

BIENVENIDOS! EVERYONE IS WELCOME. THIS MEANS YOU.

Welcome to First English Lutheran Church. You're invited to fully participate in a community of faith and friendship that gathers for worship, relationship building, personal growth, and service in the community and the world. Following the example of Christ, this congregation welcomes you exactly as you are. We are committed to the work of racial equity, justice, and advocating for marginalized groups. We welcome people in all places on the journey of faith and life. We celebrate differences in age, appearance, economic status, ethnic origin, nationality, race, family configuration, marital or relationship status, political leaning, religious background, and those who are differently abled physically or mentally. Since 1989, FELC has openly welcomed persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions to full participation in the church and society. <u>www.reconcilingworks.org</u> We're Lutheran, so that means we believe in grace for everyone. The good news of Jesus Christ, who brings us the love and mercy of God as a gift, liberates us to love as we are loved, serve as we are served, and give as we have been given much. We rejoice in the diversity that has nurtured and enriched the whole church. Whether you're from another faith tradition, a seeker and questioner looking for more to life and a place to explore, or even a lifelong Lutheran, we're glad to have you. **To learn more about our history**: <u>https://www.felcaustin.org/information/aboutfelc/felc-history</u>

ESTA LITURGIA/THIS LITURGY

If this is one of your first times to connect with FELC, WELCOME! Use the online Welcome Visitors information form and provide feedback on your visit: <u>http://www.felcaustin.org/forms/visitors</u>.

We ask everyone worshipping in the sanctuary to respect each individual's safety needs, especially anyone at high risk for Covid complications. Because of current community spread in Travis County, we encourage everyone to wear a mask. Ministers will mask during our children's time and during communion distribution.

Hearing assistance devices are available for use. Two options are available: an earpiece, or a hearing loop for those who use hearing aids. Please connect with an usher if you would like a hearing assistance device.

Children are welcome here to be fully present and fully children. There is a *Faith of a Child* children's time before the sermon, and a *Spirit Space* in the Chapel of the Saints, to the right of the front of the sanctuary.

ELW references in this worship bulletin refer to hymns that may be sung from the worship book *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* in the pew rack.

We welcome your generosity in person and online. All of life is an offering to God. Before the offering time, which is near the middle of the liturgy, all worshiping in person are invited to place an offering in a basket located at the welcome table at either entrance. Offering baskets will not be passed during the liturgy.

In an effort to connect with the broadest number of people, **we livestream and archive our services and events for broadcast on the internet.** Your attendance at an event constitutes your consent to be included in filming, photographing, audio recording, or broadcast and for any other use in whole or in part, including promotion. If you prefer to avoid being filmed, please use a back pew.

All Gender Restrooms are located in the left side hallway as you face the front of the sanctuary. Each restroom has a changing table for infants and toddlers.

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HAL CONGREGARSE/GATHERING

Welcome! Our worship service will not be livestreamed today.

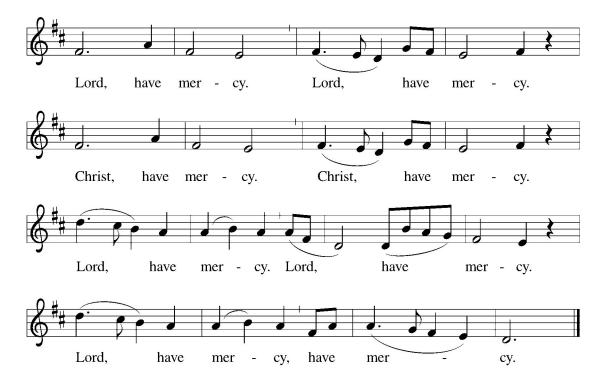
GATHERING MUSIC

Elegy Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old.

At the sounding of the singing bowls, the assembly stands, as able.

The assembly joins in singing the Kyrie. Kyrie

Deutsche Messe, Franz Schubert (1797-1828)



Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Lamentations 1:7a (KJV)

CONFESIÓN CY PERDÓN/CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who is eager to love, whose mercy endures forever. Amen.

Dear friends, together let us acknowledge our failure to love this world as Jesus does.

The assembly kneels or is seated. / La asamblea se arrodilla.

Se observa silencio para la reflexión. / Silence is kept for reflection.

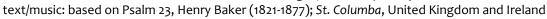
God of mercy and forgiveness, we confess that sin has a hold on us. We harm your good creation. We fail to do justice, love kindness, and live humbly with you. Turn us in a new direction. Show us the path that leads to abundant life. Be our refuge and strength on the journey, through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend. Amen.

Beloved of God: your sin is forgiven + and you are made whole. God points the way to new life in Christ, who meets us on the road. Journey now in God's abiding love through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

La asamblea se pone de pie. / The assembly stands.

CÁNTICO DE ENTRADA/GATHERING SONG

The King of Love My Shepherd Is





- 5 Thou spreadst a table in my sight; thine unction grace bestoweth; and, oh, what transport of delight from thy pure chalice floweth!
- 6 And so, through all the length of days, thy goodness faileth never. Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise within thy house forever.

SALUDO/GREETING

The grace of Jesus Christ our Savior, the reconciling love of God, and the unity of the Spirit of Life, are with you now. **And also with you.**

ORACIÓN DEL DIÁ/PRAYER OF THE DAY

Merciful God, in Christ we witness the lengths and depths to which you will go to love us. Make us glad in the wholeness and lasting peace that you give, as we share this good news with friends, neighbors, and with all the world; we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

La asamblea se sienta. / The assembly is seated.

BIENVENIDO A ADORAR/WELCOME TO WORSHIP

If this is one of your first times to connect with FELC, WELCOME! http://www.felcaustin.org/forms/visitors

+PALABRA/WORD

God communicates in scripture, preaching, conversation, song, prayer, silence, and action. We experience stories from the Hebrew scriptures, the early Church letters, and the gospels.

PRIMERA LECTURA/FIRST READING Exodus 32:7-14 New Revised Standard Version While Moses is on Mount Sinai, the people grow restless and make a golden calf to worship. Today's reading shows Moses as the mediator between an angry God and a sinful people. Moses reminds God that the Israelites are God's own people, and boldly asks for mercy for them.

⁷The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' " ⁹The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."

¹¹But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹²Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' "¹⁴And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Respuesta/Response

The assembly chants the psalm verses in bold type.



Psalm 51:1-10

¹Have mercy on me O God, according to your [|] steadfast love;

in your great compassion blot out [|] my offenses.

²Wash me through and through [|] from my wickedness,

and cleanse me | from my sin.

³For I know | my offenses,

and my sin is ev-[|] er before me.

- ⁴Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil [|] in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right [|] in your judgment.
- ⁵Indeed I was born [|] steeped in wickedness,
- a sinner from my [|] mother's womb.
- ⁶You delight in truth [|] deep within me,

and would have me know wisdom | deep within.

- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop and I [|] shall be clean;
 - wash me and I shall be pur-[|]er than snow.
- ⁸Let me hear [|] joy and gladness;

that the body you have broken [|] may rejoice.

⁹Hide your face [|] from my sins,

and blot out [|] all my wickedness.

All sing on the second half of the tone.

¹⁰Create in me a clean [|] heart, O God, and renew a right spir- [|] it within me.

SEGUNDA LECTURA/SECOND READING 1 Timothy 1:12-17

The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles because they contain advice especially intended for leaders in the church. Here the mercy shown to Paul, who once persecuted the church, is cited as evidence that even the most unworthy may become witnesses to the grace of God.

NRSV

¹²I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, ¹³even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

La asamblea se pone de pie para recibir el evangelio./ The assembly stands to welcome the gospel. ACLAMACIÓN DEL EVANGELIO/GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Jesus tells two stories that suggest a curious connection between the lost being found and sinners repenting. Each person is so precious to God that their continuing wholeness brings joy.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³So he told them this parable: ⁴"Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' ⁷Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

⁸"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' ¹⁰Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ!

La asamblea se sienta. / The assembly is seated.

Fe De Los Niños/Faith of a Child

Children and families are invited to gather at the baptismal font for Faith of A Child, a time for Welcome, Water, Wonder, and Worship. Children and families are then invited to the Spirit Space in the Chapel of the Saints.

Sermón

La asamblea se pone de pie para proclamar la palabra de Dios en canción. Following the sermon, the assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song. Our Father, We Have Wandered

Kevin Nicholas (1929-2006)

Herzlich Tut Mich Verlangen, Hans Hassler (1564-1612), harmony: J. S. Bach (1685-1750)



LAS PLEGARIAS DE INTERCESIÓN/PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of grace, hear our prayer.

LA PAZ/SHARING THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

We offer a sign and gesture of peace. We are aware of others' desire for distance to be maintained and touch to be respected.

La asamblea se sienta. / The assembly is seated.

+Comida/Meal

Presentación de las Ofrendas

An offering supports the mission of the church, and the care of those in need. Se recogen las ofrendas para la misión de la iglesia, incluyendo el cuidado de los necesitados. Offering baskets are on the Welcome tables at the entrances to the nave.

Worshipers may give online: http://www.felcaustin.org/information/giving

OFFERING MUSIC

O Taste and See

Psalm 34:8, King James Version Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

O taste and see how gracious the Lord is: blest is the man that trusteth in Him.

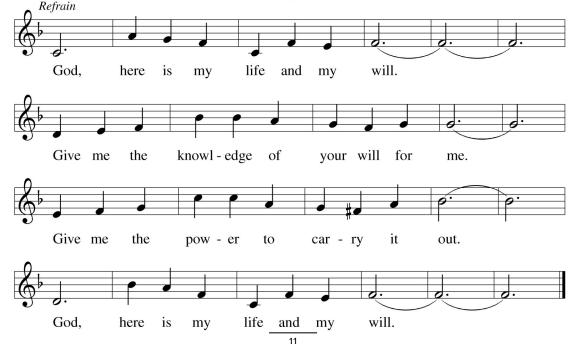
Composed for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on June 2, 1953 in Westminster Abbey.

The assembly stands and sings as bread, wine, money, and other gifts are presented.



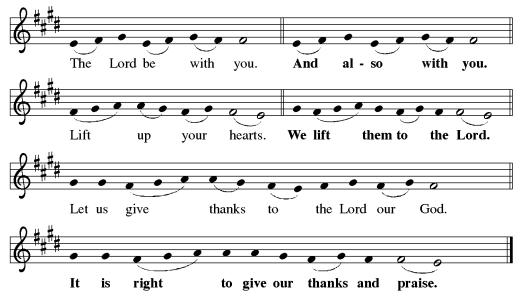
God, Here Is My Life

Jeremy Young/David Cotter (b. 1954)

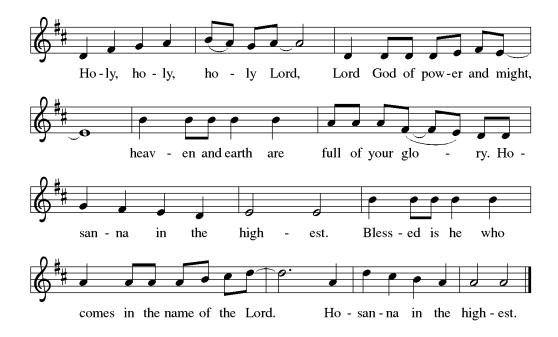


The offering is our response to God's grace. Time, labor, wisdom, skill, energy, wonder, rest, finances, resistance, prayers, protest, care, and play all serve God's purposes.

GRAN PLEGARIA EUCHARÍSTICA/GREAT THANKSGIVING



It is indeed right, our duty . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, mighty and merciful, your people praise you, saying: Your mercy endures forever. Your mercy endures forever.

By your promise . . . the colors of your love and faithfulness. Your mercy endures forever. Your mercy endures forever.

By your promise . . . to be a light to the nations. Your mercy endures forever. Your mercy endures forever.

By your promise . . . of your self-giving love.

In the night in . . . Do this for the remembrance of me. With this bread and cup we remember his life laid down and lifted up as we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us and these gifts of bread and wine. Bless us to be a blessing. Make us a sign of your faithfulness. Send us to tend and cherish the earth and to serve the world with mercy and love.

With all the saints in light, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, through Christ Jesus, in your Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

PADRENUESTRO/LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen. Padre nuestro que estás en el cielo, santificado sea tu nombre. Venga tu reino. Hágase tu voluntad en la tierra como en el cielo. Danos hoy nuestro pan de cada día. Perdona nuestras ofensas como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden. No nos dejes caer en tentación y líbranos del mal. Porque tuyo es el reino, tuyo es el poder, y tuya es la gloria, ahora y siempre. Amén.

PARTIENDO EL PAN/BREAKING THE BREAD Cordero de Dios

Victor Jortack (b. 1955)



COMMUNION INVITATION & DISTRIBUTION

All baptized Christians, including children, are invited to the Lord's Supper. We encourage you to participate in a way that is meaningful for you.

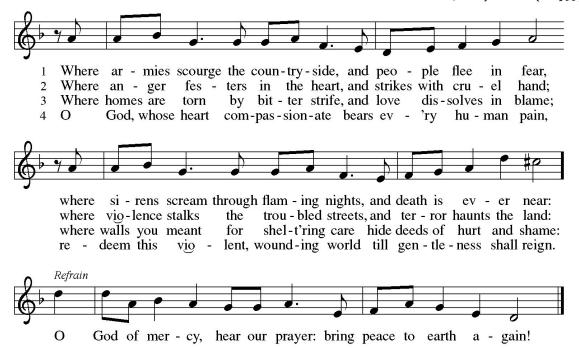
The Eucharist is offered to one side of the church at a time. Ushers will direct you via the center aisle to a station to receive bread in your hand. Then you may proceed to a station and receive a small cup, where wine will be poured. Gluten-free wafers/grape juice are available. Please ask a minister.

Then make your way to your seat by a side aisle.

You are invited to kneel or sit in prayer, meditation, and singing.

If you are not communing, you are invited to come forward for a prayer of blessing. If you desire communion or a blessing at your seat, please let an usher or minister know. Bring Peace to Earth Again

Herman Stuempfle (1923-2007) Pace Mio Dio, Perry Nelson (b. 1955)



La asamblea se sienta ofrecemos nuestro agradecimiento The assembly remains seated as we offer our thanks.

Oración Después de la Comunión/Prayer after Communion

God of the abundant table,

you have refreshed our hearts in this meal with bread and blessing for the journey.

Give us your grace on the road as we serve our neighbors with joy. Amen.

+ENVIO/SENDING

ANUNCIOS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

La asamblea se pone de pie. / The assembly stands. BENDICIÓN/BLESSING

May God give you grace never to sell yourself short.

Grace to risk something big for something good.

Grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth,

and too small for anything but love.

The blessing of God, Creator, + Christ, and Comforter, be with you, now and forever.

Amen.

text: Wm. Sloane Coffin (1924-2006)

CÁNTICO DE SALIDA/SENDING SONG All My Hope on God is Founded

Joachim Neander (1650-1680); Michael, United Kingdom, Herbert Howells (1892-1983)



music ${\ensuremath{\mathbb S}}$ 1968 Novello & Co., Limited, London, United Kingdom. All rights reserved.

Despendida/Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve as Christ.

Thanks be to God!

Enviando Música y Hospitalidad/Sending Music & Hospitality

All are invited to a time of hospitality in the fellowship hall. Todos están invitados a la hospitalidad.

CHURCH COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anuncios de la Comunidad de la Iglesia

Welcome Pastor Tim Lincoln

We welcome FELC member, the Rev. Timothy Lincoln, PhD, as our preacher & presider. Pastor Lincoln is a minister of word and sacrament in the ELCA. After serving as pastor in Detroit Lakes, MN and as librarian at Maryknoll School of Theology in New York, Professor Lincoln was called as the director of the Stitt Library (Wright Learning and Information Center) at Austin Presbyterian Seminary in 1994, and then also as an associate dean. A graduate of Concordia College (MN), Yale Divinity School, Simmons College, and UT Austin, Dr. Lincoln has published in several journals, including *Feminist Theology, Theological Education, and Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality*. He has also published a book on qualitative research methods. Tim currently serves on the Council of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the ELCA. Pastor Coffey returns from vacation on Wednesday.

FELC BOOK CLUB: THIS AFTERNOON

The FELC Book Club **meets today from 1:00 until 3:00 PM.** Our September book is *Kindred*, by Octavia Butler. All are welcome, even if you haven't read the book. (We meet on the second Sunday of each month.) We'll meet in person this afternoon and have a potluck lunch. To receive the meeting location, please contact Anne at 512-407-8427 or wiebeanne@hotmail.com

TINY DESK SERMON: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AT NOON

Join Pastor Coffey on Wednesdays at Noon on the First English Lutheran Church YouTube channel as we explore the bible stories for our Sunday worship services. Join the livestream conversation.

Young Adult Gathering: Thursday, September 15 at 6:30 pm

Young adults at FELC are invited to join Pastor Coffey for a dinner gathering at Matt's El Rancho on South Lamar. We'll catch up with each other and make plans for a future service project and other events. The cost of the meal will be covered by the FELC young adult ministry grant. RSVP to Pastor Coffey, <u>pastor@felcaustin.org</u> by Wednesday, September 14. Let him know if you need a ride from central Austin.

HOLY MOLY SUNDAY SCHOOL: ALL AGES CLASSROOM

Pastor Coffey is leading **Holy Moly Sunday School for children at 9 AM in the library beginning next Sunday.** This is an all-ages gathering (through 5th grade) for bringing Bible stories to life.

Each lesson includes a video, coloring sheet, and leaflet for use in class. There is a family sheet to engage with children on the same story at home, enhancing and their learning and building faith formation practices in the home. In addition to printed materials used each week in person, lesson materials will be available online through a shared. Parents can review the lesson with their child, including the video, and share the lesson with the child when they are unable to attend in person. Parents have the option of buying a Holy Moly Bible Storybook for their children. Each storybook is for one unit (approximately 12 stories) and costs \$8.99 for those who request them. Pastor Coffey is seeking adults to help with Holy Moly Sunday School, either leading a lesson one Sunday a month or assisting when others are leading. Please contact him if you are interested. **September 18: First Lesson: Abraham**

Sunday Symposium: Presentations, Conversations, Explorations Third Sundays at 11:30 am

This fall we begin a new opportunity for adult learning and growth. Sunday Symposium is a once-a-month gathering on a wide variety of topics. **We'll gather after Sunday hospitality in the parlor f**or presentations, conversations, and explorations on everything from social issues and theological questions to spirituality and faith. Participants will be encouraged to join in the conversation as they wish. We will emphasize respectful, open dialogue that welcomes a diversity of viewpoints. We will be open to how we might change our own views. We may have guest speakers. Join us for this new opportunity for learning, growth, and community. **Sept. 18:** Discipleship of Democracy, ELCA Social Message on Government & Civic Engagement in the US **Oct. 16:** Theology of Generosity

Nov. 20: Coffey, Sweets, & the Other: Hospitality in the New Testament

Dec. 18: The Body of Christ and Mental Illness: ELCA Social Message

Adult Class: Church Standing in the Gap: How to Have Difficult Conversations Tuesdays at 7 pm on FELC Community Zoom, September 27 -- October 25

We are living in an increasingly divided society. It often seems impossible to have conversations about important issues with people we disagree with. We may find it particularly challenging to have difficult conversations with family, co-workers, neighbors, and friends with beliefs that are very different from our own. What is our mission as the church in such a divided time? Is it to argue and win in conversations with those we disagree with? Or is it to find a way to have conversations that create relationships and foster reconciliation rooted in mutual respect? What is difficult conversation like if we don't have to win and don't have to agree, and why bother? How do we communicate in ways that lead to deeper trust and understanding? How does the church help heal our divided world by standing in the gap of our current deep divisions?

Pastor Coffey will lead us in an adult class on Zoom exploring biblical texts that speak to standing in the gap and practicing techniques that create new possibilities when faced with difficult conversations. To join in the class, use the FELC Community Zoom information shared at the bottom of each weekly email news.

SAINT FRANCIS SUNDAY BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS: OCTOBER 2

On **Sunday, October 2** everyone is invited to bring their leashed, caged, and contained pets for a blessing of the animals, a St. Francis tradition. **Our worship service will in the sanctuary and online. Join together for a family and animal friendly experience.** Dogs, cats, frogs, gerbils, snakes, birds, and hamsters, among others are invited for an individual blessing. Soft animal toys, photos, and mementos will also be blessed. We will gather for hospitality after the worship service on the front porch of the church, weather permitting. We hope to meet you and our animal friends!

Alex LaChapelle to Preach at FELC: Sunday, October 9

Vicar # 46 (2012-2013), Alex LaChapelle, is returning to FELC to be our guest preacher Sunday, October 9. Alex is currently serving as pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Harvey, Michigan. Previously Pastor Alex served as associate pastor of St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge, Illinois; as country coordinator in Southern Africa and Tanzania for the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program; and as pastor of Nairobi International Lutheran Congregation in Kenya. We are excited to welcoming Pastor Alex back to FELC and celebrating his ministry to the church.

SAVE THE DATE: OKTOBERFEST!

The FELC annual Oktoberfest returns this Fall on Sunday, October 30, 2022.

OUR DOORS ARE OPEN ONLINE & IN-PERSON @ FELC

Webpage	http://www.felcaustin.org/ for updates, outreach, livestreams, and more
YouTube, Facebook, & Twitter	YouTube: First English Austin Facebook: FELCAustin Twitter: @FELCAustin
Communications Sign-Up	Subscribe on our website to our weekly email news & other updates:
	https://www.felcaustin.org/news/communications-sign-up
Online Giving	Offer your stewardship in multiple ways: www.felcaustin.org/giving
ELCA	https://www.elca.org/ to learn about our global mission

PRAYER LIST: REQUESTS FOR PERSONS & FAMILIES 09/09/2022

the citizens, immigrants, and refugees, and the national, state, and local leaders of the United States; the people of Ukraine and of Russia; for all conflicts, worldwide; for God's good creation, and our just stewardship of it; for our congregation and child development center; for all places and situations of violence and strife; for an end to racism in all forms; for all responding to severe weather, especially in California, South Korea, and Pakistan; for all who are living with Covid-19, and those who care for them; in remembrance of September 11, 2001; in thanksgiving for Elizabeth II, and in sympathy for her family, and all who mourn; all seeking healing, strength, and care in body, mind, spirit, and relationship.

Please submit prayer requests for the FELC prayer list online: https://www.felcaustin.org/forms/prayer-request

The FELC Prayer Circle gathers faithfully. If you would like prayers offered (including confidentially) for you, your loved ones, any needs and thanksgivings, our faith community, the church, and the world, contact Teresa at <u>ttbhip@gmail.com</u>

Staff

PastorMichael Coffeypastor@felcaustin.orgcell: 512-487-0956

Director of Music & Office Administrator Bryan Rust <u>office@felcaustin.org</u>

Director of Child Development Center (CDC)

LaQuetha Ford <u>lford@firstenglishcdc.org</u> FELCDC: 512.478.5424

Bookkeeper Mary Lou Turnbull payable@felcaustin.org

Custodians Teresa del Aguila, Jesus del Aguila

CONGREGATION COUNCIL

President Vice President Secretary Pastor Members-at-Large

Interim Treasurer

Financial Secretary

Allen Jensen Nancy Neuse Andrew Koepp Michael Coffey Jerry Don Aguirre Derek Bridges Gwen Flory Todd Jermstad Mary Lou Larson Teresa Ringness Elizabeth Zimmermann Joe Cain Gwen Flory

The congregation council meets the third Monday of the month.

Mensaje del Evangelio/Gospel Message

Peripheral Vision

"Look straight forward and raise your hand on the side where you see the blinking light in the corner of your eye." Maybe you have taken a peripheral-vision test at an optometrist's office or at a DMV while renewing your driver's license. Peripheral vision, like peripheral hearing and other sensory parallels, is the ability to perceive things that occur outside the center of one's focus. In today's gospel, Jesus tells a story about a shepherd who seems to have good peripheral senses. He loses one sheep out of a hundred and immediately notices and sets off to look for it. This story may be so familiar that it is easy to take his actions for granted. But should we? It seems that many people looking at such a large group of nearly identical animals would have a difficult time noticing the disappearance of just one.

Yet this is precisely what Jesus does throughout his ministry. He is always noticing people on the margins of society whom others don't see—whether because of disease, profession, gender, economic status, or past wrongs. Again and again he is criticized by other religious leaders for moving beyond the people they are focused on and toward others they see as peripheral. As Jesus' followers, we are called to let him shift our attention to people who need the love and attention of God—even when it takes us beyond the comfort of our normal focus.

Today, as you gather to worship, ask yourself: Who is missing from the picture? Who is at the periphery of your assembly? Who is Jesus inviting to this table? In your church, in your community, in your neighborhood, or in your work, who does Jesus see that you have missed, and what would it look like to seek after them?



a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—a sanctuary church body in the United States