

# Faith Matters - August 2020

## 150

### THE LIFE OF FAITH

Past Present Future

1870-2020

#### Pastor's Page



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Many years ago, the pastor with whom I then worked preached a sermon that reflected on the turmoil that was occurring in the world at the time. I recall that it was riveting as he preached it and several people asked him for copies of it afterward, but I confess that, by now, about all I remember of that sermon is a kind of refrain he repeated over and over. "Everything nailed down is a-comin' loose."

That may well have been the case then, but I can't imagine that it held a candle to what is happening in our country today. It is not only that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spike in some areas and restrict life for all of us. It is not only that protests continue in many places and riots keep scarring too many cities. It is not only that government and politics seem more fractured and ineffective than ever. All of that might be enough for it to seem like "everything nailed down is a-comin' loose."

Worse yet, though, is how deeply, almost irreconcilably divided the American people have become over so many issues. Questions about how threatening the pandemic actually is or how to respond to it most effectively are cast as moral tests. The effort to admit flaws in American history has widened into a rejection of our entire heritage as hopelessly tainted by

racism and injustice. Egregious incidents of police misconduct have led to defunding entire police departments, even as urban violence soars, catching children in the crossfire. Reasoned discussion of public policy issues often gives way to vitriolic personal attacks, while "cancel culture" wipes out careers and reputations over statements that would not have raised an eyebrow just a few years ago. It does seem as if "everything nailed down is a-comin' loose."

In the midst of such a troubling situation, Christian, and specifically Lutheran, theology offers some vital truths that help to analyze what is at stake and to respond in productive, edifying ways. Here are some key convictions that can shed light on this cultural moment:

- The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms reminds us that God rules over the *whole* world. He works salvation directly through the Church, but rules indirectly over all of society. God has a huge stake in the state of the world. Christians know that there is no such thing as a secular realm. God is invested in every inch of creation, so we are right to be concerned about all of it.

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- The Doctrine of Vocation reminds us that God calls us to serve in a variety of callings, one of which is that of citizen. In a representative republic like the United States, that vocation is especially important. The Church itself must not be co-opted by politics, but Christians are sent into the world to pursue God's will, serve civil society, and love their neighbors.
- Yet, the Gospel also reminds us that political and cultural matters do not have *ultimate* value, because one day there will be "a new heaven and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth (will) pass away." (Revelation 21:1) This world is broken by sin and waits "in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) What we see is not all we get, so we do not need to—indeed we dare not!—treat worldly matters as if they have salvific importance.
- Jesus' commandments that we are to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44) and to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34) forbid us and free us from engaging in personal attacks instead of reasoned discourse. We can set an example by only discussing issues, not attacking speakers.
- The fact that our future is assured in Christ opens us up to engage positions and convictions with which we personally disagree, while neither surrendering our convictions nor insisting that everyone agree uniformly. Rather than retreat in silence, we can argue vigorously, but never viciously. We do not treat politics or culture like religion, but rather address political issues in the context of faith, knowing that Christ alone is Lord over heaven and earth.

I know from my own concerns that these Biblical and theological truths do not automatically relieve our fear that "everything nailed down is a-comin' loose." They do, however, surround those fears with the everlasting promises of God and give us courage to address whatever problems confront us with the ringing conviction that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39)

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Scott

### Changing the Giving Pattern

One Sunday last month, we announced that, as of June 30, Faith Lutheran had received more in offerings this year than it had spent. That is an astounding blessing, almost miraculous in light of the pandemic, and it is dramatically different from previous years. In 2019, the General Fund was about \$50,000.00 in the red by the end of June. Thank you and thank God for such rich blessing in this time!

Shortly after that, however, I heard from a church member who was told by a friend, "I hear your church has plenty of money." That wasn't incorrect, I suppose, but it certainly wasn't the point, either! First, offering income is *just barely* above expenses so far, so the church is hardly rolling in money. Secondly, this blessed situation is so much healthier than what we have seen in the past. This should be how it normally is. Most of all, though, this tremendous good news should inspire continued generous

giving, not provide a reason to scale back or become complacent.

At the end of last year, we expressed the hope of changing the pattern of giving at Faith in order to avoid huge operating deficits and the need for desperate year-end giving appeals. That is where the title of these stewardship notes originated. How amazing that, at least through June, the pattern has changed! Please join in praying that the congregation has turned a corner in its understanding and practice of stewardship, and that God will keep blessing this ministry so abundantly with the resources it needs.





*Q: Did Faith Lutheran Church ever experience something like the Covid-19 pandemic before?*

A: Historically, we know that the congregation has endured a number of similar crises. The closest experience to this pandemic was likely the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918-1920. The church was full of children who were especially vulnerable to the polio outbreaks after World War II. Hutchinson newspapers reported occasional clusters of communicable diseases like cholera, scarlet fever or measles. Beyond threats to health, Faith also lived through both world wars and several other smaller conflicts. It survived the Great Depression in the 1930's along with other economic downturns. There has been no shortage of difficult times in the last 150 years.

In Faith's own congregational histories, however, there is no mention of these or any other similar crises. It is impossible to draw conclusions from what is *not* stated for the record, but there could be several reasons why those disturbing events were not included. Most likely, they were seen as beyond the scope of the church's history. Or it could be that their effect on society at large had little impact on the church's internal life. It might also be that disease and disaster were so common in the past that they did not seem to warrant special mention.

In any case, if there were other occasions when the church had to cancel worship for a length of time or people were encouraged not to leave their homes, they are not named in the church's official history. Could it be that one day Covid-19 will also appear as a blip on the historical radar? It seems hard to imagine now, but the passage of time can place many events in a different and more measured perspective.



**Faith at the Lake**

*Sunday, August 9, from 3 - 6 p.m.*

- ◆ 3 - 5 p.m. A variety of activities for all ages
- ◆ 4 p.m. Corn Hole Tournament begins (You will be able to signup in advance at church so brackets can be set.)
- ◆ 5 p.m. Dinner begins - bring your own dinner and beverage
- ◆ Other activities include: tie dye (Bring your own shirt to tie dye), swimming, frisbee, sponge and water bucket relays

**Caregiver Support Group**

This group is meeting again on the last Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. in the Faith Center. If you are stressed out from caring for a family member, please join us. Newcomers are welcome! This may be your opportunity for relief, healing and renewal. You can contact Pastor Paulus Pilgrim or Marsha Schmit for more information by calling 320-587-2093.





**Confirmation**

Did you know that you can view pictures of Faith Lutheran confirmation classes dating back to 1903? These photos are found in the stairwell leading from the youth space into the back narthex area.

To the left is a picture of the class of 1967. Do you recognize anyone? Watch your church bulletin next week for a list of names to see if you are correct.



Hello Faith Lutheran!

I only have one thing to say...OUTDOOR WORSHIP SET UP. Every year we experience the same problem. Not enough people to help set up. I'm not entirely sure why this issue has developed, and perhaps the COVID 19 pandemic has added to the lack of response, but we cannot do the outdoor worship service without ample help to get the service set up. So here are the four steps if you have an interest in coming out.

1. Email me at [wiljh@faithlc.com](mailto:wiljh@faithlc.com). We can work together to find a Sunday that works best for you.
2. Show up at 8:30 AM. It will take you a maximum of 15 minutes to move all the necessary equipment and then you are done! The items like speakers and wires are reasonably easy to move, and you will have a volunteer who runs sound regularly to guide you.
3. Do what you want! You will have an hour or so before the service starts, so get coffee somewhere or claim your spot in the park!
4. Put everything away once the service is over! We have a diagram of where to put everything, but if you feel unsure as to where to place an item, you can just stick it outside the trailer and I'll take care of it. We have gotten this done in as little as 10 minutes! Maybe with your help we can break that record!

On another note, after working for a full and wonderful two years at Faith Lutheran, I have decided to end my employment with Faith and move back to Texas to spend more time with my immediate family. COVID-19 has largely changed the priorities of everyone, including me, and I feel as though being closer in proximity to my family during these uncertain times bodes best for me right now. My final day at Faith will be Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. Let me know if you want to chat with me before I go and PLEASE SIGN UP TO HELP WITH OUTDOOR WORSHIP.

Blessings,  
Will



## **Faith Lutheran Anniversary Apparel is Back**

*You asked for it so we are excited to announce that we have re-opened the Faith Apparel Store!*

The store is open through August 10 and you can find the link on our website [faithlc.com](http://faithlc.com) on the anniversary page. You can also stop in the office for help with an order.



### **There are a couple of changes to note:**

**Caps:** These will not be available online at this time but *we do have some available in the office so you can stop in and pick one up.*

**Masks:** Due to the ongoing pandemic we have had reusable FLC masks added as an option.

*There are a select number of anniversary t-shirts in the office if you would like one without the wait.*



## **Blessing Box Sunday**

The Blessing Box has been a real gift to a number of people since we put it up. Thank you to those of you who regularly put items in the box. Even with all of your gifts, it is still hard to keep items in the box. On Sunday, August 16, we are holding a Blessing Box Sunday. You are invited to bring food to worship to help stock the box. Items are kept in the office and taken out to the box as needed.

## **Martin Luther on Trial**

The Fellowship for Performing Arts presents a Virtual Presentation on Sunday, August 2 from 3-6 p.m. This is a free virtual event and Faith Lutheran Church invites you to watch it from the Faith Center (space will be limited to the first 45) or you can watch it from home.

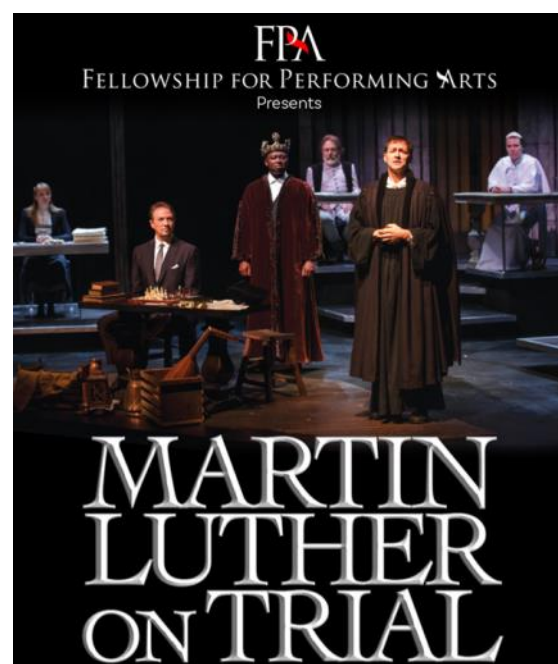
“A virtual presentation of this acclaimed production featuring the original cast erupts in an afterlife trial for the soul of Martin Luther...at Lucifer’s request.

“This fantastical courtroom drama features Hitler, Freud, Martin Luther King Jr. and Pope Francis as witnesses, a reenactment of Satan’s rebellion and his failed attempt to enlist Michael the Archangel!

“All this along with a thorough examination of Luther’s life and his loving relationship with Katie Von Bora. And did we mention how funny it is?

“No FPA production has generated more audience excitement than Martin Luther on Trial. Plus, a live talkback with Max McLean follows the event.”

To watch this production at Faith, call the office with the number attending in your party. To watch it from home, go online to [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com), in the search bar type “Martin Luther.” Click on the top event and follow the registration instructions from there.





**Seeing Beyond Nations to Where Troubles Arise  
Can Be Helpful in Our Mission Witness**  
*Reflections from Pastor Paul*

We have major mission partners in Ethiopia. Looking from the outside into this nation, we might falsely assume that it is simply one people, Ethiopians, but the truth is there are many tribes in this country along with dozens of languages spoken. Two major tribes dominate, the Amhara and Oromo tribes. Without going into the details, at present there is violent division within the country that has led to hundreds of deaths. It threatens to destabilize a country presently led by a Christian Prime Minister, who is seeking to bring greater unity and overcome past hostilities. Mix in powerful interests seeking to destabilize for self-interested benefits and you have a prescription for major trouble.

Caught in the middle are often Christians from both of these tribes and others also that make up the nearly nine million members of the Ethiopia Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. These fellow Christians covet our prayers and our support in face of this challenge and that of the pandemic.

We may thank God that our country does not face such violent divisions. Yet we know that, while we may not think we are a tribal people, we also are facing bitter strife that threatens our future. It also provides challenges to us Christians, who find ourselves often in bitter conflict even within families who see the future of our land very differently.

We also need humbly to cry out for our Lord's mercy and guidance that our divisions can be overcome. We pray that we will be instruments of healing through our witness to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.



Faith Lutheran  
Church Women

**Notes from the Faith Lutheran  
Church Women**

***Kitchen Cleaning Day:*** We are planning to clean the church kitchen on Tuesday, August 4, from 9 a.m. - noon (or whenever we get done). With all of the use that our kitchen gets, it occasionally needs a good deep cleaning. Many hands make light work, so if you have some free time that morning, we would love your help!

***The Rummage Sale*** was postponed in the spring with hopes of holding it this fall. The way that the pandemic is hanging on the FLCW board has decided to cancel the 2020 sale. The dates for 2021 have been tentatively set for April 22-24.



Facebook.com/  
FaithLutheranHutchinson

**RADIO BROADCAST**  
**KDUZ 1260 AM**  
**SUNDAYS 8 A.M.**

**TV BROADCAST**  
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# Please Remember in Prayer

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

- Braiden Bjorge (Marines - grandson of Sandy Curtiss)
- Mike Bjorge (Air Force, Qatar - son-in-law of Sandy Curtis)
- Corporal Colin Bos (Marines, Camp Pendleton, CA - son of Dawn Bos)
- Sgt. Jason Gaulke (El Paso, TX - nephew of Alice Fransen)
- Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Mason Rutledge (Navy, New Orleans, LA - son of Lenny & Patti Rutledge)
- Col. Rob Skaar (Minneapolis/St. Paul Air National Guard - son of Dave & Marian Skaar)
- LT Brett Stadskev (Navy, Corpus Christi, TX - son-in-law of Judy & Tom Felber)
- SPC Ryan Wersal (Army, Fort Meade, MD - son of Roger & Laurie Wersal)



Remember our Faith members in nursing homes & health care centers:

Bryant Homes - Maple Plain

Ardell Novotny

Cedar Crest - Silver Lake

Patricia Lambert  
Bernice Vorbeck  
Lucille Wehking

Harmony River

Margaret Alrick  
Betty Jensen  
Ruth Larson  
Karol Nolte  
Joanne Olesen  
Jean Pittman  
Doyle Thielman  
Harriet Thor

Meeker/Manor Litchfield

Harold (Swede) Sandgren

Oaks

Marcella Brede  
Beverly Kirchner  
Ellsworth & Delores Lorentzen

Pines

Mayonne Martin

Prairie Senior Cottages

Pat Fimon

Woodstone

Betty Garberich

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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

**Newsletter via  
USPS or E-mail?**

Would you like to receive your monthly Faith Matters newsletter via e-mail? It saves the church postage and printing costs, and you get to see it in color every month! You can request a change to e-mailed newsletters by sending an e-mail to [office@faithlc.com](mailto:office@faithlc.com) requesting the change.

An icon of a yellow envelope with a white newspaper sticking out of it. The newspaper has the word "NEWS" written in bold red letters on its front page.