

Faith Matters

February 2023

We love
BECAUSE
He first
LOVED US



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Pastors' Page

The last generation has seen an intentional and quite successful effort to privatize religious faith in order to isolate it from society. Christianity seems to be the object of a special effort to relegate it to what happens inside churches or homes and within the hearts and minds of believers. The idea that Christianity has a public role in society or any vital influence on the culture has been increasingly denied as irrational, oppressive or anti-intellectual.

The reduction of Christianity to a private hobby for those who are interested is troubling, of course, but it is also amusing, because that contention itself betrays serious ignorance about how much the values and achievements of Western civilization are built on a foundation of Christian convictions. I was recently reminded of that truth by, of all things, a movie review about a film set in a pre-Christian, pagan culture. According to the review, the plot was driven solely by a burning desire for revenge and the end result was terribly violent, dark and full of grotesque pagan rituals. It was largely devoid of any redeeming quality.

So why watch such a movie, much less take the time to review it? The author did not dwell on the content of the film, but used it instead to illustrate what the world might still be like if Christianity had not taken root in so many lands. He noted that the movie gave him a sense of profound relief that pagan culture had been supplanted by Christianity, which proclaims a message unheard of to pagan thinking: a loving God who created humans in His image, granting inherent worth to all people, even the weak and powerless, even enemies and slaves.

Today, the belief in human dignity is often credited to ongoing improvements in human nature or advances in modern technology. But human nature is not improving; we remain "in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves." God alone has a solution for the dark side of human nature, so as Christian belief is pushed ever more to the margins of society, we should not be surprised to see the inhumanity and violence of the old pagan days return—and, in fact, each day's headlines testify that we may already have started down that road.

Because of St. Valentine's Day, we hear a lot of talk about love during February. That is wonderful, of course, but as we celebrate again this year, we would do well to recall that our basic concept of love—even between spouses or within families—was transformed by the Christian Gospel. As I John 4:10-11 declares, "In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another." God's love in Christ Jesus is the model, the power, the standard and the inspiration for how we love other people, from within our own families to strangers who cross our paths.

Continued on page 2

RADIO BROADCAST
SUNDAYS 8 A.M.
KDUZ 1260 AM
(PRE-RECORDED)

LIVE TV BROADCAST
SUNDAYS AT 8 A.M.
NUVERA & MEDIACOM
ON CH. 7

**PRE-RECORDED
BROADCAST**
SUNDAYS 10 A.M.
AND 5 P.M.
TUESDAYS 5 P.M.
THURSDAYS 10 P.M.
HCVN CH. 10
MEDIACOM CH. 8

**YOUTUBE SERVICE
RECORDINGS**
POSTED SUNDAY
AFTERNOONS

YouTube



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That kind of selfless, other-centered love will endure only as long as its source and inspiration in Christ is known, believed, proclaimed and practiced. That makes it vitally important that, as Christians, we do not comply with the culture's desire to put great Christian truths like that "under a bushel basket," but rather be unafraid to set it "on the lampstand" so that "it gives light to all..." (Matthew 5:15)

Grace and peace,
Pastor Scott Grorud



Seniors' Scene

While they are not only for seniors, though many of the participants are seniors, you should know that here at FLC

we have three support groups. Two of them meet regularly. Those are the cancer and caregivers support groups. Another meets periodically, when the need seems to hit multiple sufferers. That is the grief support group. While grief strikes in many ways, death seems to be the most recognized time of loss.

Those of you who have "been there; done that" know the depth of suffering we can experience when we hear the results of tests and scans, and the doctors say, "I'm sorry, you have cancer." You want to crawl inside yourself; and yet you feel the need for support from others, like your Faith Lutheran family.

Support groups can fill much of that space for you. In the presence of people who promise to keep everything said in the room where we meet private

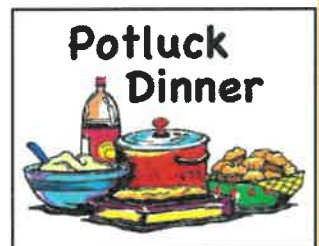
and confidential, feelings can be unloaded and left behind. Jeff, Marsha and Pastor Paulus lead those groups, but the most important person attending is our Lord Jesus. Ultimately, He is listening, caring and promising to bear our burdens. Such assurance and encouragement is like no other.

At our February **Seniors' Potluck** meeting we will hear about one of those support groups. Jeff Amundson, who has himself traveled through this difficult path, and knows the agony and the Savior's strength and healing, will tell us about "FACe" or "Fellowship Against Cancer," the name of the cancer support group he leads. Both members and some nonmembers are part of the group, which is open to all comers.

Seniors' Potluck is Thursday, February 23,

beginning with potluck dinner at 12:00 noon. Please join us for an enriching time together. Bring a friend; perhaps someone new.

See you at Seniors' Potluck!



FACe Group

The FACe (Fellowship Against Cancer) group started out the year with encouraging discussions and sharing. Support was given and encouragement for continuing the fight and recovery. It is an amazing group that has a relationship much like a family. Our sessions are always open to others in the fight against cancer and we invite patients or caregivers to join us!

Sessions meet in the office conference room at 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.



STUMP THE PASTOR

Q: My Bible reading plan recently included II Thessalonians 2:1-12 and it was totally confusing. Who is "the son of destruction"? Verse 6 says "you know what is restraining him now," but I have no idea what that is! What is this passage talking about?

A: That is an excellent question! This text has puzzled readers since the day St. Paul wrote it. Unfortunately, no one but Paul himself knows the answer. In v. 5, he wrote, "Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?" He makes it clear that this passage is just a quick reminder of a lesson he had taught them in person.

The problem is that terms like "the son of destruction" do not appear anywhere else in Paul's letters, so we have no reliable way to fill out his summary with more detail. That has not stopped countless readers from offering up suggested explanations. Some of them are clearly wrong; some could be right. There is just no way to settle the question on this side of heaven.

The best we can do is to draw out the overall message of the text. Paul leaves no doubt that evil is real, powerful and incorrigibly opposed to God's will. As Christians, we ought not be surprised or discouraged by the depth of enmity toward God in the world. Yet, right in the midst of that, God is also at work to restrain evil and preserve His people until the day when Christ appears again in glory, destroys all evil and establishes the eternal kingdom of God.



Stewardship Matters

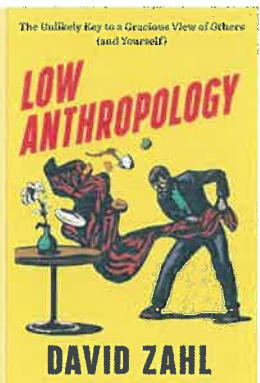
You have likely heard by now that offerings given to Faith Lutheran in 2022 fell about \$23,000 short of the church's expenses, even though giving was up a bit from 2021 and expenses were just less than what was budgeted. It was just a case of not quite making the ends meet. This is the first time in 13 years that Faith has faced a year-end deficit and it is disappointing to see that streak come to an end.

One of our elected leaders, however, suggested that this gap is actually a good reminder for the family of Faith not to become complacent in our giving or assume that the resources we need for this ministry will always be there. It is a good reason for all of us to examine how God has blessed us and how well our giving reflects that, and then adjust our giving this year in light of how God is providing for us. **Thank You** for your faithful and generous support of the mission God has entrusted to us at Faith!

New Theo Thursday Class

Noon on Thursdays, starting February 9

Join Pastor Dave as we read and dig into David Zahl's book **Low Anthropology: The Unlikely Key to a Gracious View of Others (and Yourself)**. The book explores how our ideas about human nature influence our expectations in friendship, work, marriage, and politics. Participants should get a copy of the book beforehand.



The Horrific Ukraine Crisis: How Have We at Faith Responded?

Report from the Church in the World Ministry Team



Faith Lutheran has worked through trusted partners on the front lines of helping refugees. These partners are Youth with a Mission (YWAM) and The Tartu Academy of Theology (TAT) in Estonia.

We have one of our own members, Katie Weikle, working as an administrative leader of YWAM'S training center for young adults and others going out to multiple countries to bear witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ. We gave towards her modest stipend through a \$2,500 donation in 2022. As she has reported, for much of the past year they had refugees packed into facilities usually occupied by those coming for training. They also have gathered supplies to take into Ukraine for relief of their suffering, using vans stuffed with these items only to take other refugees out to safety.

At the end of the year, our team and the council approved sending \$2,500 to the relief work done by the national organization of YWAM within Ukraine. This came out of designated funds from our mission budget.

The other group we assisted was the work of the Tartu Academy of Theology in Estonia. This Baltic country, occupied by the Soviet Union for 50 years, knows full well the horror that goes with what Russia is capable of doing. Far more refugees have found haven in the three Baltic countries; Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, than can really be handled. TAT has housed several families as they in time find other places to stay. Our annual contribution of \$3,000 to TAT, to assist them in their witness of bringing Christ back to their largely atheistic country, was in part re-directed to meet this ongoing crisis.

Thank you also, members of FLC, for any ways you may have found to stand with people of Ukraine in their time of suffering beyond our ability to comprehend. Thank you one and all.

New Hope Mission Society Update

NHMS has started the year off well and there are numerous things going on in India to continue spreading the Word and proclaim Jesus as our Savior. We have nearly collected enough funds to video tape KK Alavi's story, but could use a little more to help cover production and travel costs. Please contact Pastor Scott, Pastor Paul or Jeff if you would like to donate to this project or to NHMS in general. Wonderful things only happen when supporters like you donate.



Offering Envelope Update

We are sorry to say that there has been a problem with the delivery of our January/February giving envelopes and you will not receive them at all. The next batch you receive will be for March/April and should arrive mid-late February. In the meantime, you can use any plain envelope for giving. It is helpful to the money counters if you know your number and can write it on the envelope or in the memo portion of your check. We apologize for the inconvenience and thank you for your continued and faithful giving.





Parent Huddle: Date Your Spouse

If someone were to ask me what is one of the best things to do for your children, I would say date your spouse. Keep investing in your marriage.

Life gets busy and time is an all-too-elusive commodity. You might both work. Children have school and extra-curricular activities. You might volunteer in the community, stay connected with friends, go to a Bible study and have just enough time to do some chores before your head hits the pillow.

When life gets busy, you can be tempted to cut corners—like pushing aside exclusive time with your spouse. However, if that happens too often, you are going to look at your spouse after your children are all grown and out of the house and think, “Who is this stranger?”

Prioritizing your marriage when your children are young benefits you and your spouse, but it also benefits your children. Think about it. What is something you wish for your children when they are adults? Lots of parents wish for their children to find spouses who will love and support them. You and your spouse can model a happy and healthy marriage. You can show your children what healthy communication looks like and how spouses can love and support each other well during difficult times.

“In a study about the importance of couple time by The National Marriage Project, researchers W. Bradford Wilcox and Jeffrey Dew note ‘that the quality of the relationship between parents is one of the key factors associated with the cognitive, social, and emotional development of their children.’” (Amy Van Veen, *Married with Kids: How to Keep Your Relationship Strong*) By investing in your marriage you are actually investing in your children too!

So how do you date your spouse?

- **Set up a weekly date night.** You can go out and get a babysitter or date from home. After children go to bed or keep them busy for an hour and say that mom and dad are on a date.
- **Check in with your spouse daily.** Ask them how they are really feeling. Ask what they are excited for or nervous about this coming week. Then follow up and ask questions.
- **Dream together.** What are your hopes for this year? Hopes for your children, careers, faith.
- **Do things together.** Cooking dinner. Dishes. Laundry. Walking the dog.
- **Show love.** Know what your spouse’s love language is and show it. Words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, gifts or acts of service.
- **Have fun!** Do something unexpected. Create shared memories.

Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Dates



Planning your summer? Mark your calendars for our summer children's ministries! More details will come later.



Vacation Bible School

June 26—29 from 9 a.m.—noon
at Christ the King Lutheran Church
for Preschool through 4th-grade students



Bible Camp

Faith plans to go the week of July 16—21
at Ingham Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camps
for 2nd through 6th-grade students



Mystery Bus

July 24—26
for 5th through 7th-grade students



Day Camp

August 7—10 from 9 a.m.—2 p.m.
at Faith Lutheran Church
for Kindergarten through 5th-grade students



MISSION TRIP DETAILS

July 7—15, 2023
\$550/participant
Logan County, WV

Reach out to Kristen if you have any questions!

HAY Tubing Nights

High School Night is on February 1
Middle School Night is on February 2



Intergenerational Game Day!

More details on page 6.

Questions?

If you have questions about programs for children birth through 6th grade, please contact Laura Stowman, Director of Children and Family Ministry.

If you have questions about programs for 7th grade through young adult, please contact Kristen Durst, Director of Youth and Family Ministry.

Devotions from the Organ Bench



F – Faith of our Fathers LBW #500

Genesis 26:4a “I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven.”

A – Amazing Grace LBW #448

Ephesians 1:7 “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”

I – I Love to Tell the Story LBW #390

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

T – Thy Holy Wings WOV #741

Matthew 19:14 “But Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’”

H – How Great Thou Art LBW #532

Psalms 113:3 “From the rising sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised.”

L – Lift High the Cross LBW #377

Luke 14:27 “Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”

U – Ubi Caritas et Amor (Where True Charity and Love Abide) WOV #665

1 Corinthians 13:13 “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

T – The King of Love My Shepherd Is LBW #456

Psalms 23:1 “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”

H – Have No Fear, Little Flock LBW #476

Luke 15:4-5 “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices.”

E – Earth and All Stars! LBW #558

Genesis 2:1-2a “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work he had done.”

R – Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng! LBW #553

Philippians 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”

A – A Mighty Fortress is Our God LBW #229

Psalms 46:1 “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”

N – Now All the Vault of Heaven Resound LBW #143

Luke 24:5 “The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, ‘Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.’”

Soli Deo Gloria,

Austin Willhite, Director of Music and Worship



Ash Wednesday and Lent Schedule

Ash Wednesday is on February 22 this year. Services with Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion will be held at 12 noon and 6:30 p.m.

This will be followed by Wednesday evening Lenten services at 6:30 p.m. for the next five weeks, with a rotation of pastors from other churches.

Confirmation students should plan to attend these services with their families and then meet with their small groups after each service.

Christ the King and Faith Lutheran present:

THE VICTORIOUS LIFE(?)



WINTER RETREAT

February 24-26 @ Mt. Carmel Bible Camp

Save the Date ~ Winter Retreat

Sign up today for the Faith and Christ the King Winter Family Retreat at Mount Carmel!

Enjoy a fun-filled weekend away at beautiful Mt. Carmel Bible Camp in Alexandria, MN. There will be teaching and activities for all ages, as we explore "The Victorious Life (?)." Since Faith Lutheran is a Mt. Carmel Proclaimer congregation, we enjoy a half-price discount, so the cost will be \$100 per adult and \$50 per child, with a family cap of \$350. Space is limited, so register soon by picking up a registration form from the church office or downloading one from the church website at faithlc.com under the FORMS tab. You can contact Pastor Dave Wollan at davidw@faithlc.com or by calling 320-587-2093 with any questions.

Thrivent Action Teams

If you are eligible to apply for Thrivent Action Team Grants, Faith Lutheran has a number of opportunities for 2023.

You can find Action Team opportunities near the church offices, right across from the main floor bathrooms. Take the event you are interested in. The page includes all of the pertinent information you need to apply for the grant.

If you have any questions on how to apply, you can ask the staff or your Thrivent representative.



Intergenerational Game Day

*Sunday, February 5, 2-4 p.m.
in the third floor multi-purpose room*

Bring your friends, bring your family, bring your favorite game and, if you wish, a favorite treat.

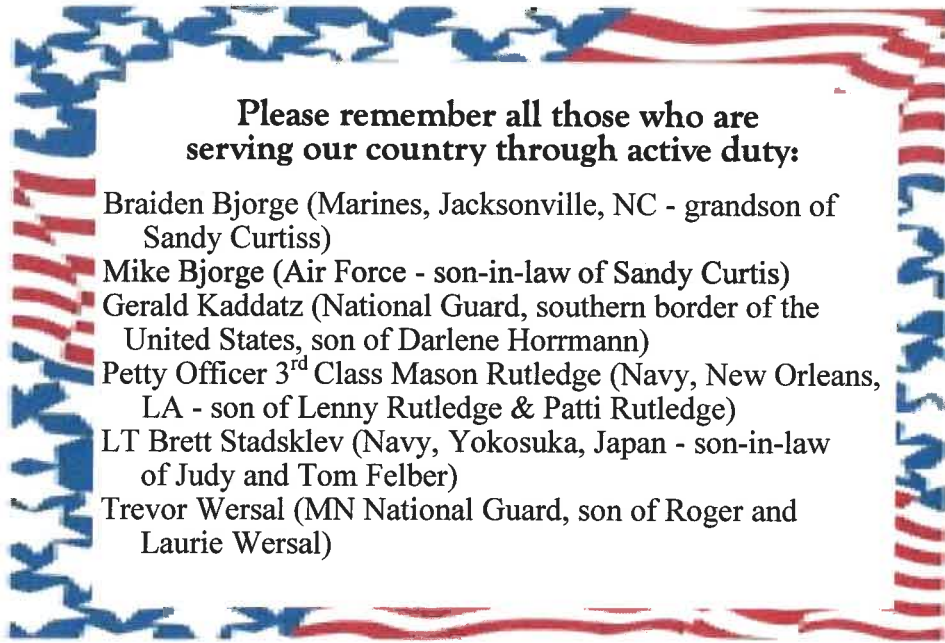
This family fun event is for all ages. Card and board games will be available, snacks will be provided and a rousing round of Bingo will begin at 3:30 p.m.

This wonderful winter retreat is brought to you by the Children, Youth and Family Team and the Congregational Life Team.

P.S. The Free Community Meal begins at 4 p.m. if you want to stay for a delicious, warm, hotdish supper provided by the Ringers of Faith.



Please Remember in Prayer



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

Braiden Bjorge (Marines, Jacksonville, NC - grandson of
Sandy Curtiss)
Mike Bjorge (Air Force - son-in-law of Sandy Curtis)
Gerald Kaddatz (National Guard, southern border of the
United States, son of Darlene Horrman)
Petty Officer 3rd Class Mason Rutledge (Navy, New Orleans,
LA - son of Lenny Rutledge & Patti Rutledge)
LT Brett Stadskev (Navy, Yokosuka, Japan - son-in-law
of Judy and Tom Felber)
Trevor Wersal (MN National Guard, son of Roger and
Laurie Wersal)



**Remember our Faith
members in nursing homes
and health care centers:**

Cedar Crest - Silver Lake

Patricia Lambert
Lucille Wehking

Cokato Nursing Home

Clara Betker
Harmony River
Phyllis Lamp
Ruth Larson

Ellsworth & Delores Lorentzen
Fran Lundeen
Karol Nolte
Jean Pittman
Rose Wagner

Meeker Manor-Litchfield

Darlene Horrman

New Haven - Maple Plain

Ardell Novotny

Pines

Elaine Blade
Ralph and Phyllis Blum
Milt Lueneburg

Prairie Senior Cottages

Harold (Swede) Sandgren

Woodstone

Dodie Fenske
Betty Garberich
Geraldine (Gerry) Grams
Barb Max
Cyndy Ollrich

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:

FOLLOW JESUS

ANNOUNCE THE GOSPEL

INVITE ALL PEOPLE

TEACH CHRISTIAN TRUTH

HELP ALL WHO ARE IN NEED



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

With postage going up again,
would you be willing to receive
your *Faith Matters* 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
a request to office@faithlc.com