

Faith's Happenings...

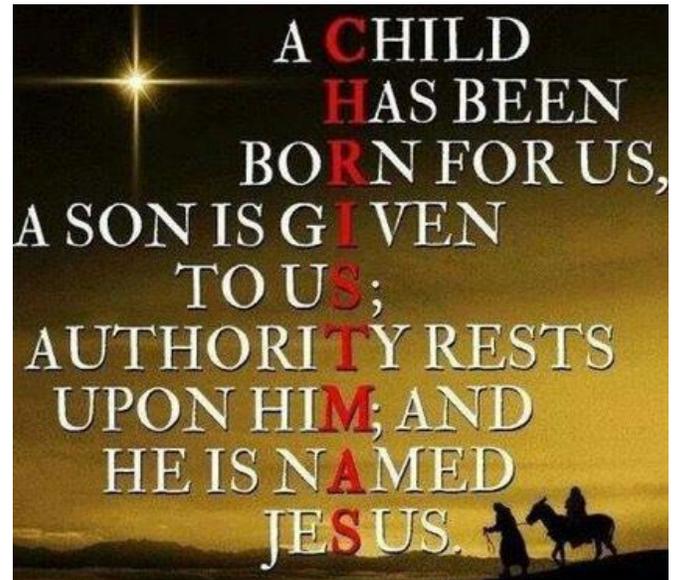
December, 2020

Happy Birthday

Ginny Linsberg	1st
Dorthea Fisher	3rd
Bonnie Goldsberry	12th
Art Hanson	15th
Tracy Reynolds	27th
Nick Hoops	29th
Pat Pelic	29th

Happy Anniversary

Gene & Bonnie Goldsberry	19th
Byron & Bobbie Myrick	22nd
Larry & Linda Bennett	27th
Carl & Sandy Despreaux	28th
Roger & Gloria DeMeritt	31st



If we missed your name/date, we're sorry.
Please notify Barbra in the church office
to have your special dates added.

December at a Glance

Mark your calendars now!
Men of Faith Breakfast: Dec. 1
Begin 2 services Dec. 6
Advent: Wednesdays
Christmas Eve worship: Dec. 24

Stephen Ministry in Our Congregation

Could you benefit from the confidential, one-to-one care and support of a Stephen Minister? Call (941) 681-0297.



Advent worship:
Recorded and available every
Wednesday online.

Christmas Eve:
5:00 pm & 8:00 pm
(each in the sanctuary)

Services Update

~ We will return to 2 services on Sunday, December 6th. The 8:30 service will be held in the Memorial Garden and the 10:30 service will be held in the building. For the 8:30 service, please bring your own chair or remain in your car – no seating will be provided.

~ Advent worship will be pre-recorded and available online each Wednesday in Advent.

~ Christmas Eve we will have only 2 services, at 5:00 pm and 8:00 pm, each in the sanctuary.

Men's Breakfast

Men, please join us as we have resumed monthly breakfasts at Stefano's restaurant. We will meet at 7:30 am on Tuesday, December 1st. Please join us!

Like to Ring a Bell?

It's that time of year again, and the Salvation Army is looking for folks to help with their annual kettle drive. Faith has been assigned Mondays, and we still need some folks to fill time slots on December 7, 14 and 21. Time slots are 2 hours long and you will be sitting outside, so there will be minimal contact with people. If you are available, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex, or call Barbra in the church office and she will sign you up.



**KEEP
CHRIST IN
CHRISTMAS**



Poinsettias Available

We need 16 poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. If you would like to purchase one for \$9.00, there is a sign-up sheet in the narthex by the flower chart. You may take your plant home after the last service on Christmas Eve.

Note: there are 12 red and 4 white plants available, please sign the appropriate line and write clearly as this chart is used for the bulletin listing.

During this difficult time, we want you to know the church office is open from 9 till noon if you have a prayer request or other need. (697-3313)

Looking for a Unique Gift

If you need a special gift for Christmas, the ELCA has a program called "Good Gifts" which provides a variety of ways to help underprivileged people around the world. You can purchase anything from a chicken to a water well in honor of your friend or family member, then request a card of acknowledgement to give to your recipient.



This past Sunday I found myself responding in a conversation, “this is the Lord’s day.” Then I thought of the words we use to begin our worship services, **“This is the day which the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Psalm 118.24.** What struck me at that moment is the reality that every day is the Lord’s day, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday as well as Sunday. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, it should be as to the Lord.

This was not the first time I had that sort of realization. However, I find it amazing how people go about daily lives and miss the deep theological significance of everyday. We will, or will have, just celebrated our National day of Thanksgiving, yet how many will miss the opportunity to take time to be truly grateful. It is incumbent on us to give thanks for God’s blessing in our lives every day, particularly when the weight of our concerns is so heavy. It is our God who carries us through.

Now we enter into Advent, a season of waiting and preparation. We hear the promises of God, who will come and accomplish our salvation. We look around us and hear that promise as a word of hope for ourselves and our world. We also wait with longing for that promise to be fulfilled. And in these times of hearing, looking, watching and waiting, we prepare to celebrate the coming of that salvation and the faithfulness of our God.

This year has been nothing like we expected. Consequently, our Advent season is being adjusted based on our concern for others during the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning the first Sunday in

December (December 6) we will resume two worship services, at 8:30 and 10:30 AM. The 8:30 service will be outside in our Memorial Garden and surrounding area. Please bring a chair or sit in your vehicle. This service of word and sacrament will be a typical Sunday service, adjusted for the outdoor setting. We will conclude with the distribution of the sacrament as you exit the worship area. After the people in chairs exit, we will offer communion to those in their vehicles.

The 10:30 service will be inside, with 2 verses of hymns, word and sacrament. The service will be live streamed and recorded for our online community. This service will be like the worship we have had all summer. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, masks are required and our seating capacity is at 50% (65-70 seats). After the 10:30 service, there will be parking lot distribution of communion for those not able to be at the 8:30 service. Instead of a Wednesday evening Advent Services, we will have a video worship/devotional service recorded and available on line. Every Wednesday morning in Advent a new service will be available. The theme this year is “The Gifts of Advent: Patience, Speech and Silence, Hope and Family.” Please join us for this special opportunity to share a common reflection during our Advent journey.

Christmas Eve we are planning two services, at 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM, both in the sanctuary. Both services will incorporate communion and candle lighting. The community is invited to join us for worship. Again, masks will be required and seating limited.

The congregation council has taken seriously our responsibility to worship cautiously in accordance with CDC

guidelines. On Christmas Eve the sanctuary will be fogged and sanitized between the services. If necessary, these plans may change if there is a resurgence of COVID-19 in our area.

Please check our website for the latest announcements; <http://alivingfaith.org>.

Amid the turmoil of the year 2020, may this Advent and Christmas season be an opportunity to welcome the peace of the Christ Child.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Brian

Long Term Prayer Update

With all the changes over the past few months, we have decided it is time to start over with our prayer list and be sure we have the names of those who need long-term prayer. If you want to add someone to this list, contact Barbra in the church office (697-3313).

For now, please keep these folks in your prayers on a regular basis: Ralph Crites, Sarah, Hester and Carter Newton, Joanne Best, Delbert Wutzke, Kathy Kanak

From Your Stewardship Committee

November 25, 2020

A Heart for our Neighbor: 2020 Report

With deep and heartfelt gratitude, we thank you for your support of Faith Lutheran Church during 2020. Our focus for stewardship this year was 3-fold: Sustaining Ministry Excellence, our Capital Expense-Reserve Fund, and Expanded Local Ministry Opportunities.

Your faithful contributions have helped us sustain our ministry, which has presented a unique challenge in this year of COVID-19. When we had to stop in-person worship, we were able to start recording worship for our

virtual congregation the next week. Within a few weeks, we were able to make decisions about purchasing camera equipment and receiving some donated equipment so that we could begin true live streaming and recording.

The Capital Expense-Reserve Fund met its funding goal in July. And most importantly we have been able to increase our planned support of local ministries which has been essential in caring for our community, particularly this year.

The true measure of God's blessing, and your generosity is evident in that, while we are on track to meet our budgeted obligations supported by your regular giving, we have received over \$4,600.00 in special gifts to support ministries like Meals on Wheels, the St Francis Food Pantry and our Love and Serve (Camper) ministries. Thanks to our congregation's volunteers, 100% of these funds go to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

To Love and Serve: the 2021 Challenge

Borrowing from the name of one of our ministry teams, "Love and Serve," our challenge in the coming year will be to continue this growth, sharing God's love and serving our community. Part of the challenge is that "community" now includes our on-line congregation.

Ministry excellence will always be at the forefront of all we do as a congregation. As we prepare for 2021, the Finance Committee has been working on a proposed budget for consideration by the congregation in January. While the budget is adjusted up for increased expenses in some areas, and decreased due to savings in other areas, the reality is that once again our budget will increase. Your commitment of increased financial support of 3% through this 2021 Intent Appeal will empower us to continue our work as God's people here at Faith, Rotonda West.

Commitment to Community will be the second part of our focus for 2021. With the prospect of continued COVID-19 restrictions, unemployment (and under-employment), new financial challenges for young and old alike, and a continuing concern for those who struggle from day to day, our commitment to Love and Serve will be an extension and expansion of our volunteer time, and the financial resources to support being God's presence among the needy. Your ability to increase volunteer time and financial support by 7% will make a world of difference here in our community, as well as in special opportunities that will present themselves in the coming year.

To assist us in planning God's work as we Love and Serve our community, we invite you to reflect on how God has been with you and blessed you this past year. Also reflect on how your support of our congregation has empowered us to be God's blessing for our Faith Family, our community and our on-line community.

Within the week you should receive in the mail a copy of this letter and a 2021 invitation of giving intent. Your response will help us prepare for the coming year of ministry. Using the words of our guiding principles:

Listen to what God is leading you to do.

Care as we live with gratitude for God's faithfulness and blessing in our lives.

Serve and commit to volunteer time or make the intent to financially support God's work.

Together Loving and Serving,
Your Stewardship Committee
at Faith Lutheran Church

Electronic Stewardship

Electronic Giving is an option at Faith. Use this code to contribute and support God's work, or click on the code on our church website.



Merry
Christmas
From the
Staff of
Faith Lutheran

