

# Faith Lutheran Church & School

## Forward in Faith

### January—March 2025

*“Where faith meets life”*

*Galatians 2:20*

#### *Our Mission:*

*Sharing the word of Jesus Christ through a loving and caring ministry responding to the needs of all people.*

#### STAY CONNECTED

2265 Red Lion Road  
Bear, DE 19701-1849  
OR  
P.O. Box 1000  
Bear, DE 19701

Church 302-834-1214  
School 302-834-3417

#### WORSHIP SERVICES

Contemporary @ 8:15 AM  
Traditional @ 10:30 AM  
Livestream @ 10:30 AM  
5th Sunday @ 9:30 AM

#### WEBSITE:

[www.faith-lutheran.church](http://www.faith-lutheran.church)

#### YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/@FaithLutheranChurchBearDE](http://www.youtube.com/@FaithLutheranChurchBearDE)

#### FACEBOOK:

[www.facebook.com/faitb.bear.de](http://www.facebook.com/faitb.bear.de)

#### PASTOR'S EMAIL:

[revthress@icloud.com](mailto:revthress@icloud.com)



HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

As we begin a new year, I always appreciate the transition away from the “Holiday Season.” As much as I love Christmas, by the time we have gotten from Thanksgiving, through Advent, to Christmas, and into the New Year, all sense of “normal” is gone. All the regular routine has been set aside for the hustle and bustle of the season.

Now we are just entering the season of the “Sundays after Epiphany.” This season resembles the season of the “Sundays after Pentecost”, which takes up about half the calendar year. It even shares the familiar liturgical color of Green.

These liturgical seasons are sometimes called “ordinary time”, which feels very fitting after the “not so ordinary time” of the holidays. As a pastor, this is a time to take a breath before the season of Lent kicks off. Easter is a little late this year, so Lent doesn’t begin until March 5. This means we get almost two months of “ordinary time” as we begin this new year.

This doesn’t mean that we are idle, but this time provides a balance. I think of Jesus when He finds time to go off by Himself to pray and rest. God created rest from the beginning when He created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh. He commands us to “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.” Both work and rest serve an important purpose in our lives.

The New Year often means making “resolutions.” But how often do we consider “rest” as something that we resolve to do. Biblical rest – Sabbath rest – includes spending time in God’s Word, praying and studying, as well as physically and mentally resting. Our minds, bodies, and spirits need time to pause and renew.

*(continued)*

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUES...

As I said, we are not idle as we spend this “ordinary time” in January and February. We continue to worship together every Sunday. Bible study continues on Sunday mornings between our worship services. The midweek Bible study resumes next week on January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10AM.

And as we worship and study together in this “ordinary time”, we reflect on Jesus’ ministry. We watch our Savior as He serves, cares, and teaches. We experience the grace of God as we watch His story unfold, leading us in this “ordinary time” to see His *extraordinary* work that leads us into Lent and to Easter, to the cross and the empty tomb.

The Lord bless you in every season.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor*



## YOUR 2024 DONATION STATEMENT IS AVAILABLE!

ICON, what is it? ICON is a software system to centrally collect all membership data: full names of each member of your family, address, phone numbers, birthdates, and email address. ICON also allows us to enter attendance each week. This is why it is important to let us know you, and your family, are worshipping with us. Please be sure you sign in at the podium located by the sanctuary doors. The attendance is also important to let us know: who we haven't seen in awhile, and check in on them; to accurately know how many confirmed members we have for synod reporting requirements; and to track one time and frequent visitors. The last component to ICON is the recording of your donations. And yes, your 2024 donation statement is available and you have the ability to download it yourself!

To print your 2024 donation statement: (**if you have a login name setup already**)

- 1) From your browser, enter [www.iconcmo.com](http://www.iconcmo.com)
- 2) Select LOGIN from the tabs at the top.
- 3) If you are asked for church's phone number, enter 302-834-1214, your login name, and password.
- 4) Please take the opportunity to check your family's personal information for accuracy and update if necessary. If you prefer not to provide your birth year, simply enter 0000.
- 5) To print your statement, select the Donations tab from the top of your screen. Enter the date range of 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024 and select print.

**If you do not have a login name setup**, please email the office at [secretary@faith-lutheran.church](mailto:secretary@faith-lutheran.church) and request a membership portal link. Once you have your login name set up, you can follow the directions above.

We understand this is a new way of receiving your statement and encourage you to give it a try. If you do not have access to a computer or would prefer a printed statement, you may request a printed copy from the office.

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we transition towards fully implementing ICON and all of the available features. If you have questions, or need assistance, please contact the office. All questions regarding specific donations can be directed to the Financial Secretary, Dave Lyons @ [davel Lyons@comcast.net](mailto:davel Lyons@comcast.net).

## COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE:

It's a new year. This is a time when many people look to make changes and try to bring progress and improvement in their lives. Of course, we all understand that a "new year" is our own invention, that we made the calendar what it is. But it can be useful in order to take an assessment of where you are and think about where you would like to go. And in fact, it might not be a bad idea to have a "new year" mentality in July, so that at least twice a year you make some positive moves!

Of course, there are certainly many things we could be anxious about moving into 2025 as our world seems more chaotic each passing day. But that should not be our focus. We fix our eyes on Jesus.

I believe 2025 will demonstrate that God is still working his plan for our lives and for this Faith community. I believe 2025 will have many wonderful opportunities for us to grow as individual believers and together as the Body of Christ.

I love coming to worship with you all and receive together God's gifts of Word and Sacrament. We have a loving community that shares warmly with each other and those that visit. But I look forward to us taking this a step further and creating more opportunities for closer fellowship and interaction in 2025. A church is to be much more than just Sunday morning worship.

I think we are on the right track with our Women of Faith and our new Men's Group. Our recent emphasis on building a strong family ministry is going in the right direction. Renewing community events like the Fall Festival and VBS will be key to increasing our time spent together, getting to know each other more, and our neighbors as well. But there are certainly even more things we can do to be in one another's lives in a positive way. The Scriptures are full of encouragement for us to care for one another and build each other up in the faith. Jesus even commanded us to "love one another."

I pray 2025 deepens our relationships with each other to such an extent people will marvel at "how much they love each other" and to such an extent that outside circumstances, challenging events, and attacks of the enemy cannot divide us or tear us apart. So, it's a new year. And what an incredible year it will be!

Pete Mueller

Faith Council Chairman



## A SPECIAL RECOGNITION

*At the December semi-annual Voter's Assembly meeting, Pete Mueller presented Carl Toensmeyer a Certificate of Appreciation for his long-serving commitment and dedication as an Elder. Thank you, Carl!*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

## 2025 FLOWER CHART



Are you celebrating a special occasion, remembering a loved one, or simply wish to give glory to God? There are still plenty of opportunities to beautify our worship space with your gift of altar flowers. Sign up sheet is on the board in the narthex.

## LENT BEGINS MARCH 5th

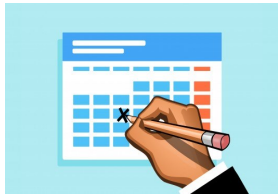
Ash Wednesday service with Imposition of Ashes @ 7:00 PM

Mid-week services - Wednesdays @ 12:00 PM & 7:00 PM

March 12th, 19th, 26th , April 2nd, & 9th



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS (RECURRING)



Women of Faith meetings - 1st Saturday of the month @ 9:30 AM

Food from Faith distribution - 2nd Saturday of the month 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Food packing on prior Thursday morning

Choir Rehearsal - Wednesdays @ 7:00 PM (resumes February 5th)

## PRESCHOOL NEWS

As we enter the second half of the school year, please help us restock our food pantry. We are accepting donations of Goldfish, Cheez-Its, cookies, 100% fruit juice, crackers, and pretzels. Juice and snacks do not need to be prepackaged in individual servings.

Donations can be left in the church office.



**Thank you for your support!**

## BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITES

Adult Bible study - Sundays @ 9:15 AM

Children's Sunday School (*during 10:30 AM service*)

Women's Bible Study - Thursdays at 10:00 (resumes January 23rd)

*Study focus: Prophets Ezra and Nehemiah*

Confirmation— see Pastor for details



**Bible  
STUDY  
Join us!**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS...

## WOMEN OF FAITH: (LWML)

### "SOUPER" BOWL SUNDAY FEBRUARY 9th



Everyone, not just the Women of Faith, is invited to bring your favorite soup or chili to share. You are also invited to bring some bread to go with your soup. Take-home containers will be provided so you can bring your soup in a kettle or crockpot. If you are also bringing bread, please package it in single serve baggies. A free-will offering will be collected and donated!

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

### JANUARY

01/05 Peter Mueller  
01/08 Tori MacLaren  
01/09 Diane Roman  
01/10 Steve Nawrocki  
01/13 Isaac Rufus  
01/14 Joleen De Luz  
01/15 Andy Borntreger  
01/17 Jules Vansant  
01/20 Brandon Bradford  
01/25 Lukas Vacula  
01/27 Eleanor Logan  
01/29 Chris Monsell

### FEBRUARY

02/01 Ashley Zelano  
02/02 Carol Milliken  
02/04 Carla Vacula  
02/08 Beth Monsell  
02/09 Jill Mackey  
02/10 Shaleen Ekoteson  
02/14 Brian Bradford  
02/17 Will Harp  
02/18 Thomas Cronin  
02/21 Lynn Bennett  
02/22 Tom Elder  
02/22 Katy Knapp  
02/22 Will McCrea  
02/26 Isaiah Rufus  
02/29 Bob Cormier

### MARCH

03/02 Bill Flickinger  
03/04 Anita Miller  
03/06 Morgan Roman  
03/08 Jen Dalby  
03/10 Raeanna Eisenhauer  
03/16 Mary Ann Ottolini  
03/24 Tom Patrick  
03/28 Luisa Georgov  
03/29 Travis De Luz  
03/29 Matthew Wanzer  
03/30 Doug Drummonds

*If your name is missing, please contact the church office with your date of birth (month and day) so we can celebrate with you!*

# FORWARD IN FAITH

## HONORING THE PAST

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## CELEBRATING THE FUTURE



Faith celebrated 70 years together on September 29th with one service, a special program, and a catered lunch afterwards. We were blessed with the arrival of Faith's long-standing charter member, Helen Knapp, arriving right on cue during the sermon! Her special message and shared memories were inspiring to all of us. The garden area by the front door was dedicated to Helen and a dedication marker was placed in her honor.



## FOOD FROM FAITH

Did you know that *Food from Faith* serves dozens of families in the community who are facing food insecurities? Food distribution is the 2nd Saturday of the month, ***every month***, and the setup and boxing takes place on the prior Thursday. This is a true labor of love and they are always looking for volunteers. For more information or to volunteer, contact Kym Caudill.



## A HUG FROM MATT

We still have a couple months of cold weather ahead and *A Hug from Matt* is still collecting the items listed below. As the weather warms, the needs will change.

### Supplies Needed:

- Mylar Blankets
- Small Fleece Blankets
- Non-perishable Food
- Women's Hygiene Products
- Socks (Male/Female)
- Hand/Foot Warmers
- Gloves
- Scarves
- Lip Balms
- Body Lotions
- Hand Sanitizers
- Water

# FORWARD IN FAITH

## TRUNK or TREAT — WHO HAD MORE FUN????

Trunk or Treat 2024 saw a variety of Halloween costumes, sported by both adults and kids, as members and friends of Faith joined together to provide a positive, family-friendly Halloween party for our members, friends, and neighbors. We estimate about 45 kids and their families joined us to enjoy crafts, food, games, “photo ops”, and of course, gathering lots of treats from the vehicles around the parking lot. A highlight of the evening was Pastor’s “ghost story from the Bible”, giving the kids and their families the opportunity to hear the Gospel message. What a wonderful ministry for our congregation to offer!

Thank you again – to all the folks who brought their vehicles with treats for the kids, to all the volunteers who supervised crafts and games, those who gave direction to kids and families for where to park and where to find the party activities, to those who worked the kitchen and serving window, and anyone who shared their creative talents. There were many volunteers who made the night special for all the kids, families and provided a God-pleasing and positive evening overall. Thanks also to Thrivent Financial, for providing an “Action Team” grant to help with expenses craft supplies and food.

So, who had more fun – the kids or the adults???? Folks who attended the evening probably have a hard time deciding on the answer. So for now, just take a look at just a few of the “trunks” from the evening..... and let your creative side start planning for Trunk or Treat 2025!

*A special thank you to Carla Abel-Vacula for contributing this article and for her planning and leadership in a “spook-tacular” evening!*



# FORWARD IN FAITH

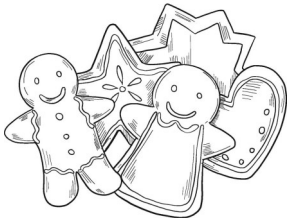
The Women of Faith were busy all fall organizing fundraisers to help those in need. Thank you to everyone who baked a pie or cookies; provided gloves, socks, other necessities, made hats for *A Hug from Matt*; or contributed Christmas toys for *Kind to Kids*. Whether you baked, shopped or made a donation, your generosity blessed many less fortunate than ourselves.

In November we had an amazing assortment of pies to bless our Thanksgiving meal. The free-will offering of \$468 was donated to the *A Hug from Matt* ministry.



In December, the Women of Faith called upon all the bakers to dust off their favorite family recipes for the annual cookie fundraiser. Wow—what an assortment of cookies, special treats, and even a homemade ginger bread

house kit! A generous \$560 was raised for *Sunday Breakfast Mission*.



The Women of Faith met December 7th for their

Annual Christmas Gathering. In addition to time for fellowship and snacking we also collected an over-flowing basket of gloves and socks for women in need through *A Hug from Matt*.



*Kind to Kids* is non-profit organization serving foster children in our surrounding community. Our Giving Tree contained tags of each child's wish or need. As you can see, our giving hearts and generosity didn't disappoint. Thank you Kym Caudill for setting up this effort and for delivering our gifts. Before Kym delivered them, she estimated our gifts were valued at \$1,500!



***Don't forget that "Souper" Bowl  
Sunday is February 9th!***

*Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. Matthew 25:44-46*