



# Faith Family

## News

December 2024

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

### The Story We Never Would Have Written... and Advent Hope

By Pastor Adam

This story sucks! Pardon my French, but I must confess that this is a much tamer version of the conversations I've been having with God lately. This last month has been the hardest. Ever. When words fail me, I've found voice in psalms of lament, music, and poetry. Here is a blessing by Kate Bowler.

#### A Blessing for the Lives we Didn't Choose

Blessed are we in the tender place  
between curiosity and dread.  
We who wonder how to be whole,  
when dreams have disappeared  
and part of us with them.  
Where mastery, control, determination,  
bootstrapping, and grit,  
are consigned to the realm of before  
(where most of the world lives),  
In the fever dream that promises infinite choices,  
unlimited progress, best life now.  
Blessed are we in the after,  
***forced into stories we never would have written,***  
far outside of answers to questions we even  
know to ask.  
God, show us a glimmer of possibility  
in this new constraint,  
that small truths will be given back to us.  
We are held. We are safe.  
We are loved. We are loved. We are loved.

Cancer, and the evil brokenness of the world that cause such things, have forced my family into a story we never would have written. As I said before, this story sucks. I know that I'm not the only one in this

kind of story. Perhaps you find yourself in a story you never would have written. As it turns out, people have forever been forced into these stories. When we find ourselves in such sucky stories, we are given the gift of Advent.

In Advent, we hear about people who have been forced into stories they never would have written. Daniel is thrown into the lions' den, Joel warns of imminent disaster and calls for repentance, Isaiah is called to prophesy to a people in exile, and Mary is told she will conceive and give birth to the Savior of the World. These are stories these people never would have written, but they are also stories of hope.

Let's journey together into Advent. Come and bring your story, however broken and sucky it may be, and join in the story of Jesus, the hope of the world.

Lastly, thank you. You have willingly entered into our story, taking on our pain. Every day people ask what they can do. In your love and prayers, you have given us all we need in the sacred community we share - the Body of Christ.

It will be difficult to keep everyone informed on our story, so we have started a Caring Bridge site. We will update it regularly so that others can share in our sorrows, celebrate our victories, and most of all, pray. If you would like to follow along, you can scan the QR code below. If you have any troubles, ask a younger friend for help. ☺

Thank you for sharing hope with  
us and being in our story.  
We are held. We are loved.  
We are blessed.

- 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.

### STEWARDSHIP APPEAL - "GENERATIONS BLESSING GENERATIONS"

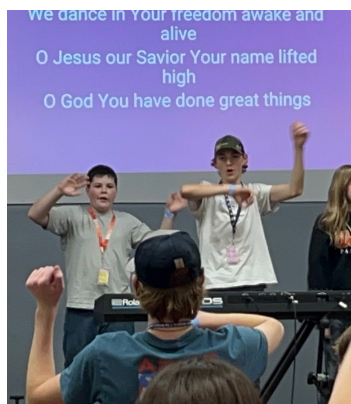
Thank you for your generous response to our stewardship appeal. Your pledges and financial giving are both a powerful spiritual practice in discipleship and a significant blessing to our ministry together. We have received 35 pledges totaling \$167,360. Here is a breakdown of our different categories:

	#	Pledged	2025 Budget proposal
General Fund:	35	\$102,710	\$233,000
Building Fund	21	\$ 43,490	\$ 54,000
Synod/ELCA	15	\$ 9,450	\$ 21,000
Local Needs	20	\$ 11,710	\$ 7,200

Thank you again for your generosity! If you have not yet made a pledge for next year, please consider prayerfully making this commitment in response to God's grace at work in your life.

### CARLINVILLE SYNOD YOUTH RETREAT

There has been a lot of growth in our synod youth activities in the past few years. Youth from Faith regularly attend the Crossways Confirmation Camp, Leadership Lab, and Carlinville retreat. Since the pandemic, attendance at the Carlinville event has grown from 50 in 2022, 80 in 2023, to 120 this year! Is it fun? Do the youth enjoy it? Take a look at some pictures and ask them... they have stories to share!



# *Reaching Up... Connecting with God through Worship*

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Flows. Grows. Shows



## **ADVENT: LESSONS IN HOPE**

This Advent, the Narrative Lectionary takes us through suspenseful stories and powerful proclamations of hope. When we find ourselves living “in the after, forced into stories we never would have written,” the biblical witness invites us to journey with others as we share our struggles and boldly lean into hope.

December 1 – Daniel’s hope in the Lion’s den. *Daniel 6:6-27*

December 8 – Joel’s invitation to hopeful living. *Joel 2:12-13, 28-29*

December 15 – Isaiah’s promise of hope fulfilled. *Isaiah 61:1-11*

December 22 – Hope magnified through Mary. *Luke 1:26-56*

## **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

### **TWO OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE JESUS’ BIRTH**

Join us on December 24 as we gather for Christmas Eve worship. There will be a family-friendly service at 4:00pm with familiar Christmas carols, the story of Jesus’ birth, and Silent Night by battery candlelight. Many of our families with young children are unable to attend our later service, and this gives them an opportunity to celebrate with us at Faith. At 7:00pm, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve worship with carols on piano and organ, communion, and Silent Night/Night of Silence by candlelight. Both services are great opportunities for outreach. Invite a neighbor or friend as we celebrate Emanuel... “God With Us.”

## **CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

Once again, we will have a short Christmas concert before our 7:00pm candlelight service on December 24<sup>th</sup>. Please let me know if you might be interested in being a part of that concert.

Jean Welch, Music Director

Contact Jean for more information.

[jrwelch53@msn.com](mailto:jrwelch53@msn.com) or 217-652-7009 (phone/text)

## **CHRISTMAS MORNING WORSHIP**

Christmas morning we gather at 9:30 to celebrate that God has brought Joy to the World by taking on flesh. We participate in God’s incarnation through Holy Communion in a liturgy set to Christmas Carols. This service will be live streamed for those who cannot attend or prefer to worship from home.

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29**

### **LESSONS AND CAROLS**

Finish off the year with a wonderful morning of Christmas Carols and scripture readings that tell the story of the birth of our Savior. There will be no communion or Faith’s Little Flock this Sunday.

## **POINSETTIAS**

To purchase a poinsettia to help decorate the church for Christmas, please sign up at the counter by the Coffee Sales and drop your check (or cash) into the decorated box; the cost is **\$12.00**. Please make your check out to Faith Lutheran Church, with a notation for *Poinsettia*, or call or email the church (245-8919 or [faithlutheran62650@frontier.com](mailto:faithlutheran62650@frontier.com)) **by December 20** and send your check to the church (1385 W. Walnut St., Jacksonville, IL 62650). Please indicate if the poinsettia is in honor or memory of someone special.

Flows. Grows. Shows



## Reaching In... Connecting through Discipleship

### ADVENT ALLEGRO LUNCHTIME CONCERTS

We have a great lineup for this year's Advent Allegro concert series.

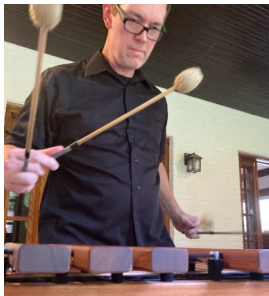
December 4: "The Extension Chords"  
(with Jean Welch)

December 11: Tyler Carpenter on percussion

December 18: Devon Carpenter on harp



The brief concerts will last approximately 30 minutes and begin at 12:15pm. Lunch of soup, chips, fruit, and dessert will be served beginning at 11:30am and after the concert for \$5.



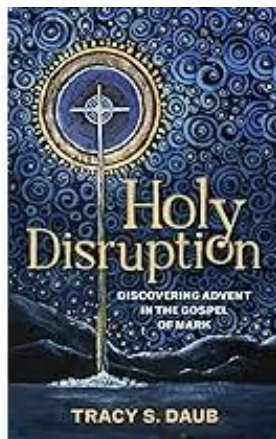
We could use some help with serving the meal and providing cookies and soup. If you would like to pitch in, contact the church office (245-8919 or [faithlutheran62650@frontier.com](mailto:faithlutheran62650@frontier.com)) or sign up on the sheet on the counter by the coffee sales.

### BOOK GROUP: *HOLY DISRUPTION*

Our Advent book read is *Holy Disruption: Discovering Advent in the Gospel of Mark*. The Gospel of Mark doesn't have an advent story, but begins with Jesus' Baptism. Author Tracy Daub suggests that Mark's Advent story is in every aspect of Jesus' life, to his death and beyond.

"*Holy Disruption* presents a fresh understanding of the holiness of Christmas grounded, not in a conventional cozy Christmas message, but through Mark's disquieting gospel which invites its readers to experience God's disruptive but transformative love for us and our world."

Join us after worship on Sundays in Advent to discuss where we see God in the life of Jesus and in our own holy disruption.



### BIBLE BOOT CAMP

What a great Fall we have had together! Join us for fun games, food, and hearing the story of Jesus' birth at our Christmas party on December 15 from 4:30-6:00pm.

### DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

Due to busy schedules during the holiday season, the Discipleship Group will not meet in December. Please join our next discussion at 10:00am on Wednesday, January 15, in the Faith Library. For more information, please contact Kelly Hartz at (217) 502-1979 or by email at [khartz@sompo-intl.com](mailto: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, December 7. At 8:00, we hang out in the kitchen, helping to cook, drink coffee, and visit. At 9:00, we sit down for some conversation and discussion on a specific topic.

### WOMEN OF FAITH

Women of Faith will not be meeting in December. Look for information about our January gathering soon!

# *Reaching Out... Connecting through Outreach*

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## **PILLARS GIVING TREE**

### **Bring Christmas Joy to the Children at the Pillars of Africa Children's Ministry**

This Christmas season, we again have the opportunity to share the love of Christ with the children at the Pillars of Africa Children's Ministry. Starting **December 1**, the Giving Tree will be up in the church gathering area.

The Giving Tree is adorned with ornaments, each representing a child and their needs this Christmas. Choose an ornament, make your donation payable to HUGS, and place it in the offering box by **December 15, 2024**.

Your generosity will bring joy and hope to these precious children, reminding them that they are loved and valued. Thank you for helping make this Christmas a special one for those in need.

For questions or more details, please contact Melissa Street, Kevin Krohe or Patty Nelson. Thank you for being a blessing this holiday season!

### **LSSI FOSTER CARE**

Last month we heard about the ministry of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. With so many in our Faith Family engaged in foster care, we would like to support LSSI's efforts in this ministry. If you would like to make a donation, designate it to "LSSI Foster Care."

### **DOORBELL DINNERS**

THANK YOU to everyone who helped deliver Doorbell Dinners in October!

**Our next time will be  
January 13-17.**

### **CHRISTMAS CAROLING**

Join us as we head into the community to visit friends of Faith for caroling and Christmas joy. Meet at Faith at 2:00pm on **Sunday, December 15** to fill up your mugs of hot chocolate. We will carpool around town and return to Faith by 3:30.

## **JACKSONVILLE FOOD CENTER**

Christmas is near, and it is time to think about giving ... to those who have little and need help. Our Food Center traditionally prepares over 300 Holiday Food Baskets, containing items for the celebration. Items needed are listed on paper that can be found on the coffee area counter or on the poster in the coat room. Money donations are also much appreciated.

Several articles in our newspaper have highlighted help received from several sources at the Food Center recently, among them a give-away of 125 turkeys. Distribution began at 9:00am. With lots of help, by 9:15, only a dozen turkeys remained. At another time, a truckload of food from DOT Foods was delivered to our Food Center and highlighted on the front page of the Journal Courier. It was much needed and appreciated.

In October, 650 families were served for food orders, a total of 1,404 people at a cost of \$68,358.80, equally 48,916.60 pounds. 402 families were served for bakery, a total of 711 people at a cost of \$6,575, equally 8,040 pounds. The churches contributed \$8,644.61 in money and \$1,842.50 in food donations. Our Faith Lutheran Church donated \$190 in October and \$100 in food in November. Let us be more generous in days to come.

*Lillian Korous & Pat Glyshaw*

# Worship Assistants

Chancel Committee	Communion Assts.	Readers
Dec. 1 Kim Heise	Dec. 1 Kay Schnitker	Dec. 1 Carol Kilver
Dec. 8 Pat Glyshaw	Dec. 8 Pam Devlin	Dec. 8 Liddy Stark
Dec. 15 Kris Roth	Dec. 15 Glen VanderKloot	Dec. 15 Kelly Hartz
Dec. 22 Mary Jane Esslinger	Dec. 22 Hallie Mayner	Dec. 22 Patty Nelson
Dec. 24 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 24 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 24 Barb D./Terri K.
Dec. 25 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 25 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 25 Liddy Stark
Dec. 29 <i>No Communion</i>	Dec. 29 <i>No Communion</i>	Dec. 29 <b>need volunteer</b>
Coffee Hosts	Greeters	Ushers
Dec. 1 Barb Davenport & Karen Sibert	Dec. 1 Barb Fishback	Dec. 1 Hallie Mayner
Dec. 8 Kay Schnitker	Dec. 8 Lynette Hamilton	Dec. 8 Pat Glyshaw
Dec. 15 Barb Davenport	Dec. 15 Lillian Korous	Dec. 15 <b>need volunteer</b>
Dec. 22 Laura S. + Verla B.	Dec. 22 Lynette Hamilton	Dec. 22 Angie & Mike Fenner
Dec. 29 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 25 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 24 Judy Dillard, Vicki Robson, & Paul Scheerer
	Dec. 29 <b>need volunteer</b>	Dec. 25 Liddy Stark
		Dec. 29 <b>need volunteer</b>

## Altar Plants

(\$15 donation appreciated)

If you would like to donate, please call or email the church office (245-8919 or [faithlutheran62650@frontier.com](mailto: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.).

- Dec. 1 By Theresa Savoie in memory of Louise Savoie on her birthday today  
& **Open for donation**
- Dec. 8 **Open for donation**  
& **Open for donation**
- Dec. 15 **Open for donation**  
& **Open for donation**
- Dec. 22 By Gayla Smith in honor of her baptismal birthday  
& By Linda & Melvin Thies in celebration of their 37<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary Dec. 17 & Melvin's 85th birthday Dec. 23
- Dec. 29 **Open for donation**  
& **Open for donation**

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](mailto:faithlutheran62650@frontier.com)).

## Financial Assistants

- Dec. 1 Greg Kimler & Monica Proefrock
- Dec. 8 Ken Devlin & Kelly Hartz
- Dec. 15 Mindy Carlson & Patty Nelson
- Dec. 22 Ken Devlin & Kelly Street
- Dec. 29 Kelly Hartz & to be determined

## Newsletter Deadline

**December 15**

## 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 December 29**, 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.