

**EVENING PRAYER FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NOVEMBER 4, 2024
7:00 PM ~ ONLINE & ONSITE**



God Loves. We Love.
Everyone!
Dios Ama. Amamos.
Todos!

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Everyone is welcome. This means you.

Welcome to First English Lutheran Church & Child Development Center. We are a congregation of the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). You are invited to fully participate in a community of faith and friendship that gathers for worship, relationship building, personal growth, and service in the community and the world. Following the example of Christ, this congregation welcomes you exactly as you are.

Worship is at the heart of the Christian life. It is in worship that we encounter God, express our theology, define our identity, and are formed and transformed as the people of God. As we are gathered together, we receive the Word of God, give thanks, and are sent to be living, active images of divine love.

We are committed to the work of racial equity, justice, and advocating for marginalized groups. We welcome people in all places on the journey of faith and life. We celebrate differences in age, appearance, economic status, ethnic origin, nationality, race, family configuration, marital or relationship status, political leaning, religious background, and those who are differently abled physically or mentally. Since 1989, FELC has openly welcomed persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions to full participation in the church and society. For more on our welcome and life, visit www.felcaustin.org.

If this is one of your first times with FELC, please use the online Welcome Visitors information form and provide feedback on your visit <http://www.felcaustin.org/forms/visitors>.

All Gender Restrooms, with infant changing tables, are located in the hallway off of the sanctuary near the fellowship hall. **Hearing assistance devices** are available for the sanctuary, with two options: an earpiece, or a hearing loop for those who use hearing aids; please connect with an usher for a hearing assistance device. **Seat cushions**, for use on our wood pews, are available from an usher.

✝GATHERING✝

We gather tonight in a spirit of openness and community. We are glad to be together. As we gather, you're invited to listen to the gathering music and be in quiet reflection.

Gathering Music

Welcome to Worship & Community

Land & Water Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the presence of God's people living on this land long before European conquest. These lands and waters have sustained the Coahuiltecan, Comanche, Jumanos, Lipan Apache, Sana, Tonkawa, and other indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Gathering today to worship on ancestral homelands, we acknowledge and honor our indigenous sisters, siblings, and brothers who continue to care for the land and water and call this land home.

Everyone may stand, as willing and able.

As we participate tonight, please use a body posture that best meets your ability to engage.

Gathering Song

“Let My Spirit Always Sing”



1 Let my spir - it al - ways sing, though my heart be
2 Though my bod - y be con - fined, let your word en -
3 Let your wis - dom grace my years, choose my words and
4 Let my spir - it al - ways sing, to your Spir - it



win - ter - ing, though the sea - son of de - spair
gaze my mind, let the in - ner eye dis - cern
chase my fears, give me wit to wel - come change,
an - swer - ing, through the si - lence, through the pain



give no sign that you are there, God to whom my
how much more there is to learn, see a world be -
to ac - cept, and not es - trange, let my joy be
know my hope is not in vain, like a feath - er



days be - long, let there al - ways be a song.
com - ing whole through the win - dow of the soul.
full and deep in the knowl - edge that I keep.
on your breath trust your love, through life and death.

Text: Shirley Erena Murray, 1931–2020

Music: SPIRITSONG, Jane Marshall, 1924–2019

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Music © 2005 Jane Marshall, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Gathering Prayer

Light and peace are with us.

Let us give thanks.

Love surrounds us as we gather.

Let us give thanks.

God is here and in each person.

Let us give thanks.

Holy One, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope.

Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance.

Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance.

Where distrust twists our thinking, grant humility and illumination.

Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams.

Holy One, you are the fullness of all love: today, tomorrow, and forever.

May it be so.

Everyone may be seated.

As we pray tonight, in words and song, we focus on the themes of community, humility, and peace.

✝COMMUNITY✝

A Musical Offering: Kyrie from Requiem, Opus 48, Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Kyrie eleison. | Lord have mercy.

Christe eleison. | Christ have mercy.

Kyrie eleison. | Lord have mercy.

A Reading from the Hebrew Scripture: The Prophet Micah, chapter 6, verses 6-8

“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before the LORD with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 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?” The LORD 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?”

A Reading from the United States Constitution: The Preamble, September 17, 1787

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

A Reading from the United States Constitution: The Bill of Rights, the First Amendment, 1791

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

A Poem by Ifti Nasim (1946 – 2011): “The Story of One Night in A Journey”

“He told me all the various tales of intimacy and longing, all the different beds that he had warmed, and all that had appealed to him in different peoples across the world. (He could still recall their “measurements”) He told me about all the nights he had stayed up till dawn and all the evenings he had spent with “intellectuals” (He could still recall each one’s name) and all the other many hours he had spent discussing the Romans and the Greeks. The candle’s light was a mystery web on the walls where a yearning’s shadow also flickered. The room was hot; but outside there was a chilling wind, and a freezing rain was rattling the door, betraying what lurked in the hearts. Desire had forced its way into his leopard eyes. But I was wondering what I should call him: My darling sister, or my brother divine?”

Reflection on Community

Song

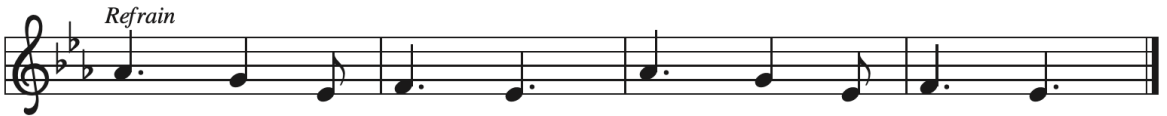
“God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me”



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to
2 Bind to my-self the name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light - ning,
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that



move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur - round me; O Christ, sur - round me.

Text: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, b. 1967

Music: GREEN TYLER, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Text and music © 2004 This Here Music, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Prayer

Everyone may be seated.

✝HUMILITY✝

A Reading from American Poet Flannery O’Conner (1925-1964)

“Dear God, I cannot love Thee the way I want to. You are the slim crescent of a moon that I see and myself is the earth’s shadow that keeps me from seeing all the moon. The crescent is very beautiful and perhaps that is all one like I am should or could see; but what I am afraid of, dear God, is that my self shadow will grow so large that I block the whole moon, and that I will judge myself by the shadow that is nothing. I do not know you God because I am in the way. Please help me to push myself aside.”

A Reading from first century (CE) Christian apostle, Paul, to the People in Phillipi: Philippians 2:5-8

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though Jesus was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

A Reading from American Poet Wendell Berry (b. 1934): from Imago Dei

“If there are a “chosen few” then I am not one of them,
if an “elect,” well then I have not been elected.
I am one who is knocking at the door.
I am one whose foot is on the bottom rung.
But I know that Heaven’s bottom rung is Heaven
though the ladder is standing on the earth where I work
by day and at night sleep with my head upon a stone.”

Reflection on Humility

Song

“Spirit, Open My Heart”

Refrain



Spir-it, o - pen my heart to the joy and pain of



liv-ing. As you love may I love, in re - ceiv - ing



and in giv - ing. Spir - it, o - pen my heart.



1 God, re - place my ston - y heart with a heart that's

2 Write your love up - on my heart as my law, my

3 May I weep with those who weep; share the joy of



kind and ten - der. All my cold - ness and

goal, my sto - ry. In each thought, word, and

friend and neigh - bor. As I live from day to

Refrain



fear to your grace I now sur - ren - der.

deed, may my liv - ing bring you glo - ry.

day, love will be my fin - est la - bor.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: WILD MOUNTAIN THYME, Irish melody; adapt. Alfred V. Fedak, b. 1953

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Music © 2011 Alfred V. Fedak

Prayer

Everyone may be seated.

✝PEACE✝

A Reading from first century Saint, John:

The Christian Scriptures, the Book of John, chapter 14, verse 25-27

“[Jesus said,] ‘I have said [love God and love one another] while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom God sends in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.’”

A Musical Offering: “River” by Patty Griffin (b. 1964)

“Isn't she a river? She doesn't need a diamond to shine
You can't really have her, but you can hold her for a time.
Takes an army just to bend her, be careful where you send her,
You can't hold her back for long; a river is just too strong, and She's a river.
Arms made out of silver, moving in a crooked line,
Carrying some dreamers off into the end of time.
You don't need to save her or teach her to behave,
Just let her arms unwind, ever changing and undefined, She's a river.
You can ride her easy when she's slow, walk across her when she's low
Follow wherever she goes, She's a river.
Run for cover when she's mad, drown in her tears when things are bad,
Don't you ever forget it, that, She's a river. Isn't She a river?
She doesn't need a diamond to shine so people call you clever,
But she's been here a long, long time.
And she's seen so many faces and places down the line.
She's been left for dead a million times, keeps coming home, arms open wide,
Ever changing and undefined, She's a river.”

The musicians of this selection were recently asked to offer Patty Griffin's "River" at the funeral of their beloved aunt's mother. The relationship between these two women was beautiful but often strained, and the choice was a powerful tribute to a complicated and impressive woman. In this context, Griffin's brilliant lyrics could apply to many of the women in our lives, and also to our country and the values we hold.

A Poem by Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

Each of you a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.
Your armed struggles for profit
Have left collars of waste upon
My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.
Yet, today I call you to my riverside,
If you will study war no more.
Come, clad in peace and I will sing the songs
The Creator gave to me when I
And the tree and stone were one.

Reflection on Peace

Song

“Let Peace Fill the Earth”



1 Let peace fill the earth as the wa - ters fill the sea.
2 Let peace fill the earth as the moun - tains fill the sky.
3 Let peace fill the earth as the light that fill the fire.
4 Let peace fill the earth as the hope that fills our song.



Let love and jus - tice flow like a might - y rush - ing stream.
Let love and jus - tice flow like the wing - ed birds that fly.
Let love and jus - tice flow like the friend - ship we de - sire.
Let love and jus - tice flow like the voic - es sing - ing a - long.



And may we see the day when war and blood - shed cease,
And may we see the day when war and blood - shed cease,
And may we see the day when war and blood - shed cease,
And may we see the day when war and blood - shed cease,



and through - out all the world there will be peace.
and through - out all the world there will be peace.
and through - out all the world there will be peace.
and through - out all the world there will be peace.

Text: Ray Makeever

Music: LET PEACE FILL THE EARTH, Ray Makeever

Prayer

Everyone may be seated.

✝SENDING✝

A Musical Offering

“Prayer for Peace”

text: Henry Baker (1821-1877); music: arr. David Cherwin (b. 1957)

1 O God of love, O God of peace,
Make wars throughout the world to cease;
The wrath of nations now restrain.
Give peace, O God, give peace again.

2 Remember, Lord, thy works of old,
The wonders that thy people told;
Remember not our sins' deep stain.
Give peace, O God, give peace again.

3 Whom shall we trust but thee, O Lord?
Where rest but on thy faithful word?
None ever called on thee in vain.
Give peace, O God, give peace again.

Prayer

National Anthem

"The Star-Spangled Banner"

text: Francis Scott Key (1814); music: John Stanford Smith (1773)

This became the National Anthem on March 3, 1931 by a Joint Resolution of Congress

O say can you see, by the dawn's ear - ly light,
what so proud - ly we hailed at the twi - light's last gleam - ing,
whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the per - i - lous fight,
o'er the ram - parts we watched, were so gal - lant - ly stream - ing?
And the rock - ets' red glare, the bombs burst - ing in air,
gave proof through the night that our flag was still there.
O say does that star - span - gled ban - ner yet wave
o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

Sending Prayer

Blessing

text: Wm. Sloane Coffin (1924-2006)

May God give you grace never to sell yourself short.

Grace to risk something big for something good.

Grace to remember that the world is too dangerous for anything but truth,
and too small for anything but love. **Amen.**

Sending Song

“This is My Song” | ELW 887

We will sing stanzas 1 & 2.



1 This is my song, O God of all the na - tions,
2 My coun - try's skies are blu - er than the o - cean,
3 This is my prayer, O God of all earth's king - doms,



a song of peace for lands a - far and mine.
and sun - light beams on clo - ver - leaf and pine.
your king - dom come; on earth your will be done.



This is my home, the coun - try where my heart is;
But oth - er lands have sun - light too, and clo - ver,
O God, be lift - ed up till all shall serve you,



here are my hopes, my dreams, my ho - ly shrine;
and skies are ev - 'ry - where as blue as mine.
and hearts u - nit - ed learn to live as one.



but oth - er hearts in oth - er lands are beat - ing
So hear my song, O God of all the na - tions,
So hear my prayer, O God of all the na - tions;



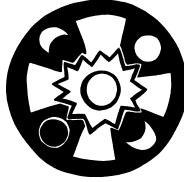
with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.
a song of peace for their land and for mine.
my - self I give you; let your will be done.

Text: Lloyd Stone, 1912–1993, sts. 1–2; Georgia Harkness, 1891–1974, st. 3

Music: FINLANDIA, Jean Sibelius, 1865–1957

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All are welcome to a time of Hospitality in the Fellowship Hall following the prayer service.

Visit felcaustin.org to learn more about the FELC welcome, worship, community life, learning, engagement, racial justice and reconciliation ministries, and our Child Development Center.

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