

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) and the North Site Nursery (off the main hallway, across from the restrooms) are open for family use during all services. Please ask an usher if you need 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

At the Downtown Site, if you are in need of a large print Bible or bulletin, please ask an usher.

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 8:30 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).

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. 2, 2018 At-A-Glance

Sunday, Sept. 2

8:30 & 10 a.m.
9 a.m.

Monday

8:15 p.m.

Tuesday

6:30 a.m.

7 p.m.

Wednesday

10:30 a.m.

5:15 p.m.

6:15 p.m.

7 p.m.

Friday

6:30 a.m.

Sunday, Sept. 9

8:30 & 10 a.m.

9 a.m.

8:15/8:45 a.m.

DS = Downtown Site NS = North Site

Worship, DS Sanctuary

Worship, NS Sanctuary

Church Office Closed

Pick Up Basketball, NS Activity Center

Men's Ministry, NS Library

Sunday School Teacher Orientation, NS Library

No Wednesday Worship

Bible Study with Pastor Mary, DS 221

Confirmation 7th & 8th Grade Small Group Leader Orientation, DS 114

Wednesday Worship, DS Sanctuary

Confirmation 9th Grade Small Group Leader Orientation,

DS 114

Men's Ministry, NS Library

God's work. Our hands. Sunday

Abbreviated Worship/Send-Off for GWOH, DS Sanctuary

Abbreviated Worship/Send-Off for GWOH, NS Sanctuary

Sunday School Meet 'n' Greet, DS/NS

Fall New & Review Series, Sept 16 - Oct. 7

Are you interested in becoming a member of First English? Perhaps you are already a member but would like a refresher on what it's all about? Then *New & Review* is for you. The fall session consists of three weeks of class and fellowship, followed by a new member welcome Sunday.

The first two weeks will cover First English and the ELCA, Lutheran Theology, how Lutherans interpret the Bible, and more. The third week will be held at Pastor Jeff's home for a luncheon where members of ministry teams and small groups will join to share about the many ways one can get involved in meaningful activities at First English. The following week will be New Member Sunday where new members are welcomed to the FELC family. The full itinerary can be found in the September newsletter or at www.felc.com/newmember.

If you would like to register for the *New & Review* session this fall please register online at www.felc.com/forms under the "New to First English" section, or by calling the church office at (920)733-2303. If you would like to learn more about this process or how you can get involved before becoming a member please contact Kathy Larson at klarson@felc.com.



First English Lutheran Church

www.felc.com felc@felc.com

Downtown Site

Sunday Worship: 8:30 & 10 a.m.

Wednesday Worship: 6:15 p.m.

Office Hours: M-Th: 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Closed Monday, Sept. 3)
F: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

North Site

Sunday Worship: 9 a.m.

Love Jesus. Live your call.

First English is committed to becoming a more welcoming, inclusive congregation.

**Wednesday Worship Resumes Sept. 5
6:15 p.m. at the Downtown Site**

Fall Worship Times Resume Sept. 16

FELC will maintain the summer worship schedule through next Sunday, Sept. 9. On Sept. 16, the fall worship times will resume which are:

Downtown Site: 8, 9:15 & 10:30 a.m.

North Site: 8:15 & 10:30 a.m.

50+ Group Tour in September

The 50+ group will tour the 1000 Island Nature Center in Kaukauna on Sept. 13. The group will meet in the Downtown Site parking lot at 9:45 a.m. to carpool, and leave promptly at 10 a.m.



for the nature center. They will stop for lunch after at Landreman's Restaurant in Kaukauna. Please sign up in the Gathering Area if you would like to participate in this fun activity.

Prayer Warrior Request



Praying is one of the most ancient of human practices, and many believe in its power. Prayer is used in a multitude of ways: to seek comfort, make a request, ask for guidance, heal and restore, express sorrow, celebrate joy or give thanks. We welcome you to join our email prayer team to pray for the requests received. Please contact Jeanne Gronholm at jgronholm@felc.com or Pastor Mary Bauer at mbauer@felc.com to join the email prayer team or to submit a prayer request.

Announcements

Week of Sept. 2, 2018

Do God's Work with YOUR Hands Next Sunday!
God's work. Our hands. Sunday is next Sunday, Sept. 9! Last year, over 130 FELC members and friends participated in service projects on and off site. This year there are even more opportunities for folks of all ages to do God's work with their hands. While some projects have already filled up, there are still spots available in many areas. Sign up in the Gathering Area or online at www.felc.com (see the insert in today's bulletin for more information on available projects). Next Sunday come to church for an abbreviated service (half hour) at 8:30 or 10 a.m. at the Downtown Site or 9 a.m. at the North Site, then be sent out to do your work. Please don't forget to wear your *God's work. Our hands.* t-shirts to worship!



**God's work.
Our hands.**

Coffee Project Sunday

When you are drinking a cup of fairly traded coffee from Equal Exchange, you are supporting small scale farmers on the other side of the world so that they can have a better life and education for their children. When farmers can't get a fair price for their coffee, it has a ripple effect in their communities, their country and even the world. The simple act of choosing fairly traded coffee can make an enormous difference. First English will be selling Fairly Traded Coffee, Tea, Hot Cocoa and Candy bars next Sunday, Sept. 9. The simple pleasure of a cup of coffee can be a vital source of income for thousands of small farmers and their families in some of the poorest countries in the world. Mark your calendar for this opportunity to do justice.



Religious Education Is Out of the Gate

The first round of information emails for Confirmation and Sunday School students has been sent to families that have registered for fall. Haven't enrolled yet? No problem! Go to www.felc.com/forms so you're in the communication loop and ready for class in September!

Calling All Bakers - The Tradition Widens

Beginning Sept. 16, we would like to invite the North Site to join with the Downtown Site in the tradition of "Calling All Bakers," that is, sharing a gift of baking for the Sunday morning coffee hour. Not only does this gift enhance the coffee hour but it goes a long way in helping to control congregation expenses. Please complete the signup sheet near the coffee table. Each baker should plan on bringing approximately four dozen goodies. Questions? Please contact Kathy Larson at klarson@felc.com, 733-2303.

Submit "Can't Serve" Dates for Worship Volunteering

A worship schedule is being created for Oct. 1 through Dec. 31. To assist with scheduling, please review your personal calendars and record within MSP any dates you are unavailable to serve during that time period. The deadline to record unavailable dates is Monday, Sept. 10. If you need any assistance with updating your "can't serve" dates, please contact Kathy Larson (klarson@felc.com or 733-2303). Thank you.

God's Work, Our Hands: Let's Get At It! Advocacy for Justice in Today's World

Saturday, Sept. 8, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Good Shepherd Lutheran

2000 Roosevelt Drive, Plover, WI 54467

Many of us want to help solve the problems in today's world but we don't know exactly what to do. This workshop - which will follow *Cherish All Children's* model of pray, educate, connect, act - will empower you to help make a difference. Pastor Cindy Crane, Director of the Lutheran Office of Public Policy, Women of the ELCA Director for Justice Jennifer Deleon and State Representative Katrina Shankland will all speak at the event.

After lunch (included), breakouts will address topics such as immigration, human trafficking, gun violence, domestic violence, and poverty and hunger. The event, co-sponsored by Good Shepherd and Women of the ELCA, ECSW, is free and open to the public. High school students are welcome to attend. A free will offering will be taken to cover expenses.

To register, visit www.eventbrite.com and type "Advocacy for Justice Plover" in the search bar. Please contact Shirley Paulson at spaulson1949@gmail.com with questions or for more information.

Middle School Music Opportunity at the North Site!

New! On the first and third Sundays of the month from 9:30-10 a.m., in the North Site Sanctuary, there is a music class for middle schoolers who are interested in joining the Worship Team some day. Whether you sing or play an instrument, we want you to join in. Bring your voice, your band or orchestra instrument, or other instruments. This class will teach you music skills to eventually join the worship team. Our first class will be Sept. 16. See you there!

Senior Living Expo: Celebrating Life After 50

Seniors, their families and all interested are invited to attend this interactive tradeshow with 70+ exhibit booths on Wednesday, Sept. 19 from 8 a.m. - noon at Players Choice, County Rd. JJ, Appleton. Admission is free, and no advance registration is required. Enjoy the following and more:

- FREE coffee and rolls while supplies last.
- FREE blood pressure readings and skin screening.
- FREE seminars: *Traumatic Falls* by Dr. Ray Georgen and *Social Security* by Tim Gierke.
- Prizes, prizes, prizes!

The event is sponsored by Appleton Noon Lions Club. All proceeds go to charitable organizations. For more information, please visit appletonnoonlions.com.

Echoes New Store Hours

Beginning Monday, Sept. 10, Echoes will be closed on Mondays.

This vibrant First English ministry is in need of your donations and your shopping dollars. With neighborhood garage sales, Echoes sales typically slow in the summer. Please don't forget Echoes!



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

- Mary Lou Garnsworthy
- Nathan Meissner
- Brooklyn Ann Converse
- Angel Manos
- Todd Hollenberger
- Jacob Schwab
- Justin Schwab
- Laurie Niles
- Lynn Boenker
- Debra Boushley
- David Heindel
- Doug Hansen
- Amy Ponomarev
- Moore Peregrine
- Tom Roy
- Je'Ann Johnson
- Paul Henrikson
- Juanita Gauerke
- Robb Schaefer
- Kim Norland
- Taylor Vivian Thompson
- Carol Peterson
- Bev Hoff
- Dennis Paisar
- Tresor
- Linda Van Berkel
- Cheryl Laabs
- Beth Nemecek
- Burt Blank

Prayers of Comfort Families of:

- Shirley Kavanaugh
- Cassie Laabs
- Lauren Laabs
- Senator John McCain
- Kenny Reinholz
- Frank Rippl

Prayers for Those Called to Serve in Other Countries

- Stephanie Olson

Prayers for Those in the Military

- Lt. Josh Anderson
- Christian Cramer
- BM3 Kyle Kramer, USCG
- LCPL Robert Kopesky II
- SPC Samuel Sinclair

This Week's Community Care Focus

- Community Clothes Closet
(920)731-7834; info@communityclothescloset.org



High School News

Grades 9-12

Sept. 2, 2018

reFUEL

For Grades 10-12
Wednesday nights
DS Youth Room
7-8 p.m.

9/19: DS Youth Room
Welcome back!

9/26: **5:30-6pm** *Special event refUEL night*
Meet at Hofacker's Hillside Orchard (W3964 Wege Rd, Appleton).

6-7pm Bonfire at NS for caramel apples with tons of toppings. If it rains we will hang out at NS Youth Room.

Social Media Corner

Follow us at
FELC YOUTH on
Facebook and
felc.youth on
Instagram!
#justdoit



High School Mission Trip Blue Ridge Mountains, NC July 20-27, 2019

Open to students currently in grades 9-12

Commitment Form can be found at www.felc.com/highschool and informational video will be posted there and on FELC YOUTH Facebook Page by Sept. 5.

Registration and \$100 Deposit due Sept. 20 to DS Office
Questions? Contact Heidi hschreiner@felc.com.

Upcoming fundraisers for 2019 Mission Trip:

License to Cruise/Octoberfest

Parking Lot fundraiser:

Sept. 28: 5:45-8pm

Sept. 29: 8:30am-4pm

Bake Sale:

Sept. 30: Between all services at both sites

Sign up for shifts at www.felc.com/highschool or email Heidi.

Sept. 2, 2018



Information for FELC Youth and Families
Grades K-12



Get Ready to Rally and Serve!

On Sunday, Sept. 9, we kick-off another awesome year of Sunday School with meet 'n' greets and congregation-wide service. Families meet their

Sunday School teachers in their classrooms at 8:15 a.m. at the Downtown Site and at 8:45 a.m. at the North Site.

Then we head to a short worship service at 8:30 a.m. at the Downtown Site or 9 a.m. at the North Site as

we are blessed to head out and serve the community with on and off site service projects. Time to rally and celebrate a new

season as a faith family spreading

God's light in the world!

(The standard Learning Times of 9:15 a.m. at the Downtown Site or 9:25 a.m. at the North Site will begin Sept. 16)

**God's work.
Our hands.**



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**



**Calling All Parents!
Let's Meet For A Great Start**

High five! You signed your child(ren) up for Sunday School and are embarking on another year of building faith in your home. It's an important gift to that child, your family, our congregation and the world. In order for parents and caregivers to understand the mission of Sunday morning education, get tips on how to build faith in the home, and hear about changes in the Sunday School program, it seems we really should meet. Please make every effort to attend the Sunday School Meeting for Parents at the Site your child attends:

- ◆ North Site: Sept. 16 from 9:45-10:10 a.m. in the Lower Level. Come down with your student(s) for story and song before and head up to Pastor Chat after.
- ◆ Downtown Site: Sept. 30 from 10:20-10:50 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

We've got a lot of work to do, so let's get off to a great start!

Those who have registered for Sunday School and/or Confirmation are already receiving info emails. It's not too late to enroll!



Go to www.felc.com/forms to be in the know before we giddy-up and go!

La-La-La...

Choir Is

Warming Up



If you love to sing then we'd love for you to do it with us!

Both children's choirs meet 8:50-9:15 a.m. to rehearse.

Cherub Choir (K-grade 2) meets in Downtown Site Room 220.

Angelus (grades 3-6) meets in the Downtown Site

Choir Room.

Choir starts next week on Sept. 16. Come one, come all whenever you're able!



**Confirmation and
Middle School Scoop**



Confirmation Is Powering UP
Mark Your Calendar For
Those Meetings!

It's September and you know what that means... everything, including religious education is starting up and so are the meetings. Make it a point to make it to yours so we can start strong!

7th Grade Family & Pastor Meetings

By Reservation on Sept. 11 & 13

Contact Kirsten a.s.a.p. at kowens@felc.com if you need the Sign-Up Genius link to reserve your meeting time.

8th Grade Student & Parent Meeting

Sept. 12, 5:30-6:15 p.m. in Downtown Site Fellowship Hall

9th Grade Student & Parent Meeting

Sept. 12, 7-8 p.m. in Downtown Site Fellowship Hall



YIKES!

How Did I Miss That?

Maybe fall snuck up on you and you forgot to register your new 7th grader for Confirmation.

No worries, we can get you rolling.

Just contact Kirsten at

kowens@felc.com so you can enroll

a.s.a.p. and not miss out on

important meetings and info!

**7th Grade
Worship Assistance
Training - Stretching
Our Time**



We ask all Confirmation students to participate in worship assistance (ushering, acolyting, greeting, etc.). The training for these roles will occur during the second half the first night of class, Sept. 19. On that one evening class ends at 8:30 p.m. versus 8 p.m. to accommodate worship assistance instruction.

Have questions or want to volunteer?

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



“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) - one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

ONSITE PROJECTS AT EITHER DOWNTOWN SITE OR NORTH SITE

- Making Seed Bombs***: Assemble, create and plant in community. All ages.
 - Painted Rocks***: Paint, add art work and hide in community. All ages.
 - No Sew Blankets***: Create blankets for Project Linus. All ages.
 - Seeds of Grace Butterfly Garden - Corner of North & Durkee Streets (DS)**: Implement new design for butterfly garden. Dig and plant new plants. Ages 8+.
 - Apple Crisp (DS)**: Assemble and distribute unbaked to area shelters. Ages 6+.
 - LWR School Bags (NS)**: Assemble donations for October boxcar load. All ages.
- *These projects are FULL at the North Site; spots are still open at the Downtown Site.*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Apple Creek YMCA** at 2851 E. Apple Creek Road. Trail maintenance, litter pick up. Ages 12+. **THIS PROJECT IS FULL.**
- Loaves & Fishes** at St. Therese Activity Center 213 E. Wisconsin Avenue. Work with raised gardens, add compost, harvest gardens. Ages 12+.
- Fox Valley Lutheran Homes** at 425 N. Linwood Avenue. Underground Parking Cleaning : **THIS PROJECT IS FULL.** Yard Cleaning:: Prune and clear yard waste. Ages 12+.
- Jake’s Diapers** at 139 E. 2nd Street., Kaukauna A 501(c)3 that provides cloth diaper kits for children in the Fox Valley, within the US and globally. Assemble diaper kits for distribution.
- Building for Kids** at 100 W. College Avenue. Painting and cleaning needed due to renovation taking place at the children’s museum. Ages 12+.

Sign up in the Gathering Area or at www.felc.com. Don’t wait too long-many projects fill up fast!

God’s work. Our hands.

**Donations Needed;
Introducing the Casserole Ministry**

Going to be out of town on Sept. 9 or have other plans? There is still a way you can help and participate. Donations are still needed plus it is the kickoff for the new “casserole ministry” that will be a year long ministry at FELC.

DONATIONS NEEDED

APPLE CRISP

- ___ 3-5 lb. bag of apples
- ___ Butter x 2 lb.
- ___ White sugar x 4 lb.
- ___ Brown sugar x 2 lb.
- ___ Oatmeal, quick oats
- ___ Foil baking pans (9x13)

LWR SCHOOL BAGS

- ___ Notebooks
 - ___ Scissors
 - ___ Sharpeners
- NO SEW BLANKETS**
- ___ 4 yards of fleece (2 yards each of complimentary fabrics)

BRING DONATIONS TO THE GATHERING AREA BY SEPT. 4

SEED BOMBS/PAINTED ROCKS

- ___ Egg cartons (paper or foam)

CASSEROLE MINISTRY

The Invitation & Hospitality Ministry team will begin requesting FELC members to make casseroles that can be frozen and then distributed to those in need. Casseroles will be collected at the Downtown Site. Any FELC member could then distribute to anyone in need.

Currently, the team is collecting names of people who may be interested in learning more. Sign up in the Gathering Area or at www.felc.com. People can either use a recipe that will be provided OR make a family favorite. Baking instructions and a complete listing of ingredients would be needed. Baking pans will be available beginning on Sept. 9.

FELC DS Engage Page: Pentecost 15, September 2, 2018

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 *Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."... Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."...For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."*

Sun, Sep. 2: Family Project: James teaches, *"let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger;"* (v. 19b) Have there been times when you have been misunderstood –when people get angry and judge you without taking the time to listen? Talk about how we can practice our listening skills to help us understand one another.

Mon, Sep. 3: There are religious rules that carry meaning for me. I like keeping the altar clear of decorations as it reminds me that we can do nothing to improve on Holy Communion and Jesus' sacrifice. However, I have to admit that nothing I do can take away from the wonder of Jesus' gift - not even putting flowers on the altar! The rule only has meaning when it is followed out of a sense of love and reverence. May all our rules point to Jesus grace, not our own rigidity.

Tues, Sep. 4: Because of the call to be a priestly nation, the Pharisees took many of the rules given for priests and applied them to daily life in order to *"build a fence around the law"* and *"preserve the Jewish faith and life."* Jesus' anger is not directed at the law itself– he does not disrespect the law. His anger was with a focus on the externals of faith rather than internal faithfulness. *"Ritual purity became a means of excluding people considered dirty."** We must never be tempted to believe that by keeping the law we are more worthy of God's grace than others.
*<http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?>

Wed., Sep. 5, Isaiah 35 Isaiah 35 is a joyous celebration of God's provision. In particular this psalm inspires hope among those who feel as though following the way of God has become too hard, who feel lost. Verse eight speaks of God's Holy Way where "no traveler, not even fools shall go astray". In the days long before GPS directions, I remember riding along when we brought my oldest brother to college. The trip back home started late, we must have missed a turn and somehow ended up driving down a dirt road into a field. In frustration over our predicament, my usually calm father crumpled up the map and threw it out the window. What unspeakable grace it is to know that no matter how foolish my actions, how confused my thinking, or how discouraged I feel, God will keep me on the Holy Way.

Thurs, Sep. 6, Psalm 146 In his TED talk on gratitude*, David Steindl-Rast talks about how gratefulness makes us happy. We see this when we encounter those who have reasons to be unhappy, but by their lives of gratitude they experience great happiness. The psalmist adds to gratitude another attitude: hope in the God who created the universe and who has a heartfelt love for the oppressed, and who calls us into a life of sharing in that love. This coming Sunday, when participating in God's Work, Our Hands, may our hearts be filled with joy as we live out God's call with gratitude.

*https://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful/up-next

Fri., Sep. 7, James 2:1-17 As Lutherans, we can struggle with the passage, *"Faith without works is dead"*, tending to emphasize more strongly Ephesians 2:8-9 (*"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God --not the result of works, so that no one may boast."*) Rather than contradicting each other, these verses speak more to our motivation. Do we live like an employee who works to receive a bonus, or one who believes in the purpose of the company? Do we volunteer for a candidate for office in hopes of getting a job, or because we have faith that they are the best suited for the position? If we have faith in someone, works are simply the way we express that faith.

Sat, Sep. 8, Mark 7:24-37 Prof. Elizabeth Johnson relates her experience with this passage while teaching in Cameroon. Students had heard these verses used to teach that Christianity is not for Africans. While Prof. Johnson pointed out that in the end the woman's faith is praised, her daughter healed and she receives salvation, it is important that we don't immediately dismiss this viewpoint. Those of us who have been privileged in a material sense can allow a sense of entitlement to transfer into our spiritual lives. None of us deserved a place at the table. This passage is not about pointing out who should be well-fed and who should get crumbs. Rather it is about the undeserved feast of grace and forgiveness that we receive. May we live our lives in gratitude, lifting up any who feel that they are being excluded from the riches of God's gifts. http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3761

*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: Pentecost 14, September 2, 2018

John 6:56-69 *Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father." Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

Sun, Sep. 2: Family Project: Learn about the armor of God by watching this fun video together. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7eC-W_XNyw
Discuss the ways the armor of God protects us from the lies the devil tells us and prepares us to share the good news of God's love.

Mon, Sep. 3: Rarely will we be totally invested in any commitment. We continually evaluate the chance of success for any endeavor. In this passage, we are reminded that some things are worth committing to whether or not they lead to success. The Czech statesman, Vaclav Havel, put it this way. *"Work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed."* When Jesus asks the disciples if they will also abandon him because of his teachings, their answer shows a willingness to commit totally, *"We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*

Tues, Sep. 4: When asked what type of men become navy seals, one leaders pointed out it wasn't the strongest, the best athletes, or the lone individual trying to prove personal excellence. Rather it was those who, when they had reached the end of their strength, were able to reach inside to help the person next to them. Similarly, the "armor of God" passage in Ephesians 6 is directed in the plural to a community. May we be a community that reaches deep within to protect and fight for those around us.

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Thurs, Sep. 6, Psalm 146 In his TED talk on gratitude*, David Steindl-Rast talks about how gratefulness makes us happy. We see this when we encounter those who have reasons to be unhappy, but by their lives of gratitude they experience great happiness. The psalmist adds to gratitude another attitude: hope in the God who created the universe and who has a heartfelt love for the oppressed, and who calls us into a life of sharing in that love. This coming Sunday, when participating in God's Work, Our Hands, may our hearts be filled with joy as we live out God's call with gratitude.

*https://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful/up-next

Fri., Sep. 7, James 2:1-17 As Lutherans, we can struggle with the passage, *"Faith without works is dead"*, tending to emphasize more strongly Ephesians 2:8-9 (*"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God --not the result of works, so that no one may boast."*) Rather than contradicting each other, these verses speak more to our motivation. Do we live like an employee who works to receive a bonus, or one who believes in the purpose of the company? Do we volunteer for a candidate for office in hopes of getting a job, or because we have faith that they are the best suited for the position? If we have faith in someone, works are simply the way we express that faith.

Sat, Sep. 8, Mark 7:24-37 Prof. Elizabeth Johnson relates her experience with this passage while teaching in Cameroon. Students had heard these verses used to teach that Christianity is not for Africans. While Prof. Johnson pointed out that in the end the woman's faith is praised, her daughter healed and she receives salvation, it is important that we don't immediately dismiss this viewpoint. Those of us who have been privileged in a material sense can allow a sense of entitlement to transfer into our spiritual lives. None of us deserved a place at the table. This passage is not about pointing out who should be well-fed and who should get crumbs. Rather it is about the undeserved feast of grace and forgiveness that we receive. May we live our lives in gratitude, lifting up any who feel that they are being excluded from the riches of God's gifts. http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3761

*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