



Faith Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

FAITH'S FOUNDATIONS

January 2021

Working to spread the Gospel here and throughout the world.

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Office Hours: Tuesday thru Thursday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm



NOTE FROM PASTOR JOHN



In the month of January it is customary to do two things. First we look back at the old year. This is a look we may not want to take. A recent Time magazine cover said it all with an X crossed through the year 2020. When we review the spread of the COVID-19 virus the year has been a disaster. As of this writing the death toll in the United States has exceeded 300,000. A lesson we have learned in a nutshell is humility. Maybe we thought since we live in a time of advanced technology deadly viruses causing worldwide deaths, hence a pandemic, were things of the past. We have hopefully learned that it is dangerous to ignore warning signs regarding harmful viruses or for that matter the consequences of environmental damage due to human caused climate change. Humility is to understand consequences when we are not careful with our health or for that matter the overall health of the planet.

How do we evaluate the role of faith in 2020? I read of one who is agnostic question a Christian,

“Why is your God so angry?” I do not think the Covid virus reveals our God having a tantrum. There are some who do say the pandemic is punishment for certain sins, and you can fill in the blanks as far as the transgressions that have caused God to be peeved. But the thought of God aiming lightning bolts at sinners is ultimately not from Scripture. True enough the Bible says God is slow to anger, but more significantly is abounding in steadfast love. True enough the prophets railed against the greed and injustice of people and warned of divine consequence. But the prophet’s warnings were not delivered for the joy of seeing people squirm. Greed and injustice cause so much hurt and this is what broke the hearts of the prophets, and probably God’s heart as well. We are created in the image of God and does this not call us to reflect God’s quality of steadfast love? The Scriptures reveal that God is not one of festering resentment over human rebellion. The rainbow was a sign that God will not destroy the world. Israel was rescued from Egypt to be a

people given as a sign for the rest of the world. Israel reveals the wisdom of God with the Ten Commandments which teach the way of love for neighbor and peace in our communities. When human beings decided to idolize themselves and ignore God this led to consequences. But instead of God saying “I told you so” the prophets spoke of the passion and comfort of God, calling people to return to the true God. And the ultimate sign of an anti-lighting bolt God is the cross revealing Jesus, sent by God not to condemn but to save.

Another lesson of 2020 is admittedly a hard one. The lesson is life is not only about me, myself, and I. With a highly contagious virus endangering one another it is no time to ignore the commandment to love one another. When the medical experts tell us to wear masks and other practices to slow the spread of the virus we should do so out of concern for our neighbors. The idea of ignoring medical advice crying a violation of one’s personal freedom is to ignore the responsibility of living together in society. The virus will be overcome through cooperation with medical advice, community focus, and compassion for one another, especially those among us who are most at risk of serious illness and death.

Martin Luther lived at a time when there could be dangerous outbreaks of the Bubonic Plague. Luther blamed the devil for an attitude of indifference for those who are or may become sick. Luther wrote, “Get away, you devil, with your terrors! Just because you hate it, I’ll spite you by going the more quickly to help my sick neighbor. I’ll pay no attention to you. I’ve got two heavy blows to use against you: the first one is that I know that helping my neighbor is a deed well-pleasing to God and all the angels; by this deed I do God’s will and render true obedience to him.....The second blow against

the devil is God’s mighty promise by which he encourages those who minister to the needy. God says in Psalm 41: 1-3, “blessed are those who consider the poor. The Lord will deliver them in the day of trouble.”Godliness is nothing else but service to God. Service to God is indeed service to our neighbor.”

In January we also look forward. We look forward to the end of the pandemic and we are thankful for the availability of an effective vaccine to protect the people. As we have heard, there is ‘light at the end of the tunnel’, but that light is still distant. The virus spread among us continues and we are told to be as vigilant as ever with the fundamental mitigations: wear a mask, social distance, and washing our hands. Let us remain vigilant with our spiritual practices in 2021. Not long ago I was preparing to lead a worship service at Faith when a member asked me to veer from the prepared prayer petitions and pray for our country. I was happy to do that since it is such an important time of challenge. We are still dealing with Covid-19 and there is still some uncertainty about our new president since the outgoing one refuses to concede. I really appreciated being asked to pray about specific concerns. Prayer helps us understand that although we see a light at the end of the tunnel; let us not lose sight of the light ever with us in the tunnel, our Savior and Lord Jesus. I would like to end with the prayer assigned for New Year’s Eve: “Eternal God, you have placed us in a world of space and time and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love. Grant that in the New Year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event that gives us joy forever—the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



*I wait for the LORD;
my soul waits for him;
In his word is my hope.
My soul waits for the LORD,
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.*



~Psalm 130

Dear people of the Northern Great Lakes Synod,

The very first summer I was in my first call, I led a group of teenage girls on a camping trip in the McCormick Wilderness. It was before the more recent trail improvements, so there were parts of the path that disappeared into swamp and we had to navigate the watery way by guessing which tufts of grass would keep us dry. Boots and socks were soaked before the trail reemerged from the reeds and rushes. Hopping from tuft to tuft, lifting packs over downed trees, crisscrossing over roots and around rocks - It was not an easy trail, but we did finally reach our lakeside destination some hours later having covered only a few miles.

The following day, we got it in our heads to “walk around the lake.” However, there wasn’t even a remnant of a trail to mark our path forward. Keeping the lake to our left, we bushwhacked our way through dense forest hoping for something worth seeing of lake, sky, and woods. But our progress was even slower than the previous day as it took substantially more effort, and we finally made it back to camp full of scrapes and bruises.

Before the pandemic, your pastoral leader walked with you along a well-traveled and wide path of congregational life blazed long ago by church tradition, expectations, and previous experience (the way things were always done). The way forward was not always easy, but at least there was a trail. Now we are, all of us, off the beaten path, whacking our way through a pandemic where every step takes effort. Forward motion requires a whole lot more - more energy, more thought, more decisions, more angst, more navigation - just a lot more. And unlike my ill-conceived hike around the lake, much of the effort is hidden. What you see on a Sunday morning, or as a weekly devotion on Facebook, represents hours of preparation and behind the scenes work. Your pastor, along with the Church, is blazing a new trail, although the word “blazing” makes it sound easy. Think instead of your pastor, obscured by the underbrush, holding a knobby stick, trying to whack a way forward through dense foliage on uneven ground with no compass. What had been for the Church a pleasant journey on a well beaten path now requires huge effort that takes much longer to go a much shorter distance. Unfamiliar terrain and difficulty getting one’s bearings results in sweaty frustration, with scrapes and bruises along the way.

In this Advent season, as we wait for so much, please remember we are all feeling the weight of loss and the disorientation of an unfamiliar landscape, including your pastor. And your pastor is working harder than ever before even though that effort is relatively invisible, putting in more time for less return and a

diminished sense of accomplishment with fewer voices offering encouragement and support. It is not an easy journey for anyone, but for leaders especially. Your council feels it. Your council president feels it. And so does your pastor.

As Covid cases increase and we wait for a vaccine - as Christmas draws closer and we brace ourselves for all that will be different – as emotions rise and we try to make sense of all that we feel - I encourage you to patiently and prayerfully embrace this time of Advent waiting. We wait, with anticipation, the completion of what is becoming.

Consider that the Church and our efforts in ministry are now “off road.” We choose more carefully where to put our energy since everything takes more work and more time. Online productions of worship and devotions, technology troubleshooting and zoom meetings, efforts to minister and stay connected consume more of your pastor’s attention and energy than you might imagine. We are blessed to wait and watch together, finding a space of quiet for ourselves and offering respite to those who feel exhausted by the effort it takes to forge a path forward.

We wait for the LORD more than watchmen for the morning...but in the meantime, we place our hope in the one who is already with us. Christ has come, is coming, will be here soon. We can wait.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan



From the President...

Greetings,

Your church council continues to meet via Zoom technology We are happy that this is available, and thanks to Linda Swanson for setting this up for us.

Again we are donating most of the parsonage rent money. This month we are giving \$300 each to The Salvation Army and NATH (the housing shelter for homeless people in Rhinelander). If you know of any needs that we may not be aware of, let us know.

We will have Christmas Eve worship here at 6 pm with Pastor John. Call the office (715-546-2770) for a reservation. We are limiting attendance to 50. As usual, we will require masks and social distancing for everyone's protection. The service will be live-streamed so go to our website if you would like to participate at home. In addition, communion packets are available in the office for you to pick up.

Blessings to you this holiday season, and prayers for a healthy new year!

Marge Anderson

"Loneliness is a pervasive pandemic and, yes, loneliness is being alone physically, for sure. More so, it is a feeling that nobody can or will help me, or nobody's listening to me, or nobody cares about me. It's this heavy sadness that settles over the soul. And that's what leads us to such horrible anxiety and atrocious levels of suicide. There are so many broken hearts." (Anon).

Here are a few suggestions which may help.

1. Get exercise, outdoors if possible.
2. Develop a few good friendships. You take the lead in this.
3. Share your situation with a mature Christian.
4. Have a visit with your pastor.
5. Develop good reading habits. Read books that are uplifting.
6. Listen to music that calms your spirit.

Other ideas:

- Hand out as many compliments as possible today.
- Order a pizza for a friend who's feeling down - have it delivered to their door.
- Prepare a basket of joy. Deliver it to the doorstep of someone in need of being remembered.
- Write a card to someone in a nursing home or who is home-bound. Let them know they are remembered and that you are praying for them.
- If snow is a problem for some of your seniors, put your shovel to work.

10 Questions to Ask at Christmas Gatherings

Here is a list of questions designed not only to kindle a conversation in almost any Christmas setting, but also to take the dialogue gradually to a deeper level. You can use all the questions or just some of them, as a group exercise, with believers or unbelievers, with strangers or with family.

- What's the best thing that's happened to you since the last Christmas?
- What was your best Christmas ever? Why?
- What's the most meaningful Christmas gift you've ever received?
- What was the most appreciated Christmas gift you've ever given?
- What was your favorite Christmas tradition as a child?
- What is your favorite Christmas tradition now?
- What do you do to try to keep Christ in Christmas?
- Why do you think people started celebrating the birth of Jesus?
- Do you think the birth of Jesus deserves such a celebration?
- Why do you think Jesus came to earth?

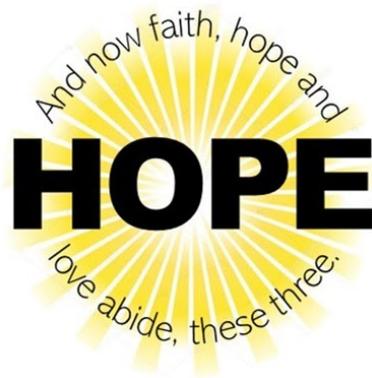
Thought of the Day

“When race and class cry out for treason, when sirens call for war, they over shout the voice of reason and scream till we ignore all we held dear before.

Yet I believe beyond believing that life can spring from death, that growth can flower from our grieving, that we can catch our breath and turn transfixed by faith.”

~ELW 252 vs. 2 & 3





2021 Synod Assembly

In case you haven't heard, Synod Assembly 2021 will be online! To avoid screen fatigue, we will announce dates and times for when and how the WHOLE synod can be involved in workshops and Synod-wide worship and orientation for voting members. We will have a Synod Assembly WEEK with opportunities all week for engagement, discussion, worship, and information.

Stay tuned for more info!



Lifting Up to God in Prayer

- For those giving, receiving, and waiting for the Covid vaccine
- For all who grieve the loss of loved ones this Christmas season
- For all pastors, deacons, and licensed lay ministers as they continue to meet the challenges of church leadership.
- For congregation councils and presidents
- For patience, resilient strength, comfort and joy



Winter Class Registration Now Open!

Registration is now open for the winter schedule of Lifelong Faith Formation, a program of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. The classes provide fun and interesting opportunities for people to connect with each other online, via Zoom, during these challenging times. The following classes begin in January:

- **Introduction to Biblical Greek II**
- **Reflections on Bonhoeffer's *Life Together, While We are Apart***
- **The Doctrine of Discovery: From Myth to Reality**
- **Bias in Our Communities: Addressing Race in Rural America**
- **Walking Together: Companionship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania**
- **The Gospel of John**



For more information, visit our [website](#) or contact Deacon-Elect Lori Ward at (615) 519-1969 or lori.ward@nglsynod.org.



ANNOUNCEMENTS



FACEBOOK

It's true! Faith Lutheran Church now has a Facebook page. "Like" us at <http://www.facebook.com/faith3lakes/> and watch the page for updates about what's happening in the life of our faith community.



PRAYER SHAWLS

To give comfort and peace. There is a tote of prayer shawls under the shelf when you walk in. If you know someone who is lonely and would use one, feel free to take one. Once wrapped around their shoulders it feels like a hug from Jesus and their friends.

LIVE-STREAMING

Did you know that when you're away, you can watch Pastor's sermon as it's delivered LIVE on Sunday morning? You can! Simply go to our church's website (<https://www.faithlutheran-threelakes.org/>) and click "Click here to watch live streaming during worship (Sundays at 9:00 am)" right on the front page. Just put in a name and hit "Enter Live Service". Streaming will start at the reading of the Gospel, which usually happens between 9:10 and 9:15, give or take a few minutes, so if nothing is happening yet when you start watching, just wait a few minutes. You can also watch a recording of many of Pastor's sermons on our website. Simply go to our church website, and go to "Worship" --> "Pastor's Sermons" and click on any sermon in the Archive of Recorded Sermons. It's that easy!

BAPTISMS WE REMEMBER THIS MONTH



This month, we continue our remembrance of baptisms among members and friends of Faith Lutheran.

Each month, we will list the baptisms for that month. The list will include those for whom we have the date of baptism, those for whom we only have the month, and some of those for whom we have no date.

Please remember our brothers and sisters in your prayers.

- 5th Alycia Madl
- 21st Gretchen Peterson
- 22nd Brooke Kowalski
- 25th Miriam Bredesen
-

Also remember: Tom Nykolayko, Joel Heiland, Sela Wick, Michelle Huml

MONTHLY OFFERING AND ATTENDANCE

Year: 2020

Month: November

Number of Sundays: 5

Average Attendance: 9

SEPTEMBER 2020	MONTH	YTD
Budget Income	\$ 4,020 + \$ 750 rent	\$ 4,019
Expenses	\$ 2,518	\$ 1,990
Net Income	\$ 1,502	\$ 2,028

*** This will be provided on a quarterly basis

OCTOBER 2020	MONTH
Budget Income	\$ 4,005 + \$ 750 rent
Expenses	\$ 3,776
Net Income	\$ 979



IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

THOSE STRUGGLING WITH ILLNESS, PAIN, LOSS OF HEALTH IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT: Kyle Smith, Paul Kragh, Monte James, Rick Jacobson, Ollie DeMuth, Megan Schiller, Bob Beyer, Ann Woelfel, John and Connie Lyons, Donna Weiss and family, Dave Lederhaus, Val Otto and the family of Brittain and Courtney Lorenz, the family of Dave Cyrtmus, Sonia and John Dionne, the family of Barb Hansen, the family of Jim Kotarski, the family of Charlotte Jensen, the family of Norm Frauenfelder, and Sue Sorg.

Our armed forces including: David Bredesen, Kaley Ebann, Tyler Kaltenberg, Nick, Brandy and Nathan Lamal, Jamie Madl, Jared Malda, Jon Priem, Brandon Paulick, Charlie and Will Starke, Nicole Young, and Alex Brendemihl.

ALL THOSE WHO ARE ANXIOUS AND WORRIED ABOUT MANY THINGS

Our Church Ministries:

Congregational Care
Congregation Council
Board of Worship Life
Board of Outreach
Board of Trustees
Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center

Our partners in the gospel of Jesus Christ including:

St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church
Three Lakes Evangelical Free Church
Union Congregational Church
Grace Lutheran Church

Our synod, the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA, and its congregations.

Our companion synod, the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and its congregations.



STEWARDSHIP CALENDARS



December 2020

	12/6/20	12/13/20	12/20/20	12/24/20	12/27/20
Assisting Minister	---	---	---	---	---
Lay Reader	Marge Anderson	Jan Harris	Rob Peterson	Marge Anderson	Jan Harris
Altar Guild	---	---	---	---	---
Greeters	Andersons	Sue Sorg and Jan Harris	Andersons	Andersons	Andersons
Music	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Dawn Gonitzke	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss
Video-streaming	---	---	---	---	

January 2021

	1/3/21	1/10/21	1/17/21	1/24/21	1/31/21
Assisting Minister	---	---	---	---	
Lay Reader	Marge Anderson	Jan Harris	Rob Peterson	Marge Anderson	Jan Harris
Altar Guild	---	---	---	---	
Greeters	Andersons	Andersons	Andersons	Andersons	
Music	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	
Video-streaming	---	---	---	---	

** If you cannot serve on your assigned day, please find a replacement, then notify the church office. **

January 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 New Year's Day	2
3 9:00 am Holy Communion	4 Office Closed	5 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	6	7	8 Office Closed	9
10 9:00 am Holy Communion <i>Baptism of Our Lord</i>	11 Office Closed	12 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours 1:00 pm Council Meeting	13	14	15 Office Closed	16
17 9:00 am Holy Communion	18 Office Closed	19 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	20	21	22 Office Closed	23
24 9:00 am Holy Communion	25 Office Closed	26 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	27	28	29 Office Closed	30
31 9:00 am Holy Communion						

Faith Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 436
Three Lakes, WI 54562

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

A member of the Northern Great Lakes Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

P.O. Box 436
6995 U.S. Highway 45 South
Three Lakes, WI 54562

Church Office: 715-546-2770

Office Hours: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Tuesday – Thursday (closed Monday and Friday)

WEEKLY WORSHIP

Sunday Morning – 9:00 am
Holy Communion

STAFF

Office Administrator: MaryBeth Koslowski
office6995@gmail.com

Interim Pastor: Rev. John Kuziej
pllc@frontier.com

Custodian: Debbie Hock

Organist: Rhonda Buss

VISIT US ON THE WEB

<https://www.faithlutheran-threelakes.org>

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

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