

# Faith Matters

December 2015

## Pastor's Page

### Setting the Stage

On Sunday, November 29, the church calendar turns over a new year and begins again with the First Sunday in Advent. Advent is a four-week season meant to prepare our hearts and minds to celebrate the Incarnation, God's Son taking on human flesh in the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Advent looks backward and forward—backward to the prophets of Israel who foretold the coming of the Savior and forward to Christ's reappearing in glory at the Last Day.

There is, however, another more direct "getting ready" story for Christmas that for some reason gets very little attention. The first chapter of Luke is a long account that lays the groundwork for the beloved Christmas Gospel in chapter 2. The lectionary usually appoints just one section of Luke 1 to be read during Advent, which leaves out a whole lot of what Luke wanted his readers to know.

This year, we are going to honor Luke's intent by reading all of chapter 1 during Advent. Under the theme *Setting the Stage*, we have divided Luke 1 into four parts for each of the four Sundays in Advent. As we prepare for Christmas, we will hear everything Luke wanted us to hear in order to be ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

While we are *Setting the Stage* for the Christmas drama on Sundays during Advent, we will also enact the drama itself on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

The service on December 2 will feature a readers' theater called "Who's the New Guy?"

On December 9, we are privileged to have Pastor Jonathan Swenson present his one-man Christmas drama "Celebrate the Child." (He will present two other times that same day.)

On December 16, our youngest Sunday School children will present their Christmas program.

Advent will also feature special fellowship meals, Christmas caroling, a Faith Family Fun event and other opportunities to prepare for the great celebration of our Savior's birth at Christmas. Please note the schedule and details of all these events elsewhere in this newsletter and join in as many as you can, as we are *Setting the Stage* for Christmas here at Faith Lutheran.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Scott

## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

### AT FAITH LUTHERAN

#### WED. DEC. 2

5:00 p.m. Chili/Soup "Cook-Off"

6:30 p.m. Advent Service

(Readers Theater)

#### WED. DEC. 9

5:00 "Lutran" Supper

6:30 p.m. Advent Service

(Paraphrase Theatre)

#### SUN. DEC. 13

4:00 p.m. Faith Family Fun ~

Parents' Night Out

4:00 p.m. Caroling to shut-ins

followed by a meal at Faith

#### WED. DEC. 16

6:30 p.m. Advent Service / PreK-

1st Grade Christmas Program

#### SUN. DEC. 20

10:10 a.m. 2nd-6th Grade

Christmas Program in

Sanctuary

#### THUR. DEC. 24

2:00 p.m. Family Worship

Service

4:00 p.m. Worship Services (in

both the Sanctuary *and*

Foundation)

6:00 p.m. Worship Service

11:00 p.m. Worship Service with

Holy Communion

#### FRI. DEC. 25

10:00am Worship Service with

Holy Communion

#### SUN. DEC. 27

8:00 a.m. First Word

*NO Sunday School or Digging*

*Deeper*

10:10 a.m. Combined Sanctuary

& Foundation Service with

Holy Communion



# Advent and Christmas Events



## Wednesday, December 2

- 5:00 p.m. Soup / Chili Cook Off (Call Wendy at 320-587-2093 or stop by the office to sign up to enter your favorite soup or chili)
- 6:30 p.m. Advent Service ~ Readers Theater "Who's the New Guy?"

## Wednesday, December 9

- 12:00 p.m. Senior Potluck and Presentation of "Celebrate the Child"
- 5:00 p.m. A Good Old Fashioned "Lutran" Supper
- 6:30 p.m. Advent Service "Celebrate the Child"
- 8:00 p.m. Presentation to FLY "The Witnesses" by Jonathan Swenson  
*(All presentations are open to the public)*

## Sunday, December 13

### 4:00 p.m. Faith Family Fun / Parents' Night Out

Children ages 3 years old—5th grade are invited to come hang out for some special holiday fun while parents go shopping or enjoy some holiday quiet. Children should bring a packed supper. Space is limited, so please sign-up soon.

4:00 p.m. Christmas Caroling to Shut-ins followed by Supper at Faith Lutheran Church

## Wednesday, December 16

- 6:30 p.m. Advent Service "Simply Christmas"
- 3 year olds - 1st Graders will share with us a magical Christmas story.



## Sunday, December 20

- 10:10 a.m. Sanctuary Service a presentation of "Christmas Perspective of an Artist"
- A play by 2nd - 6th grade students.

# 2015 Christmas Worship Services

## Christmas Eve

*Thursday, December 24*

2:00 p.m. Family Service

4:00 p.m. Worship Services

*Two 4 p.m. services will occur simultaneously again this year: one in the Sanctuary, and one in the Foundation.*

6:00 p.m. Worship Service

11:00 p.m. Worship with Holy Communion

## Christmas Day

*Friday, December 25*

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

Word at Work  
Courses:



*Would you like to be part of a "Live Studio Audience"?*

Pr. Scott will be recording classes on the Small Catechism and you are invited to come refresh your knowledge of this foundational document of Lutheran theology. Classes will be from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Nov. 29, 30, Dec. 1, 6, 7 & 8. There is no charge and no need to register. He will be looking at The Apostles' Creed, The Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Please come for any or all of them.



**Imagine Capital Campaign:** Earlier this year, Faith Lutheran was able to make an *extra* \$300,000 principal payment on our new building, in addition to the regular monthly payment. There was some concern that such a large extra payment could leave too small a cushion in our Imagine savings account if ongoing gifts fell short.

In the time since, the exact opposite has happened! The Imagine savings account has grown, even as the church continues to pay an extra \$5,000 in principal every month. The mortgage balance drops by more than \$10,000 per month and, if the savings account continues to grow, we may be able to make another extra principal payment this year. In fact, if the church can make a significant extra payment every year, the mortgage could be paid off by the time of Faith’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2020!

**Thank you** for your generous, faithful support of the wonderful new building. As the year ends, consider making an extra gift to the Imagine capital campaign, if you are able. Let’s keep driving toward that 2020 goal as faithful managers of this tremendous resource God has entrusted to us.

**Why Give? A Reflection on Biblical Stewardship:** Throughout this year, this little column has explored various aspects of Biblical stewardship to answer the question, “Why give?” As the theme draws to a close this month, the final answer to the question has to be, “Because you *want* to give.” Giving is a spiritual discipline and is an important way to keep our trust centered in God. It is essential for the church’s ministry to happen and a fitting response to God’s generosity. But in the end, giving only becomes natural, joyful and gratifying when we are so captivated by God’s boundless grace and so passionate about proclaiming Jesus’ saving love that we *want* to give ourselves, our time and our possessions to support the work of Christ and his kingdom.

That is what Paul means in II Corinthians 9:7, where he writes, “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” The Greek word translated as “cheerful” is actually *hilaron*, the root of our word hilarious. “God loves a hilarious giver.” Imagine that—finding regular, sacrificial, off-the-top giving to be hilarious, joyful, cheerful, just the best thing ever! Seem impossible? With the God we know in Jesus Christ, “all things are possible!” (Mark 10:27)

### Monthly Financial Update

	Actual YTD 10/23/2015	Budget 2015	Budget Remaining	2014-2015 2014	Difference
General Fund Income	583,356.77	762,219.00	178,862.23	578,525.49	4,831.28
General Fund Expenses	634,727.42	762,219.00	127,491.58	596,388.35	38,339.07
General Fund Net Income/Loss	(51,370.65)			(17,862.86)	(33,507.79)

Average weekly giving needed to reach budget      \$14,658.06  
 Average monthly giving needed to reach budget      \$63,518.25

	2015	2014	
Property	102,587.93	94,268.07	8,319.86
Personnel	420,324.63	403,638.05	16,686.58
			25,006.44

**Thrivent Members** - Thank you for your participation in the Thrivent Choice Program. As of October 23, 2015, your choice dollars for 2015 have amounted to \$7,072.00. In addition, \$250 Action Grants have been used for the Easter Breakfast, the April and June Community Meals, and the fall campfire. To designate your dollars for 2015, call 1-800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice Dollars". Thank you for your support.

### Recycling Program

For those of you who have noticed and more importantly used our blue cardboard recycling container over the past three months, thank you. Each quarter we receive a check from McLeod County Solid Waste. We received our first check in the amount of \$127.35. This money will be used for various mission projects as needed.



# Faith Lutheran Church Women

All women of Faith Lutheran are invited to the Faith Center on Sunday, December 6 at 11:30 a.m. for a cup of hot cider and Christmas cookies. This brief Christmas meeting will include dispersing funds at the end of the year and election of officers.

We still need 2-3 people to share the position of Funeral Liaison for a 3-4 month period, with approximately 12-19 funerals a year. This would mean each person would supervise 3-5 funerals. Prayerfully consider this important ministry. Contact Bobbi Knudson (587-2227) if you are willing to work with Darlene Larson to see what is involved.

Our ice machine is now being serviced twice, a year so we hope there will be no more problems.

The rummage sale will be April 7,8 and 9, so start setting aside items as you find them.



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**Did you know . . .** that Diane Ferguson and Dorothy Desens have been working on several projects using donated materials from the Hutchinson Hospital, furniture stores, and parishioners, among others? The creative juices have been flowing through these ladies and together they have gotten many, many people involved in donating and making:

**Baby Blankets** – made with used pieces of blankets donated by Hutchinson Health and purchased pieces of flannel and polar fleece. These are given to Common Cup, the Food Shelf, McLeod Alliance, Global Health and various homeless shelters

**Upholstery quilts/floor coverings** – made with new fabric samples donated by furniture stores for Lutheran World Relief, the Orphan Grain Train and Global Health

**Seat protectors for wheelchairs, chairs, sofas and beds** for the DVA, VA Hospital and Memory Care Units, made from vinyl donated by Hutchinson Health and flannel donated by the FLCW

**Pillow Case Dresses** – made from donated gently used pillow cases, lace for trim, pieces of fabric for pockets and sleeves and pieces of elastic (all of which is donated)



What wonderful ways to recycle what otherwise would be filling our landfills!  
Thank you to all who have helped with these projects for those in need!

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## Save these Important 2016 Dates:



- ⇒ The Faith Lutheran Church Annual Meeting will be held at noon on January 31, a light lunch will be served from 11:15-12
- ⇒ Sixth Grade First Communion Class will begin on January 24 during the Sunday School Hour. Watch for more information to follow
- ⇒ First Communion will be celebrated on Maundy Thursday, March 24 (Note that this is during spring break so please plan accordingly)

**Matthew 25:40** And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me.'



Community Meal  
Sunday,  
December 6  
4-6 pm

[Hutchinson](#)

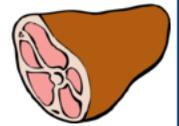
105 Second Avenue SW Suite #2  
Hutchinson, MN 55350

[Glencoe](#)

925 13th Street East  
Glencoe, MN 55336

**Laundry Love Ministry** takes place the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. at the Maytag Laundromat located at 1025 Hwy 7. You bring the dirty clothes, we'll bring the quarters.

Time to start planning your **Christmas meal**, so why not get it through [Fare for All](#). For **\$30** you will get a ham and most of the fixings for a full meal, including dessert. December distribution takes place on **Thursday, December 17th**, at the CCM Office between **4:30 and 5:30 p.m.** Place your order by **Friday, December 11th** at the CCM office. **Merry Christmas!**



HungerFree McLeod's **Backpack Program** provides weekend food for students on the free/reduced program in McLeod County schools. It currently serves around 200 children in grades K-3. The cost is approximately \$5.00 per child per week or \$1,000 each weekend during the school year. If you or a group you know would like to spend a few hours packing bags, call the CCM office and sign up.

**Provision of Personal Products or PoPP** is a program started to provide personal care products to students in grades 5-12.

## SENIORS SCENE

WOW!! Here we are at the last month of the year. Didn't we just put up a new calendar, with 12 pages to turn?

December is full of activity and interests. Christmas is by far the most central of attention and activity. My, how many memories we have of Christmases past! We tend to sentimentalize the season's recollections of the simple ways we used to celebrate, with family and worship and programs and carols. Gifts too, though perhaps much more simple, even hand made; given with much love and warmth.

No need to live in the past, though. I love ways people extend good "**Christ**"mas wishes from the heart. God has not changed. His gift of His Son, Jesus, is timeless. His saving love through Jesus will never grow old. That spirit can weave its way into all our activities, greetings and celebrations.

How evident that will be in our final Seniors Potluck meeting on **Wednesday** (NOT Thursday), **December 9<sup>th</sup>**, at 12:00 noon. At 1:00pm, the "unusual" begins. "***Celebrate The Child,***" a theatrical Christmas presentation by **Jonathan Swenson** takes place. Jonathan is a Lutheran pastor blessed with professional acting talent. He uses that "gift" of acting to bear witness to Jesus, as Savior and Lord. He will use a live baby in the production. We'll sing Christmas carols in between scenes that bring characters to life by his acting. You will be so engrossed, you won't want it to end.

You'll also want friends to join you. They can join us for the potluck dinner, OR, they can come just before 1:00pm for the production. They are welcome either way-first come, first served on space available.

If you, or they, can't make it at noon, the same program will take place in the sanctuary as an Advent worship service. You can come for that even if you saw it at noon. The whole community is invited to that service, so come early.

You will marvel at Pastor Swenson's acting ability and the way he lives into the characters he portrays. But even more, you will thrill to the way he brings the real Christmas front and center in your minds and hearts.

As your pen says, "See you at SENIORS POTLUCK." Oh yes,...and Merry Christmas!









## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD Thank You!!

Working together to provide a Christmas in the Name of Jesus to children all over the world we put together over 125 boxes. They have been packed and shipped to the warehouse in the Twin Cities. We are especially thankful to all who brought boxes, packing items and shipping money donations. We are thankful also for all who volunteered to help with the fun of packing those boxes. Our Release Time students provided enough excitement and energy that, together with adult volunteers, we packed 75 boxes.

On Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>, our Seniors Potluck group packed another over 50 boxes. St. Matthews, Fernando, joined us in these efforts, contributing completed boxes and shipping funds. We appreciated that special partnership! Thrivent Financial was a big part of the action, with Patsy Amundson seeking a \$500.00 Thrivent donation and buying up many packing items. A special thanks to Patsy and Thrivent!

You can see pictures of the packing action on Facebook and on Faith Lutheran's web site. To all of you who participated in any way....a hearty thanks!!



### What Difference Will Ending Strong Mean for Mission Partners

- ◆ Hurting people in Hutchinson and the surrounding area will come to Common Cup Ministries and have real needs met.
- ◆ Faith will continue to lead in youth ministries reaching out through Youth for Christ, in addition to our congregation's own strong work with the next generation of believers.
- ◆ Students in the campus ministry led by Pastor Dave Christensen at SMSU in Marshall will grow in faith.
- ◆ We will continue to lead in partnering with the Tabor Congregation in Ethiopia as they send out 50 evangelists, construct churches, work with poor farmers and much more.
- ◆ We will see the 40 students at the Bible School in India led by Pastor K.K. Alavi sustained in their training for witness.
- ◆ In Madagascar, evangelists will go out, prisoners will be fed, and arid land will have simple drip irrigation available to allow food to be raised.
- ◆ Many more partners could be noted with the many people they serve.

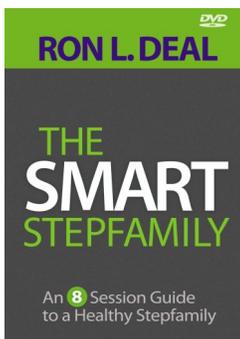
**\*(25% of our mission budget, approximately \$17,500 needs to be received during December so that our historic leadership in mission partnerships can continue.)**

# Two Continuing Digging Deeper Classes and one new class this month ~ Sundays at 9:15 a.m.

## Christianity's Most Wanted

*A History of Heretics*

From Marcion to Pelagius to modern day false teachers, this class will examine the sometimes well-intentioned -- but nevertheless in the wrong -- heretics from the history of the church. We will look at the heretics' false teaching, how the church responded, and the vestiges of that heresy in modern-day theology. This class will be fun and interesting, but will also cause you to examine and define your own beliefs in the face of heresy. Meeting in the Faith Center.



### The SMART StepFamily DVD Series

Discover the key steps to building a healthy stepfamily with stepfamily expert Ron. L Deal. Through eight engaging sessions, you'll learn useable solutions for everyday living and glean valuable insight and practical tips for raising your stepfamily the smart-not hard-way. 1) STEP Up to Discover a Redemptive God 2) STEP Down Your Expectations 3) STEP Through the Wilderness Wanderings 4) Two-STEP Your Marriage 5) Side-STEP Common Pitfalls 6) STEP in Line With the Parenting Team 7) STEP Over Into the Promised Land. Meeting in the Office Conference Room.

### Grief During the Holidays! (4 Week Class from Nov. 29 - Dec. 20)

How is the Christmas season different when a loved one has died? How can I sing "Joy to the World" when I'm grieving? Expect to gain insights and hear some tips that just might help. Meeting in the 3rd floor Conference Room.



*Q: Are all the acts of terror and other tribulations happening now the apocalyptic events foretold in the Bible (e.g., Mark 13 and the book of Revelation)? Are these the last days?*

**A:** As with so many other questions about the future God has promised, the answer to these questions is Yes and No. Yes, the current state of the world clearly reflects Jesus' warning that there would be "wars and rumors of wars, ... nation will rise up against nation, ... there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines." (Mark 13:7-8) With Christians of every time, we pray "Lord Jesus, come!" and long for the day when he will defeat all his enemies.

The problem is that any other era in history—practically any given year in history—has had all the same signs of the end, but the end has not yet come. So, the answer is also No, we cannot say that the troubles of our day mean for certain that the Last Day is at hand. Jesus also warned us of this. "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matthew 24:36) God the Father simply has not revealed a timetable for creation, neither clearly nor in code, neither in the Bible nor anywhere else.

The apocalyptic events in the Bible do not apply only to a certain time, but to all times. They testify in every age that this world, although created good by God, has been broken by sin. They remind us not to seek security in anything within creation, but only in God who made and is redeeming it. They point us away from every earthly authority to Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Lord, the King of kings, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given.

With our hope secured in Christ, we can face the tribulations or challenges around us, knowing that nothing can threaten his Lordship and that he has promised that nothing in all creation can separate us from his love. (Romans 8:39) To have such certainty, come what may, is the very definition of "the peace which surpasses all understanding (that) will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7)

# 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)  
 Sgt. Tyler Lauer (Fort Hood, TX- son of Brian & Cyndi Lauer)  
 SFC Guy Sing (Korea - nephew of Tony Sing & cousin of Darlene Karg)  
 Col. Rob Skaar (Duluth Air National Guard) son of Dave & Marian Skaar  
 LTJG Brett Stadslev (Navy, Norfolk, VA - son-in-law of Judy and Tom Felber)

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

### Birchwood

Doris Strand

### Cedar Crest – Cosmos

Pat Fimon  
Patricia Lambert

### Cedar Crest – Silver Lake

Nadine Dalin

### Cokato Manor

Patricia Paulson

### Dassel Lakeside

Doris Betker  
Joanne Thomas

### Glencoe Nursing Home

Kathryn Wendlandt

### Harmony River

Millie Blake  
Valerie Fimon  
Ruth Hackbarth  
Dave & Betty Jensen  
Clarence Kulberg  
Joanne Olesen  
Otto Streseman  
Charlie & Harriet Thor

### Prairie Senior Cottages

Delores Saar

### Prairie View (Hector)

Jerome Lindquist

### Westwood (Watertown)

Eleanor Lack

### Woodstone

Deloris Askew  
Dorothy Christensen  
Betty Garberich  
Ruth McKay  
Lucille Yukel

## Faith Lutheran Church

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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