednesday, Mar. 7, invite friends to the Downtown Site (9:30 a.m. or 6:15 p.m.) to hear Megan DesRochers speak about living with anxiety. Join a morning study on the book *Shaped by the Cross* by Ken Gire (10:15 a.m.). Attend the evening panel discussion where you can ask questions about Megan's journey (7 p.m.). And for fellowship, join us for the Lenten supper from 4:45-6 p.m.

Direct Thrivent Choice Dollars® by Mar. 31

Eligible Thrivent Financial members who have available Choice Dollars® have until Mar. 31 to direct them. If you are an eligible member, don't miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial provide outreach funding to First English Lutheran Church. Go to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice to learn more. Or call (800)847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt.

Attention New Mothers!

Did you know that First English has a Cradle Care Ministry? Sharon Morgan, a long time member of First English and retired after 35 years in obstetrics, offers visits, advice or prayer to families of newborn babies in the congregation. If you'd like a call or a visit or know someone that would benefit meeting Sharon please contact Hannah Sprenger at hsprenger@felc.com.

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/or Wednesday, Apr. 4 at the Downtown Site. Select your preferred times via the First English webpage at www.felc.com/forms.

Confirmation Rehearsal Meal Helpers Needed

Every year we celebrate the completion of the Confirmation journey of this 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.

Monthly Women's Book Club

Are you a reader? Join other women on Thursday, Mar. 22 at 1 p.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge as we discuss *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd. Come and enjoy time talking with other women whether or not you've had a chance to finish the book.

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.

Mar. 7: Instruments and Their Humans

Brian Groner

Music Director of the Fox Valley Symphony

Don't Miss Out on

Wednesday Lenten Meals at FELC

Each Wednesday during the Lenten season, a meal is sponsored by one of the church ministry or fellowship teams. The meals are served 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.

Mar. 7: Chicken Alfredo

Sponsored by the Parish Choir

Palm Sunday Breakfast Served by the Men of the Congregation

Make breakfast at church a part of your Palm Sunday tradition. It's a delicious way to get to know people and to begin your Holy Week celebration. The men of the congregation will be serving from 8:30-11 a.m. at the Downtown Site and 9-11 a.m. at the North Site on Palm Sunday, Mar. 25.

Calling all men: Are you willing to help prepare, serve, or cleanup the breakfast? Please sign up using the poster in the Gathering Area or sign up online at www.felc.com/forms.

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 each week. The spring session of GriefShare runs through the months of March and April. You may join at any point in the curriculum. Sessions are on Monday evenings from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge.

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
- Taylor Vivian Thompson
- 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
- Bill Nussbaum
- Cheryl Quello
- Jim Trundle

Prayers of Comfort

Families of:

- Roy Bartz
- Bob Hinkens
- 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

This Week's Community Care Focus

- AseraCare Hospice

Contact: Emily Umbreit, BSW

(920)497-4672; emily.embreit@aseracare.com

FELC DS Engage Page: Lent 3, March 4, 2018

John 2:13-22 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Sun, Mar 4: Family Project: For Sunday School today our focus was on the "Law" and in particular the 10 Commandments. Since, the 10 Commandments are numbered differently depending on whether you are Jewish, Catholic/Lutheran, or from most other Protestant denominations, get out your Luther's Small Catechism or go online for a copy. Each day, focus on one or two commandments and talk about Luther's description. How can we support our neighbors, protect their property, or help them keep what is theirs? End each session with this song to help remember God's rules for getting along.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d61R1LBbhQA>

Mon, Mar 5: John's description of Jesus driving the money lenders and those selling animals for sacrifice out of the temple differs from the other gospels. Instead of focusing on the shady and underhanded dealings of those who were selling, John shows how this action by Jesus predicts the end of the system of sacrificing animals to gain salvation. Instead he locates salvation in his own body that will be destroyed and raised up to shower us with free forgiveness.

Tues, Mar 6: It is extraordinary to see the gulf between what different people consider wise. In our politically charged climate, there is little consensus about common sense approaches to almost any issue. But abdicating your place in glory, giving up the power of divinity and subjecting yourself to taunts of human beings, dying a criminal's death to catch ungrateful humans in your loving embrace—that is truly foolish. Praise God for the foolish and extravagant love of the cross.

Wed., Mar 7, Numbers 21:4-9 I question that God actually let people die over complaints about the dinner menu. As a parent, incessant whining can make me crazy –but if I become violent, I am held to account by society. It's like that old saying, "Stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about," has been carried out to an unhealthy degree. Where are the social services to deal with this sort of dysfunctional parenting? Instead we recognize that losing people to snake bites was a tragedy that would force the Israelites to acknowledge their . In being brought face to face with a life and death situation, they are reminded that their OWNERS in Egypt had life and death control over them. The healing God sends wakes them up to the true source of life and hope and gives us a prophetic vision of the life and healing that will come through the cross of Jesus.

Thurs, Mar. 8, Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 When I read of those who are "sick because of their sinful ways," I think of those who suffer the effects of mistreating their bodies. It might be addictions or it might be laziness about following medical advice, eating too much/little or not exercising, refusing to get help to deal with mental health issues or being obsessive about computer use. Even though these aren't on the list of the seven deadly sins, if we mistreat our own physical bodies or emotional well-being, we are sinning as much as if we mistreat others. Confess your sins, repent and turn around giving thanks that God continues to call you into health.

Fri, Mar. 9, Ephesians 2:1-10 It is only great love that can overcome a wrong. If we are acquaintances with someone, a small slight can convince us that a possible relationship is not worth the risk. But if we have been wronged by our child, we keep hoping, we keep relenting, we keep on forgiving. This is the sort of love that God has for us –a love that began while we were sinners. That is why Paul's emphasis is not on works that we do, but on God's great work of forgiveness and grace that keeps calling us into relationship. Long before we seek to follow His invitation to good works, he saves us from the dominion of sin, -the death of sin. He allows us to catch a glimpse of the richness of a life of good works that spring out of thanks for the chance to walk in the light of grace and not slavery to sin.

Sat, Mar. 10, John 3:14-21 The verses before this passage tell the story of Nicodemus, a prominent Pharisee. His questions show he struggled with the teachings of Jesus that were drawing him away from relying on strict adherence to the teachings of the Pharisees. When Jesus tells Nicodemus, "For God so loved the WORLD...", it may have startled a man finding his identity in being one of the few chosen people. Hopefully these words will always push us away from feeling that we have any unique claim on God's love because of our religious identity. May we always rejoice in knowing that the life of Jesus centered on salvation and not condemnation.

*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 4, March 4, 2018

John 3:14-21 *And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."*

Sun, Mar. 4: Family Project: One of today's Bible passages is from Ephesians chapter 2. To help children understand grace, have them act out a scene that shows grace. Actor A steals a candy bar from actor B. Then B receives a gift of candy and invites A to come and share it. Think of other examples of a person receiving a gift that they don't deserve. Then talk about how God decided to raise us up to be with Him even when we were his enemies and dead in our sins. This is what grace is all about—getting a gift we don't deserve. Have "grace" be the word of the week, keeping track of how many times each person can use it correctly!

Mon, Mar. 5: Have you ever had a toddler walk up to you and give you something? It might be flowers, a special rock, or food, but that gift affirms the idea in Ephesians 2:10 that we are "*created in Christ Jesus for good works...that we should walk in them.*" There is nothing that gives us the glow of satisfaction like being able to truly help someone in need. Are you feeling inertia in your spiritual life? Perhaps you need to remember that you were created for good works.

Tues, Mar. 6: While the Star Wars movies may help fans understand that concept of the dark side, they do little to define what it means to come to the light. How do we "*do what is true*" so that we "*come to the light*"? From the end of this passage, we understand that acting in a truthful way points honor and acclaim away from oneself and to God. When we become increasingly concerned about our own comforts and rewards, we lose sight of the fact that all we have and all we are is a gift. May our lives give God honor and glory.

Wed., Mar. 7, Exodus 20:1-17 The 10 Commandments are so important to a faithful life that Martin Luther made them a part of his Small Catechism—a book most Lutherans study in order to be confirmed. There are two things that stand out in his descriptions of the commandments. First, each teaching section begins with, "We are to fear and love God so that..." Our reason for obedience comes as we recognize the great power God has and realize the great love shown when He settled love and grace on humanity. Next that love motivates us not only to obey the commandments, but to go the next step in showing love to humankind. We not only hear God's word, but we hear it gladly; not killing becomes helping a neighbor with any physical needs; not stealing becomes helping a neighbor improve and protect their property; not bearing false witness becomes explaining our neighbor's actions in the kindest way. May our love for God propel us to go the extra mile.

Thurs, Mar. 8, Psalm 19 Have you ever been in a situation where you wish someone would just take control? Many years ago, I was out west at a "Dude Ranch". The wranglers were all very adept at getting novice horse riders onto and off of horses, matching skill levels to animals. However, one evening there was a square dance—and no one seemed to be in charge. We fumbled around, various people with various ideas tried to get us all on track but we never got much past organized chaos. Psalm 19 describes the amazing dance that God has orchestrated in the cosmos. The psalmist calls humanity to follow God's choreography so life on earth can be just as beautiful. May we treasure God's instruction and find our spot in the dance of loving care.

Fri, Mar. 9, I Cor. 1:18-25 Perhaps like me, you left Ash Wednesday services to discover the horror of another school shooting. Many of us couldn't help but be struck by the image of the woman with the ash cross on her forehead who was at the scene. What does the cross mean in the face of senseless tragedy? We are tempted to question God and wonder, what is the message of the cross in a situation like this? Paul knows it can look foolish from the outside, but insists that to us who are being saved, the cross is the power of God. In truth, what could reassure us that God is present in all our own tragedies except knowing Christ's willingness to suffer death so we could be united in his resurrection? Praise God for the foolishness of the cross.

Sat, Mar. 10, John 2:13-22 A recent NPR show featured the author of nonfiction book on the Russian mafia. He described how important money laundering is to mafia enterprises. Bankers profit from handling illegal money while staying removed from the horrors of the crimes of drug dealing and sexual exploitation. In throwing the moneylenders out of the temple, Jesus is making a powerful statement against any profit made by taking advantage of those who are vulnerable. As a society we must ask how we accept comfort and security in ways that victimize others—whether through unfair wages or unhealthy land use or tolerance of violence against vulnerable peoples.

*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>