



February 2016 Newsletter



take up the shield of faith

Ephesians 6:16

From Pastor Nate

Take Note...

Lent begins on
Ash Wednesday,
February 10
with our Ash
Wednesday service
at 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday Lent
Services:**
February 17
February 24
March 2
March 9
March 16

Maundy Thursday
March 24

Don't forget our
Soup Suppers
before Lent Services
at 6 p.m. beginning
February 17!

As we are preparing to leave for our mission trip to the Sunbeam Boy's Home, I would invite you to read Maureen Miller's reflections from last year's trip to Jamaica. Maureen truly has a heart for missions and wrote a very descriptive and insightful letter that captures the essence of how these trips change the lives of the missionaries and those they are called to serve. Look for this on pages 5-6

A reminder that Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday service on February 10th. Soup suppers begin on Wednesday, February 17, at 6:00pm and our confirmation class will be performing skits based on parables told by Jesus.

Please join in the fellowship, worship, and supporting our confirmands on Wednesday evenings in Lent.

Pr. Nate Bjorge

President's Message

Dear Fellow Members of Faith,

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Tom Lippert and I have been given the honor of serving as our congregation's chairperson for 2016. I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that we will face together in the coming year. My wife Linda and I are charter members of Faith Lutheran, and I have served on the council since our first annual meeting. It has truly been an honor as well as a blessing to us both to be members of such an awesome church! What God has accomplished through this congregation in a few short years never ceases to amaze me. We set a goal early on to have a worship facility we could call our own, and with God's grace & guidance he has answered our prayers with this beautiful facility. In his annual report Pastor Nate talked about the need to set long term goals for our congregation. I personally think this is a great idea, and plan to make it a priority for this year's council to address. Please visit with our council members about what you feel our 5 and 10 year goals as a congregation should be. The more input they get from the members, the easier their job is! Please pray for wisdom and guidance for us that His will be done.

For His team,
Tom Lippert

Mission & Outreach Team

Seeking New Members - Approves 2016 Budget

Is God calling you to the mission field? There are many ways to serve beyond traveling to a foreign country for short-term or long-term mission trips. You can cultivate this ministry right here at Faith by serving on the Mission and Outreach Team. Maybe you know someone who is a good fit for the team. Maureen Miller recently completed her second three-year term on the team and Jan Schrupp will be leaving the team as well. In addition, our team was already short at least one member. To help provide leadership in the mission field, Linda Lippert has agreed to join the team for 2016. Listen to God's voice. Is He calling you?

The Mission and Outreach Team approved its 2016 budget. Some discussion focused on whether fixed percentages for local, state/national and international missions should be set and followed. The team decided that setting strict percentages could be stifling and limit the team's ability to respond to unexpected needs. The consensus was to try to strike a balance among the three categories. In a related matter, the team is exploring additional mission projects to support in 2016. Do you have an idea? Please share with team members.

In other Mission Team news, preparations for the Jamaica mission trip to Sunbeam Boys Home are continuing. Team members discussed the confusion that exists among some members about the trip and how much the congregation is supporting the project and in what ways. The need to share information about financing for the trip as well as some specific stories about the good work being done at the home was suggested. The congregation makes an annual donation of \$2,000 to the home similar to many other mission-supported activities and also provides financial support for the project that the team will be working on while in Jamaica. Travel expenses for individuals making the trip are the responsibility of specific team members, although some church fund-raisers help support such expenses. Congregation members are encouraged to share any concerns with Mission and Outreach Team members.

Attendance & Offering

January	3: 182	\$ 4,983
January	10: 164	\$ 4,260
January	17: 144	\$ 3,465
January	24: 201	\$ 5,210
January	31: 182	\$ 3,323

Children's Team Meeting Notes

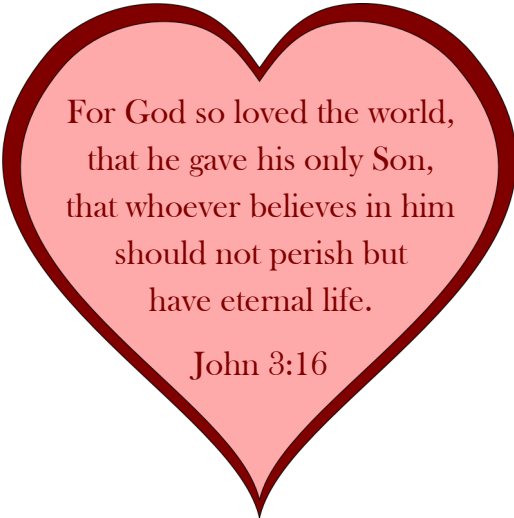
January 13, 2016 6:30 pm-7:20 pm

Members that attended: Leeanne Wolbeck, Tracy Marcus, Annie Mathison

During this evening's meeting the Ministry Team discussed the Father/Daughter Ball announcement for the bulletin in regards to people donating dress(es) or shoes for people to borrow, keep, or donate to the next event.

The team also discussed the requirements for the meeting notes and when the notes needed to be turned in by each month.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, February 10, 2016 at 6:30 pm.



For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him
should not perish but
have eternal life.

John 3:16

News from the Congregational Life Committee

January 2016 Meeting

Philippians 3:13-14 "Brothers and Sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do; forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." As we face a new year there is so much to contemplate. Our verse says that we are to forget what is behind and go ahead. I do totally agree with that but I also want to stop and remember what God has done for us and how he has blessed us as a church in 2015. I still marvel at where 6 short years has taken us. Every time that I think about this I realize that God has done great things in all of our lives and working together for His honor and glory is the result of our Family of Faith and what has been accomplished.

But now we are looking into 2016. I like the way that the Holman translation of the Bible says our verse. "But one thing I do; forgetting what is behind and REACHING forward to what is ahead." Our challenge is to **REACH OUT!** And I truly believe that we can do this. First as a Child of God, we can reach out to those around us and show the love of Jesus to them. This can be as simple as a smile, a hug or just showing someone that we care. As a church body our first responsibility, and as Pastor Nate has taught us so often, is to continue in the Word. That is where the power is. Being in the Word and following in prayer there will be no challenge too difficult for us.

The Congregational Life Committee gives us many opportunities to reach out. The events that we help plan and sponsor help us to have greater fellowship with one another and many chances to invite others to worship with us and grow in our Christian lives. We will continue to reach for the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. I have just finished reading a new book called, "Kingdom Invaders" by Randy Kennedy. It is Postmodern Threats to Biblical Christianity. We do not want Satan to have any part in our Family of Faith but as we press on and continue in the Word and Prayer God will keep us strong and our focus in all the right places of service.

We are not just making an impact in our church and our community, but also in the world. It is exciting to see a group of adults and young people going all the way to Jamaica to share the love of Jesus. Each one of these people had to make a sacrifice in their personal lives to do this. They are giving of themselves and their time, talents, and resources for this to be a reality. It will be exciting when they come back home and tell us all that God is doing, not just in Jamaica but in their lives as well. Remember to pray daily for all of them.

God is going to use each one of us this year as we REACH OUT! Thank you for serving together with us.

2016 IS GOING TO BE AN AWESOME YEAR!

Mission Statement

As Children of God, we are called to love, glorify and submit to the Living Christ, ministering to others by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.



Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand** your ground, and after you have done everything, **to stand. Stand** firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:16

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Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting

6:00 p.m. January 21, 2016

Present: Al Bauman, Cheryl Zarns, Noel Guerard, Howie Larsen, Pr. Nate, Mark Whittington, Dave ZumBerge, Jason Leibold, Tracy Marcus, Rich Collins
Absent: Maureen Miller, Tom Lippert, Pat Rioux

Treasurer's Report: as of December 31, 2015

PROFIT & LOSS YTD	
Income	39,094.35
Expenses	24,690.38
Adjusted Net Income after total other expenses	14,403.97
 BALANCE SHEET YTD	
Total Current Assets	112,985.49
Total Fixed Assets	1,350,736.33
Total Assets.....	1,463,769.55
Total Liabilities.....	704,941.26
Total Equity.....	758,828.29
 DESIGNATED Savings	
Gen. Reserve Sav. Bal	20,801.12
Park. Lot/Landscaping Fund	25,072.82
	257.71

The meeting opened with devotions led by Pastor Nate. Rich Collins moved and Al Bauman seconded to accept the secretary's report. Motion carried.

ATTENTION MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS and corresponding council reps:

Please remind your ministry teams that monthly meeting reports are needed for the council to do the work of the church. *These reports are DUE the 25th of each month and should copy Sarah, team members, and council reps.*

Treasurer's Report: The accounts balance with the financial secretary's report and with the bank. Howie Larsen moved to accept the treasurer's report with Tracy Marcus seconding. Motion passed.

Pastor's Report: The senior lunch for January will take place on February 16, at 12:00. Seniors are encouraged to bring a senior friend. Pastor Nate's Father will speak at the Wild Game Dinner and will also preach at services the next day.

Old Business: The Father Daughter Ball is scheduled for February 28, 2016. Sign up sheets for the new picture directory are on the narthex table. Please sign up to reserve your time. Pictures will be taken in the nursery room. Jason Leibold will look into installing strip outlets on the kitchen serving counter to facilitate the multiple crock pots we use for our lenten soup suppers. Al Bauman suggested checking into getting a security system estimate from Radio Shack, and will also see if having a system would lower our insurance rates.

New Business: Pat and Cheryl Rioux have resolved the problems with the church answering machine. As regards a new computer for the church secretary, Cheryl Rioux researched and chose the Dell Optiplex 3020 for \$881.00. After discussion, Noel Guerard moved with Jason Leibold seconding to purchase the computer. Motion carried. We are looking into solutions for lighting under the outside drive canopy. Discussed were the merits of light activated motion sensor vs. putting the existing lights on a photo eye (dusk to dawn) line. There will be a sign up sheet on the narthex table for the Faith 24 hour prayer vigil to begin Good Friday, March 25, at 3 p.m. in one hour increments, ending at 3 p.m. Saturday, March 26.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer. The next Council meeting is Thursday, February 18, 2016, at 6:00 p.m. Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Zarns, Council Secretary

Mission Trip Reflections by Maureen Miller

Dear Partners in Mission to Sunbeam Boys' Home,

First of all, I would like to thank you again for your investment in this mission! Whether you gave a monetary donation or prayed for us, or both; it was very much appreciated! In the days since returning home from Jamaica I have been overwhelmed by a myriad of emotions; ranging from joy to shame and everything in between! I have no doubt that the trip was a success and we were able to touch the lives of the boys at Sunbeam. My unsettled emotions lie in the "what now" and "what next" and "why me" variety. God has proven as faithful and true as always in my life, so why am I so distraught?

Let me share how the week progressed so you too may see the reasons for my emotional state. After a long first day of travel we arrived at Sunbeam just after 11 PM. With the boys' help we lugged our 30+ suitcases and backpacks into the dorms. We were exhausted and ready for bed but after a quick glance around, I knew I wouldn't be able to sleep! The bunks had clean, worn sheets, the floors and walls were peeling paint. Once I lay down and saw the huge stain on the ceiling my mind wouldn't stop thinking about bats and other critters invading what I now considered my space! I did manage a couple of hours of sleep but finally gave up to the sound of the resident rooster's crow about 5 AM. Thus day 2 began!

I was showered and dressed and down to the kitchen meeting Mrs. Bryan the home's cook by 7 AM. I helped her make breakfast by slicing and buttering bread then toasting it on a griddle. During our preparations I had my first opportunity to chat with one of the boys. Leslie was affectionately referred to as "Kitchen Helper Extraordinaire!" While Mrs. Bryan scrambled eggs for our team, I returned to wake the others for the day. Each morning, during breakfast, Heather would review the day's plan and we would enjoy each other's presence with fun teasing and easy banter. We felt odd that we had to eat before the boys for each meal. At first we felt uncomfortable and rude making those hungry boys wait while we enjoyed our leisurely meals. We later learned that it was their way of honoring us as their guests. Sunday's plan was to go to church with the boys then unpack and organize our suitcases. Due to lack of sleep it was a long day but a good day of relaxing, touring the grounds, seeing the farm animals and chatting with and getting to know some of the boys. During the afternoon I learned that one boy's name was Jason Miller, after that I called him my son. Our evening team meeting was brief and we all slept well!

Monday morning began with my doing the morning devotions with the boys. I read from my "Jesus Calling" book. I then began sharing things about my life that I had not planned or even thought of as appropriate to share with boys I didn't know but I do know that the things said were Spirit-led and though emotional for me, were exactly what God planned to be shared! After breakfast, Pastor Nate, Adam and I took a taxi into town to get the last of the food we needed and to purchase supplies and paint for the dorms. Naively we thought it would be a quick trip! Several hours later we returned with most but not all of the food items and NO paint! We did manage to get a light switch and some hinges that needed replacing on a couple of cabinets. To say those hours were a trial to our "American" expectation is an understatement! Especially since even our taxi driver was getting frustrated with the lack of help at the hardware store! We had a busy afternoon doing some repairs. Late in the afternoon we gathered the boys and constructed the bat houses we'd brought. The boys all wanted to use the one drill we had and it was very crazy and disorganized as the boys became frustrated with waiting and we became frustrated too, but we persevered and got the job done!

After breakfast on Tuesday morning, we walked into Spring Village to meet up with Randy Finnikin, a former Sunbeam boy and sponsored "son" of the Hokensons in Little Falls and the Chairman of Sunbeam, at the Technical College he is running. It was a great morning hearing the history of Sunbeam and God's work in the development of the college. There was a huge gap from when the boys graduated High School and left Sunbeam to them living a productive adult life. Many of the boys would return to living in dire conditions like the ones they originally came from. The college is now starting to fill that gap. It is a long, slow process but the minds of the local people are changing to accept these new ways of thinking. The hardest part to hear was how the whole country of Jamaica has a 70% unemployment rate and how even with the education the boys receive, many are unable to find work. I continue to pray for hope and success! When we returned to Sunbeam we gathered a few boys at a time and made the fleece tie-blankets that the Faith Comforters Quilting Group had provided. They loved them! The boys have so few personal items and to have a blanket was very special to each of them! It was so much fun to see them working hard to finish their blankets and later to see them wear the blankets to our evening devotion time!

Wednesday we had an early start to our Pilgrimage Day into Kingston. Our first stop was at a homeless shelter. It was a cement structure with a roof and no walls. It had about 25 picnic tables and about 100 people milling about. We thought we would be feeding the people breakfast, but were asked to just walk around and visit with the people. The smells around us were nauseating and the looks of some of the people were very terrifying. We brought 3 of the Sunbeam boys with us; Omar who is 13 and new to Sunbeam, stayed very close to me. I could tell he was as uncomfortable as I was.

I started asking him a few questions and he shared that he and his 2 sisters lived on the streets with his mom but he had no idea where they were. I was heartbroken for him! We stayed what felt like hours but was only about an hour! We then journeyed to the National Park to see the Jamaican Hero's and watch the "Changing of the Guard"; a remnant of British rule.

Our next stop was a Home for the elderly and disabled. This was another eye-opening experience! There were elderly and crippled people lying on benches or the grass sleeping and flies kept landing on them. I was shown into a room by a nurse's aide. There I met, visited and prayed with a woman named Sherleen, who was suffering from very painful arthritis. There were 8 beds in the room, sheets but no pillows or blankets. One of the women was singing Negro Spiritual songs mixed with Christmas songs "Swing low sweet chariot... Silent Night, Holy Night... Wade in the water..." She had a beautiful voice, and it was wrenchingly sad but oddly comforting at the same time. Sherleen shared how her husband died 2 years ago and just 2 weeks ago her eldest son died. She said he had fallen and broken his hip but no one found him for days and when he finally got to the doctor it was too late and he died! I was so distraught when I walked out of the room that it was all I could do not to sit down and bawl my eyes out! After a bit of a search through the maze of buildings and people I finally found the rest of the group a few blocks down the street. They were visiting with a wheelchair-bound man who was a talented artist. He had paintings strewn on the ground and was asking us to buy them. None of us had any money so we were unable to help him.

Next we had lunch before heading to an orphanage. This was the highlight of our day! One of the first girls I met was about 12 years old. She told me she was Leslie's sister and was looking to see if he was with us because she hadn't seen him for almost 2 years! Imagine living about 20 miles from your sister/brother and never being able to see them and know they were okay! I hugged her and told her he was fine and a wonderful help in the kitchen. She seemed somewhat encouraged by this. The children were so sweet, trusting and happy. It was a nice, but crowded home and after our earlier experiences a relief to see! We then stopped at a hardware store and bought the paint we needed for just one of the dorm rooms and a bathroom. This was a short stop, only an hour! We arrived back at Sunbeam about 6 PM. After such a long. Emotionally-draining day, it was difficult to think about making dinner. But since it was New Years Eve, we made pizza for dinner. That was a huge mistake! One very old gas oven that doesn't regulate the temperature and cooking one pizza at a time took hours to bake 8 big cookie-sheet size pizzas! Most of the boys had never had pizza before, and probably never will again! We also baked cookies for a special treat too, thankfully they turned out better than the pizzas.

Thursday was our last full day at Sunbeam. After breakfast, we started painting. Our youth each chose a boy to assist us. When I was walking to the room to start painting, Eric who is a ten year-old autistic boy, stopped me when he gestured for me to sit beside him while he ate his corn porridge. So instead of checking on the kids in the dorm, which I would later regret somewhat, I sat beside Eric and encouraged him to eat. When I sat on the love seat he kept pushing me. Finally, I moved enough for him to reach into a rip in the upholstery to get out his biscuit! I chatted quietly with Eric and teased him about the biscuit, it was precious to see his big brown eyes looking at me so intently. Something people with autism are normally not comfortable doing, a very precious time indeed. So after that 30 minute delay I entered the dorm room that our youth were painting. Somehow, I'm not sure how, I did NOT scream bloody murder! There were 10 kids, each holding a brush or roller of yellow paint and more paint was on the floor, beds, bedding and bodies than the walls! Yikes! After assessing the situation, I asked for only 3 people to stay and the rest would need to go find something else to do. They were all a bit shocked but willingly left. I did what I could to wash the floor and rinse out some brushes before shoving all the beds into the middle of the room and starting over.

After lunch Kaj Bjorge and "my boy" Jason returned and we finished the room in no time. Heather also had to reduce the "help" in the bathroom because the cleaning was taking longer than the painting. By 4 PM I was exhausted and need a break and a cuppa tea! I recruited the girls on our team to go bake brownies for our dessert that night and went outside in search of a bit of quiet. It was while I was sitting watching a few boys play marbles that Eric came to me again, I was taking photos of the boys playing marbles and Eric wanted to see the pics. I showed him my phone then snapped a picture of the two of us. After I took that picture Eric got up to roam for a few minutes. He then returned to me and laid his head on my lap. I was so overcome with emotion, I started to silently cry. I rubbed Eric's back and he fell asleep. Eric has a brother named Junior who then came over and sat next to him and rubbed his back too. I smiled at Junior through my tears and he nodded and quietly walked away. All I could think was how these poor precious boys don't get the love and affection of a mother, abandoned yet so loved by our Lord and Savior Jesus! It was then that I remembered how at worship on Sunday morning Junior shared that the best thing in his life was that Jesus saved his life! WOW!

After a very teary good-bye we left the boys on Friday morning. To say this trip changed my life is an understatement! I am forever changed by the grace of God's love and mercy and will hold tightly to the memories of all "My Boys" at Sunbeam! Thanks again for being part of this experience!

Much Love and gratitude,
Maureen