

**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Wapakoneta, Ohio**



**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany**  
**~~3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany~~**  
**February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

## WELCOME TO FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Your presence today makes us more complete.

Thank you for being here and worshipping with us.

Children of all ages are encouraged to participate in worship.

### Sunday Schedule

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

The **Altar Candles** are given to the Glory of God.

The **Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God  
by Hilary, Mike & Elanor Roeger  
in celebration of Amelia's birthday tomorrow.

### MINISTERS for TODAY

Audio/Visual.....	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Lector.....	Carly Craft
Ushers .....	Ken Frame & Richard Yocum
Worship Assistant .....	Ken Frame
Musician .....	Susan Miller
Pastor .....	Vicar Michelle Kouse
Greeter .....	Needed
Acolyte .....	Kaidence Schmidt
Altar Guild .....	Amelia Sterner & Catherine Fisher
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.

## GATHERING

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

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### PRELUDE

*I Love You, Lord* by Laurie Klein arr Douglas E. Wagner

#### \*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.**

Hear this promise of Almighty God: He prepares in our hearts a royal highway for his Son's near approach and cleanses us from all our sins. He drives away the darkness of sin and death, that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

#### \*GATHERING SONG

*I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light* (ELW 815)

#### \*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.**

### **\*CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

*This is the Feast (ELW p. 187)*

### **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. **Lord God, your lovingkindness always goes before us and follows after us. Summon us into your light, and direct our steps in the ways of goodness that come through the cross of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

### **CHILDREN'S SERMON**

Vicar Michelle Kouse

#### **Word**

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

### **FIRST READING: ISAIAH 9:1-4**

A reading from Isaiah. <sup>1</sup> But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <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.

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

## PSALM: 27: 1-9

- <sup>1</sup> The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
- <sup>2</sup> **When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh,  
my adversaries and foes, they shall stumble and fall.**
- <sup>3</sup> Though an army encamp against me, my heart will not fear.  
Though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.
- <sup>4</sup> **One thing I ask of the Lord; that will I seek after;  
to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life; to behold the  
beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.**
- <sup>5</sup> For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble,  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.
- <sup>6</sup> **Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me.  
and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and  
make melody to the Lord.**
- <sup>7</sup> Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;  
be gracious to me and answer me!
- <sup>8</sup> **Come, my heart says, "Seek his face."  
Your face, Lord, do I seek.**
- <sup>9</sup> Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger, you  
who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God  
of my salvation.

## SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 1: 10-18

A reading from 1 Corinthians. <sup>10</sup> Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." <sup>13</sup> Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel—and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. <sup>18</sup> For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

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

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

*Alleluia* (ELW p. 188)

**\*GOSPEL: MATTHEW 4:12-25**

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

<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: <sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—<sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” <sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

<sup>18</sup> As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” <sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. <sup>24</sup> So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics, and he cured them. <sup>25</sup> And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

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

**MESSAGE**

Vicar Michelle Kouse

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Will You Come and Follow Me* (ELW 798)

## **\*APOSTLES' CREED**

Let us profess our faith using the words of 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**

Let us pray that the light of Christ may shine upon the Church, the world, and all people according to their need.

Lord, sometimes we think you see us only "From a distance." Sometimes that's right where we want you! As St. Paul learned, your presence convicts and upends before it forgives and transforms us. Be gentle, Father, as you shed your holy light on us! Send us Jesus to be God-with-Us, Emmanuel. Give us the grace and comfort of your Holy Spirit, who helps us to repent and to delight in your "joyous light of glory." Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

The world scorns the Cross as folly and stumbling block. Therefore, give your Church faith, courage, and wit as it proclaims Christ crucified as the only means of forgiveness, salvation, and life with you forever. Make it lovely with the light of Jesus' strong saving love for us sinners. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring light and clarity to the people of this congregation, so that every act of worship, fellowship, outreach, stewardship, service, study, and support is centered in Christ alone. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are persecuted on account of naming Christ as Lord. Keep them steadfast in faith and gracious in witness. Soften the hearts of their tormentors, as you changed the heart of St. Paul himself, and bring them to repentant faith in Jesus. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

This is a hard prayer for us, merciful Father: we pray for the evil and wicked, for abusers and killers, cheaters and deserters, and those who commit every sort of despicable act. When their victims cannot forgive, help *us* to pray the prayer *they* cannot: Forgive, dear Lord. Cause the wicked to repent of their evil ways and cling to the Cross of Christ as their only hope. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Shine the light of reason, charity, justice, and mercy upon the minds of our earthly rulers. Turn them from every agenda, plan, and pronouncement that does not serve your will or benefit the people entrusted to their care. Remind them that they, and all who have power and authority in society, must give an account of their stewardship to you, the Lord and ruler of all. And bestow upon us all a measure of your peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing, hope, and the light of your dear presence to everyone who sits in the darkness of suffering, shame, or sorrow. Today we plead on behalf of: Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz, Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry, Marsha Henderson, Judy Metz, Ted Gibson, Bryan Katterhenry, Judy Kentner, Lauren Makuh, Sasha Maslov, Jenny Oliver, Alex Shirey, Hunter Smith, Seth Thuman, Harold Wallace, Jim Zwiebel, JJ Truesdale, Sue Bartlett, Ike Schnell, Roman Schlegel, Sue Hughes, Dan Havens, Jason Schneider, Jenn Douglas & Baby Bennett, Joyce Brincefield, Norma Jarrells, Jeanie Schnell, Kate Cunningham, Tim Cunningham, Judy Fisher, Michelle Kouse, Elaine Carlson, Wanda Nuss, Tom Meyer, Jerry Dicus, Se'Vie Daniel, Kingdom Harvest Ministries, and WHS-Fellowship of Christian Athletes. And anyone that we name out loud or quietly in our hearts. (Brief silence). Give them, and all who care for them, the grace to say: "May God be gracious and bless us. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you." Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



Father, we thank you for the lives and the witness of the faithful departed, including St. Paul {whose conversion we commemorate today}. Be the lamp to our feet and light to our path throughout our earthly pilgrimage. For the sake of your dear Son, lead us, and all whom you are pleased to redeem, into your bright courts of heaven, and into your endless day.  
Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, grant to us, dear Father, for the sake of your Son, our Savior 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**

#### **\*OFFERING HYMN**

*Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful (ELW 182)*

#### **\*OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray. Holy God, receive these tokens of our love for you. Make them, and us, holy. Use them, and us, as you desire. In everything, grant that we speak and act for the glory of your coming Kingdom, and for the well-being of the people you long to redeem. This we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our 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 right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. For you are the source of light and life, you made us in your image, and called us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord, who on the first day of the week overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

(ELW p. 190)

## **\*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

As we come to this time of Holy Communion, please let me extend to you an invitation to come forward and share in this Holy supper. You do not need to be member of this church or any Lutheran church to participate. If you have been baptized and profess faith in Christ Jesus, you are welcome. Jesus is extending this invitation and that is His only requirement. The bread and wine we share today has already been consecrated by an ordained pastor for this meal. Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

## COMMUNION SONG

*Lamb of God* (ELW p. 191)

## SONGS DURING COMMUNION

*Here is Bread* (ELW 483)

*Shine, Jesus, Shine* (ELW 671)

*Alleluia, Song of Gladness* (ELW 318)

## \*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

Almighty and ever-living God, we give you thanks for these heavenly gifts. Kindle in us the fire of your Spirit. When your Christ comes again, make us shine as lights before his face, who is alive and reigns now and forever. **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

*I Love to Tell the Story* (ELW 661)

## \*DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**

**Please stay and be seated. We will be having a congregational meeting to VOTE to Call Pastor Lorenzo Thomas.**

## OUR PRAYER CORNER

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

The Gardens	Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz
Burton Ridge in Lima	Judy Kentner
Homebound	Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry, Marsha Henderson, Judy Metz

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

Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz, Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry, Marsha Henderson, Judy Metz, Ted Gibson, Bryan Katterhenry, Judy Kentner, Lauren Makuh, Sasha Maslov, Jenny Oliver, Alex Shirey, Hunter Smith, Seth Thuman, Harold Wallace, Jim Zwiebel, JJ Truesdale, Sue Bartlett, Ike Schnell, Roman Schlegel, Sue Hughes, Dan Havens, Jason Schneider, Jenn Douglas & Baby Bennett, Joyce Brincefield, Norma Jarrells, Jeanie Schnell, Kate Cunningham, Tim Cunningham, Judy Fisher, Michelle Kouse, Elaine Carlson, Wanda Nuss, Tom Meyer, Jerry Dicus, Se'Vie Daniel, Kingdom Harvest Ministries and WHS-Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

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 JANUARY: KINGDOM HARVEST**

**MINISTRIES** Offering pans are located in the chapel and at the back of the church. Donations are accepted during the entire month.

**Loaves and Fishes:** Meals need to be reserved by calling 567-204-6708 and can be picked up in the alley behind the Fellowship Hall from 4:30 to 5:30 pm.

**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. January's Items: Canned Pasta, Jello Cups, Kid's snacks, & Hamburger Helper. 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.

**Plastic Bag Ministry** FELC will be collecting clean empty plastic grocery bags for our Prison Ministry. Allen/Oakwood Correctional incarcerated persons are making mats for the homeless. There is a collection container located at the back door.

**2025 Tax Statements** 2025 Tax statements available for pickup outside of chapel.

**Congregational Vote to Call a Pastor** Please stay after worship service TODAY, we will be having a congregational meeting to vote to call Pastor Lorenzo Thomas. This is an important vote for our congregation.

**Souper Bowl Gathering** Join us on **February 8<sup>th</sup> after worship** service for fellowship with your church family. Look for fliers around church. Save the date and invite family and friends for great food, wonderful raffles and fun playing 9-Square! There is no charge for attending event.

**Movie Night** on February 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm, Pizza & Popcorn will be provided. We will be watching *Soul on Fire* in fellowship hall. In the parlor we will be watching *Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* OR *Dog Gone*. Invite family and friends to join! All are welcome.

## MINISTERS for Next Week 2-8-26

Audio/Visual ..... Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie  
Lector ..... Matt Ronan  
Ushers ..... Dave Krites & Dave Clift  
Worship Assistant ..... Deanna Ronan  
Musician ..... Recordings  
Pastor ..... Vicar Michelle Kouse  
Greeter ..... Needed  
Acolyte ..... Nolan Roode  
Altar Guild ..... Amelia Sterner & Catherine Fisher  
Fellowship Cleanup..... Brenda Shoffstall & Darla Frame

## Weekly Attendance and Offerings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Views</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Current Giving</u>	<u>Benevolence</u>
01/04/2026	17	64	\$2,754.00	\$155.00
01/11/2026	19	52	\$1,963.00	\$55.00
01/18/2026	15	68	\$1,508.00	\$15.00
01/25/2026	33	In-Person Service Cancelled		

## **FELC Upcoming Calendar of Events**

<b>Sun, Feb 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>9:00am</b>	<b>Adult Sunday School</b>
	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Worship – Vicar Michelle Kouse Acolyte-Kaidence Schmidt</b>
<b>Congregational Vote to CALL Pastor Lorenzo Thomas</b>		
Mon, Feb 2 <sup>nd</sup>	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
Wed, Feb 4 <sup>th</sup>	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
	6:00pm	Confirmation Class
Thurs, Feb 5 <sup>th</sup>	9-11:30am	God's Store House
	4:30pm	Community Loaves & Fishes
Fri, Feb 6 <sup>th</sup>	9-11:30am	God's Store House
Sat, Feb 7 <sup>th</sup>	8:15am	Spiritual Movement Class
	9-11:30am	God's Store House
<b>SUNDAY, February 8<sup>th</sup> SOUPER BOWL</b>		Gathering after Worship Service
	<b>9:00am</b>	<b>Adult Sunday School</b>
	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Worship – Vicar Michelle Kouse Acolyte-Nolan Roode</b>
Mon, Feb 9 <sup>th</sup>	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
Wed, Feb 11 <sup>th</sup>	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
	6:00pm	Confirmation Class
Thurs, Feb 12 <sup>th</sup>	7:00pm	Ladies' Choir
	9-11:30am	God's Store House
	4:30pm	Community Loaves & Fishes
Fri, Feb 13 <sup>th</sup>	6:00pm	Men's Night at Astro Lanes
	9-11:30am	God's Store House
	5:30pm	Movie Night-Pizza & Popcorn provided
Sat, Feb 14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Happy Valentine's Day! God loves you always! ♥</b>	
	8:15am	Spiritual Movement Class
	9-11:30am	God's Store House

## **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](http://www.myfelc.org)

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

Office Hours: M-F, 8:30am – 12:00pm

## **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

Bookkeeper

Music Director

Audio-Technology

Hilary Roeger; [wapakelc@bright.net](mailto:wapakelc@bright.net); 419-738-3911

Anderson Accounting

Darla Frame; [darlaframe@gmail.com](mailto:darlaframe@gmail.com)

Dave Curry; [dlcy@bright.net](mailto:dlcy@bright.net); 937-307-8596



**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Wapakoneta, Ohio

*Our mission is to  
spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
and to love one another as  
He has loved us.*