
January 2026 Newsletter 🙌

Faith Lutheran Church - Rotonda West, FL <office@alivingfaith.org>
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Thu, Jan 1, 2026 at 1:39 PM

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Happy New Year, Jim.

From the
Pastor's Desk

Dear church family,

I've been thinking about the book of Exodus lately, God's people standing there at the edge of the Red Sea, exhausted from slavery, terrified of what lay ahead, with Pharaoh's army closing in behind them. They had nowhere to go. Nothing but God's promise that He was with them. And we

know what happened. In that impossible moment, God made a way. I come back to that story because it reminds me that God's faithfulness has never depended on how strong we are, how big we are, or how confident we feel. It depends on God alone. On God's steadfast love that goes before us.

Friends, I have real hope for us as we step into 2026. I know we're small. I know we don't always feel powerful or impressive by the world's standards. But we are known by God. We're held together by grace. We're bound to one another in Christ. During the short time I have been with you, I've watched us show up for each other in prayer, in care, in worship, in doing things for our church, and just plain perseverance. Those aren't small things. They're signs that the Spirit is alive and moving among us.

Hope for the coming year does not mean pretending that challenges will disappear. After escaping Egypt, the Hebrews faced many challenges. It only means trusting that God will meet us within them. It means believing that faithfulness matters more than numbers, and that love practiced consistently can transform hearts, including our own. God has always done holy work through small communities willing to listen, serve, and remain rooted in hope.

So, I step into this new year confident not in what we can accomplish alone, but in what God can do among us and through us. May 2026 be a year when we walk forward together - sometimes unsure, but always trusting - knowing that the same God who opened the sea continues to lead us, sustain us, and call us onward in hope.

God bless us all in 2026!

Yours truly,

Rev. Syl Estevez

Designated Interim-Pastor

Faith's Happenings ...

January, 2026

Mark Your Calendars...

Sunday, January 4

- 9:00 am - Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Worship Service**

Tuesday, January 6

- **7:30 am - "Men of Faith" Breakfast at Stefanos'**
- 8:30 am - "Maintaining Faith" Work Crew
- 9:00 am - "Lutheran Chicks" Workshop

Wednesday, January 7

- **3:00 pm - Bible Study**

Tuesday, January 9

- 7:30 am - "Maintaining Faith" Work Crew
- 9:00 am - "Lutheran Chicks" Workshop

Sunday, January 11

- 9:00 am - Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Worship Service**

Tuesday, January 13

- 8:00 am - “Maintaining Faith” Work Crew
- 9:00 am - “Lutheran Chicks” Workshop
- **10:00 am - Senior Scam Seminar**

Wednesday, January 14

- 11:30 am - “Women of Faith” Luncheon at Cheddar’s (Port Charlotte).

Sunday, January 18

- 9:00 am - Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Worship Service**

Tuesday, January 20

- 8:00 am - “Maintaining Faith” Work Crew
- 9:00 am - “Lutheran Chicks” Workshop
- **10:00 am - Council Meeting**

Wednesday, January 21

- **3:00 pm - Bible Study**

Sunday, January 25

- 9:00 am - Sunday School
- 10:15 am - Morning Coffee
- **10:45 am - Worship Service**

Tuesday, January 27

- 8:00 am - "Maintaining Faith" Work Crew
- 9:00 am - "Lutheran Chicks" Workshop

Other
Special Events

Help Us to Grow Online

facebook

Would you like to increase your knowledge of computers? We are looking for someone who enjoys posting on Facebook to take over our Social Media outreach and also someone who can help us with our monthly newsletter. This includes finding other ways to reach out to the community and promote Faith's name, and also keep our congregants and friends who are away informed about our church's events. If you have the will, we can train you. Let us know if this could be your own ministry with us in 2026.

Senior Scam Prevention Seminar



On Tuesday, January 13, at 10:00 am we will offer a seminar on Senior Scams. Join us to learn about current scams and to some ways we can spot them and prevent ourselves from falling for one.

Last Month's Recap

Holy Grounds Café



On Saturday, December 6, Chris and Ann Banting brought back their Holy Grounds coffee hour, this time with an Advent theme. The idea started years ago when the Bantings wanted to create a coffee house feel with some good Christian music. For a time, we enjoyed the tradition during the winter months, but we haven't had many Holy Grounds planned recently. This time, quite a few folks from the church attended and enjoyed the sounds of the season as well as some tasty treats.

Joint Christmas Cantata



Sue Brems directed a combined choir at Faith Lutheran as well as First Pres.

John Schleede narrated the readings, which accented the Cantata music.

Here he is at the performance at First Pres.

This Christmas season, Faith was able to join First Pres in Port Charlotte to provide a special Christmas Cantata to help celebrate the birth of the Savior. Singers from Faith and First Pres spent several hours rehearsing and planning for the Cantata, then performed it at each church on 2 consecutive Sunday mornings. Mrs. Sue Brems of First Pres directed the dual performances, which were greatly enjoyed by both church families and friends.



Church Staff End of Year Luncheon



Four of our church staff members joined Pastor Syl at Artur's Restaurant in December: (left to right) Linda Jackling, Cyndy Hoops, Barbra Davis and Pastor Syl. Candace Montesi left too soon to be included in the photo. Designed as a thank you for their service throughout 2025, the lunch was also a great time to get to know each other and Pastor Syl better. The restaurant was decorated for the holidays, and the food was great.

Christmas Eve Service



This year we offered a Christmas Eve service at 5:00 pm, with our traditional candlelight ending. Attendance was great, with 81 people

celebrating the arrival of the Christ child. A special thank you to the group which decorated the sanctuary so beautifully, and to Mary Lou Fitzgerald for making the arrangements to have poinsettias displayed at the front.

Thank You, Sandy! Welcome Jackie.



Sandy McKitterick has served as our bookkeeper since 2015, writing our checks and keeping our financial records straight. She has spent many Tuesday mornings sorting out issues and making sure our taxes are paid on time. Last month Sandy moved to an apartment in Venice and had to give up her position at Faith due to the distance involved. Taking her place is Jackie Ruiz, who comes to us with extensive experience in the financial field. We thank Sandy for her years of service and welcome Jackie to our staff.

Birthdays &
Anniversaries

**Happy
Birthday to...**

01/02 - Linda
Hughs

01/03 - Ken
Stephens

01/03 - Kathryn
Gallagher

01/06 - Noma
Schattauer

01/14 - Barbra
Davis

01/14 - Karen
Potts

01/18 - Steve
Plumley

**Happy
Birthday to...**

01/19 - Jim Taylor

01/20 - Linda
Jackling

01/20 - Bill
Buccine

01/23 - Steve
Hoops

01/23 - Dave
Johnsen

01/24 - Susan
Schuemann

01/26 - Toni
Newton

01/28 - John
Matz

**Happy
Anniversary
to...**

01/14 - Bruce &
Margarete Rieck

01/23 - David &
Donna Johnsen

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, we're sorry. Please notify Barbra in the church office to have your special dates added.

We are
Praying for

Sandy Despreaux - Health issues

Kaylyn Nagel - Health issues and encouragement

Debbie Porter - Health issues

If you would like to add your name or someone else's to the prayer list, please notify Barbra in the church office. We remove names every three months, unless individuals request to remain on the list.

Find us online on our webpage, YouTube channel, Facebook page, or at our pastor's Instagram page by clicking on the icons below.



Faith Lutheran Church Rotonda West is part of the **Florida-Bahama Synod** of the **Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America**, under the Apostolic care of the Very Reverend Bishop Pedro M. Suarez. We are also part of the greater compendium of Lutheran churches worldwide.

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