

Faith Matters

December 2025

Pastors' Page

Charles Dickens wrote a lot of classic tales, but the one he is best known for has to be "A Christmas Carol." Who doesn't know the classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and his Christmas Eve encounters with the ghosts of Christmas past, Christmas present, and Christmas future. Of course, there are many wonderful renditions of this story. I've seen it done as a play, as an animated cartoon, and as a feature length movie. My favorite version is the Muppet's Christmas Carol, in which Micheal Caine portrays Scrooge. Whichever version you prefer, it just doesn't seem like the Christmas season is complete without seeing Christmas Carol at least once!

Yet, even more so, the Christmas season certainly isn't complete without spending adequate time pondering and celebrating the real reason for the season- Jesus! For this reason, in addition to our regular Sunday worship services, we also have a tradition of adding midweek services during Advent. This December, our Advent midweek worship services are inspired by Scrooge's visitations. Rather than ghosts, however, we'll be celebrating how our Messiah has visited us, is visiting us, and will come again to visit us! To put it in Advent (which means "arrival") language: Jesus has arrived, is here, and will arrive again! So join us for "An Advent Carol: the Messiah of Advent Past, Present, and Future."

Need more incentive to come? Try this:

Wednesday, December 3: come early before worship for our annual soup and chili supper! It's one of my favorite events of the year!

Wednesday, December 17: Stay after worship for our annual cookies and cocoa event!

Add all of that to our regular Advent events like the Sunday School Christmas Program, Christmas Luncheon, and, of course, Sunday worship, and there's going to be a whole lotta Advent-ing going on at Faith, and that's a good thing!

So we'll see you in church!

Pastor Dave

Advent Services

Special Wednesday Advent services will be held at 6:30 p.m. on, December 3, 10, and 17.

Soup and Chili Supper

The annual Soup and Chili Supper will be held on Wednesday, December 3, from 5-6 p.m. (before the Advent worship service). Please sign up in advance if you are able to bring a pot of soup or chili to share. All donations should be dropped off by 4:45 p.m. Crockpots can be brought early and be plugged in at church throughout the day.



335 Main St. S.
Hutchinson, MN 55350
Phone: 320-587-2093
Email: office@faithlc.com

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

PRE-RECORDED TV
BROADCASTS
SUNDAYS 10 A.M.
AND 5 P.M.
TUESDAYS 5 P.M.
THURSDAYS 10 P.M.
NUVERA CH. 10
MEDIACOM CH. 8

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

YOUTUBE
SERVICE RECORDINGS
POSTED SUNDAY
AFTERNOONS

You Tube



Inside this issue:

Christmas Opportunities	2
Stump the Pastor	3
Seniors Scene	4
Mission and Music	5
Important Notes	6
Children, Youth & Families Church Calendar	Insert
Staff Directory Prayer Requests Calendar	7



Advent Cookies & Fellowship

Please come for cookies, coffee, or hot chocolate after the 6:30 p.m. Advent service on December 17 in the Faith Center. Join us!

Christmas Worship Opportunities

There will be multiple opportunities to participate in Christmas Worship at Faith.

There will be two opportunities to see the **Sunday School children on Sunday, December 21. The Pre-K-1st grade students** will share the Christmas story through song at the **10:10 a.m. Sanctuary Service**. Later that same day, at **2 p.m., the 2nd-5th grade students** will tell the story in a special Christmas program.

*NOTE—FLIP Sunday: to accommodate the space needed at the 10:10 a.m. service, the Sanctuary-style service will be held in the Foundation space and the Foundation-style service will be held in the sanctuary. What a great opportunity to try worship in a different space!

Christmas Eve (December 24)

- * 2:00 p.m. Family Worship (structured for families with small children)
- * 4:00 p.m. Simultaneous Foundation and Sanctuary Worship Services
- * 6:00 p.m. Sanctuary Worship Service
- * 11:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service with Holy Communion



Christmas Day (December 25)

- * 10:00 a.m. Christmas Morning Service with Holy Communion. (Church offices will be closed)

Poinsettia Orders

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory or in honor of someone, orders are due by Monday, December 15. You may take your poinsettia home after the Christmas Day service or stop in and pick it up any time that the church office is open during the following week.



Giving Trees

The Congregational Life ministry team is again partnering with CHAP Ministries to provide Christmas gifts for senior citizens in need. Look for the Christmas Giving Trees in the front entry and outside the sanctuary, take a card, purchase the gift and return by Sunday, December 14! Thank you for blessing our McLeod County seniors!

Bibleopoly Celebration - Sunday, January 4, 2026

Bibleopoly participants of ALL AGES (and everyone else), you are invited to the Faith Center to celebrate the number of books that have been read by the Faith congregation in 2025. Come join the celebration during the Digging Deeper hour for cake, Bible trivia and more!



Stewardship Matters



Over the last many years, Faith Lutheran has received nearly 25% of its annual offerings in late November and December. The church has been blessed to be able to meet all its expenses in most of those years, but it makes for a few nerve-wracking weeks during Advent and Christmas.

Faith faces that same situation again this year. At this point, the church needs to receive something over \$200,000 in order to break even on the year, even though expenses are below budget. We trust that the Lord will provide the financial support the church needs to fund all of its ministries.

During December, the family of Faith will receive a special *Joy to the Word Offering* envelope. Please give a generous Christmas gift to the church according to how God has first blessed you and pray that He will move our hearts to bold generosity and commitment to this ministry that has been entrusted to us. **Thank God and thank you!**



STUMP THE pastor

Stump the Pastor

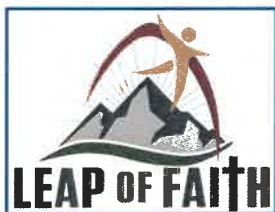
Q: Why isn't the visit of the Wise Men included in the Christmas Gospel in Luke 2?

A: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all tell the same story of Jesus, but each one told that story in his own way. That is why most Bibles title the four accounts "*The Gospel according to*" each of the four authors. There is only one Jesus and one Gospel, but told in four different ways. Readers often want to combine the four accounts into one seamless story, but it is better to let each author's work stand on its own, comparing and contrasting their portraits of Jesus.

One key difference among the four is the sources that were available to each author. Many episodes in Jesus' life appear in all four Biblical accounts, others appear in only two or three (only Matthew and Luke include Jesus' birth), and some appear in only one.

The visit of the wise men or the magi fits in that last category. Only Matthew records their visit and he tells us very little about them; "wise men from the East came to Jerusalem" is all he says. The idea that there were three wise men is based solely on the fact that Matthew names three gifts that they brought: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The actual number of the wise men, however, plus the notions that they were kings, rode camels and exactly where they began their journey have all been filled in by Christian imagination.

So, even though the wise men follow hard on the heels of the shepherds in every Christmas pageant and they all appear together in every nativity scene, only Luke tells us about the shepherds and only Matthew records the visit of the wise men. They each had their own understanding of the events surrounding Jesus' birth and it is helpful to let each account bear its own witness, rather than conflating them.



Leap of Faith Capital Campaign

The Leap of Faith campaign will soon complete its first year and the results so far have been impressive. About \$3 million has been pledged over the three years of the campaign and the account has already received \$700,000. That is a tremendous commitment from the Faith family!

As of now, however, still only about one-third of the households in the congregation have made a commitment to Leap of Faith. If the other two-thirds joined them, the results could allow us to move ahead with part or all of our much-needed Phase II of the building plan. *If you have not yet made a pledge to Leap of Faith, would you consider doing so today?* You can make a pledge on-line through Faith's website, the QR Code here, or pick up a



**Leap of Faith
Online
Pledge Card**



Digging
DEEPER

"Faith Seeks Understanding"
Continuing Learning Opportunities for Adults
Sunday Mornings from 9:15-10 a.m.

Raising Passionate Jesus Followers

There is no greater joy than seeing your children follow the way of Jesus! Join our Children and Youth Directors, Laura and Kristen, for the conclusion of this series as they lead discussions on ways to partner with God intentionally to raise sons and daughters who grow up loving God and loving people on purpose. Based around the book *Raising Passionate Jesus Followers* by Phil and Diane Comer. **Meets in the main floor conference room through December 21.**





Seniors Scene

Can you believe it? Christmas season, 2025, will soon be here, with Christmas choir and bells music, special services, and lights and decorations all over town. Do you have your family plans yet? I'll bet some of them depend upon airplane travel, possibly interrupted by the recent government shutdown and weather issues. But it will still be Christmas, because almost all of the things I've mentioned are not God's message of His Christmas Gift to you. You know His promise of a Savior is being relived and celebrated—the Gift of His Son, Jesus, Who came to us via a manger, Who died on a cross for us, Who rose from a tomb, and ascended into heaven following a promise that He would return at the end of time to receive us into His glory in heaven. The carols we sing, the sermons we hear and more, all put the genuine Christmas message front and center for us.

I recall that when our children were babies and our family opened Christmas presents by the Christmas tree they were more interested in the gala wrapping paper and bows than they were in the presents inside. Of course they were not old enough to know the difference, but we are. I suspect we can be more interested in today's wrappings as well—the gifts, the parties, the family dinners, the Christmas trees, the lights, decorations, "Jingle Bells" and yard displays than we are about Jesus. When Gary Hoffman was still with us and played the role of Santa Claus, he told me how he often made it plain to kids that Santa was not the real Christmas; Jesus is. He was proud of that witness, and well he should have been.

Here's one way Jesus said it, *"My sheep hear my voice. I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish."* I GIVE them (you and me) eternal life. That's the true Christmas gift—Jesus Himself, Who lives in us, carrying the gift of eternal life for us who cannot make our own way there. That gift cost him his life. Let us cherish this timeless Christmas gift with our whole life, in all seasons, and let it determine the shape and purpose of our every day.

SENIORS' POTLUCK meets on **Thursday, December 11**, beginning at **12:00 noon**. After our potluck meal Austin Wilhite, our Director of Music and Worship, will teach us some things I'll bet you didn't know about bells. They have a rich history which includes 40+ years of enhancing worship here at Faith with their mesmerizing and unmistakable sounds. Come and "Hear The Bells at Christmas Time" as Austin demonstrates the many technical and beautiful sounds that the bells are capable of.

"See you at Seniors' Potluck." Bring a friend.

Have you given up your landline?

We have found that we have some "out of service" phone numbers in the church records. If you have eliminated your landline, please update your information with the church office by filling out an "Update Your Information" card in the sanctuary pews, e-mailing office@faithlc.com, or by calling the office at 320-587-2093.

Thank you for updating your information and helping us stay in touch with you!



Attention Snow Birds

As you prepare to head south for the winter, we would love to have your temporary address so that we can keep you in the loop of all things "Faith Lutheran" while you are gone.

We can't forward your giving statements, newsletters, etc. to you if we don't know where you are! Please call the office with your temporary address, the date you plan to leave and when you plan to return. Help us keep you "In the Know!"

Don't forget that you can get your monthly Faith Matters and weekly news via e-mail if you are not already doing so.



Our Creedal Confession is Crucial to Our Witness

Mission Word from Pastor Paul Knudson



Far from being audacious and embarrassing, our deliberate confession of faith using words from the Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed moves us to unapologetic witness to our faith in the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These formal confessions have moved countless Christians throughout history to face death itself rather than go silent. With the Apostle Paul we declare that we are not ashamed of the Gospel (Jesus Christ), for He is the power of God for all people in every land.

As we sing those beautiful, ever-so-familiar carols, pay particular attention to the words. In these lyrics we confess who this Jesus is. In one of them we sing: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its King... He rules the world with truth and grace..." Indeed, this Lord and King is unlike our earthly leaders of nations. For us and all God's beloved children we have Jesus, God's beloved Son, Lord and Savior of all, laid in a manger, dying on a cross, and risen from death to life.

To proclaim this One we partner with other believers in distant lands to bear bold witness. We know that our partners rejoice that we stand with them and encourage them, as they inspire us with their witness. This witness is bringing millions of unbelievers to be at one with their God and our God. Praise be to the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.



Worship Snapshot: *And Every Stone Shall Cry!*

December is filled with songs and hymns that proclaim the good news, Christ is born! Even the secular music we hear in the grocery store rings with words of mirth and glad tidings. This is, in fact, "the most wonderful time of the year!" This month's worship snapshot will focus us on another theme that is not as merry. Ponder these words from *A Stable Lamp Is Lighted*:

*Yet he shall be forsaken and yielded up to die;
The sky shall groan and darken, and every stone shall cry.
And every stone shall cry for stony hearts of men:
God's blood upon the spearhead, God's love refused again.*



So much for a "holly, jolly Christmas"! This text hardly feels like it belongs to a Christmas hymn, yet if you open your green hymnal to hymn number 74, you'll find this stanza in the Christmas section. On a personal note, I absolutely love this hymn! We hardly, if ever, sing it in worship, partly due to the interesting melody, but also because this text feels so out of place from the rest of our Christmas hymns. Still, this hymn remains a favorite of mine for that very reason. It reminds me that Christmas is just the beginning of what is yet to be a story that ultimately ends in death. "For stony hearts of men God's love refused again." This story ends in sin, my sin, your sin, the sin of the world. Jesus echoes the prophet Habakkuk's warning with an unsettling image in Luke 19:39-40, "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'" We are all guilty of distraction with gifts, decorating, preparations, and whatever else this world tells us is more important. Let's not forget what Christ has come to do this Christmas season; he has come to save us. As Christians on this side of the resurrection, we know that this story really ends in salvation and triumph; sin and death are defeated! Though we may not sing this favorite hymn of mine this year again, I am happy to sing out "Joy to the World" and "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice" instead. Remembering that we can celebrate that Christ has come again! He comes to us every year, every day, and every hour to bring us peace, love, and mercy. Though it might be cool to hear a rock star singing and shouting, we should never stop glorifying and praising God for the wonders he does in our lives every day. Peace be with you and Merry Christmas!



Faith Lutheran Church Support Groups



For more information or to plug into any of the following support groups please call the church office at 320-587-2093 and ask for Pastor Paulus Pilgrim, Jeff Amundson, or Marsha Schmit.

- 1) **FACe Cancer Support Group** This group is open to members and non-members of Faith alike. Those with cancer, those who are in remission, and family members who are caregivers of those with cancer are encouraged to participate in this support group. The FACe group meets the second and fourth Thursday morning of each month in the third floor conference room at 10 a.m. A Zoom option is available for those who are not able to attend due to health or distance obstacles. (Meeting only on December 11 this month.)
- 2) **Caregiver Support Group** Meets the THIRD Thursday of each month September—May at 4 p.m.
- 3) **Grief Support Group** meets as needed throughout the year.



Faith Lutheran Church Women (FLCW) Update

The FLCW has been busy doing a lot of behind the scenes planning and work, and have a few dates they want you to get on your calendars so you can participate in these awesome events.

- 1) Deep cleaning of the church kitchen on Tuesday, December 2, from 9 a.m. until the work is done (usually a couple of hours). Volunteers will shine up the kitchen and then enjoy conversation, coffee and coffee cake.
- 2) The Christmas Lunch will be held in the Faith Center on Saturday, December 13, from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Sign-up for tickets in the church office by December 1.
- 3) The 2026 Rummage Sale dates have been set! The sale will be April 23—24 with four days of prep before and one day of clean-up after these dates. Use these cooler days to clean inside and set aside items you would like to donate. (Please note that the church does not have space to store items for you, so donations should not be brought to Faith before April 20-22.) Thank you!

Faith Lutheran Church Leadership

What are Ministry Teams

The third ministry team that we are going to look at is the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Team, also known as CYF for short.

This team supports the children and youth ministries at our church by planning the Happy Birthday Jesus Party, assisting in confirmation and graduate breakfasts, leading Sunday School Kickoff, hosting a pool day in the early spring, and supporting Kristen and Laura in their respective ministries.

The CYF team consists of the following members: Tayja Mackendaz, Jessi Boike, Jamie Kaping, Tara Strey, Ashley Albrecht, Kati Katzenmeyer, Richard Settergren, and Lola Bradford. Richard and Lola are our two representatives on the church council. This team's staff liaisons are Kristen Durst and Laura Stowman. Kristen is the Director of Youth and Family Ministries and Laura is the Director of Children and Family Ministries.

Thrivent Grants and Choice Dollars

As we approach the end of 2025, it is a great time to remind those of you who have Thrivent policies that you have two Thrivent Grant opportunities each year. If you have not used them both this year, please contact the church to find out how you can still use them to support the ministries of Faith Lutheran Church.

If you have Choice Dollars that you can designate to a non-profit of your choice, the ministries of Faith can also be supported through these gifts (that includes a one time gift to the Leap of Faith Campaign). You have until the end of March to designate your 2025 dollars, but don't wait. Designate today!

**DIRECT
YOUR
thrivent[®]
CHOICE
DOLLARS**



Unfaithful

Eager anticipation. Dread. Stress. Immense joy. These are all things you may be feeling as we near the Christmas Season in Advent. This season always brings back many memories for me. I remember my years of doing Christmas shows with my community theater and how busy the season felt. I remember in college singing in our annual festival Christmas in Christ Chapel. I remember frantic shopping for gifts because I forgot to get something for this person or I remember worship team practices where we would prepare for our services. In recent years, I remember the feeling of joy as I enter our worship spaces with such beautiful décor and the sound of our children singing in the Christmas program. I reminisce but I wish it all away. I get distracted by perfection, stress and frustration as I get caught up in the things that just don't matter.

Then I get to Christmas. I am surrounded by people gathering to remember what our God has done for us by sending his Son to walk as a child and I am caught off guard. The service starts with *O Come All Ye Faithful* and I realize just how unfaithful I am. One of my favorite Christmas songs in recent years has been the song below Sovereign Grace Music called *O Come All You Unfaithful*. It is a song that focuses on how we truly don't deserve God's grace as we walk through a world that is covered in hurt, suffering, grief, hustle and bustle, and stress, but that He faithfully gives it for us anyway.

Bring yourself. No matter how broken, bitter, weak, guilty or weary you are. Come with nothing. He is the offering. Come hear what your God has done. Christ is Born. Born for you.

Kristen Durst, Director of Youth and Family Ministry

O Come All You Unfaithful

Verse 1

O come all you unfaithful
Come weak and unstable
Come know you are not alone

Verse 2

O come barren and waiting ones
Weary of praying
Come see what your God has done

Chorus

Christ is born Christ is born
Christ is born for you

Verse 3

O come bitter and broken
Come with fears unspoken
Come taste of His perfect love

Verse 4

O come guilty and hiding ones
There is no need to run
See what your God has done

Bridge

He's the Lamb who was given slain for our pardon
His promise is peace for those who believe
He's the Lamb who was given slain for our pardon
His promise is peace for those who believe

Verse 5

So come though you have nothing
Come He is the offering
Come see what your God has done

CCLI Song # 7160115

Bob Kauflin | Lisa Clow

© 2020 Sovereign Grace Praise



Aftershock

This ministry meets on the school early-release days from 1:15 p.m.—4:30 p.m., and is for children in kindergarten—5th grade. Children get picked up from school, have a snack, make crafts, play games, have a Bible story time and worship. This month we are having a Christmas party!

NEXT DAY: December 23.

If you are able to volunteer for Aftershock, please reach out to Laura Stowman. Thank you!

56er's

56er's is an after-school program on Wednesdays for ANYONE in 5th and 6th grade. Our time is filled with hang time, snack, lesson, and games. This group meets right after school until 5:15 p.m. Go to our church website to register your child.

NO 56ER'S ON: December 24 & 31, and January 7.

Sunday School

It's December which means the Sunday School children are learning about the Christmas annunciation, Mary and Elizabeth, and the birth of Jesus. The children are also practicing their songs for their Christmas programs.

NO SUNDAY SCHOOL: December 28 and January 4.

Christmas Programs

Mark your calendars for December 21.

Preschool—1st grade perform at 10:10 a.m. during the Sanctuary worship service.

2nd—5th grade perform at 2 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

Christmas Program



DECEMBER 21, 2025 IN THE SANCTUARY
PRE-K-1ST GRADE 2ND-5TH GRADE
@ 10:10 AM @ 2:00 PM



FLY Night

Faith Lutheran Youth night continues for all high school students on Wednesdays from 7:00—9:30 p.m.

HELP SERVE FREE LUNCH!

Faith serves Free Lunch on December 4 and we need your help. Commitment is 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Contact Kristen if you have more questions!

Happy Birthday Jesus Party

Sign your child up for a fun-filled morning of celebrating Jesus' birthday. Each year the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Team throws a party for Jesus. We play games, do crafts, eat doughnuts, and read a Christmas story.



Questions? Prayer Requests? Contact us!

Laura Stowman—Director of Children and Family Ministries—lauras@faithlc.com

Kristen Durst—Director of Youth and Family Ministries—kristend@faithlc.com

Please Remember in Prayer

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

LtCdr. Brett Stadslev (Navy, San Diego, CA - son-in-law of Judy and Tom Felber)
Spc. Jones R. Reid (Space Force, Patrick, FL - son of Melissa Straka, grandson of Sherry Schuetz)

Please contact the church office to make any changes or additions to this list.



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

Buffalo Lake Nursing Home

Kathy Fabel

Cedar Crest - Silver Lake

Patricia Lambert

Cokato Nursing Home

Clara Betker

Elaine Blade

GlenFields-- Glencoe

Barb Helland

Harmony River

Shirley Holtz

Wilbur Johnson

LorAllen (Schmudge) Schmeling

Prince of Peace

Maynard Holtz

Oaks

Phyllis Blum

Deloris Olson

Carol Otto

DuWayne Peterson

Alice Poshek

Woodstone

Cyndy Ollrich



Faith Lutheran Church INFORMATION & STAFF DIRECTORY

335 Main St. S. 320-587-2093 FaithLC.com

Pastors

Scott Grorud	320-587-0171 (home)	scottg@faithlc.com
Dave Wollan	320-583-2385 (cell)	davidw@faithlc.com
Paul Knudson, Missions Ministry	320-587-2227 (home)	paulk@faithlc.com
Paulus Pilgrim, Visitation	320-234-9753 (home)	paulusp@faithlc.com

Staff

Jeff Amundson, Pastoral Associate	320-587-2093 (office)	jeffa@faithlc.com
Marsha Schmit, Director of Pastoral Care & Evangelism		marshas@faithlc.com
Austin Willhite, Director of Music & Worship		austinw@faithlc.com
Kristen Durst, Director of Youth & Family Ministry		kristenm@faithlc.com
Laura Stowman, Director of Children & Family Ministry		lauras@faithlc.com
Wendy Magruder, Administrative Assistant		wendym@faithlc.com
Sara Wegner, Finance Coordinator		finco@faithlc.com
Owen Weikle, Custodial Services Coordinator		
Monica Schiller, Nursery Supervisor	320-587-2093	

You can support the mission and ministry of Faith Lutheran Church by using this QR code or go to the FLC online giving page at Faithlc.com/give-2/



Faith Lutheran Church
335 Main Street South
Hutchinson, Minnesota 55350

Non-Profit
US POSTAGE PAID
Hutchinson MN
Permit No 5

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Put mailing label here

Newsletter via USPS or E-mail?

Would you be willing to receive your monthly copy of *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
or calling Wendy at 320-587-2093.



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

