

LETTER OF FAITH

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

DECEMBER 2021

MINISTERS: ALL THE PEOPLE OF FAITH

By the time you are reading this, we will be in Advent. So this is an opportune time to put some thought into our Advent season; Advent, the coming of something important. The term is an anglicized version of the Latin word *adventus*, *meaning* "coming". Advent for us, is the coming of the most important thing in our lives, the birth of Jesus.

How will we prepare for the coming of our Lord here at Faith Lutheran? I pray that each one of us will spend a little extra time remembering the true reason we celebrate Christmas. **Our services may be in person or online** depending what the church council decides as they discern how to keep us safe during the increased Covid numbers in our area. Make a decision to spend more time reflecting and worshiping our Lord as we celebrate his birth whether it be in your home, on TV, at church, or online.

I have listed the services below. I hope the explanation of services will help you decide which ones you and your family don't want to miss. But remember, we don't know if they will be in person and online or just online until the council meets on December 5th following worship.

We have 12 services in December: Every Sunday, Advent services on Wednesdays, the Sunday School program, a Blue Christmas worship on the longest night of the year, Christmas Eve worship.

Our **Mid-week Advent services** are an excellent way to put the emphasis on the true meaning of Christmas for you and your family. These shorter worship services will adhere to what the council decides. **Holy Darkness: Service of Word and Prayer** will be used on Wednesday nights. We are a people of the word. We encounter the living God in Jesus Christ. These services will be simple and follow the Advent themes of listening, waiting, and expectation. We will embrace the darkness of these long Advent nights as a place where we encounter the beauty and mystery of God.

If safe to do so, we will gather for the winter solstice, the longest night and the beginning of winter. Depending on the council decision, it may be online only. The service is entitled **Blue Christmas: A service of night prayer for the winter solstice**. December 25th is celebrated as Christmas, the day of Jesus' birth. It is celebrated that day as Christmas because it had been incorrectly identified as the winter solstice. The early Christians intended this to be a feast of proclamation. God arrives by way of deep darkness. Christians wanted to tell the world that God, the maker of the cosmos, chose to lovingly draw near to our broken world by way of a human birth on the longest night of the year. God's love for us goes deep and does not fade or change with the seasons.

So, let us prepare for the coming of our Lord this Advent season. And may we not rush the Christmas season but celebrate Christmas for the **whole 12 days!** We've been through this before so we will wait and see what happens with COVID and the council's

Faith Lutheran Church

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Interim Pastor Vicki Toutges

Office Manager Connie Tschetter

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Youth Director of Fusion Ministry

Heather Black

Pianist Rita Lambert

Director of Music John Kleinwolterink

Custodians Ryan & Cassie Snyder

Website Anne Mitteness

Faith Lutheran Mission Statement:

*"Faith Lutheran is a
community of believers
living out our faith in
daily life."*

Remember to check the website for future happenings at Faith. If you know someone who does not have access to the website remember to share information with them.

If you have questions, please call the church office at 589-2970.

Pastor Vicki's Letter Continued—

decision. But let us rejoice, for God is good. We can spend more time with Jesus this holiday season whether we can be together or not. Keeping safe is so important.

My plan was to end my message with the lyrics of one of my favorite secular Christmas songs, "Where's the line to see Jesus?". Becky Kelley, the recording artist says that the song was inspired by and titled after what her four-year-old nephew asked her while they were waiting in line at the mall to see Santa. The music and lyrics were written by her father, Steve Haupt. What if there really were a line to see Jesus at the mall every Christmas?

But I have not heard back from the artist for permission to print it in our newsletter so if you have internet capabilities, you can find it online by searching "Where's the line to see Jesus" I so regret that permission was not granted by now. For those who don't have internet capabilities, perhaps a loved one can help.

I wish for you a beautiful Advent and a blessed Christmas for you and your loved ones. May you fill these upcoming busy days by adding in more time with Jesus.

In Christ,

Pastor Vicki

Blue Christmas—Tuesday, December 21st

December 21st is the longest night of the year. In person or online we will pray and remember with a service called **Blue Christmas: A service of night prayer for the winter solstice**. December 25th is celebrated as Christmas, the day of Jesus' birth. It is celebrated that day as Christmas because it had been incorrectly identified as the winter solstice. The early Christians intended this to be a feast of proclamation. God arrives by way of deep darkness. Christians wanted to tell the world that God, the maker of the cosmos, chose to lovingly draw near to our broken world by way of a human birth on the longest night of the year. God's love for us goes deep and does not fade or change with the seasons.

Christmas is a season of celebration but for many of us, the lack of daylight intensifies other suffering. The weight of depression grows heavier when light is scarce. We become stressed when our calendars fill with extra social obligations. We fear interactions with family members that have been difficult in the past. Our losses in the past year and the years before often haunt us at Christmas. This past year especially, all of us have had losses. Some have lost loved ones and there are also other losses that can cause us pain. Perhaps one has lost the ability to do things because of health, or lost their job and also finances then have become tight. There are so many things we grieve at this time of year.

So this service offers the message of Christmas that is specifically sent for those in pain and suffering. It is not always that "all is merry and bright." Rather it is the abiding truth that God seeks to be with us, even when we are "blue". I have found this service healing to all who have attended in the past. I hope you can join me for this special service.

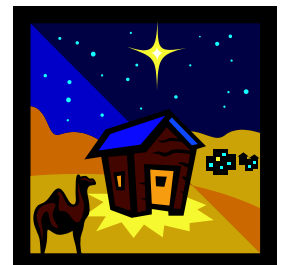
Permission granted: Sundays and Seasons, © 2021 Augsburg Fortress.

Watch Facebook and Faith's website to learn the status of this service and all the others being planned.

Christmas Eve Worship

The Church Council will meet on Sunday, December 5th to make a decision on the Christmas Eve Worship Services. Please check the website, church bulletins or call for information.

Thank you for understanding.



Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 12th
11:00am

Followed by Lunch
in the Fellowship
Hall

All are Welcome
and Invited to
attend the
program and the
lunch !



The Restoration Center is
able to receive some clothing
again.

The things they particularly
need are men's jeans and
warm pants, long underwear,
skull caps, winter coats and
clothing, and suitcases with
wheels.

Wednesday Evening Advent

Worship Services at 7:00pm

December 1

December 8

December 15

*If there are changes to this in person
service—we will put something on the
webpage and in the church bulletins.*

Plan to attend

We will again have the following
trees in the narthex:

- Mitten tree—we are collecting mittens,
gloves, caps, scarves
- Adopt a Family—we are collecting for members of
families —there will be information of things that are
needed for each member of some area families who
are in need of items for Christmas.



Thank You



Offering envelopes for 2022

Not everyone is using offering envelopes now with so many options for giving; or members are using leftover envelopes. I did order some envelopes for 2022—they are slow on shipping this year.

When they are available I will put a note in the bulletin or you can check when it gets closer to 2022.

Thank You, Connie



**Worship Services on the Morris
Public Access Channel**

(if you have one of the two cable services
of Federated or Mediacom) will be on
**Tuesdays at 11:00 and
Thursdays at 1:30**

**Church Council Meeting December 5
(Sunday)**

10:00 Following the Worship Service

Burgers, Beverages and Blessings

No 3B in December

See you in January

Mission:Stitch

JOIN US FOR MISSION: STITCH!

Tuesday afternoons in the lounge at Faith
Lutheran Church

TUESDAYS beginning at 1:30

Come when you can, stay as long as you feel
like it. We are tentatively planning on
1:30-4:30 but the ending time could change
if people want to stay a little later. You do
not need to be present for the whole time.
This group is open to anyone. You do not
have to be a member of Faith Lutheran –
invite your friends, family, anyone who is
interested in joining us.

Questions—talk to Anita Stoker

Do Days

Will meet on **all Tuesdays in
December beginning
at 9:00am**

Bring a sack lunch

All are welcome

No experience necessary

Come for the fellowship



THANK YOU for all of the Generous Donations

**In the month of November we had several areas of ministry we
collected for—Thank You to all who donated!!**

- Hygiene Kits (men's) for Central Lutheran**
- Crackers for Morris Area Elementary School students**
- Stevens County Food Shelf**
- Operation Christmas Child—items and shipping fees**
- Support for our missionaries in Tanzania**

THANK YOU



Sr. High Fusion Youth: Youth in 9th-12th Grade

Dec 5th – Sr. High Fusion 6:30-8pm at First Lutheran Church

Dec 12th – Sr. High Fusion 6:30-8pm at First Lutheran Church

Dec 18th - Live Nativity: 5-7pm Students & adults will sign up to be actors in the Live Nativity held at the fairgrounds. Come and see us!

Dec 19th - Christmas Party (Details to come!)



Element Schedule: Youth in 6th-8th Grade

Dec 1st – Element @First Lutheran Church 6-7:30pm

Dec 8th – Element @First Lutheran Church 6-7:30pm

Dec 15th – Element Christmas Party @First Lutheran Church 6-7:30pm

Dec 18th - Live Nativity: 5-7pm Students & adults will sign up to be actors in the Live Nativity held at the fairgrounds. Come and see us!

Fusion Youth Ministry Needs:

Also, we would love to provide a Bible study for the parents of Sr High Fusion and Element to be held on Wed nights. We would need 2 people who would be interested in leading that Bible study with the parents who are interested.

Please check out Fusion's updated website for more information. www.fusion-ministry.com

Join us on social media Facebook@fusion56267 and Instagram@fusion56267

Sunday Bulletins

We know not everyone is comfortable attending church in person.
If you are not attending in person and would like a bulletin please let Connie know (phone number 589-2970).

We have options to get you a bulletin:

- Someone can drop one off
- One can be mailed
- One can be emailed it to you

We want everyone to stay updated on things going on at church.

Radio Broadcast—Daily Devotions Sponsorship

The daily devotion radio broadcasts (Monday—Friday) on KMRS and KKOK are \$90.00 per week—if you would like to help with this ministry please call the church office and let us know. Any amount is appreciated.

Thank You!

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Thank You to Everyone who contributed items for the Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes and monetary donations for the shipping charges.

We again had a GREAT assortment of items and shipped 207 boxes.



Thank You to all who support this ministry.





What: ELCA National Youth Gathering

When: July 24-28, 2022

Where: Minnesota

Who: Students in Grades 9-12

For More Information—Please contact Danielle Lesmeister or Amy Swanson

Registration deadline is approaching so if you are interested—please talk to Danielle or Amy or call the church office for a registration form.

There are so many people in our congregation who have attended as students and/or chaperones who have great memories. Plan to attend!

ELCA Youth Gathering Overview

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.

Annual Reports

Reminder to all ministry groups to have the report for the year in the church office by **December 15** so the Annual Report can be printed for the Annual Meeting.

Thank You



Luther Crest Summer 2022 Camp Registration

Registration for Summer Camp 2022 opened on November 1, 2021.

You will be able to register your camper on their website at www.luthercrest.org.

Reminder – Faith Lutheran Church will pay half of the registration fee (on the lowest fee for the camp) for members of Faith – one camp per child per year.

**Early Bird Deadline is
February 14th**

Book Club

Come join us for a Book Club at Faith Lutheran Church on the last Monday of each month at 1:30.

December date is Monday, December 27th.

All are Welcome.

December book will be “The Silver Ladies of Penny Lane” by Dee MacDonald

An absolutely hilarious feel good novel.

If you have questions, talk to Karen Uphoff.

Please bring book suggestions so we can plan a few months ahead.

Happy Reading!

Gatherings for Widows and Widowers

Please join in fellowship with others who are experiencing life as a widow or widower. *Gatherings for Widows and Widowers* will meet for lunch, 12:00 noon, at **Common Cup on Sunday, December 5.** Order and purchase your lunch, and enjoy the company of others.

For questions, please call Pedersen Funeral Home 320-589-3220.

Noisy Offering Sunday

December 12th will be the next time

The second Sunday of each month will be Noisy Offering Sunday – remember to bring your change to church for the children to collect in buckets.

October amount collected was **\$158.23**

November amount collected was **\$209.05**

Thank You to Everyone who contributed!

December Daily Bible Verses

1. Jeremiah 29:11	11. Philippians 4:19	21. John 10:10
2. Psalm 105:4	12. Ephesians 5:20	22. Psalm 136:26
3. John 10:4	13. Proverbs 29:25	23. 2 Corinthians 4:18
4. Proverbs 3:6	14. Job 12:10	24. Isaiah 9:6
5. Psalm 29:2	15. 1 Peter 4:11	25. Luke 2:1-7
6. Isaiah 41:13	16. 1 Corinthians 16:23	26. Luke 2:8-20
7. Romans 8:1	17. Ezekiel 11:19	27. Matthew 17:20
8. John 7:38	18. Matthew 11:28	28. Psalm 97:1
9. John 8:12	19. Deuteronomy 32:4	29. Joshua 1:9
10. Romans 5:1	20. Mark 14:38	30. Mark 5:36
		31. 1 John 5:11-12

YOUR PRAYERS NEEDED

-Pray for our ongoing ministry as we join with our brothers and sisters in ministry from South Africa. Pray for the churches of the South Eastern Diocese of South Africa.

-Pray for Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson and their children who are serving in Tanzania.

Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (NRSV)



GIVE THE GIFT OF FAITH

Consider a financial gift to Fusion this holiday season and watch the money **DOUBLE!**



WE HAVE A 2:1 MATCH!

To Donate:

Mail or drop off a check to your church office and add "Fusion 2:1" in memo line.

The money that you give is used to directly build the ministry for the youth of Morris, Cyrus, Hancock, Donnelly and the surrounding area!

Watch Our Tree Grow—ELCA Good Gifts

We will again be collecting for the ELCA Good Gifts

Given by: _____

Please return this form and donation amount to the Church Office by December 26. Thank you

_____ Chicks	\$10.00
_____ School Supplies for a Child	\$10.00
_____ Bibles for Global Church	\$12.00
_____ Rooster	\$15.00
_____ Honeybees	\$20.00
_____ Pig	\$30.00
_____ Water Filter	\$30.00
_____ School Fees & Uniform for a Girl	\$40.00
_____ Goat	\$50.00
_____ Feed a Refugee Family	\$50.00
_____ Feed 50 at a Soup Kitchen	\$100.00
_____ Pair of Goats	\$100.00
_____ Microloan for a Woman	\$125.00
_____ Latrine	\$150.00
_____ Undesignated	\$_____ (any amount may be given)



The Outreach Committee has an annual financial commitment to support our missionaries in Tanzania, Dr. Stephen and Jodi Swanson. Because we have been unable to hold our fundraisers for this purpose, we are seeking monetary donations from the congregation. Please bring your donation to the church office. Thank you for supporting this ministry!

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, January 30th**. If we need to postpone because of bad weather we will then have the meeting on Sunday, February 6th. **Plan to attend.**

Pedersen Funeral Home's Annual Holiday Service, "A Time To Remember" will be held **Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Pedersen Funeral Home in Morris. This memorial service is centered on keeping memories of loved ones alive to help endure the pain that the holidays can bring following a death.

There will be scripture readings and special music during the service, along with a reading of all the names of those who have died in this area within the last year. This service is open to everyone, even if your family hasn't experienced a death within the last year.

Reverend Chris Richards will lead this year's ecumenical service, along with a variety of ministers from all the surrounding communities.

Faith Lutheran Church Council Highlights

November 14, 2021

<p>Members present- Pastor Vicki, Connie, Lynnae Lina, Lisa Loew, Vicky Dosdall, Mark Torgerson, Nancy Olson, Nichole Mahoney, Liz Spohr</p> <p>Members Absent - Tony Reimers, Matt Solemsaas, Eric Meichsner, Todd Hodenfield, Mike Nordquist</p> <p>Liz - call to order</p> <p>Pastor Vicki- opening prayer</p> <p>Pastor's report - handout. Confirmation for 11 9th graders. Next week music and worship meeting and talk about advent midweek services. Visited 15 members in October in facilities or their home. Off December 26 to January 1. Has fulfilled continuing Ed for the year.</p> <p>Connie's report - attached to agenda. Needs annual reports from each committee and anything for year end report.</p> <p>Fusion/Element - Danielle and Amy speak with council about program. Curriculum switched this year and is much better and kids are learning. Leave options open for new pastor to decide on program moving forward. Discussed concerns about program. Have Lonnie Anderson meet with council.</p> <p>Ministry reports:</p> <p>Congregational Life - no meeting</p> <p>Outreach - no meeting</p> <p>Worship and Music - Christmas Eve service planning. Decide on live nativity.</p> <p>Memorial/Endowment - met and trying to get Kingery family in January</p> <p>Property and Safety - Scott Bahr take out parking cement spots</p> <p>Education - Sunday school program December 12 at 11 am with worship at 9 am. Lunch served afterwards. Rotations going fine.</p> <p>Celebrate and Share - Vocation Sunday next week.</p> <p>Women of Faith - no meeting. Decorating Saturday, November 27th</p> <p>Secretary's Report - can't approve until next meeting</p> <p>Treasurer's Report - can't approve until next meeting. Ahead about \$50,000 for the year.</p>	<p>Old Business:</p> <p>Worship service - online worship about same as last month. Continue as is.</p> <p>Call Committee - met and created rules for interviews. How many votes to decide to interview and advance to 2nd interview and to present to church as a candidate. Reporting from call committee to council - council gets a name when will present to church. Can update council if have names for candidates or interviews set up. Miscellaneous expenses involved with interview process and practice interview.</p> <p>New Business:</p> <p>Covid protocols - changed protocols a little bit based on numbers. Do children's sermon in a way to distance kids. Ask people to sit distanced from others not in your family.</p> <p>Thanksgiving Eve, Advent, and Christmas services are being planned.</p> <p>Nominating Committee - Molly Fluegel to chair committee.</p> <p>Executive Committee to meet and come up with a budget for next year.</p> <p>Annual meeting January 30th; backup date February 6th</p> <p>Next council meeting December 5, 2021</p> <p>Adjournment and Lord's Prayer</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Lisa Loew</p> <p>Council secretary</p>
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FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA

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Youth Director of Fusion Ministry	Heather Black	
Pianist	Rita Lambert	
Director of Music	John Kleinwolterink	
Custodians	Ryan & Cassie Snyder	
Website	Anne Mitteness	

Congregational Church Council

Liz Spohr —President	Lynnae Lina—Vice President		
Lisa Loew—Secretary	Mark Torgerson—Treasurer		
Vicky Dosdall	Todd Hodenfield	Nichole Mahoney	Eric Meichsner
Mike Nordquist	Nancy Olson	Tony Reimers	Matt Solemsaas

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Website www.faithlutheranmorris.org (Worship Services can be viewed on the website)