

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 (off of the Gathering Area) and the North Site Nursery (across from the restrooms) are open for family use during all worship services. Please ask an usher if you need assistance. At the North Site, the child-friendly space just inside the Sanctuary doors is supervised by staff and available to children during worship services.

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 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 Feb. 10, 2019 At-A-Glance

Sunday, Feb. 10

8:50 a.m.
9:15/9:25 a.m.
9:15 a.m.
9:30 a.m.
9:30 a.m.
11:30 a.m.
12:15 p.m.
1:30 p.m.

Monday

9 a.m.
5:15 p.m.
8:15 p.m.

Tuesday

6:30 a.m.
4 p.m.
7 p.m.
7 p.m.
8 p.m.

Wednesday

10:30 a.m.
Noon
Noon
Noon
1 p.m.
5:30 p.m.
6:15 p.m.
6:30 p.m.
7 p.m.
7 p.m.
7 p.m.

Thursday

6 a.m.
9 a.m.

Friday

6:30 a.m.

Sunday, Feb. 17

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

Soup Buffet & Annual Meeting

Boy Scout Sunday; Scrip Sale; *Make an IMPACT!* Tickets

Cherub/Angelus Rehearsal, DS 220/Choir Room
Children's Learning Time, DS/NS
Adult Learning Time, DS Lounge
Women's Study Group, NS Library
Ukulele Combo Rehearsal, NS Sanctuary
Soup Luncheon, DS Fellowship Hall
FELC Annual Meeting, DS Sanctuary
FELC Family Open Gym, NS Activity Center

Quilters, DS Fellowship Hall
Stephen Ministry, DS Lounge
Pick Up Basketball, NS Activity Center

Men's Ministry, NS Library
Property Oversight Committee, DS Office Workroom
Men's Ministry, DS 221
Worship & Music Ministry Team
ATC Basketball, NS Activity Center

Bible Study with Pastor Mary, DS 110
Noon Hour Philosophers, DS Fellowship Hall
Sarah Circle, DS 114
Stewardship Committee, DS Lounge
Miriam Circle, DS Library
Handbell Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room
Wednesday Worship, DS Sanctuary
Parish Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room & Sanctuary
Confirmation General Session, All Grades, DS
Kid's Life, (Grades K-6) DS 014
refuel (Grades 10-12), DS Youth Room

Early Risers Women's Study, DS Lounge
Adult Bible Study, DS Lounge

Men's Ministry, NS Library

Scrip Distribution; *Make an IMPACT!* Tickets

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

DS=Downtown Site
NS=North Site

Small Group Ministry

It's never too late to be involved in Small Group Ministry! The first study began on Jan. 20, but since the sermons can also be found online, you can put together a group anytime and begin your discussions. If you have questions or would like to be placed in a group, please contact Pastor Mary Bauer at mbauer@felc.com.



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.

Love Jesus. Live your call.

First English is committed to being a welcoming, inclusive congregation.

Sunday at FELC

Altar Flowers

The Downtown Site altar flowers are provided by Lou Chicquette.

Boy Scout Sunday

Today we celebrate Boy Scout Sunday. FELC is the chartering organization for Troop 12, Troop 73, and Pack 3022. We also look forward to honoring Girl Scouts and their leaders on Mar. 10.

The Parables of Jesus in Luke

On Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge, we take a look at the parables in Luke from a Middle Eastern cultural view. With short teaching videos by Dr. Kenneth E. Bailey, this study will inform participants about the culture in which the parables were told. Please join us!

Coffee Sale: Today at the Downtown Site

Just as Jesus engaged the disciples, we have been called by God to fulfill the needs of our brothers and sisters living in poverty around the world. The *Coffee Project* is one way we can help. Visit the Gathering Area at the Downtown Site today. We are well stocked with your favorite items. Thank you for your generous support of this ministry.



Announcements Week of Feb. 10, 2019

FELC Annual Meeting
Today, Sunday, Feb. 10, 12:15 p.m.
Downtown Site Sanctuary
Soup Lunch
starting at 11:30 a.m.
Downtown Site Fellowship Hall
Free-will offering to benefit youth attending
the 2019 Mission Trip

Make an IMPACT!

Event Tickets On Sale Today

When: Friday, Mar. 1, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Where: The OuterEdge Stage
303 N Oneida St, Appleton

Cost: \$25/Ticket

Tickets can be purchased between all services at both sites or online at www.felc.com. Please help support our 10 FELC Summer Interns by attending this event! Questions? Contact Heidi Schreiner (hschreiner@felc.com).

Warm Up with a Good Book

Today fiction books from the FELC Library are featured and available for checkout in the Gathering Area. Books by Jan Karon, Kathy Jacobson, Max Lucado and Janette Oke, plus many children's books are available. There's even a chance to take home a unique mug with tea or hot chocolate so you can warm up with a good book.



Looking Ahead

New & Review 2019

Are you interested in joining the First English church family? Please plan on attending the upcoming *New & Review* three-week series offered in March. The weekly Sunday morning sessions are held at both sites as it is valuable for new members to be able to visit both locations. For complete details or to register, visit www.felc.com/newmember. Questions? Contact Karen Kneisler at kkneisler@felc.com.

Just One Week Left to Register!

Saturday, Feb. 23; 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Downtown Site Fellowship Hall

Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addiction challenge or is in crisis. The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders. This event is open to the public. Please register no later than Monday, Feb. 18, at www.felc.com/forms. Lunch will be provided. Contact Kirsten Owens, FELC Faith Formation Coordinator, at kowens@felc.com or (920)733-2303 ext. 312.

LEAVEN

Each year, LEAVEN serves nearly 20,000 people in over 6,000 households in Outagamie, Calumet and Northeastern Winnebago counties facing financial hardship. LEAVEN has immediate volunteer opportunities for various roles including Concierge, Receptionist, Interviewer and Caseworker. Contact Kiara West at 257-5696 or kiara.west@leavenfoxcities.org for more information.

Little Dresses for Africa

As long as there are little girls there will be a need for little dresses. We continue to make them for little girls in orphanages in Africa as we have for a few years. They are sent to Nancy's Notions in Beaver Dam to send directly to orphanages.

If you are willing to get involved in this project, feel free to pick up patterns for either a pillow case dress or a dress from new material at the display in the Downtown Site Gathering Area. Trims have been donated for this cause so help yourself to them as well. If you are using pillow cases be sure they are new or gently used to prolong the life of the outfit. Please bring you finished dress to the Downtown Site display. We will be sure that they are sent on to Nancy' Notions.

Memory Tree

Parents, grandparents and sponsors - here is a wonderful way to honor your child's baptism. For a gift of \$100 to \$500 you can have your child's name and baptism date engraved on a "Leaf" of the Memory Tree at either or both sites. All gifts support the reduction of building debt at FELC.

A Memory Tree hangs in the Gathering Area at each site. You can choose the site at which to memorialize this special day, or you can sponsor a leaf at both sites.

If you would like more information, or to order a leaf, contact Brenda in the Church Office at 733-2303 or bsmongeski@felc.com.

Find Cancellations at www.felc.com

Check the FELC website under the Facebook section, lower right hand margin on the homepage, for any cancellations. The church calendar will also be updated. In all instances, use your best judgment when deciding on driving to church for a scheduled worship, class or activity.

Noon Hour Philosophers 2019

The Noon Hour Philosophers meet for an hour at noon in the Downtown Site Fellowship Hall each Wednesday.

If you have questions, contact Mary Poulson at mmaryjep@att.net or (920)734-8137.

- **Feb. 13: The Unique Mission of the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region**

Curtis Detjen, President/CEO
Community Foundation for the
Fox Valley Region

Lunch and Learn Seminar

Wednesday, Feb. 20, 11 a.m.

Wichmann Funeral Home and Crematory 537 North Superior Street, Appleton

We invite you to learn how planning for your final wishes may shield your family from unnecessary emotional and financial burden. Join us for a light meal and learn more about pre-arrangements, veteran benefits, cremation, burials, and more. Please RSVP at (920) 297-2742.

Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive

Feb. 17 - Mar. 10

The Family Radio Network invites you to help stock the personal hygiene shelves of your local crisis programs so that they can dedicate their limited financial resources to providing qualified personnel, safe housing, food, education, and counseling to those they serve. Our goal is to supply each program with a year's worth of product. You can help! Drop off your new hygiene donations at either site in the Help for the Homeless boxes beginning next Sunday. Your support is very much appreciated.



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
- Angel Manos
- Jacob Schwab
- Justin Schwab
- Laurie Niles
- Debra Boushley
- David Heindel
- Doug Hansen
- Amy Ponomarev
- Moore Peregrine
- Paul Henrikson
- Juanita Gauerke
- Robb Schaefer
- Carol Peterson
- Bev Hoff
- Cindy Schneider
- Alex VanMaren
- Debra Nuthals
- Mitzi Hansen
- Syllas Garcia
- Caryl Bates
- Rolf Jeppson
- Jim Moard
- Arlene Gade

Prayers of Comfort

Family of:

- Lloyd Cohen
- Stephen Haslehurst
- Kim Norland
- Evelyn Weber

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Wedding of:

- Jenny Streiff and Adam Weidmeyer

Prayers for Those Called to Serve in Other Countries

- Sarah Bauer
- Stephanie Olson

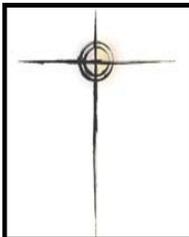
Prayers for Those in the Military

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

This Week's Community Care Focus

- **Learn 2 Fish With Us**

volunteer@learn2fishwithus.com
www.learn2fishwithus.com



High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Feb. 10, 2019



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

2/13 **Valentine's Day Eve**
Bible, love, healthy relationships
Greek words for love
5 Love Languages
Joe Davis Spoken Word

2/20 Special Speaker
Postponed!

2/27 Since we weren't able to do 8th grade refuel night, our plan is to disperse into 8th grade small groups for part of this evening!

Social Media Corner

Follow us at FELC YOUTH on Facebook and felc.youth on Instagram for information, inspiration, and humor!



High School Mission Trip Blue Ridge Mountains, NC

Next Fundraiser:

Feb. 17-Scrip Card
Distribution-Both Sites
Signups can be found at www.felc.com/highschool

Next Bonding Activity:

Going to Appletton North's production of *Newsies* followed by seizing the day at Paradise Island!
Watch for date and time!

IMPACT! Volunteers

Heidi is searching for 2-3 high school volunteers to babysit kids whose parents are attending the *Make an IMPACT! Event* Friday, Mar. 1

The OuterEdge Stage
6:30-9:30 p.m.

Please contact Heidi if you're able to help
hschreiner@felc.com.

Feb. 10, 2019



Information for FELC Youth and Families
Grades K-12

Open Ears & Hearts Needed

We need First English individuals who have open ears and hearts to be faith interviewers for this year's confirmands. Every year our confirming 9th grade students are required to spend 15-20 minutes in a faith interview with a team of two members of the congregation as they express their unique thoughts on faith.

Faith interviewers often note how much they enjoy their brief conversations and appreciate our super FELC kids! Faith interviews will take place on Wednesday, Apr. 3, either before worship (5-6:15 p.m.) or after (7-8 p.m.) at the North Site. Feel free to sign up for one or both sessions at www.felc.com/forms.

Contact Kirsten Owens, Faith Formation Coordinator, at kowens@felc.com with questions.



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



Let The Puppets Do The Talking

We are looking for a group of six to ten individuals of all ages to help prepare a brief Holy Week story presentation for Palm Sunday morning (Apr. 14) during brunch. If you're the shy type you may find it helpful to know that we have **PUPPETS** available if your group would prefer to have all of the attention on these characters versus you! Go to www.felc.com/forms to sign-up. Most of the preparation can occur during or after Learning Time on Sundays and a script will be provided. Help us bring the Holy Week story to life as we enjoy one another in community.



Choir Corner

Angelus Choir sings
TODAY at the 8 a.m. service
Cherub Choir sings Mar. 3 at the
9:15 a.m. worship



FELC Open Gym & Games THIS Sunday!

All are invited to burn off some energy with gym games or board games TODAY! Meet us at North Site from 1:30-3:30 p.m. for snacks, friends, & fun! We ask that all wear gym shoes - no street shoes on the gym floor, please. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



Taking Another Crack At Winter Camp

The polar vortex may have led to keeping us from Winter Camp once but we're taking another crack at it! If you're a student in grades 4 or 5 and would like to come along for Winter Camp at our new time, Feb. 22-24, we would LOVE to have you! The cost is \$110 for a weekend packed with fun but First English is so excited about you going that we chip in \$35 of the cost for each camper making it a super value at \$75! Contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com for registration info. The deadline is Wednesday, Feb. 13.



Confirmation and Middle School Scoop



Gettin' Small, Y'all

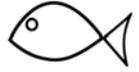
This week we chat it up with small group:



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

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

> 9th grade students should have devotion & gratitude journaling done. We'll be discussing what the Bible says about our relationship with nature.



Get The Inside Track On Small Group Leadership THIS WEDNESDAY

If you've ever wondered what the treasures & challenges of Confirmation small group leadership are then make it a point to attend the Small Group Leader Info. Meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 13, from 7-8 p.m. in Downtown Site Room 114. No commitment is expected of the attendees but we will discuss our philosophy and logistics, as well as answer any questions about journeying with a group of about seven FELC kids as they explore faith. You may be a perfect fit!



That Canoe Is Coming Up In Your Rearview Mirror

If you have a student beginning 7th grade Confirmation in September don't forget to submit your Request for Confirmation Camp Registration so we can get you on the list now to avoid any increase in camp fees. The deadline to request is Mar. 1. Confirmation camp is one of the best weeks in the program. Don't let the canoe pass you by!



Compassion Pantry collection is Feb. 27 & Mar. 13. Keep stockpiling snacks & hygiene items!

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

Retailer	\$ (Circle)	Credit	Qty	Cost
HomeGoods	\$25 \$100	7%		
iTunes	\$25	5%		
Kohl's	\$25 \$100	4%		
Kwik Trip	\$25 \$50 \$100	4%		
Little Caesars	\$20	8%		
Marcus Theatres	\$25	8%		
Meijer	\$50 \$100	3%		
Menards	\$25 \$100	3%		
Motomart	\$50	5%		
Nike	\$25	12%		
Noodles & Co	\$10	8%		
Old Navy	\$25 \$100	14%		

Total Amount Due: _____

Payment Option: Check# _____ Cash
 Make checks payable to FELC (please write Scrip in the memo)

Turn this sheet over to provide your contact information.

Retailer	\$ (Circle)	Credit	Qty	Cost
Panera	\$25	8%		
Pick 'N Save	\$50 \$100	4%		
Sam's Club	\$50 \$100	2.5%		
Scheels	\$25	8%		
Starbucks	\$25	7%		
Subway	\$10	6%		
Taco Bell	\$25	5%		
Target	\$25 \$50	2.5%		
T.J. Maxx	\$25 \$100	7%		
Uno Pizzeria	\$25	12%		
Walgreen's	\$25 \$100	5%		
Walmart	\$50 \$100	2.5%		
		SUBTOTAL PG 2		
		SUBTOTAL FROM PG 1		
		TOTAL PGS 1 & 2		

**First English Lutheran Church SCRIP Order Form (New Retailers added as of December 2018)
 Benefitting FELC Youth Annual Trips**

General Information

Please turn in form with payment to the table in the Gathering Area, offering plate, Church Office or email to Heidi Schreiner at hschreiner@felc.com. Payment is required at time of order. Orders placed by **Noon on Monday, Feb. 11**, will be available for pick up on **Sunday, Feb. 17**. **After that, they will be available in the Downtown Site Office.** Questions? Contact Heidi Schreiner at 733-2303 or hschreiner@felc.com.

Name: _____ Phone: _____ Order Date: _____

Email: _____

Check one: ___ Pick up at DS ___ Pick up at NS

Retailer	\$ (Circle)	Credit	Qty	Cost
Amazon.com	\$25 \$100	2.5%		
Applebee's	\$25	8%		
Barnes & Noble	\$25	8%		
Bath + Body Works	\$25	13%		
Best Buy	\$25 \$100	4%		
Buffalo Wild Wings	\$25	8%		
Chipotle	\$25	10%		

Retailer	\$ (Circle)	Credit	Qty	Cost
CVS	\$25	6%		
DICK'S Sporting Goods	\$25 \$100	8%		
Domino's	\$25	8%		
Festival Foods	\$50 \$100	3%		
Fleet Farm	\$25 \$100	3.5%		
Gap	\$25 \$100	14%		
Home Depot	\$25 \$100	4%		
		SUBTOTAL PG 1		

Turn sheet over for more shopping options.

DS Engage Page: Feb 10, 2019—Epiphany 5/ Failure

Luke 5:1-11 *Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.*

Sun. Feb. 10: Family Project: Jesus told James, John, and Simon Peter that they would be catching people. There is nothing that "catches" us like being loved. A confirmation student once told me, "I like math. My math teacher likes me." The most powerful tool we have for spreading the hope of the Gospel is love. Talk about how you can share love with others.

Mon. Feb. 11: One barrier to willing one thing, Kierkegaard says, is egocentric service of the good. This person *"does not will the Good for the sake of the reward. He wills that the Good shall triumph through him, that he shall be the instrument, he the chosen one...The reward which he insists upon is a sense of pride and in that very demand is his violent double-mindedness...He cannot, he will not, humbly understand that the Good can get on without him."* We may never see the big catch. We may never know if God used our actions to his glory. Nevertheless, we single-mindedly pursue the good.

Tues. Feb. 12: Kierkegaard writes, *"in your occupation, what is your attitude of mind? And how do you carry out your occupation? Have you made up your own mind that your occupation is your real calling so that you do not have to make explanation hinge on the result, maintaining that it was not your real calling if the results are not favorable, if your efforts do not succeed? Alas, such fickleness weakens one immeasurably. Therefore persevere...An unfavorable result can no more disprove the faithful one's conviction of a calling than a favorable result can of itself prove that it is the proper calling."*

Wed, Feb. 13, Jeremiah 17:5-10

Driving through the Dakota's, you will notice little clumps of trees that follow stream beds. In the arid prairies, these are the only spots with enough water for trees to grow. The psalmist compares those who put their trust in the Lord with trees planted by water. Their roots go down deep into the source of life. In times of heartache, I have often had to lean deeply into this reservoir. As you are connected to the Lord through scripture, drinking deeply from the water of life, you find yourself nourished and refreshed, and become a source of comfort and shade for others too!

Thurs. Feb. 14, Psalm 1

Sometimes the inclusive gender language that is used some translations of the Bible helps people connect with the biblical story. However, sometimes the use of plural, gender neutral pronouns takes away some of the meaning of a passage. In this passage, the original Greek speaks of an individual. *"Happy is the individual who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of scoffers."* Notice the progression from casual walking in proximity, to stopping and standing, to sitting down together. We don't choose to do evil things overnight, but gradually we become accustomed to listening to a voice other than God's voice, and we walk away from our chance to be delighted by God's word. Increase your chances for true joy by meditating on and delighting in God's wisdom.

Fri., Feb. 15, I Cor. 15:12-20

Some people prefer to follow the teachings of Jesus instead of having faith in the miraculous resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Paul derides that mindset, claiming *"If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain."* (v.14) C.S. Lewis elaborates, teaching that we don't even know how to do good for someone if we are unclear about the resurrection. If there is no resurrection, happiness is attainable only in this physical, mortal world. If there is a resurrection, humans were destined for eternal happiness and should look beyond temporal comfort to find lasting hope and joy. In order to truly *"act for the good"*, we must act on eternal values.

Sat. Feb. 16, Luke 6:17-26

There has been a craze going on in our nation for decluttering as taught by Marie Kondo in her Konmari technique. At a recent staff meeting, we were encouraged to think about a spiritual decluttering also. Are there ideas about God that you have held onto that no longer align with your understanding of scripture? Simplify to those tenets that are central to your faith. When you come before God poor, hungry, mourning, hated, excluded, reviled, and defamed, you have a golden opportunity to clear away the clutter of expectations and traditions that detract from hearing God's voice. Leap for joy as you learn to rely on God's presence to overcome struggles here on earth.

*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>.

NS Engage Page: Feb 10, 2019—Epiphany 4/ Loneliness

Luke 4:21-30 *Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.*

Sun. Feb. 10: Family Project: When Jesus started teaching and healing, it was hard for those in his hometown to accept him. Perhaps they were asking themselves, *"Where did he get this knowledge and ability? He's no one special. We know his family. He played with our kids."* So Jesus was not able to teach or to heal many people in his hometown. Talk together about how to hear God's voice, even when listening to people who we know well.

Mon. Feb. 11: Since our one desire in life should be to will the good, Kierkegaard asks the question, *"What then must I do?"* His first answer is to *"Live as an Individual."* He recognizes that the crowd always seems the strongest, but, *"In eternity you will look in vain for the crowd...Eternity scatters the crowd by giving each an infinite weight, by making him heavy—as an individual."* Eternity does not ask what our crowd did, but what we did. Looking for safety in a crowd makes us more susceptible to the fear of loneliness. Looking to Jesus -listening to act for the good -helps us to be aware of and responsive to those around us, sharing love and humanity

Tues., Feb. 12: Should we avoid relationships in order to act as individuals? Kierkegaard says, *"You should not withdraw & sit brooding over your eternal accounting. To do this is to deserve something further to account for. You will more & more readily find time to perform your duty & your task, while concern over your eternal responsibility will hinder you from being "busy" & busily having a hand in everything possible –an activity that can best be called: time-wasting."* Living as individuals helps us have more meaningful relationships, not dependent on others for our sense of well-being.

Wed, Feb.13, Isaiah 6:1-8 Isaiah confesses, *"I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips."* (v.5). In God's presence, Isaiah was brought face to face with his own unworthiness. Sometimes we allow our own shortcomings to paralyze us. If we hear an amazing piano player, we don't want to play in front of them. If we watch an incredible athlete, we would not presume to be on the same team as they are on. But it's good to remember that directly after experiencing his own flaws, Isaiah hears God's call. It's as though the realization of his sinfulness was a prerequisite to hearing and answering the call of God. Like Isaiah, in our own flawed state, may we hear God's call & answer, *"Here I am; send me!"* (v.8)

Thurs. Feb. 14, Psalm 138 The psalmist writes, *"I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise."* (v.1) Who are these other gods? These words may have referred to foreign gods, or the psalmist may have been stating their steadfast commitment to praise God anywhere –even in heaven itself. However, in my life, it is important for me to declare God's praise in front of my false gods. Am I addicted to comfort? I praise God for the disruptions in my life. Am I overly concerned about the impression others have of me? I praise God right in front of those I am most eager to impress. Have I made my family my God? I relieve them of the pressure of having to sustain me by reminding them that I am held by God. Give thanks today before your gods.

Fri., Feb. 15, I Cor.15:1-11 C.S. Lewis proposes that most of us don't want to be forgiven, we want to be excused. He writes, *"Forgiveness says 'Yes, you have done this thing, but I accept your apology; I will never hold it against you...But excusing says 'I see that you couldn't help it or didn't mean it; you weren't really to blame.'" If one was not really to blame then there is nothing to forgive.*" In this passage, Paul is not offering excuses. He is not trying to justify himself by saying, *"Because I believed this was heresy..."* or *"I was really only trying to protect the Jewish faith."* Rather he leans fully into God's grace, saying, *"By the grace of God, I am what I am."* May we rest in the grace of both asking for and extending forgiveness –not for what we can excuse in ourselves or others, but for the inexcusable –for sin.

Sat. Feb. 16, Luke 5:1-11 *"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."* Had I been Peter, thinking of catching people is what would have made me afraid. Having failed the night before in my fishing, and having realized my sins in Jesus presence, the thought of embarking on a new vocation would have been overwhelming. But Jesus makes it clear that he isn't looking for success in his followers, but rather obedience. Peter welcomed Jesus in his boat; he put out into deep water at Jesus request; he let down the nets; he followed Jesus. May we be willing to follow Jesus, going fearlessly through failure & success in pursuit of God.

*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.