

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 sound-board 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. 8, 2019 At-A-Glance

Sunday, Sept. 8

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

Monday

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

Tuesday

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

Wednesday

10:30 a.m.
Noon
Noon
1 p.m.
5:45 p.m.
6:15 p.m.
6:30 p.m.

Thursday

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

Friday

6:30 a.m.

Sunday, Sept. 15

8, 9:15 & 10:30 a.m.
8:15 & 10:30 a.m.
9:15 a.m.
9:15/9:25 a.m.
9:30 a.m.
9:45 a.m.
11:45 a.m.

DS = Downtown Site

God's work. Our hands. Sunday

Worship, DS Sanctuary
Worship, NS Sanctuary

Quilting, DS Fellowship Hall
Pick Up Basketball League, NS Activity Center

Men's Ministry, NS Library
Worship & Music Ministry Team, DS Library
Confirmation 7th Grade Small Group Leaders, DS 114
Men's Ministry, DS 221
ATC Basketball, NS Activity Center

Bible Study with Pastor Mary, DS 110-111
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

Early Risers Women's Study, DS Lounge
Adult Bible Study, DS Lounge
Leadership Transition, DS 221

Fall Worship Times Resume

Worship, DS Sanctuary
Worship, NS Sanctuary
Adult Learning, DS Lounge
Sunday School Learning Time, DS/NS
Women's Study Group, NS Library
NS Sunday School Parent Meeting, NS Lower Level
New & Review (Week One), DS 114-115

NS = North Site

Shopping With Scrip is Back Sept. 22!

Shop With Scrip, usually referred to as *Scrip*, will be taking place again monthly as a bulletin insert starting Sunday, Sept. 22. How does it work? You pre-order gift cards at church and receive 100% of what you pay for, while FELC Youth receives a rebate of anywhere between 3-14% on what you spend. Orders are due to the Church Office by Monday, Sept. 23, and will be available for pick up at your preferred site on Sunday, Sept. 29, or in the Church Office on Monday, Sept. 30. Questions? Contact Heidi (hschreiner@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.
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 being a welcoming, inclusive congregation.

Sunday at FELC

Altar Flowers

The Downtown Site flowers are provided by Lou Chiquette.

The North Site flowers are provided by Bob and Gail Lemke in honor of their 46th wedding anniversary.

A Bit Short But A Big Deal

Hey, we've got great news...the majority of our educational teachers and leaders have returned for another great year of connecting kids to Christ and being faith mentors! We are blessed to have so many folks committed to sharing this important work. Yet, we are still looking for a grades 3 & 4 teacher or co-teachers at the Downtown Site and a Kid's Life leader or leadership team for Wednesday nights from 7-8 p.m. For those kids who already have leadership for their class they won't miss a beat, but for the grades 3 & 4 and Kid's Life groups, running a bit short could be a big deal as we won't be able to meet until the roles are filled. If you think you may be willing to help, contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com or call the Church Office.



Announcements
Week of Sept. 8, 2019

Looking Ahead

Fall Worship Times Resume

First English will return to its regular worship schedule next Sunday, Sept. 15, as follows:

- Sunday Downtown Site: 8, 9:15 and 10:30 a.m.
- Sunday North Site: 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.
- Wednesday Downtown Site: 6:15 p.m., beginning Sept. 11.

Fair-Trade Sale

Through Fair Trade, farmers earn a fair price for their products, have access to affordable credit and gain a long-term trading partner they can trust—all elements missing in the conventional coffee market. We will be selling Fair-Trade products next Sunday, Sept. 15. We hope to see you there.

Open Staff Position

FELC is pleased to announce a new part-time position: AV Specialist. This position entails five hours per week, primarily on Sunday mornings, to oversee and coordinate the audio and video aspect of worship for both sites and special events. One emphasis of the position is empowering volunteers to develop their AV skills in worship. Interested persons should look for a job description and application at www.felc.com/employment or call the Church Office for more information.

Reforestation Faith

Join Pastor Bob Herder on Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge beginning Sept. 15 for a three-week study based on the book, *Reforestation Faith*, by Matthew Sleeth. Pastor Herder will be pulling out insights that were particularly meaningful to him. You need not read the book or commit to all three weeks in order to come and enjoy insights from this book that *"navigates the Bible's trail of trees to explore the wonders of life, death, and rebirth."*

Breathe Life Into Scripture

As we begin to use the Narrative Lectionary this September, we are approaching our Bible readings during worship with a deepened sense of creativity. We are working to build a group of readers at each site that are interested in being part of a team that presents the Word in engaging ways. Contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com or Pastor Mary at mbauer@felc.com to find out more about this new opportunity to breathe life into Scripture!

New & Review 2019

Interested in joining the First English church family? Attend the *New & Review Fall 2019* series. Sessions are held at both sites so new members are able to visit both locations.

Fall 2019 *New & Review* Weekly Detail

Sept. 15, 11:45 a.m. - 12: 45 p.m., Downtown Site Rooms 114/115

FELC, the ELCA and You plus Downtown Site Building Tour

Presenter: Pastor Jeff

Sept. 22, 11:45 a.m. - 12: 45 p.m., North Site Library

What It Means to be Lutheran plus North Site Building Tour

Presenter: Pastor Mary

Sept. 29, 11:45 a.m. - 2 p.m., Pastor Jeff's Home

Love Jesus. Live your call. and New Member Luncheon

Presenters: Members of Ministry Teams/Small Groups

Oct. 6, Worship Service of Choice - Either Site

New Member Sunday

Sign up online at www.felc.com under the *New to FELC* tab, then *How to Join*. Questions? Contact Karen Kneisler at kkneisler@felc.com or call the Church Office at 733-2303 to register.

Visioning Event - We Want You

First English is going through a visioning process to help us establish long range planning for the future. As we begin this process, we want to hear from you! A Group Visioning Session is being professionally facilitated on Saturday, Oct. 5, in the North Site Sanctuary from 9 a.m. to noon. In order to get good participation, invitations will be mailed to persons whose names appeared in the annual meeting report one of the last three years as ministry team or committee participants. However, this leaves out many people who either may have been involved in the past or who would like to be involved more in the present but may be unable to do so. We still want to hear your voice. If you are willing to give us a Saturday morning on Oct. 5, please join in. Call the Church Office at 733-2303 and leave an RSVP with Pastor Mary by Sept. 23.



Support Fox Valley Lutheran Homes Linwood Place While Enjoying An Evening of Music!

Join us for the Neil Diamond Nostalgia and Tribute Concert featuring Eric Diamond on Friday, Sept. 20, at 7 p.m. at the OuterEdge Stage at 300 N Oneida St. in Appleton. General Seating tickets are \$25 and Cabaret Seating Tickets are \$30. Reserve your own Cabaret Table for 4 for \$120.

Tickets are available at Linwood Place by calling (920)734-7225, from any board member or at the door.

Mark Your Calendars for the Pie & Ice Cream Social & Auction

Visit us on Sunday, Oct. 13 from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Fox Valley Lutheran Homes Linwood Commons, 425 N. Linwood Avenue in Appleton for a fun filled afternoon with old and new friends. Enjoy pie and ice cream and plan on bidding for a special item at our auction. All proceeds support the Ministry of Fox Valley Lutheran Homes. Watch our website (www.fvlhomes.org) for more information as we begin to display some of our exciting auction items.

Prayers For Community Care

Each week we lift up an organization that works to provide vital services in our community. Consider praying and possibly volunteering for the groups we mention. This week's focus:

- 91.9/91.5 The Family Radio
HeidiP@thefamily.net
(800)236-9364

AA Corner

If you or someone you know could use some confidential help with stopping drinking or if you are being affected by someone else's drinking, call Dale at (920)419-2794.

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
- Debra Boushley
- David Heindel
- Doug Hansen
- Amy Ponomarev
- Moore Peregrine
- Juanita Gauerke
- Robb Schaefer
- Carol Peterson
- Bev Hoff
- Alex VanMaren
- Debra Nuthals
- Mitzi Hansen
- Syllas Garcia
- Rev. Kathryn Kuhn
- Liz J.
- Connie Summers
- Joel Schlachtenhaufen
- Anita Mansholt
- Kristy Howard
- Kevin Hujet
- Shirley Larson
- Marilyn Pelehach

Prayers of Comfort

Families of:

- Rev. Maynard Beemer
- Gary Meyer
- Lelia (Lee) Mulla
- Marc Patri

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Baptism of:

- Faith Madelyn Voss

Prayers for Those Called to Serve in Other Countries

- Sarah Bauer-Myanmar
- Jack Kent-Lithuania
- Stephanie Olson-Cambodia
- Spencer Wentland-Japan

Prayers for Those in the Military

- Christian Cramer
- Cpl. Alex Grebe
- BM3 Kyle Kramer, USCG
- LCPL Robert Kopesky II
- Sgt. Samuel Sinclair



High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Sept. 8, 2019



Beginning Wednesday Sept. 18

For Grades 10-12

Wednesday nights

DS Youth Room

7-8 p.m.

9/18: Welcome back! @DS Youth Room

9/25: 5-6:15 p.m. *Special event refuel night*

Hofacker's Hillside Orchard (W3964 Wege Rd, Appleton)

5-5:30 p.m. Apple picking

5:30-6:15 p.m. at NS

10/2: Outreach Event @NS, more info to come!

Mission Trip 2020...drum roll please..

NASHVILLE, TN June 14-19

Commitment form and fundraiser sign-ups found at www.felc.com/highschool

Commitment form due: Sept. 20

Fundraiser schedule:

Sept. 27: License to Cruise Parking Lot Fundraiser

Sept. 28: Oktoberfest Parking Lot Fundraiser

Sept. 29: Bake Sale Both Sites, Scrip Pick-Up Both Sites

Social Media

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



September 8, 2019



Information for FELC Youth and Families
Grades K-12



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

**God's work.
Our hands.
Rally Sunday is
TODAY!**

Forget to sign up for a project? No problem, various on-site activities are available this morning or feel free to do your own type of service project (make a meal for a sick friend, pick up litter in a park, etc.).

We commit to *God's work. Our hands.* Rally Sunday each fall remembering that coming together to do community work fueled by God's love is a big part of who we are and a true blessing!



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.



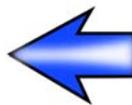
Elementary & Sunday School News



Not Sure Which (If Any) Sunday School Info You Got?

It has been difficult for some folks to track down our Sunday School emails. So far we have sent a Welcome to Sunday School, God's work. Our hands., and grade specific parent info emails since early August. Many are finding them in their junk emails (this especially seems true for Gmail addresses) while others simply are unable to find any of them. If you're able to go to the Parent Meeting at your site you will receive the most comprehensive information.
Sept. 15: North Site from 9:45-10:10 a.m. in the Lower Level
Sept. 22: Downtown Site from 10:30-11:15 a.m. in Fellowship Hall
Contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com if you have questions prior to your meeting.

Downtown Site Sunday School now begins in 9:15 a.m. worship with pick-up at 10:20 a.m. in the classrooms starting Sept. 15.



911! Leadership Needed

Downtown Site grades 3 & 4 teacher or teaching team
Kid's Life leader or team for Wednesday nights (7-8 p.m.)

Without leadership these groups will not meet.

Contact Kirsten Owens at kowens@felc.com right away if you can help lead these super kids!

A New Parent & Student Retreat Opportunity at Crossways!

Seeds Retreat for grades 1 & 2 students and their parents

Oct. 25 & 26 at Crossways

Pine Lake, Waupaca

Registration due Sept. 22

Go to www.felc.com/forms to request info.



CROSSWAYS
CAMPING MINISTRIES



Confirmation and Middle School Scoop



Don't Miss Your Parent & Student Meeting

7th grade: Pastor & Family meetings Sept. 9, 10, & 12 by reservation via Sign-Up Genius link sent in the Welcome to Confirmation email.

A brief, 15 minutes, orientation meeting follows.

8th grade: Sept. 18, 5:30-6:15 p.m.,
Downtown Site Fellowship Hall.

9th grade: Sept. 18, 7-8 p.m., Downtown Site Fellowship Hall.



7th Grade Confirmation Start-Up Lock-In Oct. 4-5, 6 p.m.-8:30 a.m. at North Site.

Can't wait to see you there!

NEW ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is about exploring and affirming the baptismal promise made by the family, and congregation when we entered into that shared vow together. It's important that students are present to share and discuss theological, Biblical, and practical ideas about faith with family, leaders, and friends prior to determining if they intend on confirming their relationship with Christ. As a congregation, we are only able to engage in this process successfully when attendance is a priority.

Confirmation students are now able to miss three classes a year without make up work. If a student misses five classes they will be responsible for completing a worksheet for the material of two of the sessions missed. In the event that a student misses more than five classes a study packet will be given to be discussed in one or more meetings with a pastor. These meetings must occur prior to being confirmed. We look forward to spending as much time with students as possible preparing for Confirmation together!

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



Just four simple things to do to be a host:

- Have a heart for people,
- Open up a place to meet,
- Serve a snack, and
- Turn on a DVD. It's that simple.

- The *A Counter-Cultural Community* series begins the week of Oct. 13.
- Host training will take place Oct. 1. Materials will be provided.
- Questions? Contact Jeanne at jgronholm@felc.com or Pastor Mary at mbauer@felc.com.

Sign me up as a Small Group Host!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Meeting Day: _____

Meeting Time: _____

What type of group would you like to host? (e.g. age preference, couples, singles)



Oct. 13, Downtown Site and Oct. 20, North Site:

Community of Love

In a faith-filled counter-cultural community we are loved by Christ and that love overflows. By sharing our stories we form deep bonds that hold through difficult times.

Oct. 20, Downtown Site and Oct. 27, North Site:

Community of Celebration

In a faith-filled counter-cultural community, celebration hones a life-long identity (vs. shallow time-limited connection) that allows us not to forget ourselves, but to find ourselves. This joy fuels compassion and inspires us to bring joy to others.

Oct. 27, Downtown Site and Nov. 3, North Site:

Community of Service

In a faith-filled counter-cultural community our deep bonds naturally flow into mutual (not one-directional or power-based) acts of caring (not pity) that bring a sense of belonging (mutually vulnerable).

Nov. 3, Downtown Site and Nov. 10, North Site:

Community of God's Presence

In a faith-filled counter-cultural community we never act alone and God's presence gives us the strength to love deeply, is the source of our joy, and gives us the courage to be vulnerable - to care for others and to be cared for by others.

Nov. 10, Downtown Site and Nov. 17, North Site:

A Community of Inclusion

In a faith-filled counter-cultural community, Jesus empowers us to move beyond fear and shallow connections into a community where all are known, accepted, and belong.

FELC DS Engage Page: Sept. 8, 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24 *In the day that the LORD God made the earth & the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth & no herb of the field had yet sprung up-- for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, & there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, & water the whole face of the ground--then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; & the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; & there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight & good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, & the tree of the knowledge of good & evil...The LORD God took the man & put him in the garden of Eden to till it & keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field & every bird of the air, & brought them to the man to see what he would call them; & whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, & to the birds of the air, & to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, & he slept; then he took one of his ribs & closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman & brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones & flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father & his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

Sun, Sep 8: Family Project: What a great day to celebrate creation! Spend some time creating yourself. Draw or use play dough and make your favorite animals. Remember together spots that have moved you with their beauty. Place your animal creations in a place where they will remind you to thank God every day for the many gifts of this created world.

Mon, Sep 9: Edwin Hatch's hymn asks, "Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do." From Job 32:8, we hear a similar sentiment. "But truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty, that makes for understanding." Several times today, pause to remember that it was God's breath that brought Adam to life, and it is God's breath that sustains us. Use that breath today, to speak words full of God's wisdom and love.

Tues, Sep 10: This passage can make us bristle knowing the ways it has been used to order society, interpreting "helper" to diminish the voice of women. However, if you were designing a computer and a friend brought the "helper" Bill Gates, you would not devalue his input or assume he could not also be a leader. This passage is not about subservience. Rather the Lord committed to making Adam "a helper as his partner."

Wed., Sep 11, Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 After creation, the Biblical narrative begins a cycle of wandering & homecoming that illustrates humanity's wavering relationship with the law. We read the story of Noah who builds an ark to save all God's creatures from a catastrophic flood. After the flood, Noah's family spreads out into the drying land, & eventually, God calls his descendant, Abraham, to a new land, promising he will be the father of a great nation. However, Abraham's wife, Sarah, is unable to get pregnant. Since her age defies the possibility of children, Sarah laughs at God's messengers when they predict the birth of a promised child. This cynical response turns to true joy as Sarah gives birth to Isaac. Though our disappointments will not always be reversed, this story reminds us that God power can create new possibilities in our lives.

Thurs, Sep 12, Psalm 69:13-18 Many couples live in the disappointment that existed for Sarah & Abraham as they waited and hoped for the birth of a child. It is the sort of agony that we can experience in divorce, job loss, illness, or in the death of a dream. This psalm is a heartfelt cry to God in the midst of deep distress. It applies to human enemies, but also encompasses the enemies of depression, hopelessness, and despair. If you are in that position, you are not alone! Make this psalm the prayer of your heart. If you are not, pray it on behalf of someone who you know is struggling. "With your faithful help rescue me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. Do not let the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the Pit close its mouth over me. Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good."

Fri, Sep 13, Genesis 18:1-15; 21:1-7 Professor Margaret Odell writes, "it is Abraham who must receive the promise. The LORD tells him, "I will return to you and Sarah will have a child." In the Hebrew, the prepositional phrase "to you" is masculine singular; in effect God promises to return to Abraham, and in that way, Sarah will have a child. The promise, as well as Sarah's response to it, makes it clear that Isaac will come to Sarah and Abraham in the ordinary way that children come to human beings...The promise is not simply a promise of a miraculous birth. Rather, the miracle is that this promise brings Sarah and Abraham back together again." So many times when I ask God to change my circumstances, instead it is my heart that is changed—usually through new or restored relationships.

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4189

Sat, Sep 14, Mark 10:27 The rich young man came running up to Jesus and knelt before him, asking "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus recognized this was a genuine question and looked lovingly before telling him to sell his possessions, give them to the poor, and to follow Jesus. We are called to ask ourselves if we would walk away "grieving", as that young man did. The sense of security that most of us derive from our homes and possessions we would find impossible or irresponsible to give up. It is to us that Jesus says, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." Finding safety in things will always disappoint. It is through God alone that we rest secure. We use our resources responsibly to give God glory.

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

FELC NS Engage Page: Sept. 8, 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 14:1, 7-14 *On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come & say to you, 'Give this person your place,' & then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go & sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, & those who humble themselves will be exalted." He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, & you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

Sun, Sep 8: Family Project: Have those in your family ever experienced what it feels like to be left out? Perhaps there was a birthday party that they didn't get invited to, or a class that all of their friends were in, or a team with tryouts that they didn't "make it" into. How does it feel to be left out? According to this passage, who does Jesus invite to his banquet? How do we make sure that the poor and all those who cannot repay feel welcome into our worship and into our community of faith?

Mon, Sep 9: Although we do not live in an honor-shame culture like Jesus did, we do allow ourselves to honor those who have more prestigious connections. This passage encourages us to open our hearts to everyone, regardless of whether or not the relationship will make us look good in the eyes of others. David Lose wonders, *"what it would be like to live into the freedom to stop calculating our social prestige and stop worrying about what others think and simply be kind to everyone around us, particularly those who are not often the recipients of kindness."* He invites us to help in God's work of handing out dignity, worth, and value to all.
<http://www.davidlose.net/2016/08/pentecost-15-c-freedom-to-stop-counting-and-start-blessing/>

Tues, Sep 10: When I meet someone new, I might invite them over for supper, and then sit back and wait for them to reciprocate. After some time, I might try another invitation –or even a third. But at some point, I expect that they will initiate getting together and show some interest in the relationship. Jesus reminds us that our interactions with others aren't to be dictated by some rules of engagement, but rather the need of the recipient. Does someone need to belong? Don't play the waiting game. Keep on inviting –you are blessed as you share God's love.

Wed., Sep 11, Genesis 2:4b-25 Our Narrative Lectionary starts with the second of the creation stories. While the account in Genesis 1 places the focus on the order & breadth of creation, this account emphasizes the relationship between God & humanity. We see the pieces align for the amazing drama that unfolds throughout the Biblical narrative. A loving God creates humanity and invites them to learn how to trust and obey God's law (do not eat from the tree), to exercise free will, and to acknowledge all the ways that creation is interconnected. It is a lesson that we are learning to this day. Do we see God's law as gift or as burden? Do we value all of creation? And what do we do when we fall short –over and over again? The very first chapters of this astounding story point us to the cross and our need for Christ's redemption and forgiveness.

Thurs, Sep 12, Psalm 8 When I got a puppy, my habit of moving from a chair by the tv right up to bed had to change. She needed a trip outside. Consequently, I have had the joy of getting reacquainted with the night sky. Whenever I step out my door and look up, straightway I see the big dipper. Next the little dipper comes into focus except for nights when the moon is bright enough to cast shadows. The vast beauty causes me to burst into song on a regular basis. (This is when I'm particularly glad I'm in the country!) I wonder which stars this psalmist was seeing when he declared, *"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?"* (v. 3-4) Rejoice today in the wonder that we occupy even a tiny part of the mind of the God who fashioned the night sky.

Fri., Sep 13, Genesis 2:4b-25 When I read, *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it,"* (v. 15) it makes me think of a diorama. I'm picturing God making a pleasing little scene and placing Adam into it in the same way that I created a world inside a shoe box. However, no matter how well I formed the pieces, I would never come back and find that they had planted a garden inside the shoe box while I was gone! God gives us so much in creation –a beautiful world, an amazing body, resources for food, shelter, and clothing. But one of the most amazing gifts of creation is purpose. God's creation did not stop in forming our bodies. Praise God for the breath of life, a chance for meaningful work, and the ability to impact this world.

Sat, Sep 14, Mark 1:16-20 One of the first things God did after creating Adam was to give him a job. We have a God who allows us to be co-creators, to use our intelligence and will to create beauty and harmony. Similarly, Jesus' first recorded words to Simon and Andrew were, *"Follow me and I will make you fish for people."* (v. 17) Although Jesus alone would conquer death and sin, he engaged humans in the work of spreading the message of love and forgiveness to others. Be assured that your life has meaning and purpose. Jesus has called you to be in the people business –to share God's grace and to participate in making this world reflect God's glory.

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