



take up the shield of faith Ephesians 6:16

From Pastor Nate

Go to the Movies!

There are several Christian themed movies out right now: “I Can Only Imagine,” “Paul, Apostle of Christ,” and third installment of “God’s Not Dead.” I have heard positive reviews from church members on all of these films. Another film that was released last month is “Tortured for Christ.”

This film is based on the book, *Tortured for Christ*, by Richard Wurmbrand. Richard who was a member of the underground church was imprisoned in Russia for 8 ½ years, from 1948 to 1956. After he was released resulting from pressure from the West, he continued to preach the Gospel of Christ and was imprisoned again for 5 more years. He was subjected to extreme torture and suffering and forced to watch the suffering and death of other prisoners. When he was finally released again his body was literally broken from untreated broken bones. Wounds and scars covered his body, but like a diamond his spirit and his love for Christ was unbreakable.

Richard describes the look of “rapturous joy” on the faces of Communist captors as they tortured their prisoners, even crying out, “We are the devil.” And yet Richard refused to give up on these evil men because he had once been an atheist himself who even hated the notion of God. If God could reach his heart then maybe their hearts could also be reached and transformed.

In 1966, after Norway negotiated Richard’s release, he founded the Christian Mission *The Voice of the Martyrs* along with his wife. They provide relief to families of imprisoned Christians worldwide. Their motto is, “Hate the evil systems, but love your persecutors. Love their souls, and try to win them for Christ.”

Carbon is the second most common element in the human body. Diamonds are also formed from carbon. It takes extreme pressure and heat to form carbon into a diamond, without it you might end up with coal. And we all know what coal is good for – the furnace. Diamonds are the hardest known natural material on earth. The word diamond comes from a Greek word meaning “unbreakable.” We can’t begin to comprehend the suffering and torture that Jesus bore on our behalf. Isaiah says “He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities, oppressed and afflicted... He poured out His soul to death bearing our sins.” It is because Richard knew Christ’s love for him that he was willing to suffer for others.

In all of the movies listed above there is a common theme that the pressure and pain we experience in life can help form an unbreakable faith. In the lyrics of Christian singer, Hawk Nelson, “When the pressure is on, He’s making diamonds out of dust, Making diamonds out of us.”

Together in Faith
Pr. Nate Bjorge

President's Message

March Church Council meeting took place on March 15, 2018. Opening Prayer was led by Pastor Nate. Treasurer's report indicated that discussion is taking place on the accounts. All the account numbers have changed on the income and expense portion and unused account numbers were suspended. In addition, use of QuickBooks was talked about to keep track of everything.

Discussion took place regarding the mortgage balloon payment coming due in 2019.

First Communion class started on Wednesday, March 14th. The Easter Breakfast will be put on by the youth going to Noah's Ark.

The Youth Minister position was discussed, and Pastor Nate has had one interview with a candidate.

A call has been put out for volunteers to help with law mowing this year. Request and bids have been called to purchase a new riding lawn mower for the church. Cost of mower would not exceed \$5000.

As Easter is upon us, take time to reflect and remember the Easter Story and what it means to all of us. If you are traveling, drive safely and may your time spent with family and friends be a wonderful time as we remember our Lord & Savior and what he did for all of us.

God's blessings,

Rich Collins, Council president

News from the Congregational Life Committee

As I write this it is snowing again! Howie received some of his garden seeds in the mail last week, so I know spring must be coming!

Our team has been busy planning some spring events.

We hosted the senior citizen's luncheon on March 20th. 27 people attended. Annika Bjorge, Jasmine Miller, and Adam Hyatt talked about their trip to the Sunbeam Boys Home in Jamaica. We thank them for sharing their experiences with us.

There will be an Easter breakfast before our church service on Sunday, April 1st. The youth going on the Noah's Ark trip this summer will earn some money by helping with the breakfast.

The next Sunday, April 8th we will have the Adult/Teen Challenge with us. A brunch will be served after the service.

The garage sale and bake sale date is Friday, May 4th and Saturday, May 5th. More details coming soon.

We discussed donating some money to the "Care Closet" at the high school. This idea has been given to the Mission Team.

We encourage everyone to check out the table in the gathering space where there are many opportunities to "sign up" to help in various ways at Faith.

Anyone having concerns, ideas, and comments about "events" at Faith, please contact any of our team members: Becky Boody, Beckie Ottman, Lois Erickson, Julie Shelstad, Jean Stowell, Loni Pantzke, Jody Cox, Ally White, Rich Collins, Justin Juelke, Bev Larsen

"See you in church!"

For the team, Bev Larsen

Children's Team

The Children's Ministry Team met on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 6:30 pm.

Members present: Lisa Christenson, Heidi Larsen, Kelly Olson, and Annie Mathison

Today our team discussed the expectations council has related to our monthly meetings, we discussed Vacation Bible School, and Sunday School.

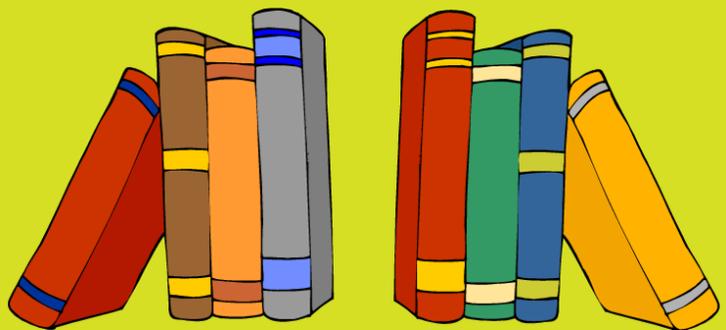
Vacation Bible School will be held at Faith Lutheran during the week of June 4-8, 2018 from 9-11:15. The curriculum that the community churches chose to use this year is Shipwrecked and the team has already been meeting for a month to make sure this will be another successful year for our children. We will be in need of many volunteers to make this event a hit with our youth, sign-ups will begin shortly as well as a donation list, however, if you are interested please see one of the Children's Ministry Team members so we can get you added to our list. For sure we will need 2 people with bubbly, fun, energetic personalities that are good with kids to lead our children for the opening and closing each day for our Pre-K and 1st-5th program during VBS; if you know of someone that fits these qualities please send him/her our way! The team discussed whether our VBS staff from Faith Lutheran should be required to complete a background check prior to this event, and our team felt that this was not necessary at this time.

Our team has decided on teacher gifts for our Sunday School teachers and we will be celebrating our teachers on Sunday, May 20, 2018 during worship (this will also be our last day of Sunday school for the 2017-2018 school year. Our annual Easter egg hunt will be held after worship on Easter Sunday; Heidi will be working on this event this year and will also be talking to our older students about hiding the eggs during worship. If you are interested with helping, please see Heidi Larsen. The idea of having meetings for the Sunday School teachers was brought up by Lisa Christenson and our team felt this was a good idea as the teachers are often tossed into this role. Therefore, during our next meeting, we will be setting a date and time to do a wrap-up meeting for this year's teachers. We will also have a meeting next fall for our teachers prior to the start of Sunday School to ensure all teachers are prepared and be able to have his/her questions answered. Heidi mentioned that attendance has been down at Sunday School in some classes and questioned whether we should look at adjusting the start time. Her recommendation was to possibly start during offering time (on non-Communion Sundays) and after Communion (on Communion Sundays) and ending shortly after worship is complete each Sunday. Kelly Olson will be bringing this to Council for a discussion to determine if this is possible; unless she is unable to attend, then it will be brought up by another team member. Lastly, related to Sunday School, our 5th-6th grade teacher, Patricia Fernelius, requested that bulletin boards be put up in each of the Sunday School rooms. The Children's Ministry team felt that this would be a great idea, prices are being figured, and Kelly Olson will be bringing this to Council for a discussion as well in case the price to put one in each classroom (Pre-K through 6th grade rooms for sure) is over \$300 and to make sure our building team is on board with this plan.

We are still looking for 1-2 members of Faith Lutheran to join our team so feel free to join our next meeting and check out this amazing group and see if it is a fit for you at this time. The next Children's Ministry Team meeting will be on Wednesday, April 11, 2018 at 6:30 pm.

Library Update:

The library has two new books written about Martin Luther. *Luther the Reformer* – written by Kittleson and Wiersma and *Martin Luther* by Eric Metaxas tell the life story of Martin Luther who by many is the person who changed the religious world. The books are on a table ready to be checked out. Also, there are books about Easter on another table, ready to be read.



March 2018 Mission and Outreach Team News

The Mission and Outreach Team (MOT) heard a presentation from Oasis Central Minnesota at its March 7 meeting and received multiple requests from various ministries. Henry (Hank) French, Rose Surma and Lynn Lowry were the Oasis representatives that attended the March MOT team. They asked the team whether it would consider making a donation or having a door offering at one of Faith's upcoming Sunday worship services. The purpose of the gift is to provide temporary housing for people currently living in their cars/vehicles or "couch-hopping." Oasis is currently finalizing relationships with local providers of rental housing in the area and hope to raise \$30,000 to \$40,000. This temporary housing would offset the need for temporary housing Oasis is providing at the Clifwood Motel. They indicated the need is great with 25% of clients below or near the poverty level including approximately 22 minor children during a given month. They indicated that housing is very difficult for their clients to obtain since a job paying \$15 per hour is needed and the current minimum wage is \$9.50 per hour. They also offered to speak at a church service after the Easter season. The recommended a gift of \$250 to \$1,000 based on the size of our congregation. The team indicated it would work with Pastor Nate to find a date after Easter but not when another door offering (notably the Adult and Teen Challenge visit on April 8) when they could come. The team recommended up to a \$500 donation, which will be taken up at the April meeting after Pat talks to pastor.

The team also heard a summary from Gene Hyatt on the most recent Jamaica mission trip (Feb. 10-18). The trip included 13 people (12 from Faith). The team performed multiple projects during the trip including some work on toilet/bathroom/shower facilities, constructing a wheelchair ramp and performing electrical upgrades and working on the driveway at Sunbeam Boys Home. Gene wants to involve prospective mission team participants in service projects for local ministries/missions like the food shelf, etc. The MOT agreed to consider providing Faith support for such service projects.

The MOT voted to provide the following budgeted expenses: \$200 to Sunbeam Boys Home, \$400 to the Nicaragua mission, \$400 to the Germany mission, \$1,000 to the Food Shelf, \$250 to Beginning Experiences, and \$2,000 to Heal Our Patriots. Heal Our Patriots helps veterans, and their spouses, fight for their marriages after waging battles abroad. Each week for 16 weeks, 10 couples can take part in Biblically based marriage-enrichment classes guided by Samaritan Lodge staff and retired military chaplains. God is at work as couples rededicate their marriages, repent of their sins and turn to Christ for salvation, and profess their faith in Him through baptism in the glacier-chilled waters of Lake Clark in Alaska. Finally, the team was also asked to make a \$250 to the school's "Care Closet," also referred to as Heidi's Closet at Little Falls School District. Heidi Larsen, a Faith member, oversees the project at ISD #482. The team approved the \$250 request.

Please feel free to share any mission projects you believe are worthy of Faith's support.

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

Faith Lutheran Church

303 18th St. SE

Little Falls, MN 56345

320-414-0533

faithlutheranlittlefalls.org

secretaryfaithlutheran@gmail.com

March Council Minutes

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting, March 15, 2018, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Kennard Fellbaum, Joel Hanson, Justin Juelke, Denny Myers, Kelly Olson, Cheryl Rioux, George Sandy, Randy Wolbeck, Dave ZumBerge and Pastor Nate

Absent: Rich Collins, Mark Pugh, Ally White

The meeting was called to order by George Sandy.
Opening Prayer was led by Pastor Nate.

Additions to the Agenda: Dave ZumBerge moved and Kennard Fellbaum seconded to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report: Justin Juelke moved and Joel Hanson seconded to approve the February Council minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Cheryl Rioux met with Sarah and Renee Miller to discuss changes to the accounts and is currently working on the income and expense portion. Cheryl and Sarah will meet to work on the balance sheet to figure out where there are issues and fix those. Then, we will look at putting the budget into QuickBooks to keep better track of everything.

Mortgage Balloon Payment – Sarah brought up the Mortgage Balloon Payment that's coming up in early 2019 and mentioned we might want to start looking at refinancing. Kennard will speak to his banker and ask if there are penalties for refinancing early.

Randy Wolbeck moved and Denny Myers seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Nate reported that Daven Hanson, currently our Financial Secretary who handles the weekly deposits, is concerned about our ServantKeeper program. He has been having issues with it crashing and losing information. Thankfully he has been able to successfully get it back but they are recommending that we upgrade. Since we are having issues that may need to happen. The Finance team will discuss this further.

We are currently in the middle of Lent. So far, the testimonies are going well. No comments about not doing the Holden Evening Service.

First Communion class started Wednesday, March 14. It seems to be going well so far. First Communion will be on Maundy Thursday, March 29th.

Good Friday service will be at Living Hope. We are providing the music this year so Joan, Kate, Julie and Tammy will be involved in the service.

The Easter Breakfast will be put on by the Youth going to Noah's Ark this summer. They will be raising money for their trip.

Old Business:

Youth Minister Position: Two candidates have applied for the position. We would like to move toward doing a video conference interview with one of the candidates. The council would like the Youth & Family team to work on this interview process. The Finance Team agreed to this as well.

Copier: The Finance Team has decided to keep running the copier we currently have for now.

New Business:

Lawn Mower/Lawn Mowing: Gary Berulson will no longer be able to mow the church lawn so we are looking at volunteers to take over. As part of that, the council wants to look at a different mower so the volunteers don't need to spend hours fixing it. So far, we have 4 members who have agreed to help mow. We will probably look for a tractor type mower. Fellbaums offered to bring their mower over to use but the council felt if we are using volunteers and planning around weather, then it would be more convenient to have it here. The Finance Team will research this and get back to the council. Randy Wolbeck moved and Denny Myers seconded to allow the Finance Team to be authorized to make a down payment on a lawn mower purchase which is not to exceed \$5000 total. The total amount will be approved by council prior to payment. Motion carried.

Children's Team: The Children's Team would like to put large bulletin boards in the Sunday School classrooms for display of projects or posters during lessons. So far, they have found some 4'x6' bulletin boards that run about \$100 each but they are still researching. If they can bring the total to under \$300 they have permission to purchase these bulletin boards and have them hung up in the classrooms. The Sunday School teachers also proposed that the children could be dismissed a bit earlier. This way, the teachers could begin class before the end of the service. They would be dismissed after the message or, on Communion Sundays, after Communion so they can start earlier but not miss important parts of the service. The council felt this would work well and approved the early dismissal.

Staff Review Process: Justin Juelke brought up some questions about how the Staff Review process is handled. As Pastor Nate is the direct supervisor of all employees, he has been doing the reviews. Questions were brought up regarding a new Youth Pastor should the church hire someone. After discussion, the council decided that Pastor Nate would complete review forms for the Youth Pastor and the actual review would be conducted by the Executive Members of the Council, taking into account Nate's recommendations. Pastor Nate will continue to do the other employee reviews.

The meeting closed with prayer.

The next meeting will take place April 19th at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Sarah Kalkbrenner, Faith Lutheran Church Secretary

Attendance & Offering

Wednesday, March	7:	98
Sunday, March	11:	159 \$ 3,870
Wednesday, March	14:	96
Sunday, March	18:	167 \$ 13,170
Wednesday, March	21:	97
Sunday, March	25:	199 \$ 4,289