

**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Wapakoneta, Ohio**



**A SEASON
of JOY**

**3rd Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2024**

WELCOME TO FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

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

We invite all baptized Christians who believe that Christ is truly present
in the meal to join us for Holy Communion when served.

Children of all ages are encouraged to participate in worship.

Sunday Schedule

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

10:00 a.m. Worship

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

The **Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God by Fellowship Committee
in celebration of family gatherings for this joyous season.

MINISTERS for the TODAY

Audio/Visual	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Lector	Youth Christmas Play
Ushers	Ken Frame & Jon Schmidt
Worship Assistant	Deanna Ronan
Musician.....	Darla Frame
Pastor	Michelle Kouse
Greeter.....	NEEDED
Acolyte	Nevaeh Estep
Altar Guild.....	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
Fellowship Cleanup.....	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
Advent Reader/Candlelight	Ronan Family

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

* Please rise if able.

Introduction to the day

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

GATHERING

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

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Emmanuel by Michael W Smith arr Lloyd Larson

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed Be the God of Israel (ELW 250)

*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.**

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
For his steadfast love endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of gods,
For his steadfast love endures forever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
For his steadfast love endures forever.

Advent's Holy Light Congregational Part

JOEL RANEY

(on cue)

Lord, we are wait - ing for peace to reign,
Lord, we are lis - tening for love's re - frain.
For hope, peace, and joy and love to u -
nite in the beau - ty and won - der of
Ad - vent's ho - ly light.

(repeat this chorus after the candle lighting and litany)

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LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Ronan Family

(light three candles)

Today the candle representing Joy joins the candles of Hope and Peace. As we light this third candle, let the joy of the season fill our hearts. May we find joy in simple moments, and may that joy bring a sense of peace and wellbeing into our lives.

When we think of the countless blessings that fill our lives

Our hearts are filled with joy.

For the warmth of relationships and the bonds we share with family and friends

Our hearts are filled with joy.

When we pause to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature

Our hearts are filled with joy.

For the giving and receiving of simple acts of kindness

Our hearts are filled with joy.

Gracious Creator, teach us to find joy not only in triumphs but also in the simple moments of everyday grace. Fill us with joy that surpasses circumstance, anchored in the unchanging truth of your love. Help us share this joy with others and may joy and laughter be a constant companion on our journey through life.

Amen.

REPEAT ADVENT'S HOLY LIGHT-Congregation Part from Above

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

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

CHRISTMAS PLAY

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

(ELW p. 188)

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia.**

***GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18**

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

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

MESSAGE

Michelle Kouse

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

He Came Down (ELW 253)

***APOSTLES' CREED**

Let us profess our faith using the words from the 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**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

God who reforms, fill your church with courage to do your will. Empower your people in taking risks that bear fruit. Raise up leaders who will proclaim the good news. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God who creates, you hold in balance diverse ecosystems. Encourage efforts to protect wild lands from devastation. Care for animals and people in the path of destructive fires, storms, and other disasters.
Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God who leads, this world cries out for true justice. Guide legislatures, judges, and lawyers in actions steeped in love and restoration. Increase the desire to advocate for all who are confronted with discrimination and oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, class, or age. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God who embraces, help us notice the places where your people are hurting or sick *especially* Family and Friends of Chris Minks, Sharon Billiter, Dorothy Dickman, Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz, Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry, Kathy Link, Staff and Students at Concordia University at Ann Arbor, Lee Albright, James Benshoff, Janet Case, Dominic Cousins, Emily Fisher, Ted Gibson, Ben Jauert, Bryan Katterhenry, Wayne & Judy Kentner, Lauren Makuh, Sasha Maslov, Jenny Oliver, Nixon Palte, Pam Schulz, Alex Shirey, Hunter Smith, Evelyn Sprague, Seth Thuman, Norma Wachauf, Harold Wallace, Jim Zwiebel, Tasha McPeek, Shelia Snider, Bonnie Davidson, JJ Truesdale and Kathi. And those that we name out loud or in our hearts. (Brief silence). Show your compassion and remember your people in love. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God who abides, you dwell among the people of this congregation. Deepen our relationships with one another and make us aware of the diverse talents and gifts present here. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God who consoles, we thank you for the time we have had with loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of everlasting life in you. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **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.

OFFERTORY

*Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus by Rowland Hugh Prichard
arr Mark Hayes*

***OFFERING HYMN**

(ELW p. 190)

***OFFERING PRAYER**

(ELW p. 190)

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: ourselves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, 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.

*CALL COMMITTEE PRAYER

Dear God, as we continue on this journey of seeking a pastor, we ask for your divine guidance. Your word reminds us that you are the Good Shepherd, and we trust in your leading us to find the right pastor for our church family. May our search be guided by the same love and care that Jesus has for his flock. Lead us to the pastor who will nurture, lead and protect our congregation. In your name, Amen.

*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 good news. **Thanks be to God.**

MINISTERS for Next Week 12-22-24

Audio/Visual	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Lector	Joyce Brincefield
Ushers	Luke Kline & Chad Sterner
Worship Assistant	Makayla Frame
Musician	Recordings
Pastor	Chaplain Leslie Haines
Greeter	Needed
Acolyte	Vivian Fisher
Altar Guild	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
Fellowship Cleanup	Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
Advent Reader/Candlelight	Nancy & Frank Hefner

MINISTERS for Next Week 12-24-24

Audio/Visual Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
 Lector Marsha Jackson
 Ushers Steve Stienecker & Jim Kantner
 Worship Assistant Char Curry
 Musician Special
 Pastor Pastor Bill Schultz
 Greeter Denise Kantner
 Acolyte Amelia Roeger
 Altar Guild Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
 Fellowship Cleanup Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame
 Advent Reader/Candlelight Kirby Family

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE & OFFERINGS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Views</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>
11/17/2024	09	63	\$1,383.06	\$15.00
11/24/2024	13	86	\$2,192.00	\$100.00
12/01/2024	14	63	\$3,667.00	\$25.00
12/08/2024	16	78	\$3,537.96	\$0.00

2024 current budgeted expenses are \$128,507.08, or \$2,471.29 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!



OUR PRAYER CORNER

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

Manor at Celina	Sharon Billiter
Otterbein at St. Marys	Dorothy Dickman
The Gardens	Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz
Homebound	Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry

We especially remember in our prayers...

Family and Friends of Chris Minks, Sharon Billiter, Dorothy Dickman, Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz, Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry, Kathy Link, Staff and Students at Concordia University at Ann Arbor, Lee Albright, James Benshoff, Janet Case, Dominic Cousins, Emily Fisher, Ted Gibson, Ben Jauert, Bryan Katterhenry, Wayne & Judy Kentner, Lauren Makuh, Sasha Maslov, Jenny Oliver, Nixon Palte, Pam Schulz, Alex Shirey, Hunter Smith, Evelyn Sprague, Seth Thuman, Norma Wachauf, Harold Wallace, Jim Zwiebel, Tasha McPeek, Shelia Snider, Bonnie Davidson, JJ Truesdale and Kathi.

We remember in our prayers our military serving at home and abroad, underrepresented 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.

What's Happening at First English....

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

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!

Collection for the Women's Crisis Center We are collecting food items each month for the Auglaize County Crisis Center based on a monthly dinner theme. December's theme is Snacks. The crisis center is also in need of basic personal hygiene items. Please put donations on the counter in the library for us to deliver weekly or bi-weekly.

Brunch with Santa is following worship TODAY, December 15th in Fellowship Hall. Brunch includes meal and activities.

Angel Tree Lists are posted for The Crisis Center, Seniors at Wapak Village, and Generations of Love on Pearl St. Please sign up to donate gifts. Any questions please contact Teresa Fisher, she will go shopping if you want to give monetary donation instead of items.

Confirmation Regular class is on a break until January 8th and don't forget Sermon Notes!

Ladies' Lunch is scheduled for 11:30am on Tuesday, December 17th at Main St. Restaurant in New Knoxville, OH.

Wapakoneta Irving Club invites you to St. Paul United Church of Christ sanctuary on Monday, December 16th at 7:00pm to listen to and sing-a-long with the St. Paul's Bell Choir. Light refreshments will follow in the fellowship hall.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service will be at 8:00pm on December 24th with Pastor Bill Schultz. We will have special music starting at 7:45pm. We hope everyone will join us.

FELC Family Christmas Party All are welcome to come, invite family and friends, on December 20th at 7pm. Bring a wrapped present/gift bag (\$10 max.) that you would enjoy receiving (Not a white elephant). Also bring a smaller gift that can fit into a red solo cup, solo cup will be provided at event. Be ready to play Christmas games and have a fun evening with your FELC family. Bring your favorite Christmas snack to share!

Call Committee Checklist for seeking a Pastor:

- ✘ At the time of learned pastoral vacancy, the congregation council arranges for regular supply or interim, working with the Mission District dean.
- ✘ Form a call committee in accordance with congregational constitution – uneven # of persons with a cross-section of the congregation is helpful-elect Chair of the Committee.
- ✘ Call Committee downloads NALC Call Process Manual for call committee members.
- ✘ Call Committee chair contacts the NALC Call Process Coordinator to schedule a conference call for orientation/training. Met on September 15th.
- ✘ Call Committee engages in Bible Study in the Call Process Manual. Meeting on Wednesdays at 6:45pm.
- ✘ Call Committee chair will contact Mission District dean to arrange and complete The Congregational Workshop in preparation for the Call Process.
- ✘ Chair contacts their Mission District dean to arrange and complete the Congregational Workshop – November 2, 9am-2:00/2:30pm.
- Call Committee completes the Congregational Profile and emails it to NALC Call Process. ...

CALL COMMITTEE PRAYER: Please pray throughout the week:

Dear God, as we continue on this journey of seeking a pastor, we ask for your divine guidance. Your word reminds us that you are the Good Shepherd, and we trust in your leading us to find the right pastor for our church family. May our search be guided by the same love and care that Jesus has for his flock. Lead us to the pastor who will nurture, lead and protect our congregation. In your name, Amen.



FELC Upcoming Calendar of Events

Sunday, Dec 15th	9:00am	Adult & Youth Sunday School
	10:00am	Worship – Michelle Kouse
		Christmas Play
		Brunch with Sants following worship
Tues, Dec 17th	11:30am	Ladies Lunch @ Main St. Rest. in NK
Wed, Dec 18th	10:00am	Quilting
		No Confirmation
	6:00pm	Bell Choir
	7:00pm	Women’s Choir
Thurs, Dec 19th		NO Loaves & Fishes
Fri, Dec 20th	7:00pm	FELC Family Christmas Party
Sunday, Dec 22nd	9:00am	Adult Sunday School
	10:00am	Worship – Chaplain Leslie Haines
Tues, Dec 24th	7:45pm	Special Christmas Eve Music
	8:00pm	Christmas Eve Service - Pastor Bill Schultz
Wed, Dec 25th		CHRISTMAS DAY! Jesus is Born! Office Closed NO Confirmation
Thurs, Dec 26th		Office Closed NO Loaves & Fishes
Fri, Dec 27th		Office Closed

First English Lutheran Church

A Congregation of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC)

107 W. Mechanic Street, Wapakoneta, OH 45895

(419) 738-3911 www.myfelc.org

Church email: wapakelc@bright.net

Office Hours: M-F, 8:30am – 12:30pm

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

Hilary Roeger; wapakelc@bright.net; 419-738-3911

Bookkeeper

Anderson Accounting

Treasurer

Cari Frame; felc.finance@myfelc.org

Music Director

Darla Frame

Audio-Technology

Dave Curry; dscy@bright.net; 937-307-8596