



Faith Family

News

January 2024

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

New Beginnings

By Pastor Adam

Have you ever wished you could start over? Are there things you have done that you wish you hadn't? Maybe things you hadn't that you wish you had? Perhaps you've made a mistake and wish there was a "redo" button. Boy... I have! Fortunately, our lives are full of new beginnings. While we can't change the past, we can begin again.

As I look back on my life, I'm aware of the new beginnings I've been given. I always welcomed a new year of school (and a clean slate on my report card!). It was so exciting to go to college and make new friends that didn't know how dorky I was growing up. When I took a call to be your pastor, I welcomed the opportunity to leave some of my past mistakes behind and start anew. But, wouldn't you know it, my new report cards weren't all A's, I turned out to be just as dorky in college, and I continue to make mistakes as your pastor. I'm forever in need of new beginnings.

The Apostle Paul knew what it was like to need new beginnings. At one point, he was so convinced that Jesus was NOT the messiah that he persecuted everyone who thought he was, even condemning some to death. God gave Paul a new beginning, literally knocking him off his horse with the power of grace that granted forgiveness, and a calling. That's really what new beginnings are all about... a combination of setting down the burdens of the past and claiming God's call on our future. That's why

Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

By the grace of God, we are given this new beginning every day. Through the gift of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, we are given new life. The Sacrament of Holy Baptism makes this gift tangible as God's living water washes us clean from sin. The Sacrament of Holy Communion gives us food for the journey, sustaining us with the real presence of God. Every

Sunday, even every day, we can give thanks for these gifts, confess our sins, receive God's forgiveness, and begin again.

On the next page, you'll hear more about plans for our sabbatical time ahead. For three months, I'll be taking time to be grounded as I plug into identity, and you'll take time to be grounded as you plug into faith. I can't begin to imagine how strange it is going to be to not worship with you

for three months, but it will be a time for new beginnings. It's not a time to move on to a new class in school. I'll still be as dorky when I get back as I have always been (maybe even more so with new experiences and stories to share!). I won't be able to wipe away mistakes of the past. But it will be time for God's grace to be at work in me and in you.

In this new year, with all the new experiences and new opportunities, may it be a time of new beginnings. Together, let's let go of the burdens that weigh us down and claim God's calling on our lives to live as new creations in Christ!

Pastor Adam



Upcoming Sabbatical...Let's Get Grounded!

Have you ever plugged in that appliance and your whole kitchen went dark? Sometimes, we place demands on our circuits that overload them, causing the breaker to trip. This can happen in our lives as well when work loads build without time or a plan to handle them. That's why it is so important to be grounded. When we are grounded, we are able to weather the surges of life because we are living into our identity and draw from God's strength. This is the purpose of our upcoming three-month sabbatical. From January 29-May 4, we will be getting grounded in some intentional ways.



changing so quickly. And I am a Child of God and want to ground myself in who God made me to be so, living more authentically and better reflecting my Creator. The greatest gift is simply the time and opportunity to do this. Over three months, my family will travel together, tapping into our adventurous side, reconnecting with familiar places and exploring new. I will attend a retreat for reflection that will build on time I spend with my leadership coach, counselor, and spiritual mentor. I will attend an "Ignite the Church" conference as I seek a recharge in ministry. And in the midst of it all, there will be books to read, games, movies, home projects, date nights, bike rides, Legos, and more to ground into my identity.

For you... it will be time for grounding as well as you plug into faith... both your personal faith and Faith Lutheran Church. Following our total ministry triangle, you will have opportunities to ground yourselves in worship (up), discipleship (in), and outreach (out). Grounding UP, you will learn about how you best connect to God through worship and personal devotion. Grounding IN, you will learn about your spiritual gifts and how to share them with our congregation's ministry. Grounding OUT, you will learn to live out your baptismal promises of working for justice and peace, beginning in our own backyard. Our Church Council has appointed Monica Proefrock as the chair of a Sabbatical Team to help lead us in these efforts, and I am so excited for the opportunities you will have together as a congregation while I am away.

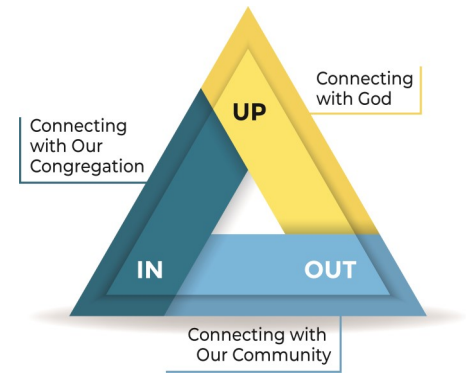


What to expect? This will all "launch" on the weekend of January 27-28 with Pastor Jeff Linman, Pastor Adam's leadership coach. At a meal and workshop on Saturday, Pastor Linman will ground us in Ephesians 3:20, "the power at work within us that is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine." It will be an opportunity for us all to provoke conversations of how God will empower more and new ministry together. He will also be our guest preacher that Sunday as we are sent into our sabbatical time together. For the next three months, Pastor Adam will be completely unplugged from congregational life, including church-related communication and pastoral care. We have made arrangements for Pastor Paul Schwartzkopf (Faith's interim from 2011-2012) to return to lead worship, provide pastoral care, and assist with congregational oversight. We will also be asking YOU to step forward and consider helping in new ways! It's all part of getting grounded as we plug in together.

Thank you for your support and willingness to provide this opportunity for Pastor Adam and embark on this journey together. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to talk to Pastor Adam, Monica Proefrock, or any member of our Church Council: Mindy Carlson, Ken Devlin, Greg Kimler, Kelly Hartz, Patty Nelson, Mike Oldenettel, or Kelly Street.

Reaching Up... Connecting with God through Worship

Total ministry is a balanced ministry as we reach up, in, and out... connecting with God, our congregation, and our community



Joy, Joy, Joy!

Thank you all for making our Christmas worship celebrations such times of JOY! Through Advent, we reflected on hope, peace, love, and joy, aware that each is a gift only from God through Jesus, the Word made flesh. In worship, we gave all thanks and praise to God through many musical offerings, art, poetry, prayer, and more. Special thanks to Jean Welch, Sandi Watts, and Susan Roegge for all of their musical leadership, and to Bishop-Emeritus John Roth for leading worship on Christmas morning so Pastor Adam could spend the day with his family.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 LESSONS AND CAROLS

Start the New Year with a wonderful morning of Christmas Carols and scripture readings. We will hear the background to some of our favorite songs, hear the story of the birth of our Savior, and feast on God's grace in the Word made flesh in Holy Communion.

Baptism of Jacob Dale Nixon

We celebrate with Emily and Josh Nixon at the baptism of their son, Jacob Dale, on December 17. We welcome you into the mission we share and join in giving thanks to God!



January Sermon Series: "Prepare for Liftoff"

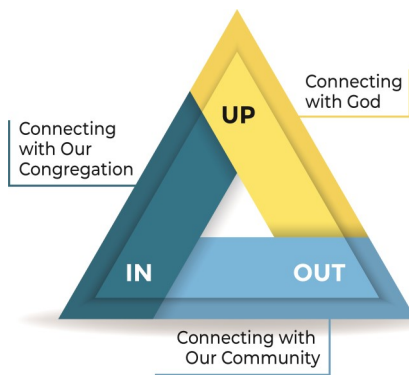
In preparation for rocket launches, there is always a countdown to make sure all systems are ready for "go." Our new year in the Narrative Lectionary begins with time in Mark's gospel as Jesus prepares us for liftoff. It's not just about launching into our upcoming sabbatical time, but launching into our call to mission.

January 7 – In Mark 2:1-22, Jesus begins his ministry by healing the sick and calling disciples. It's all about new beginnings! We will consider what role healing and calling have in our lives as we begin a new year and learn about what it means to play in the grace of God.

January 14 – In Mark 4:1-44, Jesus tells parables of the kingdom that call us to live as kingdom people. We will play with what it means to be sower, seed, and soil, as well as learn how God has created each of us with our own unique identity for play.

January 21 – In Mark 5:1-20, Jesus is healing again. Through his healing comes opportunity for renewal. We trust in God's faithfulness to provide renewal in our sabbatical months ahead and whenever we are tired, distracted, or weighed down.

January 28 – In Ephesians 3:20 Paul calls us to give glory to "him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine." This Sunday, Pastor Jeff Linman will be our guest preacher and help us all launch into our sabbatical time through commitment and dedication to trusting in God to accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine.



Reaching In... Connecting with our Congregation through Discipleship and Fellowship

Total ministry is a balanced ministry as we reach up, in, and out... connecting with God, our congregation, and our community

Women of Faith Fellowship Night

Join the women of Faith for dinner at El Patron on **Wednesday, January 10th at 6:00pm**. Please RSVP to Monica at 217-737-0475 **by Sunday, January 7th**.

Also, save the date for our 2nd annual **Galentine's Day** party on Wednesday, February 7th at 6:00pm. This year we'll have a waffle and bloom bar. Look for more information soon!

"Pastor's Pick" Sabbatical Books

Pastor Adam has selected a number of books to read on sabbatical, but would like to invite you to join in reading some of them with him. When he returns, he plans to host a series of discussion sessions to reflect on what we've learned together.

- February - "Let Your Life Speak" by Parker Palmer
- March - "Imperfect: the Gifts of Imperfection" by Brene Brown
- April - "What Makes You Come Alive? A Spiritual Walk with Howard Thurman" by Lerita Coleman Brown.

Books will be available for \$10 each.

Potluck & Movie for the Whole Family

Do you have January 15 off of work or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day? Are your kids home from school? Join us for "Journey to Bethlehem," a live-action Christmas musical celebration for the entire family that weaves classic Christmas melodies in to new pop songs in a music-infused retelling of the timeless story of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Jesus. Potluck at 11:30 and movie at 12:00. *Sharon Zuiderveld*

Discipleship Group

Join the Discipleship Group at **10:00am on January 17** in the Faith Library for our monthly get-together. If you have any questions about our group or are curious about how we spend our time together, please call Kelly Hartz at 217-502-1979 or email khartz@sompo-intl.com.

Men's Breakfast

Come and connect with other men as we share our faith and enjoy some good food on **Saturday, January 6**. Come help at 8:00 and eat at 9:00.

Jacksonville Food Center

The November statistics for families needing help followed the trend that has been reported every month this year. Each month, the number of families needing help has increased. In October, 630 families were provided with bi-weekly food boxes. In November, the number increased to 699 families, a total of 1,659 people at a cost of \$89,865.30. The weekly produce/bakery customers totaled 847 people at a cost of \$5,945.00, also an increase in numbers.

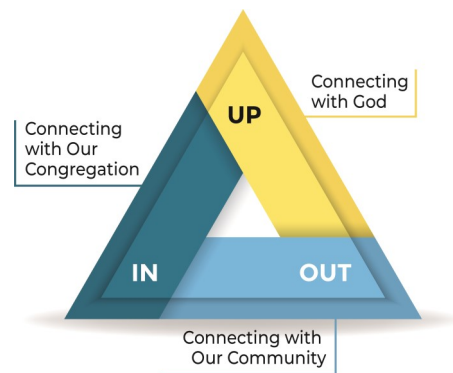
Help for this amazing output is provided by grants, individual donations, schools, churches, food markets, individual food delivery organizations, and many businesses in the area. God is guiding all.

The churches contributed \$9,383.27 in money and \$6,461.00 in food donations.

Faith Church donated \$615.00 in November. Last week, in December, \$100 in foods, and about 8 grocery bags full of much-needed empty egg cartons were delivered to the Food Center. As explained in last month's article, egg deliveries come in bulk to the Food Center. *Lillian Korous*

Reaching Out... Connecting with our Community through Outreach

Total ministry is a balanced ministry as we reach up, in, and out... connecting with God, our congregation, and our community



2023 in Partnership with HUGS and Pillars of Africa in Uganda

by Melissa Street

This year began with our Faith family generously providing the funds for Pastor Adam and Benen Dichsen, Kelly and Melissa Street, Patty Nelson, and Kevin Krohe to travel to Uganda and meet face to face with the children and staff at the Pillars of Africa Children's Ministry in Uganda. The trip brought a deeper understanding of the Ugandan culture, their struggles, and also of their unwavering faith in God. They trust Him to provide even when they cannot see a way. The time we spent with Patrick and Madinah Kunihira, founders of Pillars, their staff, and the children allowed the love in our hearts to grow and for them to truly become family. Since March, we have been able to share the blessings of our time in Uganda with so many others who in turn have helped meet some of their seemingly insurmountable needs.

The biggest need was the purchase of their church building and land which they had been renting and was in danger of being sold to someone else. The church is near the Pillars office and is the cornerstone of their ministry. A lot of time is spent there in worship, bible study, and meeting the needs of the community through outreach efforts. Patrick, Madinah, and the Pillars staff are dedicated to spreading the gospel to the surrounding villages, and over 200 people were baptized and given a bible in their own language this year. Thanks to donations from individuals and churches here in the U.S., and a matching gift in memory of Pastor Adam's mother, Judy, the church building and land are now owned by the Pillars of Africa Children's Ministry. God is so good!

Another large area of ministry is the Pillars of Africa Nursery and Primary schools. The children start and end each day with prayer, are fed breakfast and lunch, and are taught by dedicated teachers and instructors. During our trip, Kevin, Kelly, Pastor Adam, and Jonas McBride ran electricity to each classroom for a light so the children can see to do their work on cloudy days. Child sponsorships and donations through HUGS support education, which is their only hope out of the cycle of poverty.

The Pillars of Africa Secondary and Vocational School is a much-needed answer to many months of prayer and fasting by Patrick, Madinah, and the staff at Pillars. Secondary schooling is very expensive in Uganda, and not always a Christ-centered experience for the teens who must board at the school. Thanks to some unexpected support from our Faith family and a few other churches, Pillars was able to renovate an existing structure and will offer day schooling for secondary students from both Pillars and the community. In addition, they will incorporate the already established vocational classes into the curriculum to provide both book learning and skills training. These classes include sewing, computer basics, business, and hair dressing.

As we look back on 2023, we are in awe. God has shown His love in so many ways. Seemingly insurmountable needs were met, growing our faith and filling our hearts with gratitude.

As we enter 2024, we pray for continued guidance and wisdom; we pray for the health and safety of the staff and the 56 children at the Pillars of Africa Children's Ministry; and we pray that God will abundantly bless our Faith family as we seek to be a light for each other and for our neighbors both near and far.

In this photo, some of the Pillars secondary students are proudly wearing new uniforms made by the vocational program's sewing instructor.



Worship Assistants

Chancel Committee

Jan. 7 Kris Roth
Jan. 14 Pat Glyshaw
Jan. 21 Karen Sibert
Jan. 28 **need volunteer**

Communion Assts.

Jan. 7 Hallie Mayner
Jan. 14 Kay Schnitker
Jan. 21 Karen Sibert
Jan. 28 **need volunteer**

Readers

Jan. 7 Kelly Hartz
Jan. 14 Carol Kilver
Jan. 21 Mike Fenner
Jan. 28 Doris Robinson

Coffee Hosts

Jan. 7 Judy D. & Vicki R.
Jan. 14 Kay Schnitker
Jan. 21 Karen Sibert
Jan. 28 **need volunteer**

Greeters

Jan. 7 Hallie Mayner
Jan. 14 Lillian Korous
Jan. 21 Angela Spray
Jan. 28 **need volunteer**

Ushers

Jan. 7 **need volunteer**
Jan. 14 Pat Glyshaw
Jan. 21 Angie & Mike Fenner
Jan. 28 **need volunteer**

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

Altar Plants

(\$15 donation appreciated)

Plants are placed in the chancel that remain for an extended period of time.

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.).

Jan. 7 **Open for donation**
& **Open for donation**
Jan. 14 **Open for donation**
& **Open for donation**
Jan. 21 **Open for donation**
& **Open for donation**
Jan. 28 **Open for donation**
& **Open for donation**

Offering Envelopes for 2024

Offering envelopes are available in the gathering area at church. If you do not see a box with your name on it, please let us know.

Newsletter Deadline

January 21

Financial Assistants

Jan. 7 Barb Davenport & Karen Sibert
Jan. 14 Greg Kimler & Monica Proefrock
Jan. 21 Barb Davenport & Karen Sibert
Jan. 28 Kelly Hartz & Kelly Street

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 January 28**, 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.

Annual Meeting — January 28

Anyone who would like to have an **Annual Report** included in the Annual Report Packets for 2023, please have your report to the church office (by e-mail is preferred) **by January 14**. The Annual Meeting will be held on January 28, and we need time to duplicate the reports into a packet to distribute on Sunday, January 21.

Plastic Caps & Lids

We stopped collecting caps in December, but the Jacksonville Public Library is now accepting caps and lids.