



Faith Family

News

March 2025

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

PRAYER-PARALYSIS

By Pastor Adam

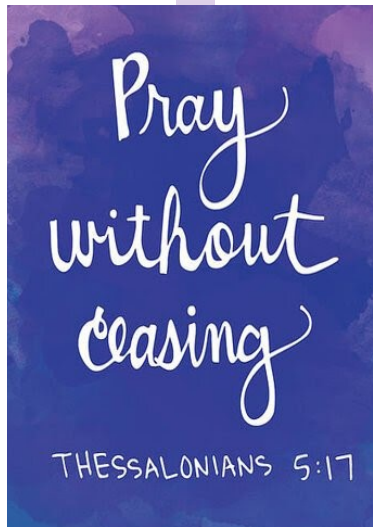
A few months ago, I had a case of prayer-paralysis. After Marilyn's cancer diagnosis in late October, I felt like I was on a roller coaster from hell. First it was the shock from the first appointment when a nurse came in with tears in her eyes and simply told us, "I'm so sorry." Then came the biopsy, diagnosis, surgery, aggressive return of the cancer, chemo, and an ambulance ride back to Barnes due to a possible infection. I remember talking to my brother on the phone, tears streaming down my face as he prayed for miraculous healing for Marilyn, and I cringed. For nearly a month, we'd received nothing but bad news. How could this be happening? Where was God? This prayer thing wasn't working, and I just couldn't do it anymore. I couldn't pray.

A couple of weeks later, I was talking with someone at church and he was sharing with me how much he was praying for Marilyn and our family. He had changed his daily routine so that prayer took priority. In a moment of agonizing vulnerability, I confessed how difficult it was for me to pray. "That's okay," he said, "when you can't pray, know that I am."

Since then, I've become aware of countless people who have been praying for Marilyn and our family, and I'm unaware of countless more. When I couldn't pray, they were... you were... and are. Thank you!

Since then, my prayer-paralysis has been cured (or at least it's in remission), and I see things differently. I suspect others have times when it is difficult to pray.

Times when we can't find the words or there are simply no words to express. Times when we are rushed, frantically flying from one thing to another, and pausing seems impossible. Times when we are defiant, like a rebellious child, arms crossed, refusing to do what their parents are asking. At these times when we experience prayer-paralysis, we can still pray without ceasing.



In Romans 8:26-27, Paul writes: "26Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

In our prayer-paralysis, the Spirit is praying. The Spirit intercedes for us, just like my friend who said, "When you can't pray, I am." Whether you are physically, emotionally, or spiritually capable of putting your prayers in words, God knows your heart, and the Holy Spirit is praying.

This Lent, we are calling all prayer-paralytics, from those in the depths of despair to those in recovery. We are calling YOU to a journey of prayer without ceasing. Join us for midweek worship as we speak, sing, and even simply sit in silence. Pick up a set of daily prayer cards to help you pray each day. Bring your prayer requests to Sunday morning worship, speaking them on your lips or in your hearts. Reach for the hand of another and know that you are never alone. Rest in the Spirit and know, when you just can't muster up the ability to, the Spirit is.

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.

LISTENING SESSION THANK YOU

A big THANK YOU to all who joined us for our listening session after worship on Sunday, February 23. We gathered in groups to share how Faith Lutheran Church impacts our faith and consider ways to nurture faith, reach out, and reach in to all generations. The results are already being processed and will be discussed at our congregational Council Retreat on March 15. Stay tuned for another meal to hear the outcomes and join together in helping these ideas come to life. If you were unable to participate and would like to share your input,



questionnaires are available in the Total Ministry Center. Please turn yours in to the church office **before March 15**. Finally, thank you to our men's breakfast chefs who provided a delicious breakfast!

LIVING LAST SUPPER

It has been eight years since we last hosted a "Living Last Supper." We would like to offer it again as a time of worship and reflection for our Faith Family and the entire community. As it is a significant undertaking and involves a lot of helpers, we are looking for twelve men who would be willing to present a brief monologue as disciples. We'd also like to include women as many women played a significant role in following Jesus and leading in the early church. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Adam as we will have our **first rehearsal on Sunday, March 16**. We haven't set the dates of the worship services yet, but will do that soon.

BAPTISMS

We celebrate with parents Andrea and Leo Peterson and brother Knox at the baptism of Sadie Jane on February 2. We welcome you into the mission we share and join in giving thanks to God!

Join us on March 16 as we celebrate the baptisms of Ella and Naomi Snodgrass, daughters of Drew and Maria Snodgrass.

LENTEN MIDWEEK

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Our schedule has changed for midweek worship services this year. Read more about the outreach meal format on the outreach page and note that worship now begins at 7:00 p.m.

March 5

Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00 p.m.

March 12, 19, and 26

Outreach Meal at 6:00 p.m.

Midweek Worship in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m.

MIDWEEK WORSHIP:

"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"

Our midweek worship services will focus on prayer and provide opportunities to pray without ceasing. We will worship in the sanctuary with a variety of music that invites us into prayer. There will be time for your own prayer and some reflections on the power of prayer in our lives.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Reaching Up... Connecting with God through Worship

Flows. Grows. Shows



everything [in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

This year, we're letting the Gospel of Luke guide us through Lent. Beginning with Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), we will hear familiar stories, well known in

sacred and secular imagination. For example, have you ever identified yourself with as either a "Mary" or "Martha?" The "Good Samaritan" title alone could reference a hospital, charitable organization, type of law, or good deed. Perhaps you grew up singing "Zacchaeus was a wee little man" in Sunday School. So many of these scriptures hold significance in pop culture, church history, politics, and everything in between.

When we look at these stories, we see how they mirror divisions we experience today. "Everything in Between" invites us to navigate the polarities of our lives with faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. Each weekly theme explores two supposed binaries like faith & works, rest & growth, or grief & hope. We often consider these as opposing, but as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. Join us as we find God present in the in-between, meeting us beyond the categories we create.

This series provides numerous resources to enrich our worship and Lenten practices, including hymns, prayers, poems, skits, devotional booklet, daily devotional cards, and more. Look at our discipleship page for more information and visit the display under the cross near the bathrooms to pick up your materials.

SUNDAY MORNING TOPICS FROM "EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN"

Ash Wednesday - "Intention & Action" - In Luke 9:51-62, a village of Samaritans refuses to receive Jesus, and his disciples suggest impulsive action. Somewhere between good intentions and impulsive action lies discipleship. On Ash Wednesday, we make a commitment to align our intentions with our actions.

March 9 - "Stranger & Neighbor" - In Luke 10:25-42, the question is asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells a parable where a Samaritan who is both stranger and neighbor cares for a man in need. As we align our intentions to our actions, we reconsider who is "stranger" and how we care for them as "neighbor."

March 16 - "Faith & Works" - In Luke 10:38-42, Mary and Martha provide a binary of faith and works, and we are tempted to see one as more favorable than another. Both are needed and both are good.

March 23 - "Rest & Growth" - In Luke 13:6-9, a gardener in a vineyard knows a fig tree needs rest and to bear fruit. Striving for growth without rest leads to burnout. Rest alone leads to no fruit. The fig tree teaches us that the in-between time of nurture before fruit is where transformation begins.

March 30 - "Lost & Found" - In Luke 15:1-32, we hear parables of sheep, coins, and a son who were lost and then found. Our lives are an ebb and flow of lost and found, one moment feeling like we have it all together, then the next struggling to survive. No matter how "lost" we feel, the Good Shepherd is by our side.

Ash Wednesday Worship

March 5, 7:00 p.m.

Join us as we begin the season of Lent by committing to the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, almsgiving. In a cross of ash on our foreheads, we receive a powerful reminder of our sin and mortality, but also the promise by which we receive forgiveness and life, the cross of Christ.

Flows. Grows. Shows



Reaching In... Connecting through Discipleship

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS FROM “EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN”

DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

Pick up your own devotional book to dig deeper into the weekly binaries that Jesus addresses in Luke's gospel. In addition to scripture, each week includes commentary, poetry, visual art, hymns, and journaling prompts. Pair this book with your Bible as they accompany you through the Lenten season to the empty tomb.



DAILY DEVOTIONAL CARDS

Beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through the first few days of Eastertide, use these daily devotional cards with questions and prayers to deepen our spiritual walk through Lent. Day by day, may these prayers remind you that God is by your side, through your doubt, your faith, and everything in between.

WOMEN OF FAITH

Women of Faith is on hiatus during the season of Lent. Make plans to join us again in May for a special Mother's Day event. More details coming soon!

FAITH'S LITTLE FLOCK

This month, we will follow the Lenten worship themes. Faith's Little Flock is for children ages 2-7. We also welcome Big Kid Helpers (ages 8 and up) to help the little ones with the more difficult parts of the crafts, and our older adults to read the scripture story to the children. Contact Melissa Street if you would like to take a turn reading the story to the children. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered so far!

The children all return to the sanctuary for the communion blessing. Word-finds, crossword puzzles, and other activity sheets are available in the gathering area for the older children (and adults) to help reinforce the message of the day. We look forward to seeing all of the children in March!

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

♥ Swing by the Faith Library at 10:00am on **Wednesday, March 19**, for a heartwarming chat all about LOVE and everything it brings. Have questions or need more info? Contact Kelly Hartz at (217) 502-1979 or email khartz@sompo-intl.com. Can't wait to see you there!

GET TO KNOW OUR YOUTH

For Sunday mornings during Lent, we are looking for volunteers to meet with our youth after worship. You can choose from a variety of options, from following a list of questions to share your faith and get to know each other better, use a discussion guide to reflect on the scripture of the day, work together in the kitchen for a meal, do a service project together at church or someone's home, or more. Sign up by the Total Ministry Center and enjoy getting to know our youth.

BIBLE STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Following worship, join Pastor Adam for a Bible study on Luke in the Justice Room. We will discuss the reading of the day, connect it to the gospel context, and reflect on it's significance for us today.

BIBLE BOOT CAMP

with our Elementary Children

Calling all elementary kids for some fun in God's Word! Pastor Adam shares a Bible story and music, then Patty Nelson and Shelley McDaniel lead creative play and crafts. At 5:30, we share a meal with parents and older youth. Future events are scheduled on Sundays, from 4:30-6:00, **March 9 & 16, April 6 & 13**.

Reaching Out... Connecting through Outreach

MIDWEEK SUPPER AND WORSHIP WITH NEW "OUTREACH MEALS"



Our Lenten tradition continues with Wednesday night meals and worship, but with a significant change. The meals will no longer be pot-luck style but will be a provided meal with a free-will offering. Groups are invited to sign up for a Wednesday to provide the meal. Faith will reimburse them \$200 in outreach funds to cover their cost. The group can select a charity to receive the funds, and all of the offering will go towards that ministry. Sign up your group and charity at the counter outside the Total Ministry Center. Join us for these wonderful outreach meals at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays and all are invited to chip in and help with clean up in the kitchen. Worship will start at 7:00 to make time for all to be ready after the meal.

JACKSONVILLE FOOD CENTER

The Food Center is always busy and an important function of our town. In January, 509 families were served food orders at a cost of \$147.72 per order or a total cost of \$75,190. (Estimated cost based by weight.) 241 families were served once a week at the bakery and produce tables at a cost of \$4,065. The churches contributed \$4,613 in money and \$4,151 in food donations (based by weight).

Faith Lutheran donated \$960 !! in January (WOW), \$219 in food by weight. Thank you, Faith worshippers, for your kindness.

Lillian Korous & Pat Glyshaw

MUSIC AND CHOIR

OPPORTUNITIES AT FAITH

At our recent listening session, we heard a desire for our choir to get back together. Our Music Director, Jean Welch, will be organizing a choir to sing on Easter and at our Living Last Supper worship, but there is one thing she needs... singers! If you would like to sing with us, contact Jean.

We are also always looking for people to sing or play special music for a prelude or a stewardship offering. Please contact Jean if you are interested in sharing your musical gifts.

jrwelch53@msn.com or 217-652-7009 (phone/text)

Jacksonville Area Conference of Churches Collection for the Personal Needs Pantry

The Jacksonville Area Conference of Churches (JACC) is collecting items for the Personal Needs Pantry of First Baptist Church during March and April. A list of the needed items can be found in the Total Ministry area, and donations can be put in the Blue Box. Together we can do great things, and thank you in advance for your help! *Pat Glyshaw*

Household Cleaning
Laundry Detergent
Household Cleaners
Dish Detergent

Paper Products
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Facial Tissues

Baby Items
Shampoo
Lotion, Powder
Diapers

Oral Care
Toothpaste
Toothbrushes
Denture Cleaner

Personal Hygiene
Shampoo
Bar or Hand Soap
Lotion & Deodorant

Shaving Cream/Razors
Bandages/Peroxide
Feminine Products
Combs and/or Brushes



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Remember to spring forward 1 hour on Saturday night (March 8) so you won't be late to church!

