

February Newsletter



FAITH
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Hope In February!

Can you believe that we have arrived in February already? We all know that means that there is that special one day this month that will either make you full of delight or hesitant even to admit it exists. That day? Ash Wednesday, of course! The beginning of the Lenten season is upon us. You thought I was referring to that “other” day celebrated on February 14th, Valentine’s Day, right? The holiday of celebrating romantic loved ones aside, Ash Wednesday and the Lenten season provide us a time to look forward in Hope, no matter the time of life’s journey you may find yourself.

Many Christians look at this time of year differently. For most, some observations of Ash Wednesday still exist, while others continue with Lenten services, fasting in various fashions, a Fat Tuesday celebration, and all culminating with Holy Week. These ancient church practices have existed in some form or fashion since the earliest church history. Typically, those practices are solemn, filled with reminders of our death and need for repentance, even encouraging us to give up something to find ourselves closer to God.

The early church took these rituals directly from scripture. The idea of fasting and spending time in sackcloth and repentance wasn’t new to the followers of Christ in the early church. The Old Testament contains many examples of God’s people crying out to Him similarly. The idea for a Lenten season leading up to the celebration of Resurrection Sunday, or the celebration today we call Easter, is based directly on Christ’s temptation in the wilderness.

I wonder if we couldn’t receive more from this season if we were to look directly at the singular reason we have it – Jesus Christ’s sacrifice for all the world. Instead of seeing this time of year as a reason to look at how short we come to fulfilling the laws of God, we

could look at the glory of the Son on the cross, the only true action of love in the world, and see that He did that for each person individually. Yes, it is good to be mindful of our sinful nature, as Paul writes in Romans 6:1-7, so we know the need for Christ. But isn’t it more uplifting to remember his words in verse 8, “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (Rom 6:8)? In Christ’s death, He paid for all your sins, and you are alive in Christ. You are not regulated to a life of making sure that if you miss one sin, Christ will ignore you. No, He died for all your sins. Maybe that is why Luther was against fasting and other days of “penance” in the church and instead repeatedly stated that we should celebrate the work Christ has done for us. There is all the hope we need in His work, for now, and in every season.

I don’t advocate that we skip Lent and Ash Wednesday, nor do I think that if you are fasting for your purposes, you should stop. I look forward to this time of the church year each year, as it truly reminds me of the insignificance of my sins compared to Christ’s work. Let’s keep the Lenten season and the traditions, but remember that we are not suffering to earn what Christ has already given us.

“Lent, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week shall be retained, not to force anyone to fast, but to preserve the Passion history and the Gospels appointed for that season.”

– Martin Luther, Luther’s Works, Vol. 53

A quote from Luther directing the “new church” on how to observe the church year.



In Christ’s Service
Pastor Denton L. Bennet, Jr



February Greetings from Pastor Jennifer

Although it seems like Christmas was just yesterday, Ash Wednesday will soon be upon us. As we anticipate the contemplation and repentance of the Lenten season, we prepare our hearts for a time of personal reflection. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, when hundreds of millions of Christians receive ashes on their foreheads in churches across the world. We too observe this practice of the imposition of ashes.

Ashes are an outward sign of our need for repentance and a heartfelt admission that we are sinners who fall short of the glory of God. The concept of sin may seem archaic or old-fashioned to many in the modern world. But sin is part of our human nature, brokenness is our human condition, and this is something that persists into the modern age. None of us is perfect; wherever there are people, there is sin. We need a Savior.

We put ashes on our foreheads in Lent to remember that we are sinners in need of God's grace and mercy. When our first parents, Adam and Eve, lived in the Garden of Eden they enjoyed perfect love and perfect communion with the Lord. God instructed them not to eat from the tree in the middle of the garden. But Satan, the enemy, twisted God's words and created doubt in their minds.

They wondered, "Does God really have our best interests at heart? Can we really trust him or is he holding out some special secret or power from us?" The first couple believed the lie. They ate against God's clear instructions. They wanted to be like the Creator, to control their own lives rather than be obedient to God. This was the first sin, and every human since Adam and Eve has committed similar sins because we want to be in charge of our own lives rather than be faithful to God.

God searched for the couple after they had sinned. He knew they were ashamed, and he covered them. But because of their disobedience they were cast from the garden and would spend their lives working the land and toiling for their needs. To the woman God pronounced pain in childbirth. God cursed the serpent to slither on the ground and eat dirt. And to Adam God said, "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

"Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You took on you what was mine; yet set on me what was yours. You became what you were not, that I might become what I was not."
– Martin Luther

Our great emphasis during the season of Lent is on pausing in our busy lives to reflect and rethink our sinfulness versus God's righteousness. Recognizing this contrast is significant because Jesus reversed this at the cross. In his mercy, Jesus took the sin of the world upon himself and gave each of us his righteousness instead. It's often called The Great Exchange. In so doing, all children of God now have God's promise of forgiveness of sins, salvation, and eternal life.



There is much to contemplate during Lent, and at the end of this season we will celebrate together the glorious gifts of God, granted to us by the death and resurrection of our Lord!

In Christ's Service,
Pastor Jennifer Bennet



Ministry to the Homebound

Thanks be to God that our church membership is so active in helping others! Thank you all for all that you are doing to bring Christ's love to each other and to our neighborhoods.

Needs and requests have been coming in to the church office for a while that make some pause to pray and question. There seem to be a few categories that call us to look to our mission statement: To love God, to love each other and to serve the community. Much discussion has been had about this and the need for an expanded direction seems to be apparent. Might you feel/hear a calling to help visit those in our community who have requested some support?

- * We have widows and widowers in our community, as well as within our membership, who sometimes could use some help.
- * Senior citizens have moved into our communities to be closer to loved ones. They leave their forever church home and are housebound so that they cannot participate in person at church as they would prefer. Besides visits from a pastor, they would benefit from some Christian camaraderie, an occasional helping hand, and the feeling of connection.
- * There are some church members who are homebound. They get visited by each of our pastors, but sometimes having other Christian friends to talk and pray with, in addition to pastoral visits, would be appreciated.

Attempts have been made in the past to coordinate a few volunteers to help with this sort of service. Prayerfully consider please, volunteering to help lead a project like this.

Please pray for those in our community who are in need. Please pray that Faith Lutheran Church will always fulfill our mission statement in a way that is pleasing to our good Father in Heaven. If you would like more information, or have any questions, please contact Pastor Jennifer.



From FLC Preschool: Connection

Each January we celebrate National Lutheran Schools Week! This year our focus comes from John 15:5.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

Jesus is the living vine that connects us to God, and we are the branches. If we (the branches) stay connected to Jesus, then we thrive and continue to grow in Love, Joy Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control!

Connection is a form of responsive atonement. It is a gift we give when we relinquish our self-centered view of the world in order to participate fully with another. When we connect, we let go of our judgments about how others should be, release our biases of how things should go.

Connection helps build strong relationships, whether it is your relationship with God, parents, children, co-workers, friends! Children require authentic connection for growth and development. The 4 key elements are: Eye Contact, Touch, Presence, in a Playful manner!



Pastor Jennifer teaching the preschoolers 'Fruit of the Spirit' song during Lutheran School Week

From Our New Music Director

Hello Friends at Faith Lutheran,

Pastor Denton asked me to present an article for the monthly newsletter for February. So here I am on a beautiful winter's day, Jan. 22 in Hickman, NE (ten miles south of Lincoln). It's going to be above zero today - a balmy 35 degrees! Praise God!!

I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you soon. I so enjoyed worshipping with you back in December when I visited the church for the first time. You were all so welcoming, and the music and ministry were so meaningful.

I have been a church musician since I was 14 years of age, using my developing skills at the church organ and piano. Since that time I have played at several churches that include: Congregational, Lutheran, Catholic, etc. I love singing, playing, and directing a variety of sacred music, including hymns, praise music, and choral-am, so I am looking forward to working with your talented musicians and making music together with you!



I always like to include a musical verse. This is from 2 Chronicles 5:13 as part of the dedication of Solomon's temple, "in unison, when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise, and to glorify the Lord, and when they lifted their voice, accompanied by trumpets and symbols, and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying, He, indeed, is good, for His loving kindness is everlasting..."



I'm looking forward to praising God with you very soon!
Char Reid
Music Director



ARE YOU A FIT FOR OUR TEAM?

Faith Lutheran Church is seeking a part-time Facility Maintenance manager. The Facility Maintenance position requires someone skilled in building and grounds maintenance. FLC offers competitive wages, some benefits, and a supportive work environment. If you are skilled in this area, please submit your resume to office@faithcrao.org and thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration.

Join us in the Adult Forum from Jan 28 to Apr 14 as we learn from Pastor Greg Finke the difference between living your life for Jesus and living your life with Jesus. Pastor Greg and his wife lay out the simple and powerful ways that we can walk with Jesus and recognize where Jesus is already at work in our schools, neighborhoods, and schools. You will be surprised how easy it is to see Jesus at work all around you while responding to the everyday opportunities He has placed in your path. Opportunities to live for and with Jesus and see His work around you impact the work we are doing together at Faith Lutheran Church. This series includes a short book (provided), a video curriculum we will view together, and a discussion guide. - Pastor Denton



From The Council President

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I made an announcement in church on January 7th after the Church Council meeting on the 6th to let you know that we, as a Council, are working on several items that came out of our November Congregation Meeting. Some theological questions have arisen along with some opportunity for education about what it means to call ourselves Lutherans.

The Adult Forum (education sessions take place in The Gathering Place on Sunday mornings at 10:30-11:30am), currently being led by Pastor Denton, has focused on various aspects of what does being a Lutheran mean.

We've discussed some of Luther's theses, we've delved into Baptism and into free will versus bonded will. If there are topics you'd like to know more about, Pastor Denton would like to know.

In addition to the Adult Forum, the Council has come up with questions for small groups to discuss and report anonymous feedback to the Council. This feedback, in conjunction with the Adult Forum group is setting the ground-work for us as a church to identify who we are and to define what we believe.

Changing topics now, at FLC it has been apparent for many years now that we need more physical space to continue growing and furthering our mission, Loving God, Loving One Another, Serving Our Community. The Council will be discussing growth plans at our February meeting. It's an exciting time to be part of this growing community!

One of the perplexing conundrums that Council has been discussing is how to get more people involved on a volunteer basis. There are many opportunities:

- ✚ We are in need of oversight of Education – there is a council position open for Spiritual Liaison where Sunday School and Small Group ministries currently fall. There has been a resounding “we need to strengthen our family and youth ministries” yet we struggle to have consistent support and commitment at FLY on a weekly basis. We need more Sunday school teachers – we are currently down to one classroom for ALL of the children. We used to have separate classes for the various age groups.
- ✚ Another need that's been identified is to start a Community Intouch ministry group that would provide pastoral care for our members internally.

I bring all of this to your attention so that you're aware of where we are. Please pray and consider your time as a gift to God and FLC.

Volunteer Needs:

- ✚ Sunday School teachers
- ✚ Nursery Volunteers
- ✚ AV/Sound Engineer volunteers
- ✚ FLY
- ✚ Community
- ✚ Intouch Ministry (name TBD)



On a final note, please move your weekly newsletter articles to this monthly newsletter. Going forward all large articles need to be submitted and posted here. If you need to know how to submit your monthly article, please contact the office. The weekly email blast is meant to be a shorter reminder of current happenings at the church during that particular week.

God's peace be with you all and may you have a blessed February.

Colleen Hopwood

Council President

“Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, or his steadfast love endures forever.” Psalm 136:1

THEREFORE, ALWAYS MAINTAIN AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE AND SHARE IT WITH THOSE YOU MEET!



Greetings from the Food Pantry Ministry!!

God is working here at Faith Lutheran Church, not only through the Food Pantry, but through the Preschool, Children’s Ministry, Quilters, and the many more ministries. We need to Praise Him always for what He does for us as a church, also as well as for us as individuals. All the glory belongs to you, God!

A look back for the Food Pantry Ministry in 2023: We served a record number of families and family members than any of the past three years. Please see the chart below for more details. In addition, the average number of families that come through the pantry on Saturdays is 25. On average, we will spend \$5,000 per month on groceries. We receive large donations of food, toiletries, household items, etc. from other food pantries, from local families and individuals – all to compliment the variety of food that is given.

	Total Families	Total Members	Avg Family Size
2023 Total	1,292	5,616	4.35
2022 Total	1,050	4,331	4.12
2021 Total	878	3,742	4.26
2020 Total	505	3,508	4.27
Inception Total to date	4,025	17,197	4.27

At least 95% of the families served through this ministry are from the Castle Rock area. But we have regulars coming from Elizabeth, Highlands Ranch and other surrounding communities.

This ministry is blessed with the many servants who support it, within the congregation and outside. As an average we can have up to 20 volunteers per week, shopping, assembling, and helping on Saturday’s handing out the groceries and greeting and praying with the family. We have young mothers bring in their children to experience the act of giving on Friday and Saturdays. Some will pray over the groceries after they have assembled them for a family. There are

typically 1 to 2 volunteers each week that come in to help that are not in our congregation. If you have a calling to join in this ministry, please reach out any of the team members (noted below). We would love you to join us in the fun and fellowship!

As a reminder, the Pantry could use any of the following items: baby food and formula, dish soap, laundry soap, paper towels, toilet paper, hand and bath soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shaving cream for women/unisex, razors, etc. We also welcome donations of food, however, please check expiration dates as we must discard any items that are expired.

Please drop any items you may have in the Food Pantry donation bin at the entrance of the church before 10:00 am on Saturday.

The FP ministry team would like to express their deepest appreciation for all the support you give either by serving in the ministry, donating items, or donating financially. Thanks for all of the prayers for God’s continued presence.

With overwhelming gratitude,
Terry Korsvold, Ruth Harvey, Bette Warn, Willis Buehrle & Laura Stevens

“²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.”

- Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV

Guatemala Update - Leanne Becker

Back in October when I learned from Pastor Marcos that HOL had not come to bring food for our sponsored families since September, I had contacted His Hands International (HHI) – a US ministry in Gualan, Guatemala (halfway between Hope of Life’s campus and our Village). At that time, the president of HHI, David Varner agreed to help us out and deliver food to our village as well as bringing new shoes for all and a doctor to check out any injuries or ailments.

After communicating with Pastor Marcos in Los Castillos on December 15, 2023, I learned that Hope of Life still had not visited our village since September. They claim they ran out of money to provide help to our sponsored kids in September.

On December 21, 2023, I called the president of HHI to see if they would again be willing to send a truck with more food along with two filled pinatas to Los Castillos for Christmas as a gift from Faith Lutheran to our friends. They were thrilled to help us out! Below are pictures from the day they delivered the food bags. They prayed for us for being generous and loving them enough to send the food and pinatas! They were very grateful!

We are extremely grateful for the help of HHI in this most difficult situation. We now have 92 families in the village. We were billed on \$15 per bag. Previously we were paying \$38 per bag. We feel hopeful that a partnership with His Hands International may be the answer to our prayers for how to keep the promises made to the children and families in our village. We will be running a background check on the organization and its leadership. We will also be meeting in person and via Zoom to try to determine if a long-term partnership is possible.





February Calendar



Feb 1, Thursday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 8:30 AM Piece Makers
 6:30 PM Thursday Night Bible Study

Feb 2, Friday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 9:30 AM REAL Bible Study

Feb 3, Saturday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 10:00 AM Food Pantry

Feb 4, Sunday

9:00 AM Worship Service
 10:15 AM Coffee & Fellowship
 10:30 AM Adult Forum
 10:30 AM ARK Sunday School
 10:30 AM Confirmation Class
 6:00 PM FLY

Feb 5, Monday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM WOTR
 6:00 PM Men's Bible Study

Feb 6, Tuesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM Tues. Night Men's Group

Feb 7, Wednesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 9:30 AM Sarah Circle
 1:00 PM InTouch

Feb 8, Thursday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 8:30 AM Piece Makers
 6:30 PM Thursday Night Bible Study

Feb 9, Friday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 9:30 AM REAL Bible Study

Feb 10, Saturday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 10:00 AM Food Pantry

Feb 11, Sunday

9:00 AM Worship Service
 10:15 AM Coffee & Fellowship
 10:30 AM Adult Forum
 10:30 AM ARK Sunday School
 10:30 AM Confirmation Class
 6:00 PM FLY

Feb 12, Monday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM WOTR
 6:00 PM Men's Bible Study

Feb 13, Tuesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM Tues. Night Men's Group

Feb 14, Ash Wednesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 7:00 PM Ash Wednesday Service

Feb 15, Thursday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 8:30 AM Piece Makers
 6:30 PM Thursday Night Bible Study

Feb 16, Friday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 9:30 AM REAL Bible Study

Feb 17, Saturday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 10:00 AM Food Pantry

Feb 18, Sunday

9:00 AM Worship Service
 10:15 AM Coffee & Fellowship
 10:30 AM Adult Forum
 10:30 AM ARK Sunday School
 10:30 AM Confirmation Class
 6:00 PM FLY

Feb 19, Monday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM WOTR
 6:00 PM Men's Bible Study

Feb 20, Tuesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM Tues. Night Men's Group

Feb 21, Wednesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 9:30 AM Sarah Circle
 1:00 PM InTouch
 6:00 PM Soup Supper
 7:00 PM Lenten Service

Feb 22, Thursday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 8:30 AM Piece Makers
 6:30 PM Thursday Night Bible Study

Feb 23, Friday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 9:30 AM REAL Bible Study

Feb 24, Saturday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 10:00 AM Food Pantry

Feb 25, Sunday

9:00 AM Worship Service
 10:15 AM Coffee & Fellowship
 10:30 AM Adult Forum
 10:30 AM ARK Sunday School
 10:30 AM Confirmation Class
 6:00 PM FLY

Feb 26, Monday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM WOTR
 6:00 PM Men's Bible Study

Feb 27, Tuesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM Tues. Night Men's Group

Feb 28, Wednesday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 6:00 PM Soup Supper
 7:00 PM Lenten Service

Feb 29, Thursday

7:00 AM Zoom Prayer Meeting
 8:30 AM Piece Makers
 6:30 PM Thursday Night Bible Study



Worship Helpers

Sunday, Feb 4

Greeters..... Brad & Deb Remus
 Ushers..... Mark Baird, Dean Stange
 Acolytes.....Natalie Ness, Addison Baird
 Communion Asst. TBD
 Reader..... Mark Baird
 Offering Counters TBD

Sunday, Feb 11

Greeters..... TBD
 Ushers..... Cori Schroeder, Jan Burkhardt
 Acolytes..... Lukas Rudebusch, Delaney Bush
 Communion Asst. TBD
 Reader..... TBD
 Offering Counters TBD

Sunday, Feb 18

Greeters..... Jan & Bob Burkhardt
 Ushers..... Ralph Lawson, Rob Rudebusch
 Acolytes..... TBD
 Communion Asst. TBD
 Reader..... Becky Heacock
 Offering Counters TBD

Sunday, Feb 25

Greeters..... TBD
 Ushers..... Ron & Laura Stevens
 Acolytes..... TBD
 Communion Asst. TBD
 Reader..... TBD
 Offering Counters TBD

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” ~1 Peter 4:10-11



Church Staff Directory

PASTORS

Pr. Denton Bennet, Jr.....pastordenton@faithcrco.org
 Pr. Jennifer Bennet..... pastorjennifer@faithcrco.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Daria Martin dariam@faithcrco.org

NURSERY ATTENDANT

Ashley Wallweber..... awallweber@faithcrco.org

MUSICAL DIRECTOR

Charlene Reid musicdirector@faithcrco.org

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Linda Turner lturner@faithcrco.org

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

Open Position



“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” - Romans 12:4-5



Are You Called To Serve?

We’re in need of some ministry assistance and we would absolutely love your help if you’re able to lend a hand. Thank you so much in advance for prayerfully considering it!

Nursery Volunteers: sign up sheet is located in the Narthex. If interested, you may also contact Ashley Wallweber or the office at office@faithcrco.org

A/V Volunteers Needed: We are seeking volunteers to assist with the A/V system during services. Training will be provided. If interested, please contact Mark Scott or Pastor Denton.