

Faith Matters July 2026

Pastors' Page

A Birthday Blessing

Two hundred and fifty years old!

My goodness, we've been around for a while!

As our nation celebrates our semiquincentennial (yes, I had to look that up!) anniversary, it offers an opportunity for reflection and thanksgiving. Andrea and I recently saw the movie *A Great Awakening*, about the unique and important friendship between Ben Franklin and the revivalist preacher, George Whitefield. The movie depicts the tension between the American Dream and ambition represented by Franklin, and the Christian foundation as represented by Whitefield. The two forces collided and cooperated to help form the nation we live in today.

Those two forces continue to live in tension and collaboration with each other to this day. Because of that, I'm sure than many of you are like me: I continue to give thanks to God that I live in this fine place—the greatest nation in the world—but I am also deeply concerned for the state of our nation, and the erosion of the Christian foundation. We are blessed to live in a country founded on liberty and on religious freedom. I so take for granted that we can gather every Sunday—right in the middle of our town—and worship God without threat of persecution. And yet, I see so many in our country abusing the freedoms we have, and I also see some of those freedoms under threat. So what do we do?

John 1:14 is a well-known verse in the Bible. It describes the incarnation. But I wonder if we are as familiar with the rest of the verse?

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

Grace and truth. When you think about Jesus' ministry, you can see how gracious he was, while also standing on truth. I think this informs our posture toward the world around us. We are called to be gracious—proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. At the same time, we stand on the truth of God—as articulated in the Bible, the creeds, and our confessions. These two postures don't have to be contradictory—Jesus shows us that.

So happy birthday, America! We're praying for you! We're doing our best, as redeemed sinners, to make this nation a wonderful place to be, while also pointing towards a perfect and final destination, where we will live with God forever!

See you in church!
Pastor Dave



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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

YouTube



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STUMP THE PASTOR

Stump the Pastor

Q: If God is all-knowing, why didn't He just stop Adam and Eve from sinning before they did it?

A: This is one of many troubling questions in theology. It seems contradictory to say that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, loving and good, and to admit that sin, evil, natural disasters, illness, death and unbelief have plagued all of human history. If God is truly God, and is opposed to evil, it seems that He surely could have prevented any possibility of sin when the world was created. Plus, it would have spared God's Son from suffering and dying on the cross! So why did God allow sin in the first place—or was He powerless to stop it?

It is not possible for creatures like us to know the mind of our Creator. Any attempt to understand God's thinking, unless it is clearly stated in the Bible, can only be an educated guess, and any explanation is bound to be too one-sided or overly simple.

Still, curious minds want to know, and one possible answer to this question concerns the nature of relationships. Uniquely among all creatures, God made humans in His own image, so that we could know, love and trust Him. As in all relationships, however, such love and trust would not be authentic unless the possibility existed that people would *not* trust God or would *not* reciprocate His love. Had God precluded even the possibility of human sin, His connection to humans would be more akin to robots than to creatures made in His image.

Tragically, as Genesis 3 demonstrates so powerfully, humans have been unwilling simply to love and trust God. Like Adam and Eve, we are all enticed by the serpent's siren song, "You can be like God." Thus, we confess that "we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves." Because of that, the whole creation has been fractured by sin and separated from God.

What is truly astonishing is that God did not destroy creation, and start over or disavow the whole notion. Even when God unleashed the Great Flood, He saved Noah and his family, but they were barely off the ark before sin picked up right where it had left off. So God, surely knowing that His beloved creatures would likely rise up in rebellion, already had a strategy in place to redeem them. As St. Peter wrote, "Christ... was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the age for your sake." (I Peter 1:20) There is the astounding good news of the Gospel, that even at the cost of Christ's death on the cross, God was determined to stay in right, loving, genuine relationship with you and me, now and through all eternity.

Stewardship Matters

In II Corinthians, Paul assured his readers that, if they contributed generously to the offering he was collecting for the church in Jerusalem, they would not fall into poverty, because God would continue to provide all they needed. "And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work." (II Cor. 9:8)

Stewardship
A way of living

It is easy to forget that God's promise to provide applies not only to individuals, but also to churches. Early in 2026, Faith Lutheran incurred a larger-than-usual deficit in the General Fund. It did not bode well for this time of year, when giving often decreases even further. Faith's elected leaders were rightly concerned whether the church would be able to meet her budgeted obligations through the year.

God knew that need, however, and inspired such generous giving recently that the General Fund deficit has dropped significantly! Faith is now in a much better position to weather the summer months and, if this trend continues, not to need such huge offerings at year's end to meet her expenses. How joyful would it be to celebrate Advent without the usual driving concern about the church's finances? **Thank you** for your steadfast support! Please continue to give according to how God blesses you to do so.

Missions UPDATE

Mission Partners Facing Unexpected Challenges Pastor Paul Knudson

In recent months mission partners of Faith Lutheran Church and the Augustana District have let us know that their congregation(s) are struggling with the effects of the military conflict in the Middle East, especially as it relates to the conflict with Iran. Some of us are facing challenges with increased gas prices and more. Many of us, while frustrated, are not struggling as much as some of our partners..

Our AD mission partnership with the Tabor congregation in the city of Hawassa, Ethiopia, is facing a major challenge in helping their dozens of evangelists cope with increased costs of over \$50.00 per month. To us this amount is irritating but not life threatening. To need over \$1,000 more per month to cover their evangelists' needs, with members' incomes what they are now, is also a major concern.

We are invited to pray for our many mission partners around the world. We encourage you to see your way through your own needs, and through the grace of our Lord Jesus, continue to be faithful in generosity. Our partners bear witness in very challenging situations on multiple fronts. Our faithfulness in supporting them is beyond encouraging. It gets right down to matters like adequate food on the table simply to exist.

For me it continues to bring joy as I witness what our faithful generosity makes possible. Giving with generous hearts is its own reward, but now it becomes critically significant for our partners in Ethiopia, India, and beyond.



Leap of Faith Capital Campaign

Believe it or not, we are approaching the half-way point of the Leap of Faith capital campaign! The three-year timeline that seemed so long when it began is elapsing quickly. The great news is that gifts to the campaign so far are right in line with the \$3 million that was pledged to it. The challenge is to try to surpass what was pledged so that inflation does not keep pushing Phase II further out of reach.



Leap of Faith
Online
Pledge Card

- If you have given to Leap of Faith, **thank you** for investing in the future of Faith Lutheran!
- If you have not yet made any gifts toward your pledge, could you begin to do so?
- If you have completed your pledge, has God blessed you to give more than you first planned?
- If you have not yet pledged or given, would you join the Faith family in this visionary project?

You can find all the material about Leap of Faith on the church's web site. Scroll down to the Leap of Faith logo and click on the bar for more information.



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.
- 2) **Caregiver Support Group** Meets the **THIRD** Thursday of each month.
- 3) **Grief Support Group** meets as needed throughout the year.



Outdoor Worship at the Fairgrounds

Sunday, August 23, at 9 a.m. on the Main Stage

Faith Lutheran has the opportunity to hold a Sunday morning worship service at the Fairgrounds during Fair week.

Make plans now to come and worship at the Fair.

There is no charge to get into the fairgrounds.

Watch for more details in the upcoming

Sunday announcement packets.

See you at the fair!

Garden TOUR 10 am to 2 pm

Immerse yourself in a world of vibrant colors, fragrances, and the beauty of blooming flowers.

How beautiful a day can be in a garden. Whether the garden space is small and cozy or colorful and filled with texture and variety, you are sure to see a variety on the **Saturday, July 11 GARDEN TOUR**. This event is sponsored by Faith Lutheran Church Women from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Your ticket gets you a tour map (to follow at your own pace) and lunch. Come back to the Faith Center between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. for a cold salad luncheon before returning to the gardens. Tickets are being sold between services and from the church office. Ticket prices are: \$15 per person and \$5 for children age 10 and under.



Worship Snapshot: Worship Beyond the Walls

Summer has a way of reminding us that the world around us is full of God's gifts. The warmth of the sun, the beauty of creation, and the rhythms of the season invite us outdoors. This summer, as we gather for worship in Library Square, we are reminded of the words of the beloved hymn, "This Is My Father's World."

Written by Maltbie D. Babcock in the early 1900s, this hymn gives voice to a deeply Lutheran understanding of creation: the world belongs to God. Creation is not separate from God's presence but is a gift that reveals the Creator's care. When we sing, "This is my Father's world," we are not simply celebrating nature; we are confessing faith in the God who created all things and continues to sustain them.

The summer months can sometimes become a season when worship attendance changes. Vacations, busy schedules, and outdoor activities can make it easy to think of summer as a time to step away from church. Yet worship in the park reminds us that our life with God does not take a vacation. The Church gathers not only in sanctuaries but wherever God's people come together around Word and prayer.

In Lutheran worship we believe God meets us through ordinary things: water, bread, wine, voices lifted in song, and the proclamation of God's Word. A park may look different from our usual worship space, but the promise remains the same. Christ is present among his people.

"This Is My Father's World" calls us to look at creation with new eyes. The trees, the sky, and the open space around us are not distractions from worship; instead, they are reminders of the God we worship. As we gather outdoors this summer, may we remember that every season belongs to God, and every place can become a place of praise.

So when the calendar says summer, let us not think "time away from church," but rather "time to see God's presence in new ways." The same Lord who gathers us in the sanctuary gathers us under the open sky. This truly is our Father's world.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Austin



CHILDREN, YOUTH
& family

The Mystery Is Out

Kristen, Laura, the Summer Fellows, and 23 middle schoolers jumped into two vans and hit the road! For three days in June, the students arrived at church not knowing what they would be doing that day, and were happily surprised as they rolled up to their service project and fun activity. That is why this awesome experience is called **MYSTERY BUS!**

Here is what they did.

Tuesday

In the morning, the group arrived at Global Health Ministries. GHM is a nonprofit committed to improving the health for all by providing supplies that many clinics and hospitals around the world do not have. At GHM, students sorted gowns, bedsheets, and other medical supplies to determine what could be sent to other countries around the world that have minimal medical supplies and equipment.

In the afternoon, students went bowling, ate pizza, played laser tag, and arcade games.

This was a great start for the week!



Wednesday

This day took the group to Mount Carmel Ministries in Alexandria. The weather was beautiful for the work that needed to be done. The group split into two. One group took to the grounds of the camp to clean up large branches that fell from the storms the night before. They even found some toads, which, of course, they named. The other group hauled four pallets of cedar mulch to beautify the landscaping around the chapel. What would have taken the couple of staff an entire day or two took the group one hour! The service coordinator was amazed by how hard-working these students were!

After joining the summer staff for lunch, the students had some well-deserved time in the lake.

Could not have asked for a better day! And it was fun to see some familiar faces too!



Thursday

The last day may have just been the favorite for many. The students packed food at Feed My Starving Children in Chanhassen. FMSC is a Christian nonprofit dedicated to providing nutritious meals to children worldwide. This service project is so much fun with kids, and they even get to taste a sample of what they made at the end of the packing session. Mystery Bus wrapped up with an exciting high ropes course excursion at Kerfoot in Henderson. The instructors were very impressed by how adventurous this group was!

Thank you to the students who served, parents who supported their children attending, and to the congregation for supporting the group through prayer.



Still To Come!

Day Camp
Kindergarten—5th grade
August 3—6

**Register on the Children's Page
of the website faithlc.com**



FLY Night

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

Mission Trip

Please keep our youth and adult leaders in your prayers as they travel to Wilmington, North Carolina from July 10-19. Pray for safe travels, good health, our service partners, peace, joy, and ways for God to move in the lives of the participants.

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 Stadsklev (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)
 FBPFA Holden Anderson (Border Patrol at the Northern MN/ND Border—son of Shawn and Beth Anderson)

If you know of a member of Faith who serves in the armed forces 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

GlenFields— Glencoe

Barb Helland

Harmony River

Larry DeGrote
 Shirley Holtz
 Wilbur Johnson

Prince of Peace

Maynard Holtz

Oaks

Phyllis Blum
 Helen Kieper
 Deloris Olson
 Carol Otto
 DuWayne Peterson
 Alice Poshek

Pines

Ron Max
 Dave Skaar

Woodstone

Cyndy Ollrich



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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/



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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

