

**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Wapakoneta, Ohio**



**Lessons and Carols
December 31st, 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.

The **Altar Flowers** are given to the glory of God by the Van Meter family in loving
gratitude for God's many blessings.

MINISTERS for This Week

Audio/Visual	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Acolyte	Amelia Roeger
Lectors	Denise Kantner, Georgeann Stienecker, Brenda Shoffstall, Chris Nagel, Jon Schmidt, & Chuck Curry
Ushers	Steve Stienecker & Jim Kantner
Worship Assistant	Chuck Curry
Musician	Darla Frame
Greeter	Chris Nagel
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

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. Like the voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna, we join in the chorus, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song reveals Jesus as the means of God's salvation freely offered for all peoples. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE *Sing We Now of Christmas* 15th Century French tune arr Larry Shackley

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

* **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.**

* **CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 185)** *Glory to God*

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Rebecca Van Meter

LESSONS AND CAROLS

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5, 14-18

¹⁴And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, ¹⁵and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night — and the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

HYMN

The First Noel (ELW 300, verse 1,2,3)

Second Reading: Micah 5:2-5a

² But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace. If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil, we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight installed as rulers.

HYMN

O Little Town of Bethlehem (ELW 279, verse 1,2)

Third Reading: Luke 1:26-35, 38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary

said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful (ELW 283, verse 1,2)

Fourth Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

HYMN

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (ELW 270, verse 1,3)

Fifth Reading: Luke 2:8-20

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When 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." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

HYMN

Angels, from the Realms of Glory (ELW 275, verse 1,4)

Sixth Reading: Matthew 2:1-11

¹In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

HYMN

What Child is This (ELW 296, verse 1,3)

Seventh Reading: John 1:1-14

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

*** HYMN OF THE DAY**

Away in a Manger (ELW 277)

*** 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.**

*** 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.**

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**

Joy to the World (ELW 267)

*** DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the harvest.

Thanks be to God.

MINISTERS for Next Week

Audio/Visual	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Acolyte	Faith Whetstone
Lector	Marsha Jackson
Ushers	Ken Frame & Richard Yocum
Worship Assistant.....	Darla Frame
Musician	Karen Luginbuhl
Preacher.....	Jennie Grundey
Greeter	Brenda Shoffstall
Altar Guild.....	Sara Young & Angie Bowersock
Fellowship Cleanup	Brenda Shoffstall & Chris Nagel

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...

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>
11/26/2023	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
12/24/2023	8	113	\$2,124.20	\$3.00

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 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 9th FELC will be hosting Bingo at the Acres on January 9th 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. Thank you!

Help Needed to Take Down Christmas Decorations Volunteers are needed to help tear down and put away our Christmas decorations. Please join us as you are able. Brenda will open the church at 9am on Friday, January 5th and Saturday January, 6th the church will remain open each day until the last volunteers go home or the work gets done. Many hands make light work. If you plan to stop by in the evening, you are encouraged to call Brenda to make sure the church hasn't been locked for the day.

Noisy Offering for JANUARY: Family Life Center 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 New Year's Day

Reimbursement requests for 2023 due ASAP If you have any outstanding receipts and reimbursement requests from 2023, you are asked to please get them into the church office as soon as possible so that they can be applied to the correct fiscal year.

Annual Report Items due by January 22nd A reminder to committee chairs and ministry leaders, all year-end committee reports and meeting minutes from 2023 and any other items that are to be included in the 2023 Annual Report should be submitted to the church office no later than January 22nd.

Save the Date: Souper Bowl 2024 FELC is hosting a community Souper Bowl luncheon on Sunday, February 11th at 11:30am in the Fellowship Hall. Each lunch will consist of a choice of soup, a sandwich or hot dog, and a dessert. Participants will have the option to dine in or carry out. This event is open to the community, so please invite your friends. More details to follow in the coming weeks.

It will take many hands to pull this event off successfully, so we will be reaching out for lots of volunteers to prepare food, serve meals, and clean up after the event. Please consider signing up to help out when the opportunity becomes available. Thank you!

FELC Upcoming Calendar of Events

Sunday, December 31st	10:00 a.m.	Worship – Lessons and Carols
Monday, January 1 st		Happy New Year! (office closed)
Wednesday, January 3 rd	6:00 p.m.	Bell Choir
		Confirmation
	7:00 p.m.	Ladies Choir
Friday, January 5 th	9:00 a.m.	Take Down Christmas Decorations
	5:00 p.m.	Depart for YouthQuake
Saturday, January 6 th	9:00 a.m.	Take Down Christmas Decorations
Sunday, January 7th	10:00 a.m.	Worship – Jennie Grundey
	3:00 p.m.	Estimated return from YouthQuake
Tuesday, January 9 th	2:00 p.m.	Bingo at the Acres
Wednesday, January 10 th	10:00 a.m.	Quilting
	12:00 p.m.	Prayer at Trinity
	6:00 p.m.	Confirmation
Thursday, January 11 th	4:30 p.m.	Loaves and Fishes
	6:00 p.m.	Men's Night @ TBD

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

Church email: 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; nksoccer@nktelco.net
Music Director	Darla Frame
Audio-Technology	Dave Curry; dlcy@bright.net ; 937-307-8596