

**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Wapakoneta, Ohio**



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"Let us now go to Bethlehem  
and see this thing that has taken  
place; which the Lord has  
made known to us."

Luke 2:15, NRSV

**Christmas Eve  
December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

## **WELCOME TO FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Your presence today makes us more complete.  
Thank you for being here and worshipping with us.

We welcome you to our table for Holy Communion.  
We invite all baptized Christians who believe that Christ is truly present  
in the meal to join us.

Children of all ages are welcome and are encouraged to participate in worship.

### **Sunday Schedule**

9:00 a.m. Youth and Adult Sunday School

9:45 a.m. Youth Choir

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

### **Worship Leaders & Assistants**

The **Altar Candles** are given to the Glory of God by Marsha Jackson in loving memory  
of her parents Charles & Mabel Jackson.

### **MINISTERS for This Week**

Audio/Visual .....	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Acolyte .....	Kaidence Schmidt
Lector .....	Marsha Jackson
Cantors.....	Darla Frame & Susan Miller
Ushers.....	Luke Kline & Clayton Fisher
Worship Assistant.....	Makayla Frame
Musician .....	Darla Frame
Preacher.....	Pastor Paul Gruetter
Greeter .....	
Altar Guild.....	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
Fellowship Cleanup .....	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame

This worship service is live streamed and recorded and  
is published on YouTube and Facebook.

\* Please rise if able.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

## PRESERVICE MUSIC

Ladies Choir      *Sing We All Noel* - African Noel and Siyahamba arr Ruth Elaine Schram

Doris Fisher      *What Child Is This?* - Traditional Olde English tune arr William C Dix

Darla Frame      *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* - by Felix Mendelssohn arr Joel Raney

Makayla Frame and Darla Frame      *Angels' Canon* - arr Michael Larsen

## WELCOME

### \* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (ELW P. 94)

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

### \* GATHERING SONG

*Angels We Have Heard on High* (ELW 289)

**\* GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH** (*Light Four Candles*) *Schlosser Family*

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. **Amen.**

**\* CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 187)** *This is the Feast*

**\* PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**CHOIR ANTHEM**

*Do You Hear What I Hear?*  
by Noel Regney & Gloria Shayne arr by Harry Simeone

**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

*Rebecca Van Meter*

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 9:2-7**

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>2</sup>The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—  
on them light has shined.

<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

<sup>4</sup>For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,  
the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup>For all the boots of the tramping warriors  
and all the garments rolled in blood

shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
<sup>6</sup>For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;  
and he is named  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup>His authority shall grow continually,  
and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.  
He will establish and uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.  
Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 96**

<sup>1</sup>Sing to the LORD | a new song;  
sing to the LORD, | all the earth.  
<sup>2</sup>**Sing to the LORD, bless the name | of the LORD;  
proclaim God's salvation from | day to day.**  
<sup>3</sup>Declare God's glory a- | mong the nations  
and God's wonders a- | mong all peoples.  
<sup>4</sup>**For great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised,  
more to be feared | than all gods. R**  
<sup>5</sup>As for all the gods of the nations, they | are but idols;  
but you, O LORD, have | made the heavens.  
<sup>6</sup>**Majesty and magnificence are | in your presence;  
power and splendor are in your | sanctuary.**  
<sup>7</sup>Ascribe to the LORD, you families | of the peoples,  
ascribe to the LORD hon- | or and power.  
<sup>8</sup>**Ascribe to the LORD the honor due the | holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts | of the LORD. R**  
<sup>9</sup>Worship the LORD in the beau- | ty of holiness;  
tremble before the LORD, | all the earth.  
<sup>10</sup>**Tell it out among the nations: "The | LORD is king!  
The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the  
peo- | ples with equity."**  
<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the | earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that | is therein.  
<sup>12</sup>**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your com- | ing, O LORD,  
for you come to | judge the earth.**  
<sup>13</sup>You will judge the | world with righteousness  
and the peoples | with your truth. **R**

## **SECOND READING: Titus 2:11-14**

*A reading from Titus.*

<sup>11</sup>The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, <sup>13</sup>while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

## **\* GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil (ELW 512)*

## **\* GOSPEL: Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]**

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup>Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup>He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup>to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

## MESSAGE

Pastor Paul Gruetter

### \* HYMN OF THE DAY

*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (ELW 270)

### \* APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### \* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Confident that God receives our joys and concerns, let us offer our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of creation.

Each petition will end with Hear us, O God.  
Please respond with **Your Mercy is great.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, in the name of the one who reconciled all creation to himself, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### \* PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

*Please take a moment to share the Lord's peace and grace with one another.*

## MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### TITHES AND OFFERING

*Please be seated.* As the ushers come forward, we would like to thank you for the work you have been doing, for the support and care you provide, and for the gifts you share.

### \* OFFERING HYMN

*Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful* (ELW 182)

**\* OFFERING PRAYER**

God of field and forest, sea and sky, you are the giver of all good things.  
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation, and multiply your graciousness in us, that  
the world may be fed with your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**\* GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

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

**\* HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 190)**

**\* WORDS OF INSTITUTION (ELW p. 130)**

**\* LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come and know Christ, broken and poured out for you.

**COMMUNION SONG *Lamb of God* (ELW p. 191)**

**SONGS DURING COMMUNION**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem* (ELW 279)  
*It Came upon the Midnight Clear* (ELW 282)  
*I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve* (ELW 271)



**\* AS WE ARE BLESSED**

Now may the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace now and always. **Amen.**

**\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We thank you generous God, for the refreshment we have received at your banquet table. Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world, through the one who is our dearest treasure, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **AMEN.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**\* BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace. **Amen.**

**\* SENDING SONG**

*Silent Night, Holy Night!* (ELW 281)

**\* DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the harvest.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**Thank you to everyone who provided poinsettias for the altar!**

Chuck and Sarah Curry  
In honor of Dave and Char Curry and in loving memory of Phyllis Neff

Marsha Jackson  
In loving memory of Charles & Mabel Jackson

Chuck & Joy Kantner  
In honor of our family and in loving memory of  
Emmett & Margaret Kantner and Fred & Evie Fisher

Susan Miller & Jeff Ritchie  
In loving memory of Tom Miller and Lois & Bob Bogart

## MINISTERS for Next Week

Audio/Visual .....	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Acolyte .....	Amelia Roeger
Lectors .....	Denise Kantner, Georgeann Stienecker, Brenda Shoffstall, Chris Nagel, Jon Schmidt, & Chuck Curry
Ushers .....	Ken Frame & Richard Yocum
Worship Assistant .....	Chuck Curry
Musician .....	Darla Frame
Greeter .....	Chris Nagel
Altar Guild .....	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
Fellowship Cleanup .....	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame

## OUR PRAYER CORNER

### Those who would love a visit or a card...

Otterbein at Cridersville	Sharon Billiter, Rex Lippincott
Otterbein at St. Marys	Dorothy Dickman
The Gardens	Betty Hague, Dale & Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz

### *We especially remember in our prayers...*

Family and friends of Donna Stowell Dague,  
James Benshoff, Susan Binkley, Olivia Brinkley, Braden Brandyberry, Nancy Bush,  
Dominic Cousins, Ted Gibson, Connie Kantner, Bryan Katterhenry,  
Wayne & Judy Kentner, Rex Lippincott, Lauren Makuh, Sasha Maslov, Mitchell Metz,  
Desmond Miller, Jenny Oliver, Sue Schoonover, Pam Schulz, Alex Shirey,  
Seth Thuman, Phil Thrush, Eddie Whetstone, Jim & Cyndi Zweibel, Nancy Carter,  
April Nance, Angela, and Skyler.

We remember in our prayers our military serving at home and abroad, under represented and oppressed people, EMTs, firefighters, police officers, healthcare workers, and our veterans.

*If we are missing anyone in our prayer corner, please call or email the office and let us know. If there is anyone who wishes to be removed, please do the same.*

## WEEKLY ATTENDANCE & OFFERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Views</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Current Giving</u>	<u>NWOS Benevolence</u>
11/19/2023	16	67	\$1,884.00	\$3.00
11/26/2023	19	57	\$2,001.82	\$0.00
12/03/2023	7	70	\$4,954.91	\$73.00
12/10/2023	18	94	\$26,104.02	\$23.00
12/17/2024	18	90	\$7,962.91	\$133.00

2023 current budgeted expenses are \$210,480.66, or \$4,047.71 per week.

FELC can now accept online donations through the church website thanks to our partnership with Tithe.ly online giving. Just visit [myfelc.org](http://myfelc.org) or scan the QR code to the right. From the church website click on the green GIVE button and follow the prompts. Thank you for your support!



### ***What's Happening at First English....***

**Worship Music** We need your help! If you or someone you know would like to record a song, or sing or play live music for our prelude, let Darla know. Also, if you know someone who plays the organ or piano that might be interested in serving as our "organist" one or two Sundays a month, please let Darla know. Thank you so much!

**Next Bingo at the Acres on January 9<sup>th</sup>** FELC will not be hosting Bingo at the Acres in December. Bingo will resume on January 9<sup>th</sup> from 2-3pm. If you would like to help with this social outreach ministry, please contact Brenda Shoffstall.

**2024 Offering Envelopes** The cost of offering envelopes has risen and the reliability of their timely delivery is suspect. For those reasons we are discontinuing ordering offering envelopes for our members. There are envelopes available in the pews for your convenience. Please be sure to enter your full name and what fund you would like your offering directed to. You may use outdated envelopes, but please be sure to write your full name on the envelope. If you have questions, please see Georgeann Stienecker or contact her at [nksoccer@nktelco.net](mailto:nksoccer@nktelco.net). Thank you!

**Noisy Offering for DECEMBER: Loaves and Fishes** Offering pans are located in the chapel and at the back of the church. Donations are accepted all month.

**The Church Office will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day**

## **FELC Upcoming Calendar of Events**

<b>Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Preservice Music</b>
	<b>7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Worship – Pastor Paul Gruetter</b>
Monday, December 25 <sup>th</sup>		Merry Christmas! (office closed)
<b>Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Worship – Lessons and Carols</b>
Monday, January 1 <sup>st</sup>		Happy New Year! (office closed)
Wednesday, January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
		Confirmation
	7:00 p.m.	Ladies Choir
Friday, January 5 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 a.m.	Take Down Christmas Decorations
	5:00 p.m.	Depart for YouthQuake
Saturday, January 6 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 a.m.	Take Down Christmas Decorations

## **First English Lutheran Church**

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

107 W. Mechanic Street, Wapakoneta, OH 45895

(419) 738-3911 [www.myfelc.org](http://www.myfelc.org)

Church email: [wapakelc@bright.net](mailto:wapakelc@bright.net)

Office Hours: 11:00am – 1:00pm

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of First English Lutheran Church is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to love one another as He loves us.

## **Church Staff & Volunteers**

Office Administrator	Chuck Curry
Bookkeeper	Anderson Accounting
Financial Secretary	Georgeann Stienecker; <a href="mailto:nksoccer@nktelco.net">nksoccer@nktelco.net</a>
Music Director	Darla Frame
Audio-Technology	Dave Curry; <a href="mailto:dlcy@bright.net">dlcy@bright.net</a> ; 937-307-8596