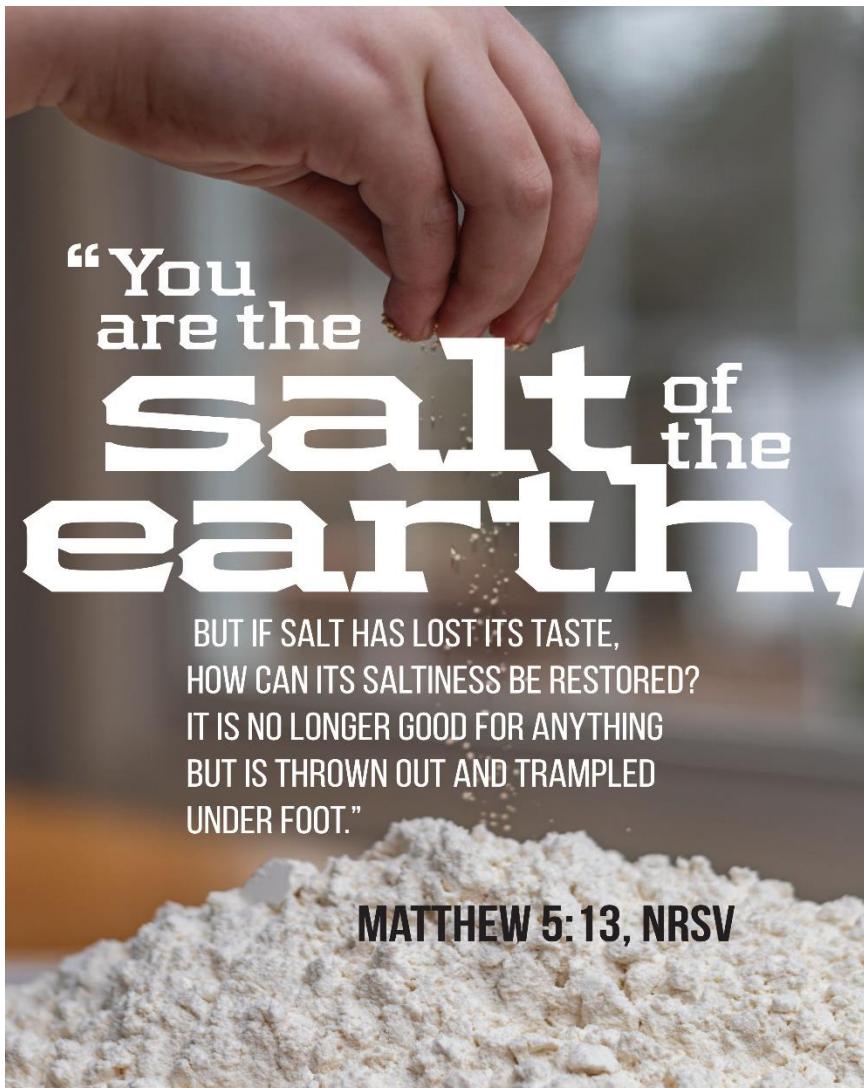


FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Wapakoneta, Ohio



**“You
are the
salt of
the
earth.”**

BUT IF SALT HAS LOST ITS TASTE,
HOW CAN ITS SALTINESS BE RESTORED?
IT IS NO LONGER GOOD FOR ANYTHING
BUT IS THROWN OUT AND TRAMPLED
UNDER FOOT.”

MATTHEW 5:13, NRSV

**5th Sunday after Epiphany
February 8, 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
by Mark & Chris Nagel in celebration of birthdays:
their granddaughter, Remi & their daughter-in-law, Lisa.

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God
by AVAILABLE.

MINISTERS for TODAY

Audio/Visual.....	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Lector.....	Matt Ronan
Ushers	Dave Krites & Dave Clift
Worship Assistant	Deanna Ronan
Musician	Susan Miller
Pastor	Vicar Michelle Kouse
Greeter	Joy Kantner
Acolyte	Nolan Roode
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

*CONFESSİON AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the \div 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

Gather Us In (ELW 532)

*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, with endless mercy you receive the prayers of all who call upon you. By your Spirit show us the things we ought to do, and give us the grace and power to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

Rebecca Van Meter

Word

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

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 58:3-9a

A reading from Isaiah. ³ “Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. ⁴ Look you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. ⁵ Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? ⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own kin? ⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.” If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

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

PSALM: 112: 1-9

1 Praise the Lord! Happy are they who fear the Lord,
who greatly delight in his commandments!

**2 Their descendants will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.**

3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

**4 They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright;
they are gracious, merciful and righteous.**

5 It is well with those who deal generously and lend,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

**6 For the righteous will never be moved;
they will be remembered forever.**

7 They are not afraid of any evil tidings;
their hearts is firm, secure in the Lord.

**8 Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid,
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.**

9 They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor, their righteousness
endures forever; their horn is exalted in honor.

SECOND READING: 1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-12

A reading from 1 Corinthians.¹ When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom.² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.³ And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.⁴ My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power,⁵ so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.⁶ Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being destroyed.⁷ But we speak God's wisdom, a hidden mystery, which God decreed before the ages for our glory⁸ and which none of the rulers of this age understood, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.⁹ But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him"—¹⁰ God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.¹¹ For what human knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.¹² Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God.

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

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia (ELW p. 188)

***GOSPEL: MATTHEW 5:13-20**

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

[Jesus said:] ¹³“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot. ¹⁴“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

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

MESSAGE

Vicar Michelle Kouse

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

Christ, Be Our Light (ELW 715)

***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.

Heavenly Father, your Word is challenge, command, and marching orders for us. But we often stumble, fall short, or go AWOL in fulfilling it! Thank you for Jesus, who fulfilled your Word and who IS your Word. Thank you for planting his grace, mercy, and obedience in our hearts. For his sake, make us like him: salt and light, hope and holiness, so others may turn to him and live.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Cause your Church to constantly preach Christ, crucified for the forgiveness of sin unto everlasting life. Keep it from being conformed to the desires and whims of the world. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless the people and ministries of this congregation. Fill us with your Holy Spirit. Let everything we say and do glorify you and help our neighbor, especially the poor, lonely, and distressed people in our community. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, being a disciple means being a student of Jesus. Give us teachable hearts and minds! Lead your “apprentices” in paths of devotion and holiness. Form us into “journeymen” who walk with those whose path is hard and lonely. Use us to bring hope, encouragement, and Jesus’ love to those who need it most. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We remember before you our persecuted sisters and brothers. Make them lamps shining in dark places. Bring them justice and deliverance. Soften the hearts of their enemies so they may turn to you and live. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Cause the rulers of all nations, especially our own, to obey the words of the prophet: to do justice tempered with mercy, and to care for the poor. Help us all not only to refrain from evil, but to actively pursue righteousness, as we strive to live in peace. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring healing and hope to everyone burdened by sin, sorrow, and suffering. Today we pray for Family & Friends of Steve Tabler (brother of Greg Tabler), 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, Todd Sawmiller, Kingdom Harvest Ministries, and WHS-Fellowship of Christian Athletes. And anyone that we name out loud or quietly in our hearts. (Brief silence). Shine the light of Christ upon them, and upon all who care for them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our beloved dead, especially those who were salt and light in our lives. Keep us in your care throughout our earthly pilgrimage. Kindle your Spirit in us, and help us to encourage one another along life's way. For the sake of your beloved Son, who gave himself for us, bring us into your eternal Kingdom, where with all whom he had redeemed, we may gaze upon his face and adore you forever. Lord, in your mercy, **please 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

In the Singing (ELW 466)

This Little Light of Mine (ELW 677)

Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (ELW 712)

*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

Thy Strong Word (ELW 511 vs 1, 2, 6)

*DISMISSAL

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

OUR PRAYER CORNER

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

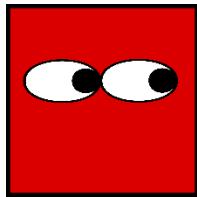
The Gardens	Betty Hague, Mary Ann Thomas, Betty Lietz
Burton Ridge in Lima	Judy Kentner
Homebound	Marty Rostorfer, Eloise Katterhenry, Marsha Henderson, Judy Metz

We especially remember in our prayers...

Family & Friends of Steve Tabler (brother of Greg Tabler), 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, Todd Sawmiller, 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.



→ → → Christian Education/Youth Committee is looking for someone to Direct our Vacation Bible School for 2026. If you are interested, please let office know no later than February 15th.

What's Happening at First English....

Noisy Offering for the month of JANUARY: LUTHERAN MILITARY VETERANS & FAMILY 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. February's Items: Taco kits, cake mixes, frosting, chunky soups, soup in a cup, & cooking spray. 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.

Souper Bowl Gathering is **TODAY**, **after worship** service. Join us for great food, wonderful raffles (make sure to buy your raffle tickets) and fun playing 9-Square! Raffles include: Dish Set & Christmas Tray; Lottery Tickets & Gift Card Bucket; Christian Movie & Goodies Basket; Pie of the Month Club; Spa Item Bag; OSU Wreathe; KAH Meats Certificate; Walter Meats Certificate; Valentine's Centerpiece; Easter Wreathe; Buckland Acres Bistro Certificate – 2. Proceeds will be donated to Flying Horse Farms.

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

Men's Night is scheduled for 6:00pm on Thursday, February 12th, at Astro Lanes. All men are encouraged to come and bring a friend!

Ladies' Lunch is scheduled for 11:30am on Tuesday, February 17th at Whaling Knife. All women are encouraged to come and bring a friend!!

Installation Service and Luncheon is on **February 15, 2026**, please join us in welcoming Pastor Lorenzo Thomas at his installation service and luncheon!

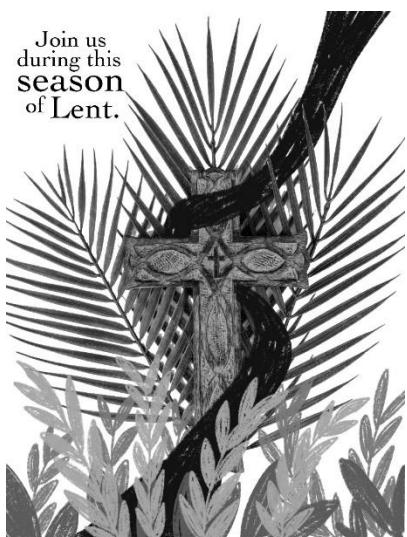
MINISTERS for Next Week 2-15-26

Audio/Visual	Noah Kirby & Jeff Ritchie
Lector	Elanor Roeger
Ushers	Ken Frame & Chad Sterner
Worship Assistant	Makayla Frame
Musician	Darla Fame
Pastor	Pastor Lorenzo Thomas
Greeter	Hilary, Mike, Amelia & Elanor Roeger
Acolyte	Vivian Fisher
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>
01/11/2026	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		
02/01/2026	76	23	\$19,701.20	\$255.00

Join us
during this
season
of Lent.



Lenten Tri-Congregational Worship Services we will be joining St. Mark's Lutheran Church and St. Paul's UCC for our Lenten Services:

ASH Wednesday will be on **February 18th** at St. Paul's UCC with FELC preaching at **7:00pm**. Readings will be Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51: 1-17; 2 Corinthians 5: 20b – 6:10; Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-21

FELC will also be having **Wednesday Evening Lenten Services on March 11th, 18th & 25th at 6:30pm**.

FELC Upcoming Calendar of Events

SUNDAY, February 8th SOUPER BOWL Gathering after Worship Service		
	9:00am	Adult Sunday School
	10:00am	Worship – Vicar Michelle Kouse
		Acolyte-Nolan Roode
Mon, Feb 9 th	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
Tues, Feb 10 th	1:30pm	Bingo at the Gardens
Wed, Feb 11 th	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
	6:00pm	Confirmation Class
	7:00pm	Ladies' Choir
Thurs, Feb 12 th	9-11:30am	God's Store House
	4:30pm	Community Loaves & Fishes
	6:00pm	Men's Night at Astro Lanes
Fri, Feb 13 th	9-11:30am	God's Store House
	5:30pm	Movie Night-Pizza & Popcorn provided
Sat, Feb 14 th	Happy Valentine's Day! God loves you always! ♥	
	8:15am	Spiritual Movement Class
	9-11:30am	God's Store House
Sun, Feb 15th	9:00am	Adult Sunday School
	10:00am	Installation & Luncheon
		Worship – Pastor Lorenzo
		Acolyte-Vivian Fisher
Mon, Feb 16 th	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
Tues, Feb 17 th	11:30am	Ladies' Lunch at Whaling Knife
Wed, Feb 18 th	ASH WEDNESDAY	
	5:15pm	Spiritual Movement Class
	7:00pm	Ash Wednesday at St. Paul's UCC
	9-11:30am	God's Store House
	4:30pm	Community Loaves & Fishes
Thurs, Feb 19 th	9-11:30am	God's Store House
Fri, Feb 20 th	8:15am	Spiritual Movement Class
Sat, Feb 21 st	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

Church email: 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

Pastor

Rev. Lorenzo Thomas;

felc_office@myfelc.org; 330-506-6025

Office Administrator

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

Bookkeeper

Anderson Accounting

Music Director

Darla Frame; darlaframe@gmail.com

Audio-Technology

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



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