



Faith Family News

February 2026

*In response to God's grace flowing
through Christ, we grow in faith
and show Christ's love.*

DO YOU HEAR WHAT I HEAR? A WAVE OF CHILDREN!

By Pastor Adam

I hope you have taken time to read through our 2025 Annual Reports. If you have not, I encourage you to pour a cup of coffee (or drink of your choice), get cozy, and reflect with us on our ministry together. In my report, I share how God is calling and inviting us to new life and ministry... but we may not recognize it if we don't listen. I highlighted a number of areas where I hear God calling and would like to share more about one area as we break new ground together for 2026 in children, youth, and family ministry.

On Sunday mornings at Faith, it's hard to miss the sound of children. Did you know we have 22 kids under the age of four and 20 in grade school? If they were all here on a Sunday (think of the Christmas program last December), you couldn't miss them! And then there are our youth. They are loud in different ways... many of them serving through singing, offering music, volunteering in worship, and helping around the church. We are blessed to have many young families in our congregation, and they are spreading the word and inviting their friends. Today's reality is that youth and families are very busy with commitments in many areas. It's normal for them to attend in-person worship less frequently, but that can make it difficult to build relationships with one another and our congregation. We try to offer other opportunities to gather such as Winter Cheer this Sunday, Bible Boot Camp, and Confirmation/Youth nights, and would like to offer more like Vacation Bible School and more regular youth events, but it requires much help to coordinate. As this wave of

children builds and flows forward in the years to come, we want to build and strengthen our ministry to meet their needs, keep them engaged, and draw more families to our church.

I'm excited to share that our Church Council has put together a position description for a Family, Children, and Youth Ministry Coordinator. It is a part time position dedicated to nurturing spiritual growth, fostering engagement, and supporting the holistic development of families, children, and youth at Faith. We want to cultivate meaningful relationships within these families and within our congregation, so that our church can thrive as a network of mutual support, encouragement, and faith. This person would receive a \$1,500 monthly stipend, funded for the first year by our current Youth Ministry Fund and an endowment for ministry support. As this ministry grows, we expect the financial support to grow as well, fully taking on the cost of the position when our mortgage is paid off. Position descriptions are available in the church office and will be shared in the community and through our ELCA synod office. In the coming months, the Council will oversee an interview process, and we hope to have someone serving this position by summer.

If you have questions, reach out to me or any member of our Council and I'll share more at our Annual Meeting on February 8. We welcome your prayerful support and continued financial support for our ministry together. It's such a joy to hear the sound of children at Faith. Listen and give thanks as we also listen for God's direction for the life of our ministry together, today and for years to come.

Pastor Adam

Flows. Grows. Shows



Faith Family Updates

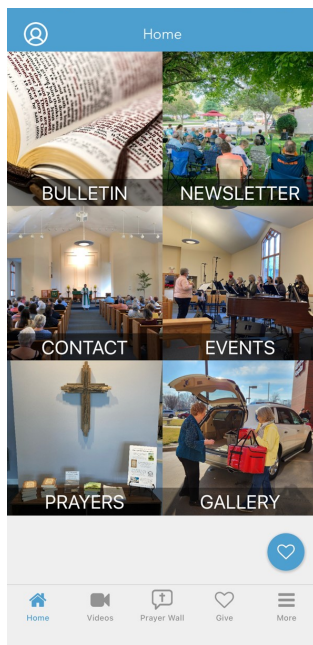
What's new around Faith? Maybe you haven't been here in awhile or you just haven't noticed, but our ministry is constantly changing.

ANNUAL MEETING

Faith's Annual Meeting has been rescheduled for **Sunday, February 8**, due to snow on previously scheduled January 25. Please join us back in the sanctuary after fellowship as we hear about God's work among us in 2025 and look forward to 2026.

UPCOMING BAPTISMS AND NEW MEMBER WELCOME

On Sunday, February 8, we welcome Katie Carls and Meghan Roman as new members to our congregation and celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Baptism for their three children, MJ, Shay, and Sean. Please come and join us for this special service and fellowship afterwards with cake. After some time of fellowship, all are invited back to the sanctuary for our Annual Meeting.



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH APP

There's an app for everything these days... even church! Introducing, the new Faith Lutheran Church App! This is your one-stop source for our church calendar, giving you updates about upcoming events. It gives direct access to our online services for easy access anywhere. Have you ever wished you had your newsletter with you to recall a certain article? Now you have them all on your phone. It even has a prayer wall where you can add prayers and see who we are praying for. There are lots of ways we can modify this app to meet the needs of our congregation. If you are interested, please consider adding it to your smartphone so you can try it out and give us feedback. We hope that it will be a tool to help stay connected to one another, improve communication across our congregation, and stay engaged in the ministry we share. Currently, our app isn't available to the public on app stores, but can only be shared directly. If you would like to have the church app on your phone, contact Pastor Adam and he will help get you set up.

THANK YOU FROM THE DICHSENS

For over a year now, you all have been surrounding us with love, holding us in prayer, and lifting us with support through our journey with Marilyn's cancer diagnosis. Whether grieving or celebrating, you've been there. Thank you so much! Through your generosity and the generosity of others, God has abundantly provided food for our family, finances for every medical bill, and encouragement in faith when we definitely needed it. While this journey continues into the unknown, we are grateful for good news and the opportunities it provides for the future.

With great love and gratitude, *The Dichsens*



Reaching Up... Connecting with God through Worship

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FIRST SUNDAY SCHEDULE

We continue to offer two worship services on the first Sunday of each month, Contemporary at 9:30 and Traditional at 11:00. Our contemporary service is less structured and incorporates familiar contemporary songs as well as some new to you that you may hear on the radio. The traditional service draws from our rich Lutheran liturgical heritage, incorporating tunes and prayers shared in worship for centuries. The hymns which have stood the test of time, are saturated with Lutheran theology. Each service is a full course meal... consider mixing up your menu and giving one a try.

WHAT IS LENT?

The word "Lent" has a surprising etymology. It comes from the Old English *lencten*, meaning "spring." Maybe not surprising considering this liturgical season is home to the first day of Spring and the lengthening of days, but perhaps it refers to another spring as well. Lent is a season of repentance, a time for the law to show us our sin and the gospel to

heal us through God's grace. Just as farmers spend this season preparing their fields, we are invited to adopt spiritual practices of repentance and mercy. Traditional Lenten practices or disciplines include prayer (spending time in dialogue with God), fasting (giving up excess in your life), and almsgiving (generosity for the sake of others). How will you practice the season of Lent? Join us in some of the ways we make this journey together.

Ash Wednesday

February 18 - 7:00pm

Lent is just around the corner! Join us for our traditional service of the imposition of ashes. This practice reminds us that we are dust and to dust we shall return... but also proclaims that we find life in the cross of Christ.

LENTEN MIDWEEK WORSHIP

Throughout the season of Lent, we will gather for Holden Evening Prayer, a beautiful and contemplative liturgy for worship and reflection. Services will be held at 7:00pm on Wednesdays, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, and 3/25. There will be a mission meal at 6:00pm, and the service will last approximately 30 minutes.

SERMONS IN LENT - JESUS' PASSION IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Since Christmas, we've been reading through the Gospel of John, and you may have noticed how different it is from the others. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the "synoptic gospels" because they are so similar. Through Lent, we will be reading from chapters 10-20 in the Gospel of John. These chapters tell of Jesus' Passion (the events leading up to his crucifixion), with some of the stories and theological views being unique to John. Come join us on this Lenten Journey through John's gospel:

February 18 - Ash Wednesday - The Good Shepherd (John 10:1-18)

February 22 - Lent 1 - Jesus Raises Lazarus (John 11:1-44)

March 1 - Lent 2 - Jesus Washes Feet (John 13:1-17)

March 8 - Lent 3 - Peter's Denial (John 18:12-27)

March 15 - Lent 4 - Jesus and Pilate (John 18:28-40)

March 22 - Lent 5 - Jesus Condemned (John 19:1-16a)

March 29 - Palm Sunday - The Crucified Messiah (John 19:16b-22)

April 2 - Maundy Thursday - Jesus' Last Words (John 19:23-30)

April 3 - Good Friday - Jesus the Passover Lamb (John 19:31-42)

April 5 - Easter Sunday - Resurrection (John 20:1-18)

LENTEN DEVOTION BOOKLETS

Special devotion books are available to read through the season of Lent. You can pick one up beneath the Working Cross beginning on February 15. There will be a box available if you'd like to make a donation.

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Reaching In... Connecting through Discipleship

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Come and connect with the men as we share our faith and enjoy good food on **Saturday, February 7!** At 8:00, we hang out in the kitchen, helping to cook, drink coffee, and visit. At 9:00, we sit down for conversation and discussion on a specific topic.

TABLE TALK DISCUSSION

Over the last year, following worship, we've had some wonderful fellowship and discussions around the readings and sermon of the day. To make sure this ministry continues, Naomi Hahn has volunteered to facilitate future discussions. The group meets in the Justice Room by the ramp following worship (and after a little time for coffee and cookies in the gathering area, of course).

FAITH'S LITTLE FLOCK

(Ages 2-7) gathers each Sunday after the Children's Sermon and returns to the sanctuary in time for Communion.

This February, Faith's Little Flock will continue the journey through the book of John alongside the rest of our congregation. Through simple storytelling, hands-on activities, and music, our youngest learners (and big-kid helpers) will explore what it means that Jesus is our Good Shepherd and discover the hope found in the story of Lazarus. As the Lenten season begins, we will focus on themes of love, trust, and new life, helping children understand that Jesus is always near, guiding and caring for them.

We look forward to walking this meaningful season together with your children through stories, creativity, and faith-filled fun.

If you would like to help with FLF, please contact Melissa Street, Pam Devlin, or Liddy Stark. Blessings, *Melissa*

READ THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

Join us in reading the Bible over the course of a year (this new group takes the place of the Discipleship Group). We gather weekly **on Wednesdays at 10:00am in the Faith Library** to discuss insights and reflections and utilize The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble, available on the YouVersion Bible app, to guide our journey. For more information, reach out to Pam Devlin. A sign-up sheet is available in the Gathering Area. People should read assigned daily readings from The Bible Recap so that we can discuss what we read.

NEW - YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

At a listening session with our young families, the youth spoke out that they would like a regular Bible Study. Pastor Adam plans to lead a study with them on Sunday mornings after worship. There will be times he will be away and unable to lead. If others would like to help, please let Pastor Adam know.

BIBLE BOOT CAMP AND FAITH INKUBATORS

Pastor Adam is available to lead gatherings on Feb. 15, March 15 & 22, & April 12 & 19. If others would like to help provide a meal or lead a fun activity, please contact Pam Devlin, Carol Freesen, or Celeste Hill on our Discipleship Core Team or **sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Area**. Our typical schedule is for Bible Boot Camp from 4:30-5:30, a meal from 5:30-6:00, and Faith Inkubators from 6:00-7:30.

NEW PRAYER AND MEDITATION MINISTRY

Last month we introduced a new prayer ministry, an open invitation to all to come and pray in the sanctuary throughout the week. The church doors are open on Tuesday-Friday, 9:00-1:00. At the back of the sanctuary, by the sound booth, there is a prayer station with a list of people we are praying for in worship, a candle to remind us of God's presence, and a journal for you to write your prayer, words of encouragement, or sign. Prayer is a powerful practice and ministry for all people. Consider making it a more prominent practice in your new year.

Reaching Out... Connecting through Outreach

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Super Bowl Competition

to support the Food Center "Grains" event: choose a team and bring your donation to the Working Cross area in the Gathering Area.

Seahawks

Hamburger Helper or Mac n Cheese

Patriots

Crackers or Dry Pasta

Not a Fan

Cereal

Let's score a touchdown for the Food Center!

EXTRA WINTER CHEER EVENT

Everyone is invited for Extra Winter Cheer on **Sunday, February 1, from 11:00am–1:00pm in the Great Room.** We'll have pizza to eat, cookie decorating, a hot cocoa bar, and a special Valentine's service project. Stay after either service and beat the winter blues with some fellowship and fun!

NEW DIRECTIONS

The New Directions homeless shelter continues to seek volunteers to provide meals for their residents. You may call ahead to confirm the headcount if you plan to prepare a meal. Drop off your meal between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m.

You may also provide a contribution to Liddy Stark, member of the Outreach Team. She will purchase a gift card from a local restaurant and deliver it to New Directions when they need it.

FRIENDS FROM FAITH

A ministry team led by Naomi Hahn: on the last Sunday of each month — everyone is welcome to send a greeting card. **On February 22,** visit the tall white table just outside the sanctuary where you can select a card, sign a card, or deposit a card in the mailbox to send. Cards and stamps are provided for your use. If you have extra cards or stamps to spare, please bring them and donate them in the provided jar.

END-OF-YEAR GIVING

For many years, Faith has designated money to be given to a variety of partners in ministry. This year, at our Annual Meeting, we will seek to approve \$20,000 to be shared. Below is a list of last year's recipients. If you have a recommendation of a 501(c)3 recipient for this year, tell Patty Nelson (pattynelson1938@gmail.com) by the end of February.

2025 Recipients: Hearts United in God's Service (HUGS), Global Refuge, Bella Ease Family Advocacy Center, Crisis Center Foundation, Faith Scholarship, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Western IL Youth Camp, YMCA, Jacksonville Food Center, Hobby Horse House, Lutheran Social Services, Midwest Youth Services, New Directions, Prairie Council on Aging, Spirit of Faith Soup Kitchen, Salvation Army, and the Faith mortgage principle.

LENTEN MISSION MEALS

Last year's mission meals were very successful, and we'd like to offer them again. Before our Midweek Lenten services, we are looking for volunteers to provide the meal and designate a charity of their choice. Please plan to feed 30 people — outreach funds are available to reimburse up to \$200 for your expenses. Contact Liddy Stark or the Church office if you are interested in participating. The first meal, on February 25 will be hosted by our Church Council and will benefit New Directions. Come hungry and generous!

JACKSONVILLE FOOD CENTER

In December, our Faith Family donated 21.2 pounds of food to the Food Center with a value of \$106. We also had monetary donations of \$890, which is amazing. The Blessing Blitz food weighed in at 300 pounds, with an estimated dollar value of \$1,500! The Center was very grateful.

The Food Center continues to provide boxes of food to those in need and sack lunches to the unhoused.

Blessings, *Pat Glyshaw and Barb Davenport*

Worship Assistants

Chancel Committee

Feb. 1 Pat Glyshaw
 Feb. 8 Mary Jane Esslinger
 Feb. 15 to be determined
 Feb. 18 Kris Roth (7pm)
 Feb. 22 Martha Krohe

Communion Assts.

Feb. 1 Karen Sibert (9:30am)
 Feb. 1 Kay Schnitker (11am)
 Feb. 8 Ken Devlin
 Feb. 15 Pam Devlin
 Feb. 18 Ken Devlin (7:00pm)
 Feb. 22 Kay Schnitker

Readers

Feb. 1 Barb Davenport (9:30am)
 Feb. 1 John Williams (11am)
 Feb. 8 Angela Spray
 Feb. 15 Angela Spray
 Feb. 18 Sharon Woodworth (7pm)
 Feb. 22 John Williams

Coffee Hosts

Feb. 1 Karen Sibert (9:30am)
 Feb. 1 Karen Sibert (11am)
 Feb. 8 Kay Schnitker
 Feb. 15 Terri K. & Malinda C.
 Feb. 22 **need volunteer**

Greeters

Feb. 1 Lynette Hamilton (9:30am)
 Feb. 1 **need volunteer** (11am)
 Feb. 8 **need volunteer**
 Feb. 15 **need volunteer**
 Feb. 18 Lynette Hamilton (7pm)
 Feb. 22 Barb Fishback

Ushers

Feb. 1 Pat Glyshaw (9:30am)
 Feb. 1 **need volunteer** (11am)
 Feb. 8 **need volunteer**
 Feb. 15 **need volunteer**
 Feb. 18 **need volunteer** (7:00pm)
 Feb. 22 **need volunteer**

If you would like to help with assisting for the 9:30am worship services, please **sign up in the gathering area** at the podium by the east doors or contact the church office (faithlutheran62650@frontier.com).

Financial Assistants

Feb. 1 Kay Schnitker & to be determined
 Feb. 8 Barb Davenport & Karen Sibert
 Feb. 15 Mindy Carlson & Monica Proefrock
 Feb. 22 Monica Proefrock & Kay Schnitker

Altar Plants

(\$15 donation appreciated)

If you would like to donate,
 please call or email the church office (245-8919
 or faithlutheran62650@frontier.com) or
sign up in the gathering area at the podium
by the east doors;
 please make checks payable to
 Faith Lutheran Church (1385 W. Walnut St.).

Feb. 1 **Open for donation**
 & **Open for donation**
 Feb. 8 Dichsens in honor of Benen's 17th
 birthday on February 9
 & Dichsens in memory of Pastor Adam's
 Mom, Judy
 Feb. 15 **Open for donation**
 & **Open for donation**
 Feb. 22 **Open for donation**
 & **Open for donation**

Stewardship Snapshot...

...What's a church budget?!

Every year, our Church Council takes a close look at our annual expenses and giving trends. Just like you do with your income and expenses, decisions are made about priorities. Some items aren't negotiable, like utilities or insurance. Others - like worship, children's discipleship, or outreach - are so important that we don't want to cut back. Eventually, we settle on a budget that we hope will accomplish our goals while staying within the means. This is what we do, but it doesn't answer the question, "What is a church budget?" A church budget is an act of faith. It's an expression of trust and commitment shared together as a congregation, that this community and ministry are so important to us and to the world that we will come together to see it through. Acting in faith, each of us prayerfully discerns what we will contribute. Over the years, God has provided abundantly for our ministry needs, and we trust that God will continue to do so... through each of us. As we work together in ministry this year, we will keep you informed about our budget. Please join us in prayerful discernment, practicing generosity, and partnering in ministry together in 2026 and for many years to come.

Newsletter Deadline

February 15