



**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany  
Thursday, January 29, 2026**

**First English Lutheran Church  
402 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Wausau, Wisconsin 54401-4448  
715-842-5727**

**<https://www.firstenglishlutheranwausau.org>**

**A Congregation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Pastor: Reverend Mary E. Zupansic  
Minister of Music: Daniel Larson  
Pianist: Hal Osborn  
Parish Administrator: Debra Kluetz**

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

**Whether you are joining us in person or online, we are blessed to have you worshipping with us today. We pray that our time of worship together further encourages and strengthens our call to discipleship.**

**If you are a visitor, please fill out the neon green Visitor Card and drop and give it to an usher or greeter. Please come to worship with us again!**

**Worship Leader: Pastor Mary E. Zupansic**

**Pianist: Hal Osborn Lector: Marla Zumann**

### **PRELUDE**

### **WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **GATHERING**

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

### **CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, **+** one God,  
the Creator of heaven and earth,  
the Word who spoke life into being,  
the Wind stirring the waters. **Amen.**

Let us turn in confession to the one who knows us completely.

*(pause)*

Mighty God, lover of justice,  
**you call us to life in community,**  
**but we have served our own interests**  
**at the expense of our neighbors.**

**We have sown deceit where honesty was needed.**

**We say the right words,**  
**but our hearts are far from you.**

**Turn us to seek your face.**

**Knit us together and give us the mind of Christ,**  
**that we may do justice, love mercy,**  
**and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

The former things have passed away,  
and new things God now declares:  
Like a spring of water that never fails,  
God covers you in the righteousness of Christ,  
and forgives your sin in <sup>+</sup> Jesus' name.  
May the Spirit give you strength to live for others,  
and bless you with the gift of peace.

**Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG**

*Give Thanks*

**ELW #525**



Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,



give thanks be-cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.



Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,



give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.



And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am



rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And

now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am rich," be-cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

*Last time*

Text: Henry Smith

Music: GIVE THANKS. Henry Smith

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## 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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Holy God, you confound the world's wisdom in giving your kingdom to the lowly and the pure in heart. Give us such a hunger and thirst for justice, and perseverance in striving for peace, that in our words and deeds the world may see the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## WORD

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

### FIRST READING: Micah 6:1-8

A reading from Micah.

<sup>1</sup> Hear what the LORD says:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,  
and let the hills hear your voice.

<sup>2</sup> Hear, you mountains, the case of the LORD,  
and you enduring foundations of the earth,  
for the LORD has a case against his people,  
and he will contend with Israel.

<sup>3</sup> “O my people, what have I done to you?  
In what have I wearied you? Answer me!

<sup>4</sup> For I brought you up from the land of Egypt  
and redeemed you from the house of slavery,  
and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

<sup>5</sup> O my people, remember now what King Balak of Moab devised,  
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,  
and what happened from Shittim to Gilgal,  
that you may know the saving acts of the LORD.”

<sup>6</sup> “With what shall I come before the LORD  
and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come  
before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

<sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn  
for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the  
sin of my soul?”

<sup>8</sup> He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the  
LORD require of you but to do justice and to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God?

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **PSALM: Psalm 15 (responsively)**

<sup>1</sup> LORD, who may dwell in your tabernacle?  
Who may abide upon your holy hill?

<sup>2</sup> **Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right,  
who speak the truth from their heart;**

<sup>3</sup> they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not cast discredit upon a neighbor.

<sup>4</sup> **In their sight the wicked are rejected, but they honor those who fear the LORD. They have sworn upon their health and do not take back their word.**

<sup>5</sup> They do not give their money in hope of gain, nor do they take bribes against the innocent. Those who do these things shall never be overthrown.

## **SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

A reading from 1 Corinthians.

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

<sup>20</sup> Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, <sup>23</sup> but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

<sup>26</sup> Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 5:1-12**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

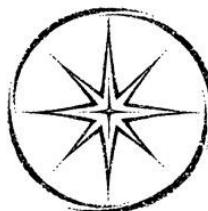
<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

**Pastor Mary E. Zupansic**



1 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion here, to show com -  
 2 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion bold, to feed the  
 3 To be your pres - ence is our mis - sion blest, to speak for  
 4 We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve your

pas - sion's face and lis - t'ning ear, to be your heart of mer - cy  
 poor and shel - ter home-less cold, to be your hands of jus - tice,  
 all the bro - ken and op - pressed, to be your voice of hope, your  
 peo - ple is our call and choice, and in this mis - sion we, the

ev - er near,  
 right up - hold,  
 love ex - pressed,  
 church, re - joice,

al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: ENGELBERG, Charles V. Stanford, 1852–1924

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## 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 God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

*Each petition ends with the following response.*

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior. **Amen.**

### **THE SHARING OF PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

### **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God of majesty,

**no eye has seen, no ear has heard**

**what you have prepared for those who love you,**

**yet in this meal you reveal the wideness of your mercy.**

**Use what we have gathered to feed us with the reign**

**of God come near, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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**

Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Come to the table; taste and see.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION: Instrumental Interlude**

### **TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

**Radiant God,**

**we have seen your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.**

**In the sacrament of his body and blood you**

**have drawn us to your heart. Send us from**

**this table with delight, that our**

**lives may reflect the beauty of your love,**

**and bear witness to all we have seen**

**and heard, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

### **SENDING**

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

### **BLESSING**

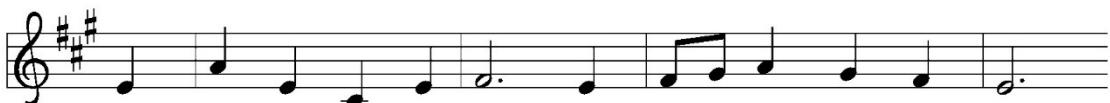
May the triune God,

who has put a new song in your mouth

and tuned your heart for praise

 bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SENDING SONG***Rise Up, O Saints of God***ELW #669**

1 Rise up, O saints of God! From vain am - bi - tions turn;  
2 Speak out, O saints of God! De - spair en - gulfs earth's frame;  
3 Rise up, O saints of God! The king - dom's task em - brace;  
4 Give heed, O saints of God! Cre - a - tion cries in pain;  
5 Com - mit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;



Christ rose tri - um - phant that your hearts with no - bler zeal might burn.  
as heirs of God's bap - tis - mal grace, the word of hope pro - claim.  
re - dress sin's cru - el con - se-quence; give jus - tice larg - er place.  
stretch forth your hand of heal-ing now, with love the weak sus - tain.  
and, quick - ened by the Spir - it's pow'r, rise up, O saints of God!

Text: Norman O. Forness, b. 1936

Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825-1893  
Text © Norman O. Forness, admin. Augsburg Fortress

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy. Share the light of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

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## **PASTORAL CARE**

If you would like a visit from Pastor Mary, or if you have a pastoral emergency, please call Pastor on her cell phone 920-671-4338.

## **COMMITTEE NIGHT**

**This Tuesday, February 3, 6:30 p.m.** We'll gather in Fellowship Hall.

## **2026 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

**This Sunday, Feb. 1** there will be a meeting to review and discuss the 2026 Budget of First English. The meeting will be in the Fireside Room following worship. Copies of the budget are available in the narthex. Feel free to bring your questions and thoughts.

## **EMAIL SCAM ALERT!**

If you receive an email or text message that appears to be from Pastor Mary requesting help with purchasing gift cards, please do not respond. This is a scam. Ignore and delete any such messages immediately.

For clarification, I will never reach out by email or text message to ask for assistance with buying gift cards. Protect yourself by staying vigilant and reporting any suspicious communications.

## **ANNUAL MEETING OF FIRST ENGLISH**

will be held on Sunday, February 8, at 10:15 a.m. following worship.

Members, please plan to attend if you are able. Your support and participation in the ministry of your congregation in the new year 2026 is greatly appreciated.

Agenda items include Election of Church Council Officers and Council Members and presentation and voting of the 2026 Budget along with any Old or New Business that needs to be discussed. Copies of the 2025 Annual Report are available in the narthex after this Sunday. NOTE: There will be no Sunday School classes next Sunday so the teachers and helpers may attend the meeting.

## PEEK AT THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 1-8, 2026

<b>Sunday, Feb. 1:</b>	9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m. 2026 Budget Discussion Meeting
<b>Tuesday, Feb. 3:</b>	9:00 a.m. Quilting Workday 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 6:30 p.m. Committee Night
<b>Thursday, Feb. 5:</b>	6:00 p.m. Worship
<b>Friday, Feb. 6:</b>	6:30 p.m. NA Meeting
<b>Sunday, Feb. 8:</b>	9:00 a.m. Worship 10:15 a.m. ANNUAL MEETING – No Sunday School

## CROSS GENERATION FAITH FORMATION

Join us on Sunday, February 15, immediately following the 9:00am worship service for a special Cross Generation Faith Formation event. This gathering is designed to bring together individuals of all ages, providing a chance to grow in faith as a community.

Event Focus: Baptism



Our time together will center on the topic of Baptism. We will explore several key questions:

- What is Baptism?
- What are the Baptismal promises?
- How do we live out our Baptismal identity?
- How does Baptism unite us?

## Activities and Discussion

Everyone will have the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities and group discussions. These activities are designed to engage people of all ages and help deepen our understanding of Baptism and its impact on our faith community.

## WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

Thursday, January 22: No worship due to cold weather

Sunday, January 25: 76 YouTube Views: 80

## SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Sunday, January 25: 8

## LET US REMEMBER IN PRAYER...

John & Karen Otto, Chad Seivert, Karl Otto, Lyle Jaegler, Linda Kittel, Judy Beemer (*sister of Roger DeWitt*), Ron Wiese (*friend of the DeWitt family*), John (family of Klapperich and Wynn), Melinda (*sister of Matt Heyne*), John & Pat Alters (*parents of John & Mike*), Diane (*Aunt to Angela Greenfield & Jarek Nelson*), Janet Alters (*Family member of Mike & Joan, Jack & Kim, Erin, Spencer and Ella*), Tracey (*friend of Sheri Fochs*)

**Homebound / Assisted Lived:** Kathie Peterson (*Primrose*), Dolores Hintz (*Sylvan Crossings*), Sue McKee (*Rennes in Weston*), Diane Zuelke (*Mountain Terrace*), Michelle Detert (*Cady Home*), Ila Bartelt (*Rennes*), Gary Klingbeil (*Wood Aven*), Rick Petzke (*Crossroads Care Center in Weyauwega*), Dennis & Laurayne Nicoliasen (*Rennes*), Geraldine Hopperdietzel (*Wood Aven*)  
Audrey Fellbaum  
Delphine Saeger  
Eleanor Thorpe

**Daily Prayers Offered for:** Bishops Anne Edison-Albright (*East Central Synod*) and Yehiel Curry (*Presiding Bishop of the ELCA*), and all those who work in the East Central Synod Office; ShyAnn and Peter Egwalata (*in Uganda*)

## The Season of Lent 2026



### Ash Wednesday

Brief Spoken Worship Service with scripture and the Imposition of Ashes **Wednesday, February 18, 12Noon.** Soup to follow the service.

Traditional Worship Service with Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes  
**Wednesday, February 18, 2026 - 6:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. Chili Supper provided by FELC Youth.**

## **LENTEN MID-WEEK PRAYER**

### **“Baptismal Promises”**

**February 25 & March 4, 11, 18, 25 -- 12:15 p.m.**

You have made public profession of your faith.

Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

*to live among God’s faithful people,*

*to hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper,*

*to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,*

*to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,*

*and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?*

Each week we will consider one of the baptismal promises and how we live them out in our everyday lives.

## **SOUP & HEARTY BREADS**

**Following the 12:15** worship service, enjoy soup and hearty breads, accompanied by a variety of desserts.

### **LENTEN SOUP LUNCHES...**

There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for those who would be willing to provide a simple lunch of soup, bread and sweets.

ALSO – to get some idea of how many people to prepare for each week, there are sheets in the narthex for you to indicate if you will be attending.

## **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

### **Presentation of Our Lord**

**Monday, February 2, 2026**

Forty days after the birth of Jesus we mark the day Mary and Joseph presented him in the temple in accordance with Jewish law. There they were greeted by Simeon, an aged priest who offered the song "Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace," as well as by the prophet Anna, who spoke of the redemption of Israel.