

## 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 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](mailto: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](http://www.felc.com), or check the bulletin boards and kiosks in the Gathering Area.

## The Week of Sept. 15, 2019 At-A-Glance

### Sunday, Sept. 15

9:15 a.m.  
9:15/9:25 a.m.  
9:30 a.m.  
9:45 a.m.  
11:45 a.m.

### Monday

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

### Tuesday

6:30 a.m.  
4 p.m.  
5:30 p.m.  
8 p.m.

### Wednesday

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

### Thursday

6 a.m.  
9 a.m.  
9:30 a.m.  
6:45 p.m.

### Friday

6:30 a.m.

### Sunday, Sept. 22

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

DS = Downtown Site    NS = North Site

### Fall Worship Times Resume

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

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

Men's Ministry, NS Library  
Vision Steering Task Force, DS Lounge  
Executive Committee, DS Lounge  
ATC Basketball, NS Activity Center

Bible Study with Pastor Mary, DS 110-111  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Family Orientation, DS Fellowship Hall  
Handbell Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room  
Wednesday Worship, DS Sanctuary  
Parish Choir Rehearsal, DS Choir Room  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Worship Asst. Training, DS Sanctuary  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Family Orientation, DS Fellowship Hall

Early Risers Women's Study, DS Lounge  
Adult Bible Study, DS Lounge  
Leadership Transition, DS 221  
Finance Committee, DS 114

Men's Ministry, NS Library

Adult Learning, DS Lounge  
Sunday School Learning Time, DS/NS  
Women's Study Group, NS Library  
DS Sunday School Parent Meeting, DS Fellowship Hall  
New & Review (Week Two), NS Library

### 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 next Sunday. 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](mailto:hschreiner@felc.com)).



First English Lutheran Church  
[www.felc.com](http://www.felc.com)    [felc@felc.com](mailto: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.

Announcements  
Week of Sept. 15, 2019

## 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 Chicquette.

### 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 today in the Gathering Area. We hope to see you there.

### Reforestation Faith

Join Pastor Bob Herder on Sunday mornings at 9:15 a.m. in the Downtown Site Lounge beginning today 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.*”

### New & Review 2019 Begins Today

Interested in joining the First English church family? Attend the *New & Review Fall 2019* series beginning today. Don't worry if you didn't register—you can sign up at class this morning!

### Fall 2019 New & Review Weekly Detail

Today, 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

Questions? Contact Karen Kneisler at [kkneisler@felc.com](mailto:kkneisler@felc.com) or call the Church Office at 733-2303.

# Looking Ahead

## GWOH Thank You!

Thanks to ALL who participated in any and all ways in making last Sunday's *God's work. Our hands.* Sunday so successful. Special thanks to Jean Monson, Diane Putzer and their project leads for their excellent organization and execution of the event!

## FELC is Hiring!

First English is looking to fill two NEW exciting staff positions. If you or someone you know is interested in either, please visit [www.felc.com/employment](http://www.felc.com/employment) for complete job descriptions and to apply, or contact Church Administrator Brenda Smongeski at [bsmongeski@felc.com](mailto:bsmongeski@felc.com) or Pastor Jeff at [jtengesdal@felc.com](mailto:jtengesdal@felc.com), with any questions.

- **AV Specialist:** FELC is pleased to announce the part-time position of 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.
- **Neighbor Network Coordinator:** FELC is currently accepting applications for the role of Neighbor Network Coordinator, a new position to lead an exciting new ministry initiative of FELC. A key function of this role will be matching people's joyful need to serve with others' unmet needs. The person who fills this role is a servant leader, has a passion for deepening community, and will become integral within the life and ministry of our congregation. A half-time position, the role has potential for future expansion and will report to the senior pastor.

## Possible Marathon Detours

An FYI: The Fox Cities Marathon is next Sunday. Although neither FELC site is on the race route, your way to church may be affected, so you may need to allow for a little extra drive time.

## Our Third and Fourth Graders Need You!

Since early summer we have been looking for a Sunday School teacher/teaching team for the grades 3 & 4 class at the Downtown Site. At this point we remain without a teacher for this class. If you think it's important to have our children learn about Jesus Christ and the Bible, make church friends, and see and feel the support of adults in their faith community then you would probably be an excellent fit for this role. Class cannot meet without leadership. Please prayerfully consider teaching this great group of FELC kids. Contact Kirsten Owens at [kowens@felc.com](mailto:kowens@felc.com) or (920)733-2303 if you're able to help.

## 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.



## Wednesday Worship

Casual. Contemplative. Communion. Candles. These words describe the feel of Wednesday's 40-minute worship service. If another word were to be added, it would be Confirmation. Wednesday worship is a great time for students and families right before the Confirmation hour. Worship is held from 6:15-6:55 p.m. in the Downtown Site Sanctuary.

## 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, or from any board member or at the door.

## LWR Trailer Load

Keep *God's work. Our hands.* going! On Saturday, Oct. 12 at 8 a.m. at the North Site, help load the trailers with the Lutheran World Relief quilts and kits that have been created this past year. These items will be distributed to people in need throughout the world. Students grade 11 and up, and adults are encouraged to help, along with students in grades 7-10 if accompanied by a parent. Visit [www.felc.com/forms](http://www.felc.com/forms) to sign up. Please note: the busiest time where help is needed the most is 8-9:30 a.m. Added incentive: treats will be provided!



# 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
- Kristy Howard
- Kevin Hujet
- Shirley Larson
- Marilyn Pelehach

## Prayers of Comfort

- Families of:
- Gary Meyer
  - Marc Patri
  - Joel Shlachtenhaufen

## Prayers of Thanksgiving

- Baptism of:
- Max James Dornfeld

## 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

## Prayers For Community Care

- ThedaCare At Home
- [jane.shea@thedacare.org](mailto:jane.shea@thedacare.org); (920)969-0919



# High School Youth News

Grades 9-12

Sept. 15, 2019



**Beginning THIS 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: Special Outreach Event at NS to support Sibiu Flyers Wheelchair Basketball Team 7-9 p.m.

## Mission Trip 2020

**NASHVILLE, TN June 14-19**

**Commitment form and fundraiser sign-ups**

**found at [www.felc.com/highschool](http://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, Scrip Distribution, Both Sites

## Social Media

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



September 15, 2019



Information for FELC Youth and Families  
Grades K-12

**3-2-1 BLAST OFF!**  
**Learning Launches TODAY**



**Sunday School Learning Begins at Both Sites**

**Downtown Site: 9 a.m. meet teachers in classrooms.**

**Then families head to 9:15 a.m. worship together to begin**

**Sunday School. Pick up is in classrooms at 10:20 a.m.**

**North Site: Meet teachers in Lower Level in the classrooms at**

**9:25 a.m. Stay for the Parent Meeting from 9:45-10:10 a.m.**

**with Family Chat to follow.**

**Confirmation on Wednesday, Sept. 18, Downtown Site**

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Worship Assistance Training, 7-8 p.m. in the Sanctuary**

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Parent Meeting, 5:30-6:15 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**

**9<sup>th</sup> Grade: Parent Meeting, 7-8 p.m. in Fellowship Hall**

## 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](mailto:kowens@felc.com)

Heidi Schreiner, Youth & Summer Ministry Coordinator: [hschreiner@felc.com](mailto:hschreiner@felc.com)

***Love Jesus. Live your call.***



## Elementary & Sunday School News



Don't Miss The Parent Meeting  
If You Want The Best Info  
You will receive the most comprehensive information about Sunday School, retreats for elementary age students, special classes, etc. if you are able to make it to the Sunday School Parent Meeting at your worship site.

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](mailto: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 today.**



### 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](http://www.felc.com/forms) to request info.



### C'mon! Join the Kid's Life Team

In the past we have offered Wednesday night activities for students kindergarten to grade 6 at the Downtown Site from 7-8 p.m. We have had some interest from folks that would like to be team leaders for this group. The team would ideally be comprised of four or more families that would rotate

leadership so that each would lead once a month. Please contact Kirsten Owens, Faith Formation Coordinator, at [kowens@felc.com](mailto:kowens@felc.com) or (920) 733-2303 if you would be interested in being part of this fun team that provides games, crafts, service, projects, etc. while talking about faith!



## Confirmation and Middle School Scoop



Don't Miss Your Parent & Student Meeting

8<sup>th</sup> grade: Sept. 18, 5:30-6:15 p.m.,  
Downtown Site Fellowship Hall.  
9<sup>th</sup> grade: Sept. 18, 7-8 p.m.,  
Downtown Site Fellowship Hall.



Calendars, text books, and handbook changes will be shared.



**7<sup>th</sup> 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!**

### The Christian Calendar Reminds Us Of Who We Are

For a long time our Confirmation schedule has followed the Appleton Area School District calendar. It seemed an efficient way to ensure that our classes were as full as possible knowing when schools are on break, our attendance can be low. We are no longer following this pattern for a couple of reasons: 1. We have as many as 10 schools per grade level represented in each Confirmation class so many are not on the AASD schedule. 2. As Christians it only makes sense that we would return to the Christian calendar. The Christian calendar intentionally includes important festivals, time of reflection, remembrance, prayer and celebration. By getting back to our Christian calendar roots we have regular reminders of our faith-based identity. So we will now be ending

Confirmation the final week of Lent and beginning next year, Confirmation Sunday will be on Pentecost. We continue to try to use tools, new and old, to help faith development in the family.

*Have questions or want to volunteer?*

Contact Kirsten Owens at [kowens@felc.com](mailto: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](mailto:jgronholm@felc.com) or Pastor Mary at [mbauer@felc.com](mailto: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.

# Echoes, A Christian Thrift Store

Echoes, A Christian Thrift Store, located at 1320 W. Wisconsin Ave. in Appleton is an outreach ministry of First English Lutheran Church. It is doing its part to divert usable clothing and household goods from landfills. Echoes happily accepts donations of gently used items - just drop them off during store hours. The store is open Tuesday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Cold weather items such as winter coats, mittens, hats, boots, scarves and warm sweaters are especially needed.

Any First English Confirmation students that need to fulfill family service hours? Echoes would love to work with your family. The biggest need is Saturday afternoons. Contact Kathy Hoffman, Echoes Manager, at [echoes@felc.com](mailto:echoes@felc.com) or (920)882-8172 to volunteer.

Check out and like the Echoes Facebook page. New items are listed each week and by liking and sharing the page, you can assist in reaching more people online. If you have never checked out the store, stop by to see what you are missing and use the attached coupon. Hope to see you soon!



**50% off on one item**

**(limit of \$10 maximum savings)**

**Expires Oct. 31, 2019**

**Bulletin Insert promotion Sept. 2019**

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## FELC DS Engage Page: Sept. 15, 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

*Genesis 18:1-14, 21:1-3 The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on-- since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. They said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." Then one said, "I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?" The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." ...The LORD dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him..*

Sun. Sep 15: Family Project: Hospitality is an important part of Middle Eastern culture. It seems very strange for me to read about someone running down strangers in order to convince them to come for a meal. Good things happened after Abraham and Sarah rushed to help these travelers. Think about ways that your family can share hospitality with others. Even though you may not be entertaining angels, you will be spreading joy.

Mon. Sep 16: *"Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?"* We hear that question and our hearts cry out, *"NO! Our God can do anything."* Nevertheless it is easy to see why Sarah would be dubious and even laugh when she heard about the possibility of having a baby at her advanced age. It can be easier to have faith in God in the abstract, large areas of life than in the very personal concerns and heartaches we face. Remember, our God walks beside us through even the smallest disappointment.

Tues. Sep 17: These heavenly visitors brought news of a promised son to Sarah & Abraham –miraculous news! We may feel that miracles depend on our level of faith, but Sarah never did show faith; she laughed at the visitors' promise. God's faithfulness does not depend on our ability to banish doubts. If you fear your questions alienate God, take hope in knowing that God was able to face Sarah's laughter –and keep on giving.

Wed., Sep 18, Genesis 32:9-13, 22-30 Abraham's promised son Isaac grows & becomes the father of Jacob and Esau. Being younger, Jacob is not entitled to the birthright, but tricks his father, Isaac into giving it to him. Immediately Jacob runs away, certain that his brother will seek revenge. Decades later, Jacob is married with 13 children when he feels God's call to return to his homeland. He is justifiably worried about what his brother Esau will do. Jacob has been conniving and deceitful in his relationship with Esau. Nevertheless, the Lord works through Jacob to fulfill God's promise to make a great nation of Abraham. We are tempted to dismiss people who have acted unscrupulously in their past. If you question your worth because of past mistakes, remember our God is a God of second ...& third ...& many more chances.

Thurs. Sep 19, Psalm 147:12-20 The psalmist writes, *"He hurls down hail like crumbs—who can stand before his cold? He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow."* The hardships that come our way may make us feel as though God has turned a cold shoulder to our prayers. Disappointments rain down on us like cracker crumbs that cover our laps. Like ice that booms and cracks on a frigid winter day, life can break our hearts open, exposing fault lines that create barriers that prevent us from fully loving and accepting ourselves and others. When we are in that position, it is God's word that comes to us and melts our hearts, helping us to know that even the innermost parts of ourselves, even those parts that we try to deny can be touched by God. Praise God that He sends forth His word and blesses us with the chance to change and experience God's grace more fully.

Fri., Sep 20, Genesis 32:9-13, 22-30 Jacob's fears about Esau's anger do not materialize. When the brothers meet, Esau greets Jacob with open arms. The true struggle ends up being Jacob's struggle with God. He does not repeat the past by resorting to trickery in order to receive a blessing. He walks straight into the arms of God. Does he know he will prevail? Likely not. But he knows that his call to return home is a call to be vulnerable. He must be willing to accept that he is not a perfect paragon of faith, but is a man crippled by ambition, nevertheless loved and blessed by God. None among us is perfect, but we are blessed when we refuse to walk away from faith. If we hang on through our struggles with God, we will be changed and blessed.

Sat. Sep 21, Mark 14:32-36 In the garden of Gethsemane, we see Jesus striving with God –and we are the ones who prevail. His prayers show that he would like to walk away from the upcoming suffering and find an easier way. However, his love for all humanity compels him to smash the belief that we are able to justify ourselves by following the law. It is this penchant for self-justification that turns us in on ourselves and encourages us to label others as insiders or outsiders depending on their interpretation of the law. No matter how you feel about the faith or theology of others, remember that Jesus has intentionally & at great cost to himself, torn away your ability to judge others.

\*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/FELCEngagePage>.

## FELC NS Engage Page: Sept. 15, 14<sup>th</sup> 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 15:** Family Project: What a great day to celebrate creation! Spend some time creating yourself. Draw or use play dough & 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 16:** 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 17:** 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 18, 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 19, 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 20, 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](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4189)

**Sat, Sep 21, 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.

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