

# Faith Matters

January 2015

## It's Epiphany!!

Yeah, I know, big deal right?

What's up with Epiphany? It's like the step-child of church seasons. Let's just skip to Lent, already! And what little we actually remember when it comes to Epiphany- the three kings- we get wrong anyway! Try this little quiz:

1. How many kings came to see Jesus?
2. How many wise men, or magi, came to see Jesus?
3. The wise men saw Jesus in:
  - A manger
  - A house
  - A stable
  - A good mood



Well, if you gave any number for the first question, you were wrong. The wise men were not kings! That's a tradition that arose years after. More than likely, they were scientists, astronomers, who studied stars. As to the second question, if you gave the traditional answer, three, you also may be wrong. The truth is, the Bible never says! We get the number three from the number of gifts mentioned, but there may have been many more magi than three. Finally, despite the inclusion of three wise men in many of our Christmas nativity scenes, it is not very likely that the wise men showed up the night Jesus was born. In fact, Jesus may have been almost two years old! Matthew 2:11 describes the wise men finding Jesus in a house, so he was well beyond the feed trough days.

How'd you do? Have I shattered your already-low impression of Epiphany even further? Well let me rescue it!

Epiphany is a time to commemorate the manifestation of Jesus to the world. During Epiphany, we remember how Jesus was introduced to the world beyond that silent night. It starts with the star introducing the new king to the searching wise men. It continues with other revelations of Jesus, including his baptism, his first miracles, his first teachings, and his Transfiguration. These stories are filled with wonder and awe, and show us who Jesus is.

But even more than commemorating how Jesus was made manifest back in the first century, we believe Jesus continues to manifest himself to us today.

He is made manifest in the simple yet powerful words of forgiveness.  
He is made manifest in the proclamation of the Gospel.  
He shows up in the least of these.  
He comes to us in the bread and the wine.  
He's here.  
For you.

Come, let us adore him.  
Start your year off with an Epiphany.

See you in Church,  
Pastor Dave



## Pastor's Page

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

### SUN. JAN. 4

9:15 a.m. New Digging  
Deeper classes begin

### SUN. JAN. 11

2:00 - 4:00 PM Faith Family  
Fun Event at Hutchinson  
Middle School Pool

### WED. FEB. 4

5:30 High School Trip to  
Powder Ridge for Tubing

### SUN. JAN. 28

*12:00 noon Annual Meeting*  
Lunch served at 11 a.m. by  
*Random Act of Kindness*  
*Crew*

### THURS. JAN. 29

12:00 noon Seniors Potluck

### SUN. FEB. 1

9:15 a.m. 6th Grade 1st  
Communion Classes begin

### WED. FEB. 4

Middle School Trip to  
Powder Ridge

# Why Give? A Reflection on Biblical Stewardship

Everyone knows that churches like Faith Lutheran depend on the offerings people give to pay their staff and provide the necessary resources for ministry. Because of that, it is widely thought that the chief reason to give is to pay the church's bills—and there is no denying that there are bills to pay.

But in many places, the Bible offers different, deeper reasons to give. One of them is that giving is an important *spiritual discipline*. Each offering we make reminds us that everything we have and are is first given to us by God. Giving also reminds us that money is a tool God gives us to provide for ourselves and others—but it is not a god to be served or worshiped. In that sense, giving is also joyful, because it turns our hearts and minds back to God and His record of steadfastly providing all we need for life and health.

Please give as God blesses you. Faith needs your offerings to do its work. But that is not the only, or even the best reason to give. Embrace it also as a joyful spiritual discipline that can draw you into deeper dependence on God and awareness of his generosity to you.



## Imagine Capital Campaign

Since Celebration Sunday on November 23, 2014, pledges to the Imagine Capital Campaign have continued to arrive and the total pledged is now over \$750,000! **Thank You** to everyone who has committed support to this next important stage in paying for the new building addition. The three-year term for the Imagine Capital Campaign officially begins on January 1, 2015, although the church has already received initial offerings and other gifts toward it. If you have not yet added your support, please join in, as God blesses you to do so.

## Faith Lutheran Church Women

The FLCW will be serving the Community Meal on Sunday, January 4, 2015 from 4-6 p.m. Talk to Bobbi Knudson (587-2227) if you are willing to help, donate money, or bring bars or leftover Christmas Cookies.

The Annual Rummage Sale will be coming up the week after Easter, April 16-18. So start setting aside items as you find them.

## Faith Lutheran Church INFORMATION & STAFF DIRECTORY

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### Pastors

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## Who Would Have Thought?

### A Story of Amazing Witness

Who would have thought that a covenant partnership begun last January could have come this far? Eleven representatives of the little Augustana District went to Hawassa, Ethiopia, to form a partnership with the Tabor Congregation of the Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. Moved by the powerful experience of witnessing the spiritual depth and commitment of this one congregation's Spirit-moved witness to Jesus Christ, these representatives returned and have been telling the story.

Now twelve months later nearly \$100,000 dollars has been given by congregations and individuals of the Augustana District to extend these people's brave, sacrificial witness. Thirty-nine evangelists are supported, numerous worship centers are being built, motorcycles and bicycles are making the work of evangelists easier, and farmers are being assisted in being better providers for their families.

It is a wonderful story. Faith Lutheran Church will have given \$5,000 to this effort in 2014. It also is providing leadership of this partnership by funding Pastor Paul's position, a significant portion of which helps coordinate this District initiative.

Our Lord said: "You will be my witnesses..."(Acts 1:8). Indeed we are. Thanks be to God.



## **Ethiopia**

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# **Digging Deeper**

Short-term studies are offered on Sunday mornings throughout the year.  
Dig deeper at Faith Lutheran with these new classes, beginning January 4, 2015

### ***Giving God His Due: Malachi's Conversation with God, Judah and Us.***

Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament, challenges the people of Judah to trust and obey God. Listen in on this conversation between God and the people of Judah to see how Malachi addresses that same call to us.

### ***"I love to tell the story- I just don't know how!"***

The Apostle Paul, in Romans 10 asks how people can believe if they haven't heard the good news. The problem is, how can they hear the good news if we don't know how to share it with them? This class is going to examine how we tell the old, old story while sharing our story with people. Taking into account our Lutheran understanding of how God works in our lives, what does our story of faith look like?

***Marriage Care: "Your Time-Starved Marriage"*** We are all busy these days and because of this busyness, our relationships sometimes suffer. This DVD series is presented by relationship experts Drs. Les & Leslie Parrott and will present ways to help us better manage our time and maximize the moments we have together.

# stump the pastor

*Q: Since God forgives our sins for Jesus' sake, does it really matter what we do or how we live?*

**A:** This question was already being asked in the New Testament church. In Romans 6:1, Paul asks, "What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?" There is a certain logic there: we like to sin, God likes to forgive, so we can keep each other very happy, right?!

But Paul answers his own question, "By no means!" In Greek, it is the equivalent of saying, "Don't even think about it!" But the reason he is so appalled at the idea is a matter not of *obedience*, but of *identity*. Paul goes on, "How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized into his death ...so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life?"

Being baptized into Christ, the question is no longer "What do I have to do?" nor "What can I get away with?" The question instead is, "Now that I am a new creature in Christ, what do I want to do?" What thoughts and actions reflect the love of Christ and what would betray His will for me and for the world, instead?

Looking back on their childhood, many adults will admit that they feared disappointing their parents more than they feared their anger or punishment. That is the same motivation for striving to obey God's will. His grace and love for us do not depend on what we do—they are as freely given as parents' love for their children. But, being so graciously loved, why would we think, speak or act in ways that we know would disappoint Christ or defy his will? By God's free choosing, we *are* His children, so our call—in fact, our very nature—is to live out that identity in joyful obedience to our heavenly Father and Christ, our brother.

## SENIORS SCENE

Wow! Here we are...in 2015. A new year. They just keep on coming, don't they? God is always giving us newness---a new day, a new month, even a new life. With the forgiveness God gives us through Jesus we have another shot at living righteously. That is, seeking to know His love, His call to serve, His challenges to feed on His Word, His joy with us when we help someone in His Name, and a daily repentance away from the sin that always presents itself from within. And, of course, new opportunities to meet up with His fellow disciples at worship and many other activities believers share.

One of those opportunities is Seniors' Potluck meetings. We have so much to share (besides the food). There is a bonding energy going on. We share common interests, concerns, faith, and topics.

One topic that comes up in conversation frequently is "scams." They come by telephone, mail and computer. One simply has to be alert, and know the ropes of one who wants to cheat us. We'll have another opportunity to learn about that from our local police chief, Dan Hatten. Dan has expressed concern for us regarding scams in several venues. He has repeatedly led small group discussions on scams at our annual McLeod County Seniors Expos. But there is so much more he can share, and so many more new scams happening. We are sure to be filled in on the latest, as well as reminded of the old ways scammers set their traps.

Don't miss that meeting: Seniors Potluck meeting, **Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>**, beginning with potluck dinner at **12:00 noon**. When you come, be careful of ice and packed snow under foot. We want NO accidents...none!! Invite a friend. I think we might have a special surprise that day too. Maybe.

See you there!!! And God bless your New Year. Truly a gift from our God.

# Thoughts and Prayers

**Please remember all those who are serving our country through active duty:**

Sgt. Jason Gaulke (El Paso, TX - nephew of Alice Fransen)

Andrew Hantge (Navy, Virginia Beach, VA - son of Marsha Schmit and Robert Hantge)

Lee Johnson (Fort Bragg, NC - son of Geri & Ralph Johnson)

Sgt. Tyler Lauer (Fort Hood, TX- son of Brian & Cyndi Lauer)

Justin Olsen (Behring, Kuwait - son of Sharon Grivna and Jerry Olsen)

SFC Guy Sing (Korea - nephew of Tony Sing & cousin of Darlene Karg)

Col. Rob Skaar ( Duluth Air National Guard) son of Dave & Marian Skaar

## **Faith Lutheran Church**

### **2015 Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, January 25th**

***The Random Acts  
of Kindness Crew***

**will be serving lunch after  
the 10:10 service and  
the meeting will start  
at 12:00 Noon.**

**See YOU there!**

**Remember our Faith  
members in Nursing  
Homes & Health Care  
Centers**

#### **Cedar Crest— Silver Lake**

Nadine Dalin

#### **Lakeside (Dassel)**

Dorothy Getz

#### **Harmony River**

Valerie Fimon

Millie Blake

Clarence Kulberg

Charlie & Harriet Thor

Joanne Olesen

Otto Streseman

#### **Prairie Senior Cottages**

Delores Saar

#### **Prairie View (Hector)**

Jerome Lindquist

#### **Woodstone**

Deloris Askew

Betty Garberich

Eleanor Lack

Ruth McKay

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OUR MISSION IS:

## BUILDING FAITH

*"EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, FOR BUILDING UP  
THE BODY OF CHRIST"*

*EPHESIANS 4:12*

TO LIVE OUT THAT MISSION, GOD CALLS US TO:

**F**OLLOW JESUS

**A**NNOUNCE THE GOSPEL

**I**NVITE ALL PEOPLE

**T**EACH CHRISTIAN TRUTH

**H**ELP ALL WHO ARE IN NEED