

Faith Lutheran Church
The Messenger
January, 2025



Dear Friends,

I recently came across a quote that hit me like a ton of bricks. Writing about his own conversion experience, New York Times Columnist David Brooks joked, “that entering the church in 2013 was like investing in the stock market in 1929.” As someone ordained in 2011, I felt all the truth embedded in that quip. My seminary class showed up on campus ready to be bold and visionary leaders of revitalized church. We graduated into the Great Recession, called to serve a church that was in the middle of what was then the largest schism of any Mainline Protestant denomination in history (though our Methodist siblings are going through one even larger today). All around us, congregations of all stripes were wrestling with the “Great Dechurching,” which is arguably the biggest shift in religious observance in American history. And then came Covid.

For many, this will seem like old news. Not just old news, but *bad* old news. Where’s the good news, pastor? That too is a challenge. Often the expectation is that somehow we can find a way to stop the change and reverse the clock. At times, the nostalgia feels so deep and pervasive, that one wonders if it could be terminal. Strategic planning devolves into magical thinking. A spirit-sapping doom hangs over meetings (particularly when there is anything budget-related). And the “blame bowl” is bitterly contested: someone, somewhere caused all of these problems (cue furious arguments about who). So, pastor, what are you going to do to fix it?

Slowly, though, it dawned on me that Brooks’ comment is a remark by a convert to the faith. It’s a joke about joining the church, by someone who did just that, and then wrote about it publicly using the tremendous platforms available to him. That despite all the reasons to despair, despite the institutional struggles, shrinking congregations, etc., the Holy Spirit is still “calling, gathering, enlightening and sanctifying” the church. That people are still finding their way to the foot of the cross and experiencing anew the profound grace of Jesus Christ. And then telling others about it!

Accordingly, in this New Year, I resolve to place a greater emphasis on hope.

I want to get better at finding the hope and allowing hope to grab my attention. As pastor, I am asking God to be, in a sense, reconverted, to be renewed in my love for the church that is, rather than the church that was, or the church that I wish had been. And this in turn will be among my prayers and encouragement for you all. Let us resolve together to trust that God brings good out of all things. As the Apostle Paul writes to the Roman church, who faced some struggles themselves, “*suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us*” (Romans 5:3b-5).

Peace, blessings and hope in this new year!

Dana

Budget Forum

The 2025 congregational budget and the gift committee's recommendations for the use of a major congregational gift will be presented at a budget forum on January 9th at 7 pm in the narthex. This is an opportunity for members of the congregation to get information and ask questions ahead of the annual meeting on January 19th.



Pianist and composer Thomas Keesecker was here at Faith in December to help lead worship and to present an afternoon program. He was so impressed with our choir and with Luise on the violin that he wrote an anthem dedicated to the choir, its director, and its violinist. This anthem will be published by Augsburg Fortress. This is a HUGE honor for our music program. You will be hearing more about this soon!

Looking back over the past year, I am grateful for:

- Pastor Dana for his unwavering support of the music program.
- members of the Parish Choir for their dedication, persistence, and sense of humor.
- members of Grace Notes and Morning Bells for graciously offering their time and talents.
- all those who played instruments to add joy to our worship.
- all the cantors for the amount of time they spend studying and rehearsing the psalms and communion music.
- Amanda for cheerfully printing bulletins and supporting us in whatever way I ask.
- Jennifer Klee for countless hours spent mending choir albs.
- Children and parents of the newly formed Children's Choir for their hard work, beautiful music, and support of the program.
- the people of Faith for encouraging, supporting, and loving us.

I wish each of you a happy new year as we all together grow in grace and love. Kathy

Music@faithlutheranchurch.com

Thank You From the Staff



Many thanks from the church staff to the members of Faith for their generous gifts at Christmas.

Pastor Dana, Kathy Egner, Amanda Nord, Paige Barricklow, Neil McComb, and the nursery staff.

Council Members Needed

As we have in the past, we will be electing new members to the Church Council at the Annual Meeting. If you are interested in serving in this important position for the next two years, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee, (Sherri Greer, Kevin Carey, Val Dutcher, and Gayle McGrath), Bob Henry or Pastor Dana. We also need nominees for lay voting members to the 2025 IK Synod Assembly in Indianapolis (June 5-7). In addition to three lay voting members, FLC can send a young adult and a youth voting member.



Harstad Fine Arts Series Ninth Season

Join us for our annual fun-filled **RISING ARTISTS** concert featuring diverse styles and artforms, and support young talents of our community

Sunday, January 26 at 3:00 PM

Faith Lutheran Church

HFAS SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

- Elisabeth Howard, dance
- Hannah Kang, viola
- Bonnie Speck, dance

CKYO JAZZ ARTS ORCHESTRA

Raleigh Dailey, conductor

For FREE TICKETS, click the QR code or go to www.harstadarts.com



The Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, provides operating support to the Harstad Fine Arts Series with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.



LexArts has provided funding support for the Harstad Fine Arts Series Season 2024-2025 through its Fund for the Arts.

Annual Meeting Set Up

We are excited to have Faith’s upcoming annual meeting and congregational potluck downstairs in the old fellowship hall. This has not happened in several years and involves some logistical coordination with the Faith Lutheran Learning Center. Pastor Dana and FLLC Director Courtney are working on plans for setting up and taking down for the meeting. As this is a new endeavor for both of them, please grant an extra measure of grace as plans progress. At this time, we need people to help with set up on January 18th from 10 am until noon. Please come and lend a hand if you are available. We are also thankful for the Parish Life committee for coordinating the potluck.

Can’t make it to help set up? We will need people to stay after the annual meeting to help take down tables and chairs. We also need donations of disposable tablecloths for the tables. These can be dropped off at the parish office.

Grace Jar Entries



Thank you to everyone who has placed a note in the Grace Jar. Here are the entries we received in December. Please continue to place these in the jar in the Narthex.

- ◆ Cheers to Kathy Egner, Melissa Stanley and Val Dutcher for all their work with the Children's Choir on December 1st. It was wonderful hearing children's voices filling the rafters of the sanctuary.
- ◆ Thank you to Pastor Dana for showing his vulnerability during the Dec 8th sermon. Prayers to him and his family at this time. Showing vulnerability to friends and family is not a weakness, but instead a sign of strength, and of love and trust in those around one in times of need.
- ◆ Thanks to the Treasurer, Finance Committee and Council for thoughtful budgeting.
- ◆ Thank you Debbie Rosenberg for all the amazing work you do.
- ◆ Thank you to Kathy Egner for all you did to help with the children's Christmas program. You are appreciated

Downtown Youth Group



With our Christmas party in December, we have officially completed the first semester of Downtown Youth Group. We've had a great semester of activities hosted by our 4 congregations, including our kickoff and our Christmas party. As each congregation brought their groups of students month to month, we have had a chance to meet and get to know members of our wider Lexington faith community. Next semester we have an exciting schedule of events, and hope to welcome more people into the community we have built!

Coming Soon: Holy Cow!



This fall, the congregation council explored ways to proactively gather information about our congregation to assist with mission, vision and strategic planning work. The council decided to use the Congregational Assessment Tool from Holy Cow Consulting. While more information will be shared at the annual meeting, we wanted to give the congregation a brief introduction:

What is the CAT?

The Church Assessment Tool is a 102-question online assessment of a congregation that is completed by members of a church. This assessment includes standard questions used by thousands of other congregations as well as some additional questions specifically tailored to Faith Lutheran based on feedback from the church council. All members of FLC are invited to participate in the CAT. Youth (12+) are encouraged to participate with their parents' permission. While we hope as many members as possible will complete the CAT online, provisions for completing the CAT on paper will be made for those needing that option.

What is the purpose of the CAT?

Using the Congregational Assessment Tool is like taking your church to a doctor, a travel agent, and a tailor. It gives leaders a read-out on the health of the church, a sense of where members think the church should head in the future, and a description of the church as a unique body of people.

Last Month at Faith



Bob Henry helping deliver gifts.



Ford & Joyce Cornett delivering gifts.



Items for senior stockings.



Gifts from FLC for the Santa for Senior Program



Paper products and items donated by FLC to the Catholic Action Center



Food items donated by FLC to God's Pantry



The kiddos in the Children's Choir wait excitedly for showtime



The Children's Choir, led by Kathy Egner, performed at the 11am service on December 1st



A lot of fun, chaotic, holiday themed games were played at the DYG Christmas party!



To finish off 2024, Central Christian hosted the DYG Christmas party!



A Blue Christmas service was held December 22. Many who attended were moved to tears.



Above and right: These beautiful pictures were taken by Terry Wild, a professional photographer who has been attending Faith.

Prayer List



The persons on the parish prayer list are lifted in prayer at every Sunday service. If you would like to be on the prayer list or no longer need to be on the list, please call or email the parish office.

If you would like a pastoral visit or home communion, you may contact Pastor Dana by calling the church office or by email pastordana@faithlutheranchurch.org

The prayer/care ministry invites you to join them in connecting with persons on our prayer list. You can volunteer to connect by phone or email, by a personal visit, or by agreeing to add one specific person to your daily prayers. Contact Pastor Dana for more information or to become part of this ministry.

Members of the Parish (recent concerns): Richard Heine, Joan Sorenson, Paul Sorenson, Gayle McGrath, Carol Buchanan, Carolyn Carden and Linda McDaniel

Members of the Parish (ongoing concerns):

Wayne Schedler, Nancy George, Mike Keller, Eva Lau and Ray Ranta

Friends of the Parish:

Jim Pinkston, Rory Hefner-Templar (daughter of David Templar), John Klee, Wendy Meadors, the family of Sue Raney, Britney Harris (daughter-in-law of Leta Harris), Jim Johnson (brother of David Johnson) and Danny Rees (nephew of Kathy Johnson).

Tuesday Bible Study

The Tuesday morning Bible study is taking a long holiday. We will not be meeting again until January 14 at which time we will continue our study of 1 Peter.

(we're on the lithium chapter). All are welcome to join.



- 2 Joyce Rector
- 9 Joyce Cornett
- 10 Urton Anderson
- 13 Cindy Heine
- 14 Paul Sorenson
- 16 Amanda Nord
- 17 Carolyn Walker
- 18 Roland Born
- 19 Marcus Atkerson
Janet Walker
- 21 Diana Erickson
Gayle McGrath
Laura Zink
- 24 Dan Kazee
- 29 Luise Wendroth

Offering Envelopes



Offering envelopes are available for pick up in the church narthex.

Annual Meeting Potluck



Annual Congressional Meeting Potluck

Sunday, January 19, 2025

Following the 10:00 Service

Parish Life will provided the entrees; ham and turkey, bread and butter, and drinks.

The Congregation will provided the potluck. To make sure we have a variety of dishes we suggest you provided a dish according to your last name.

A-G: Dessert or Fruit

H-O: Salads

P-Z: Vegetable or Potatoes

FYI: Childcare will be available during worship and the annual meeting.

“A Heartfelt Thank You” to Our Congregation

On Page 5 there are several photos of the items collected by our congregation for the Nest (a program for mothers and children to “prevent their abuse and neglect by supporting families in crisis through education, counseling, advocacy and resources.” Each year at Christmas the Nest sponsors the “Reindeer Express”, to collect coats, gloves, scarfs, and toys to help meet their needs for the winter months. The director of the Nest told us she expects over 1,600 children and adults will use their resources and need support through the Holidays. She expressed a “Heartfelt Thank you” to our church for the generous donations: 43 coats, many hats, scarfs, gloves and toys! While they still have a ways to go, our contributions will help keep many children warm and enable them to get a toy as well.

We also provided 26 gift bags of presents to 26 seniors who are either in a Nursing Facility or alone in their home (Homebound). Administered by the organization called Home Instead, they will collect and distribute over 400 gifts to these Seniors on items such as blankets, clothes, crockpots, Christmas cookies, candies, shirts, PJs, etc. In addition, Joyce and Ford Cornett used a Thrivent grant to purchase additional hats, socks, lotions, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and word search books to help fill 215 Senior Stockings. Finally, there was a donation of about 20 New Jigsaw Puzzles that will be delivered to each community. They were most appreciative of all that we brought and said a BIG THANK YOU to all the members of our Church who contributed! What a wonderful expression of giving and love to all who participated in these and other activities! This includes those who regularly donate for food items for God’s Pantry, and paper products for the Catholic Action Center. Like Tiny Tim said in Charles Dickens “Christmas Carol” novel, “God bless us, everyone!”

Ringin' Out to our Ringers!

Thanks to the volunteers who stood outside ringin' bells for the Salvation Army in front of the Lexington Green Shops! The Bell Ringers from Faith were: Julie Keller, Pat Mundt, Sherri Greer, Roland and Helen Born, David Templar, Kim Heersche, Gordon Grotrian, Becki Luddy, Bob and Donita Henry, and Carolyn Carden. We learned that over 2.7 million people sign up every year across the U.S. to ring bells **and** the inspiration for the Christmas song, “Silver Bells” written in 1950, came from the bells used by Salvation Army ringers on the New York City street corners! The total amount collected during our day of ringin' on Saturday, December 7th was **\$691.08!** This money will go to fund Salvation Army’s year-round service programs which include: emergency shelter, food, childcare, rental assistance, addiction recovery services, disaster relief, rehabilitation services, and anti-human trafficking. Thanks Faith Lutheran members for taking time to ring out!

November Financial Summary

November 2024						
	Total Income - Month	Total Expense - Month	Actual Total Income Less Actual Total Expense	Total Income - YTD	Total Expense - YTD	Actual Total Income Less Actual Total Expense
Budget Forecast	\$24,935.83	\$34,780.21		\$274,294.13	\$385,582.31	
Actual	\$32,688.57	\$33,106.94	(\$418.37)	\$331,590.08	\$395,179.15	(\$63,589.07)
Variance	\$7,752.74	(\$1,673.27)	(\$418.37)	\$57,295.95	\$12,596.84	(\$63,589.07)
%	131.1%	95.2%		120.9%	103.3%	

Faith Lutheran Learning Center

The Power of Early Childhood Education: A Mission That Transforms Lives

Early childhood is a remarkable time of growth and development. Research shows that by the age of 5, **90% of a child's brain development is complete**, making these early years crucial for laying the foundation for success in school and life. During this time, we can nurture curiosity, build resilience, and equip children with the skills they need to thrive for years to come.

We are truly privileged to be part of this transformative journey. This is a time when we are privileged enough to provide safe, loving classrooms where children and families from all walks of life come together to learn, grow, and explore.

Addressing a Growing Need

The need for affordable, high-quality childcare in our community is greater than ever. The average cost of childcare in Lexington can exceed \$10,000 per child annually, which is a significant financial burden for many families despite their income. We are meeting this need by offering a high-quality program that:

- **Accepts child care assistance** for qualifying families.
- **Provides scholarships** for families who fall just outside the range of qualifying for assistance but still need support.

By doing so, we are helping to ensure that families from diverse economic backgrounds have access to the early education their children deserve.

A Fully Inclusive and Deliberately Diverse Community

One thing that really drew me into this position was the church's commitment to being "**Fully Inclusive and Deliberately Diverse.**" It's extremely important to me that our learning center mirrors that commitment. This is one of the many ways we are supporting that commitment. In our classrooms, you'll find children from higher-income families learning alongside those from middle- and low-income families. This diversity enriches the learning experience for every child, teaching them empathy, understanding, and the value of community.

The Ripple Effect of Our Work

The work we do here has a ripple effect that extends far beyond our classrooms. When families have access to affordable, quality childcare, they gain the stability needed to pursue careers, education, and opportunities that benefit the entire community.

Because of the dedication of our amazing staff, the strength of our program, and the support of the congregation we know that children in our care are receiving a high-quality education that will benefit them—and our community—for years to come.

The impact of our work is reflected in the wonderful things people say about our center. It is clear that the love, care, and quality education we provide are making a difference—not just for the families we serve but for the broader community.

How You Can Continue Supporting This Mission in 2025

Faith Lutheran Learning Center is more than a childcare program—it is a ministry that reflects Christ's love through service. I am asking for your continued support in these ways:

- **Pray** for our staff, children, and families as we work to fulfill our mission.
- **Advocate** for the importance of affordable, high-quality childcare in our community.
- **Celebrate** the work being done here and share the stories of how this ministry is transforming lives.

Get involved by sharing a skill, reading a book, or come to visit.

Together, we are shaping the future of our children, families, and community. Thank you for your partnership in this vital mission.

Healthy Congregations



Healthy Congregations Workshop on January 11th

One of Faith Lutheran Church's major goals for 2024 was to complete the Healthy Congregations series. We give thanks for all the faithful attendees, for the leadership from council members, and for the parish life committee for providing breakfast for each session. After reordering the schedule this fall, we will welcome Pastor Kevin Burney one last time to present the 6th workshop on January 11th. We will gather for breakfast at 8:30 am followed by the workshop from 9 am until 1 pm. A description of the workshop is below.

All are welcome to attend. Healthy Congregations has enhanced our understanding of our congregational culture and how we function as an emotional system. It has led to deeper insight into our present and provided tools to build a stronger future together. We hope to see you there!

Workshop 6: Spiritual Care of Healthy Congregations:

- In healthy congregations, people share their lives (instead of each living for oneself)
- In healthy congregations, hospitality is offered to all (instead of favoritism for the few or like-minded)
- In healthy congregations, beginning again is a way of life (instead of staying stuck)
- At the end of this workshop participants will be able to:
 - * Identify at least three times that people can make connections with God
 - * State at least two gifts that come from or go to the community because of health and holiness
 - * Tell about at least two scripture passages where Jesus showed hospitality
 - * State at least two characteristics of a hospitable relationship
 - * Describe the steps in making a new beginning
 - * Describe how rituals are established in individuals and groups
 - * Identify at least three ways a congregation can move forward after a loss
 - * Pray using the ancient Jesus Prayer, a form of breath prayer
 - * Describe at least two methods of spiritual development
 - * Explore the relationship between the spiritual and the material
 - * Identify boundaries in their own lives in the areas of family, work, volunteer, service, and community
 - * Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of having boundaries
 - * Tell at last two criteria for rigid and fluid boundaries

Deep Green Faith Forum



Our Deep Green Faith Forums will begin in February!

We are developing a new Faith Formation project for 2025. It will be grounded in Martin Luther's case for an everyday practical and compassionate response to a Gracious God.

The project, **Deep Green Faith Forum**, will weave together three different strands for exploration:

God and Nature

Vocation and Faith

Refuge and Learning

Let's have a look at each of these strands:

God and Nature

The name of *Deep Green Faith Forum* suggests that there will be a focus on connecting and living in kinship with the natural world as God's Creation. God's love as proclaimed in the bible includes all creation in its work of salvation, redemption, and holiness. How do we encounter God in nature? How might we connect God and nature in our daily lives?

Vocation and Faith

We will be delving deeply into the theme of vocation, the characteristically Lutheran idea that finding and pursuing a life work is a living out of our faith. Members of our congregation and community will be sharing their stories of how vocation can shape faith and how faith shapes one's vocation. What we do in our everyday lives can be a vital expression of our beliefs. If you would like to share your Vocation/Faith story, please contact Pastor Dana (pastordana@faithlutheranchurch.com), Sue Anne Lau (sabeyer@twc.com), or Kathy Johnson (kathyreesjohnson@gmail.com)

Refuge and Learning

Our world has a lot of challenges right now and it can be a stressful time. With Faith Lutheran Learning Center and our rich gathering of congregants endowed with deep knowledge in a wide variety of concerns, Faith serves as a refuge for our community. FLLC provides a vitally needed early childhood education, addressing a major concern for families today. Similarly, members of Faith have pursued understanding and have lived experiences that can help heal our community and beyond. We will be illuminating this strength in the year ahead by sharing ideas that can enhance resilience for us and our surroundings.

You might already notice how these three strands naturally weave together. It is difficult to separate out the possibility of learning as we consider each other's stories about everyday living and working in our world. By purposefully weaving the strands together, our intention is to create relevant and relatable modeling of living the faith in a complicated and challenging world. It will be an opportunity for our community to contemplate our own lives encouraged by the examples of our presenters.

We will also be developing creative sessions for intergenerational participants to help us consider God and the natural world from fresh perspectives. Acting as a refuge for learning, our activities and discussion will be open to people of all ages and the wider community.

In a nutshell, our Deep Green Faith Forums will be a gathering of diverse voices sharing experience of God and Nature, Vocation and Faith, and Refuge and Learning. We hope that you will be part of this community experience.

Letter From Karen Anderson



Dear Faith Lutheran Church,

As many of you know, I am retiring this year from the ELCA. Although I see my retirement as a process not an event (I will continue to volunteer with EPES on several projects), this is an important milestone for me. I have worked for the ELCA for over 33 years and with EPES for 42 years. With both of my daughters now living in the states -- and a one-year old granddaughter in Minnesota-- I am looking forward to having more time to spend with them.

It has been wonderful to work with ELCA Global Mission all these years, especially under the leadership of Rev. Rafael Malpic a. In the midst of the brutal dictatorship of Pinochet, the Lutheran church hired a 26-year old *me* to start and lead EPES. I am grateful for their trust in me and for their love and support for me and for EPES over all these years. Working with EPES – the dedicated staff and the amazing community health promoters – has been the privilege of my life.

I am especially grateful to all of you! To all the wonderful, loving, faithful people I have met over all these years in my supporting congregations. I have been so blessed to stay in your homes, to have deep conversations about our lives, our faith and our work, and to share the work of EPES with your congregations. I am grateful for the letters of support, the cards, the prayer shawls, your friendship and for your interest, support and prayers for me, the EPES team and our work to promote justice and dignity in health.

I hope you will continue to support EPES and the Global Mission of the ELCA. EPES will continue to be an ELCA-supported ministry and you and your congregation can continue supporting EPES' work.

You can also choose to support another missionary - there are so many people doing important and wonderful work all over the world!

[Note: Karen was thoughtful enough to send in detailed information about how FLC can continue to support EPES and other ELCA mission partners around the world. This information will be shared with the outreach committee and is available from the church office.]

The most recent EPES Update is available in the Narthex and from the church office, where you will read about important developments in our work on food sovereignty and community gardens, continuing Spanish-language training for Haitian women and of our International Training Program that continues to extend our influence beyond Chile's borders. You will also read about the retirement and legacy of two key members of the EPES team, Rosario Castillo and María Teresa Fuentealba.

On a very sad note, you'll read of the loss of three important members of the EPES family: Carol Larkin, Sheila Dauer (board members of Action for Health in the Americas) and Vicky Norambuena, of the Concepción team. Three new scholarships have been established in their names to be awarded to students in our 14th International Training course in January 2025. All three will be deeply missed.

Thank you again for your support over all these years! Have a blessed Christmas.

Abrazos,

Karen Anderson

ELCA mission personnel in Chile

Faith Lutheran Church

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Church Council 2024

Bob Henry, President
Gayle McGrath, Vice President
David Templar, Secretary
Debbie Rosenberg, Treasurer
Pastor Dana Lockhart
Steve Hayes
Urton Anderson
Sue Anne Lau
Penni Black

Financial Secretary

Jennifer Carey

Sunday Worship Schedule

In-Person Worship 8:30 and 11:00 AM
Online Streaming, 11:00 AM

Clergy & Staff

Pastor Dana Lockhart

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pastordana@faithlutheranchurch.com

Amanda Nord

Parish Administrator

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Kathy Egner

Director of Music

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Neil McComb, Sexton

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Paige Barricklow, Youth Assistant

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Courtney Herald, Learning Center Director

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