



March



March 2024 Newsletter

take up the shield of faith Ephesians 6:16

Take Note...

Online giving now available on our website: faithlutheranlittlefalls.org



Lent Schedule:

Wednesdays,
 March 6, 13, 20
 6:00 p.m. Lent Soup Supper
 7:00 p.m. Lent Worship

Thursday, March 28
 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Worship

Friday, March 29
 12 noon Community Good Friday Worship at Living Hope
 2:00 p.m. Prayer & Healing Worship
 3:00 p.m. 24-Hour Prayer Vigil Begins

Sunday, March 31
 8:00 a.m. Easter Breakfast
 9:30 a.m. Easter Worship
 10:45 a.m. Egg Hunt (following worship)

From Pastor Mark...

Preparing for Holy Week:

Why is Good Friday Called *Good*?

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” **Hebrews 12:2 (KJV)**

On Friday, March 29, Christians will observe Good Friday as part of Holy Week. This explanation of why Good Friday is called *Good* is based on a devotional by the faithfully departed theologians Gerhard Frost and Gerhard Belgum.

When the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus is the “finisher” of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), our minds are irresistibly drawn to a word that Christ spoke on the Cross. We call it the Sixth Word: “It is *finished!*” (John 19:30).

What was finished? The *perfect life* was *finished*. The only perfect life in the world’s history was, in a matter of moments, not just ended, but completed. What does it mean? It means that He did for us what we cannot do for ourselves, fulfill to perfect completeness the Holy Law (what we *should* do). It means that His righteousness is now ours through Grace (this is GOSPEL, the Good News of what God *does for us*). This is possible if we live in a vital and unhypocritical relationship of trust in Jesus Christ. The perfect life was *finished*.

What was finished? *His suffering* was *finished*. The physical torture of nails, the crown of thorns, the ugly anger of the crowd, and the suffering brought on by my sins. He was willing to take on our griefs and our sorrows. Now His suffering is finished.

What was finished? *Your forgiveness* was *finished*. Your power to live a life that counts. Your eternal reconciliation with God. All this was finished. Now you are clean through His blood.

And so the writer to the Hebrews tells us, “Look to Him who is the author and finisher of our faith.” Set aside the things that hold you back. Run the race with patience. When weary and faint, look to the Christ of the Cross. This is the Word of and from God today: *Look to the Christ of the Cross*.

In Christ,
Pastor Johnson

President's Message

Greetings Family of Faith,

When I first thought about what to write for this month, I thought I would write about Spring. This morning, I received a text from our daughter, who lives near Fargo. This is what she said. "Here in Fargo, we had a record high of 61 degrees yesterday. Today we are in a blizzard warning with 25 below wind chills! It is a snow day for all of us. Crazy!" We have had a very mild winter so far this year and for the most part, it already feels like spring - but God is in charge, This weather could change rapidly. I'll write about Spring next month.

So, today I'm thinking about change. Change can be wonderful but at the same time challenging. One of our natural responses to change is - "This is great!". Another response is - "No way! I hate it." The way I try to address change is to do my best to keep an open mind and rely on God to lead me. Easier said than done, however.

There are many Bible verses that give us encouragement regarding change. These two stand out for me. From Lamentations 3:21-23. "But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." And when trials come my way, this verse is one I need to turn to. From Romans 12:12 - "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulations, be constant in prayer."

We have seen change first hand at Faith during the last few months. Pastor Mark has brought us new ideas; different ways of conducting worship services; and a challenge to dig deeper into the Bible. He has done these things not to force his will on us but to present different perspectives in ways to worship God; to think of new ways to spread the Good News of Christ; and to bring us closer to God through His teachings in the Bible. Along with Pastor Mark, we are blessed to have Sarah and Isaac with us. All of them are so outgoing and willing to be a big part of our faith journey together.

At our last church council meeting we welcomed four new members. I was impressed, but not surprised, at how quickly they all joined in during our discussions and decisions. There is one thing I didn't do last Sunday during the installation of the council. I neglected to introduce three of the council members who couldn't be at the service. They are: Steve Fellbaum (Children's Team); Joe Hyatt (Finance Team and treasurer); and Chris Scholl (Finance team).

Change. To me, change just for the sake of doing something different is not anything to embrace. Change for good reasons, while sometimes challenging and hard to get used to, can be enlightening and make a difference in our lives. I, for one, am willing to accept enlightening change.

I pray we can all accept the changes at Faith Lutheran. God has blessed us as a congregation over and over. As long as we are faithful to Him, He will always be with us, watch over us, and guide us.

In peace and love,
Howie

**Faith's Core
Values:**
*Discipleship,
Hospitality,
Prayer,
Service,
Stewardship,
Worship,
and Unity*

Congregational Life Team

At our February meeting we welcomed Debbie Nelson to our team. We look forward to working together to coordinate all the upcoming events.

Our council reps are Howie Larsen and Pam Trang. Note the change. Steve Tschida had a conflict with time and date of our meetings so he is now on a different team. Our Wednesday evening soup suppers are going well. Remember to sign up on the sheet on the table or contact Amanda to sign up on line.

Our next events will be new member Sunday in March. We will be welcoming several people into our family of Faith.

We will have our Easter breakfast. Watch for more information on how to join in the celebration on Easter Sunday.

Please put any comments or ideas in the suggestion box on the table in the narthex or contact any or our Congregational Life team.

Bev for the team



Saint Patrick's Day is March 17th

We celebrate Saint Patrick's day to commemorate Saint Patrick, a 5th Century Romano-British Christian Missionary and Irish Bishop. The symbol is a Shamrock or three-leaf clover because he is credited with teaching the Trinity using a shamrock, showing people how there are three leaves in one shamrock like the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Ministry Volunteer Coordinator

There are more opportunities to dive into God's word, apply it to our lives and be in fellowship with one another!

Sarah Johnson will be hosting a Woman's Bible Study on Fridays at 8:30am. This will be on the sermon text for the upcoming Sunday. Ladies, grab your Bible and join Sarah in the Narthex for a discussion. This will begin March 8.

Maureen Miller and I will be hosting a Women's Study on Tuesdays. This study is titled "The Three-Mile Walk: The Courage to Live the Life God Wants for You" by Banning Liebscher. "Banning examines the life of Jonathan in 1 Samuel to show the journey of faith that believers must take to follow Christ. Through this study, you will discover the transformation Christ can bring to your life when you have courage to be who he has called you be." *christianbook.com*.

The study guide for this is \$13. There will be a sign-up March 3-March 17. This will begin March 26. When signing up, please specify if you would like 9am or 4:30pm.

Tod Tonsager will also be hosting a bible study. This study is titled "The Family Project" by Focus on the Family. "The Family Project vividly explores God's irreplaceable design for the family and examines the profound impact of biblical families on the world today. Rediscover God's original purpose - renew faith in His timeless design - and reclaim the image of family from a changing modern-day perspective." *Focus on the Family*.

The study guide for this is \$13. There will be a sign-up March 3-March 24. This will be held on Wednesdays at 6:30pm in the sanctuary and will begin April 3.

If you are interested in hosting your own small group, please contact me if you would like help with getting started.

Please visit the sign-up table in the narthex or check out the online sign-up to see how you would like to help with Sunday/Wednesday services. Do you like to bake? Maybe find a friend and bake treats to serve refreshments following the service on Sundays! Your help is always appreciated!

Amanda Hyatt
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Mission Statement

Know, Grow, Go

- *Know* God and others
- *Grow* in Faith
- *Go* in Faith to Love and Serve the Lord



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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February Council Minutes

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting, February 15th, 2024, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Joe Hyatt, Michael Johnson, Howie Larsen, Zach Leibold, Tom Lippert, Jim Nelson, Faye Sandy, Chris Scholl, Renae Stueber, Pam Trang, Steve Tschida and Pastor Mark

Absent: Steve Fellbaum

The meeting was called to order and opening prayer led by Howie Larsen. Howie then welcomed the new council members.

Secretary's Report: Joe Hyatt moved and Tom Lippert seconded to accept the January Council Minutes, Annual meeting minutes and Council organizational minutes. Motion carried. Sarah also shared that she is working on updating the bulletin board and encouraging teams to update their contact lists and duties and responsibilities.

Treasurer's Report: Joe Hyatt presented the January financial reports. Income is \$4k below budget, which is in line with where we were last January. Expenses are about \$1,200 below budget. Overall, we are about \$3k behind where we should be for the budget. This is similar to where we were last year at this time. Jim Nelson moved and Tom Lippert seconded to approve the January Treasurer's Reports. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Mark had a meeting with Dave ZumBerge to discuss the current security protocols. He was impressed with the work the team puts in to training and security. The Alliance Defending Freedom webinar was today, 18 attended. Pastor Mark would like to schedule some sessions to re-watch the webinar on Sunday, April 14th after worship and the following day in the evening. Pastor Mark's new tax preparer recommends a change to the Housing Allowance. Tom Lippert moved and Faye Sandy seconded to approve a change to reallocate \$4k per year from salary to Housing Allowance. Motion carried. New Member information packets are being put together for the New Member information sessions which will be February 25 and March 3. The New Member Sunday is tentatively scheduled for March 10. Pastor Mark will also work on a statement of expectations for members which will be presented to the council next month. Eventually this will be something to put in the new member packets.

Ministry Volunteer Coordinator Report: Amanda's report shared the Visitation team she is working on putting together and what this team would be responsible for. The website is nearly ready with just a few additional items to update before it can go live. She also shared information about the webinar and how after the discussion, the group felt sharing it with a larger group of the congregation would be beneficial, as these aren't issues just those with children are facing.

Old Business:

Ministry Team Reports:

- Children's Team: Discussed the Christmas program needing one more rehearsal. Sunday School dismissal will be announced after the Children's message, an adult will help lead the kids to their classrooms. Lessons are being planned to be 25 minutes. A new Sunday School curriculum is being considered. Easter Egg hunt is being planned. They would like to have something about the meaning of Easter, not just candy. VBS is being planned for June 3-7. It will be at Alliance this year.
- Congregational Life Team: Debbie Nelson joined the team. Bev Larsen has applied to Coborns for the Brat sale again this year. Soup supper planning is underway. Joe Hyatt moved and Steve Tschida seconded to approve the Soup supper funds going to the Youth Mission Trip, as recommended by the team. Motion carried.
- Finance & Management Team: Guards for the attic sprinklers are done. Deb Colombe is working on creating a committee to oversee the columbarium. Pastor Mark has requested his Continuing education budget roll over from year to year if not used. This would require creating a fund. Jim Nelson moved and Steve Tschida seconded to create a fund for the continuing education money. Motion carried.
- Mission & Outreach Team: Pat Rioux is now the chair of this team. They will not be meeting until February 20th.
- Worship & Prayer Team: Updated their duties and responsibilities as well as their contact list, discussed Lent and Easter services coming up and the Worship band and how things are working there.
- Youth & Family Team: Joel Hanson is currently running this team. The mission trip is being planned to Indianapolis July 13-20.

2024 Goals: Howie Larsen recommended the council think on some goals for the congregation to work toward. Pastor Mark shared a diagram about our mission statement and values covering certain questions and how the goals should work toward the other questions we would need answered.

Sprinkler System in Attic: Joe Hyatt took care of protecting the sprinkler heads in the attic, but the area is not really meant for storage. It's meant for maintenance to access furnaces, the stairs are very steep and dangerous and storage in that area can actually be a fire hazard. The door is kept locked but the key is in the office and openly accessible. After the garage sale, the garage will be cleaned out and storage will be offered there but will need to be removed from the attic area for safety.

New Business:

Jamaica Mission Trip: Gene Hyatt joined the meeting to discuss the issues with Sunbeam Boys' Home and why the mission trip has been delayed. He shared 1 Peter 5:2-5 and shared information regarding what he knows of what's happening. The group is all adults and despite caution recommended on Jamaican travel, they still wish to go although they have looked into alternate locations. They hope to go March 23-31. The council decided to defer to the Mission & Outreach team and their recommendations and so recommended Gene to attend the Mission team meeting on the 20th.

Council Installation: February 25th.

Blue Star Flag/Armed Forces Devotional: In support for our members who are on active duty in the military we would like to display a blue star flag and share some Armed Forces devotional books with them. Howie will help determine how many stars we should display and how many are on active duty.

Thrivent Share Certificate Rollover: Jim Nelson will check the rates at US Bank and Sarah will check at Thrivent and they will bring recommendations back.

Website: Chris Scholl moved and Zach Leibold seconded to renew the subscription at wix.com using the funds from the Erik Mathison memorial. Motion carried. Amanda is working to get the website ready.

Driveway Paving: Patrick shared an estimate to have the gravel portion of our entrance drive paved. Although this is technically owned by the city, we could still pave it. The estimate is \$19,900. Joe Hyatt and George Sandy will get a few more bids before any decision is made, but a fundraiser would need to be done in order to raise the money to do this.

Bank Authorized Signers: The council members have changed so those authorized to sign at the bank also needs to change. James "Jim" Nelson, Cheryl Rioux and George Sandy need to be removed. Howie Larsen, Joe Hyatt and Faye Sandy will need to be added. Sarah Kalkbrenner will stay the same.

Olsen Family Benefit: A fundraiser is coming up for the Olsen family. Erik Olsen has brain cancer. The poster advertising the benefit will be on the bulletin board and the announcement will be in the bulletin. The council will recommend some funds from the Family Emergency Fund be donated as well.

Zach Leibold moved and Steve Tschida seconded to adjourn the February Council meeting.

The next meeting will take place March 21st, 2024.

Submitted by Sarah Kalkbrenner, Faith Lutheran Church Secretary

Attendance & Offering

February 4: 142 \$ 6,900
February 11: 195 \$ 5,621
February 18: 142 \$ 10,930
February 25: 148 \$ 3,253
Church Mortgage
Balance: \$182,978