



Forecaster



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH * DECEMBER 2023

“If you but trust in God to guide you with gentle hand through all your ways,
you’ll find that God is there beside you when crosses come, in trying days.
Trust then in God’s unchanging love; build on the rock that will not move.”
(“If You But Trust in God to Guide You”, Georg Neumark)

Dear members of the Faith Lutheran community, grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, the savior of the universe!

On Sunday Nov. 19, Amy Sinclair highlighted the following verse from the prophet Jeremiah while discussing the new mission of Faith Lutheran Church:

“They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.” – Jeremiah 17:8

The use of these prophetic words of hope and perseverance especially resonated with me in the context of mission, but also in the news I anticipated bringing to you this week; news both joyful and sad.

I can now share my news via this letter, I have been blessed with the opportunity to move with my family to Oregon, near our family and loved ones. I have accepted the call to be the pastor of West Linn Lutheran Church in West Linn, OR. My final Sunday will be January 7, 2024 which will also be my final day as your pastor. Sarah, Danielle, Theodore and I are sad to leave the only home our children have ever known and the first congregation I was ordained into, but we are joyful and excited to experience what God has in store for us. We are also especially joyful and excited to raise Dani and Teddy near the family and close friends that have long been too far away.

When I was ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament in April of 2019, after being called to be your pastor, I wasn’t really sure of God’s plan for me and I certainly could not have anticipated the love I would feel for this congregation. We moved out to Menifee two days after ordination, Danielle arrived 5 months after that and then the pandemic 5 months later. So much else has happened in this time- and God has been present with us all, through all of those joys and uncertainties, just as God always is and will continue to be in the weeks and months and years to come.

As I look back on the almost 5 years of ministry in partnership, I must offer my sincerest and most heartfelt gratitude to each and every individual who I have had the honor to serve. We have accomplished much together, but the list of specifics cannot truly express the depth of emotion I feel for our time together and the relationships in faith we have built. We can take pride in what we have done together, and more for the service we have rendered and friendship which will last and

live on through the Holy Spirit. The Lord guided us together, and now guides us apart. While we will be apart physically, you will all live in my heart and memory forever.

Through word and deed we've shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ in and with our community, the impact of which hasn't yet been fully realized. I am supremely confident in you as a congregation and that with support from the Holy Spirit, the Pacifica Synod, and- crucially from each other, you will keep the commendable momentum and spirit we have built these years and carry it forward to enact even more wonderful, hopeful, and worthy acts of ministry in God's name. As written in Acts of the Apostles 2:17, "It will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all peoples, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young women and men will see visions, and your elders will dream dreams." So, modern day apostles of Christ, receive the Spirit of God, breathe it deeply into your whole being, and dream many dreams of the visions of joy and hope of where God is guiding you next.

With this letter, I offer notice of resignation of call as the pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Menifee. The decision to resign from this call is a difficult one, coming after much prayer and discernment. This announcement comes with mixed emotions and is tinged with sadness.

During this time of transition, the Reverend Dave Nagler, Bishop of our Pacifica Synod, along with the synod staff will be guiding the congregation through the next steps. An interim pastor will be appointed and the call process for a new pastor will begin. In the meantime, I will do my best to have a conversation with everyone in the congregation before Christmas. If you would like to discuss my resignation, or another topic, I invite you to please reach out to me through the church office (951) 679-1518, or through my cell phone (949)258-3452.

Thank you for the ministry we've shared together. It's been an honor to serve God and our neighbors alongside you. I ask that you remember me and my family in your prayers during this time of transition, as we too will remember you in ours.

So I will conclude by again invoking the wisdom and encouragement of both the prophet Jeremiah and Georg Neumark: be the tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream, which is not fearful or anxious, which stays green and does not cease to bear fruit. And always trust in God to guide you, trust then in God's unchanging love. And finally "May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; may the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26).

Yours faithfully in Christ, Pr. John Barton



Christmas Giving Tree

Our Faith Lutheran Church family will be donating gift cards to seniors in need in our community. Your donations will be going to The Menifee Valley Community Cupboard. Please stop by The Christmas Giving Tree in the Narthex for full instructions! \$485.00 in gift cards has been donated so far!





May this Christmas season be a time of joy, peace, and love for you and your family. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, let us reflect on his message of hope and love. Let us remember to be kind to others, to forgive those who have wronged us, and to always strive to live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God.

Christmas is a time to give thanks for all the blessings in our lives. It is also a time to give to others in need. This year, I encourage you to find a way to make a difference in the lives of others. Whether it's donating to a charity, volunteering your time, or simply being a good friend or neighbor, every act of kindness makes the world a better place.

The Church Council would like you to know that if you'd like to contribute to the staff Christmas gifts, the deadline is December 10. Please make checks payable to Faith Lutheran Church and write "staff gifts" in the memo line.

May this Christmas be a time of renewal and hope for you. May you find joy in the simple things in life, and may you feel the love and presence of God in your heart.

Christmas Blessings,
Diane Swarts, Council President



P.S....the last day of 2023 is 123123!

Worship Assistants December

Asst. Ministers	Lectors	Power Point	Ushers	Greeters	Attendance
3rd: Roderick	3rd: Pat	3rd: Lynn	3rd: Annie	3rd: Walli	3rd: Debbie
6th: N/A	6th: N/A	6th: Marlene	6th: N/A	6th: McGavrans	6th: Freddericka
10th: Marlene	10th: Bill	10th: Lynn	10th: Gina	10th: Harold	10th: Diane M.
13th: N/A	13th: N/A	13th: Candy	13th: N/A	13th: Dave	13th: Shirley
17th: Harold	17th: Sandy	17th: Bill	17th: Judy	17th: Diane M.	17th: Shirley
20th: N/A	20th: N/A	20th: Candy	20th: N/A	20th: Pat	20th: Diane S.
24th am: Joanne	24th am: Steve	24th am: Mike	24th am: Walli	24th am: Bosingers	24th am: Marlene
24th pm: Marlene	24th pm: Kathy	24th pm: Mike	24th pm: ??	24th pm: Bosingers	24th pm: Marlene
31st: Joanne	31st: Marlene*	31st: Candy	31st: Walli	31st: Marlene	31st: Debbie

***Additional Lectors for 12/31:** Mike, Joanne, Roderick, Steve

Altar Guild: Kandie, Marlene

Worship Schedule

FOR DECEMBER 2023

Join us to celebrate the glorious and joyful season of Advent where we wait and anticipate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Midweek worship opportunities will be held during Advent. There will also be a special joint worship service with Sun City Methodist held at their sanctuary. Invite a neighbor, a friend or your family. The more, the merrier. **Take note that the last Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship are the same day. "Go tell it on the mountain..."**

December 3 In-Person (and Drive-In) Worship & Communion at 9:30 am
First Sunday of Advent

December 6 - Advent Worship at 5:00 pm

December 10 In-Person (and Drive-In) Worship & Communion at 9:30 am
Second Sunday of Advent

December 13 - Advent Worship at 5:00 pm

December 17 In-Person (and Drive-In) Worship & Communion at 9:30 am
Third Sunday of Advent

December 20 - Advent Worship at 5:00 pm

*Thursday, December 21 – Blue Christmas / Longest Night Worship at 5:00 PM
A joint Worship Service held at Sun City Methodist Church*

December 24 In-Person (and Drive-In) Worship & Communion at 9:30 am
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24 *Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship & Communion at 5:00 pm*

December 31 In-Person (and Drive-In) Worship & Communion at 9:30 am
A Worship Service of Lessons and Christmas Carols

Those hesitant to be in larger crowds may continue to worship by choosing one of the following alternatives:

- **Radio:** in our parking lot still on *live* broadcast. Tune to 98.9 FM
- **Online:** on our website, any time after 2:00 pm each Sunday



Thank you to Jim Loughboro, Gregg McGavran, Mike McGavran and Jack Miller for setting up our directional signs on Saturdays and returning them to church after our Sunday worship services! These 4 guys alternate weekends and we are very grateful to them!

If you would like to join this "Task Force", please contact Joanne McGavran at 949.280.1123! The more, the merrier!



Greetings, dear women of Faith!

We are looking forward to December and the beginning of our Advent and Christmas season. Welcome, all of you, to any and all of our activities and events.

In December our women's Bible study will be a devotional called "God's Topsy-Turvy Kingdom" in the *Gather Magazine* prepared by Hannah Hawkinson. If you would like to attend December's study but haven't received your magazine or would like a copy of the study, please check in the church office.

In January we will be adding an evening W-ELCA Bible study. This will meet starting Thursday, January 18 at 6:00 pm in the library. This is a new additional time planned for the coming year. Please join us if this fits into your schedule. If you have questions, please call Eileen Johnson at (619) 379-7878. The one daytime circle will continue to meet throughout the coming year on Wednesdays, with our next daytime meeting on Wednesday, December 13, 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Come join in the conversation and fellowship. All women are welcome.

Snip and Stitch Quilters: Our quilters will meet on **Thursday, Dec. 1, 9:00-12:00** in the Fellowship Hall. No experience as a quilter is needed. There will be various things to do. Please bring a bag lunch if you wish, for lunch and fellowship when we finish. Look forward to seeing you and having you join us to work on a worthwhile project and fellowship together.

The Faith Women of the ELCA Christmas Party with a Purpose is coming up on **Saturday, December 9 at 10:00 am** here at the church. We will have our general meeting with election of a 2024 Board; a speaker, Christian author, Carol Gift Page; projects with a purpose, all followed by lunch. Please stop by at the card table in the narthex to sign up, and pick up a flyer, which will tell you all about the party. ALL women are invited!!

The Pacifica W-ELCA Convention and Gathering, was held on November 3 and 4 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Yorba Linda. Seven of our Faith W-ELCA members attended and enjoyed a time of fellowship with women from a number of churches in Southern California and Hawaii. This is an event held every year on the first weekend in November and all women of the church are invited and welcome to attend.

Sunday Coffee: Just a reminder your help is needed to continue to have coffee and fellowship after our church service. Help with the set-up is provided by Evelyn. We would like volunteers to help clean up after our Sunday coffee. **Please sign up and give it a try.**

Coming up this month:

Saturday, December 2, 10:00 am: Alter Guild decorating the sanctuary. Helpers are invited

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 9:30 am: Pastor's Circle Leaders *Gather Magazine* Bible Study

Thursday, Dec. 7, 9-12 noon: Snip and Stitch Quilters meet in the fellowship hall

Saturday, December 9, 10:00 am: W-ELCA Christmas Party and General Meeting

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 10:00 am: Lydia and Mary Circles Bible study in the fellowship hall

Wednesday, December 20, 10:00 am: W-ELCA Board Meeting at church

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And

*this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”
Luke 2:10-12 ESV*

As we enter this Advent and Christmas season, peace and joy in Christ,
Bea Olsen, W-ELCA President, Cell # 951 370-3600 beaolsen@yahoo.com

FINANCIAL REPORT Ending October 31, 2023

1. Comments

- a. Member giving was above budget again this month, and we are also over budget year-to-date. We have exceeded budget for the last 4 months and 7 of the 10 months this year. This amounts to \$7,048 more income YTD than budgeted. Let's keep it up!
- b. We are making headway on reducing the budgeted deficit. *THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFUL GIVING!*



2. Financials Review

- a. **Offering Envelopes**
 - i) **For the month**, significantly over budget at 133.2% (\$13,527 vs \$10,152).
 - ii) **Year-to-date**, over budget at 112.5% (\$120,177 vs \$106,875).
- b. **Total Income**
 - i) **For the month**, significantly over budget at 120.9% (\$20,804 vs \$17,207).
 - ii) **Year-to-date**, over budget at 104.4% (\$167,637 vs \$160,589).
- c. **Expenses**
 - i) **For the month**, under budget at 92.7% (\$14,951 vs \$16,137).
 - ii) **Year-to-date**, slightly over budget at 102.0% (\$169,501 vs \$166,246).
- d. **Net Operating Income** (Total Income minus Expenses)
 - i) **For the month**, a surplus of \$5,853 vs the expected surplus of \$1,070.
 - ii) **Year-to-date**, a loss of \$1,864 vs the expected loss of \$5,657.
- e. **Checking balance**
 - i) **Balance at Month-end** is \$6,017, much bet.
 - ii) **Previous Month-end balance** was \$317.





BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

To

December 1, 1938	Mimi Houghtaling
December 8, 1948	Bill Brauer
December 10, 1939	Mary Ann Whitford
December 14, 1933	John Neff
December 15, 1977	Berenice Varsobia
December 19, 1977	Robert Ackley
December 22, 1995	Kally Homchick
December 22, 1970	Amy Sinclair
December 26, 1931	Erma Hinkle
December 28, 1939	Harold Whitford
December 29, 2014	Jackson Ackley
December 29, 1954	Audie Carr
December 29, 2015	Hunter Holmes
December 31, 1928	Earlean Wagner



ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS

To

December 19, 1959	Len & Carol Morris
December 28, 1965	Mike & Joanne McGavran

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, please notify the church office so we can add you to our list!



Hunger Never Rests!

The Menifee Valley Community Cupboard is in need of 1 lb. bags of dried beans and/or rice for December!



Your donations are always welcome and needed! Bring your donations to the church office during our regular hours or you may drop your items off at The Cupboard at 26944 Cherry Hills Blvd (951/301-4414). When you drop off your donations, please inform the Community Cupboard you are from Faith Lutheran. If you are a Thrivent member you may wish to use your Thrivent Action Card to purchase up to \$250.00 of food for the Cupboard. For more information, call David Moe at (951) 230-8493.

Also, **The Cupboard Could Use OUR Help With...** Sorting & pricing donations, food distribution, and staffing the Christmas Store. Give Dawn Smith a call at 951-301-4414.

Diane Swarts - Community Cupboard Liaison

Servant Spotlight

Frank & Debbie Ehrig



The next time you see Frank or Debbie Ehrig, please give them a big thank you!

Frank has volunteered to help Harold on the Property Committee and he has been coming to church weekly to pull weeds and work on our landscaping!

Debbie is also quite the busy worker helping Frank with the landscaping, and volunteering to help with Sunday School, as well as volunteering for the Outreach, Fellowship and Cheer Committees!

Thank you, Frank and Debbie, for all you do to help and support Faith, our ministries and our members!

Welcome to Advent!

Join us for Advent!! Advent is the four-week season in the Church calendar dedicated to anticipating the arrival, or "advent," of Jesus of Nazareth, the long-awaited Messiah and King! We celebrate this time with reflections on hope, peace, love, and joy and focus on the hope-filled arrival of Jesus!

Take a journey with Faith Lutheran Church during Advent on Facebook and Instagram with a daily devotion intended to help each of us discover God's intricate plan to save the world from sin and the promises fulfilled in the birth of His Son.

Be sure to share each post on your own page...spread the word about Jesus!! The first Sunday of advent is this Sunday, December 3rd!



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Daily Advent Devotionals at:
facebook.com/faithlutheranmenifee
instagram.com/faithlutheranmenifee

**Join us for
Advent.**



And, speaking of social media...

Are you following us on social media?

The use of social media is a great way to advertise Faith Lutheran (for free!) and help us GROW! Help us by going to the links below to follow our page and be sure to invite your friends and family to follow us, as well! In addition, you can write a review on Facebook, Instagram and Google, as well! The more interaction we get on our social media pages, the higher we'll place in the algorithm, which makes us easier for others to find us, follow us and join us for worship!



<https://www.facebook.com/faithlutheranmenifee>



<https://www.instagram.com/faithlutheranmenifee>



<https://g.page/r/Cekm6HPOyDnHEBO/review>



Thank you, Snip 'N Stitch Quilters Group!

What a delight to enter the sanctuary on November 26th and see the colorful array of quilts adorning every pew! Many thanks to the Snip 'n' Stitch group for sharing their beautiful handiwork with the congregation before the quilts are donated as needed.



Wow!

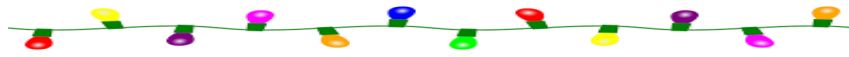


As a reminder, Snip 'N Stitch will meet on Thursday, Dec. 1 (the first Thursday of each month) at 9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. No experience as a quilter is needed and ALL are welcome!!

Snip 'N Stitch is always in need of donations of fabric, pillow cases and lace! Check out these cute photos of Ava Holmes modeling a dress made out of a pillow case!



For more information and/or questions, please call Eleanor Diaz at (951) 623-3496.



LADIES... YOU ARE ALL INVITED!

Faith Lutheran Women of the ELCA
Party With a Purpose / General Meeting

"CHRISTMAS CALL TO ACTION"

SATURDAY, DEC 9, 2023, 10:00AM

IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

(28200 Portsmouth Dr., Menifee, 92586)

OUR PURPOSE: Fun, friendship, gathering donations for asylum seekers, and getting Christmas gifts ready for our homebound members.

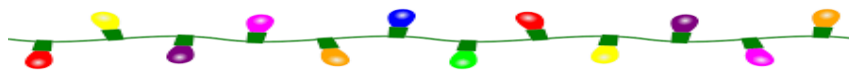
FEATURED SPEAKER: Carole Gift Page, Author

ALSO FEATURED: Devotions, Election of W-ELCA Officers, Lunch, Prayer Partner reveal and draw.

SIGN UP: At church, or call Bea Olsen: 951-370-3600

PLEASE BRING:

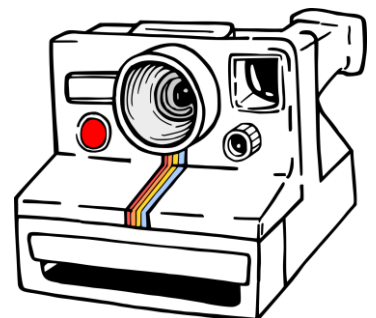
- One small wrapped item for the gift exchange
- Prayer Partner Card (*if you are a Prayer Partner*)
- A Friend or Two or Three or Four
- Suggested Lunch Donation at the Door: \$7
- Needed items for Asylum Seekers: Baby Wipes, Phone Chargers, Travel-sized toiletries, Reusable grocery bags or backpacks, Snacks, Bottled water, Clothing, especially socks, jackets, and shoelaces, Visa gift cards of \$20 to \$50 so those with long travel days or layovers can buy a meal for themselves at the airport.



Attention Committee and Group Chairpersons!

If you take photos at any upcoming events, please email them to the church office at faithlutheranmenifee@gmail.com and/or to Mary Mazy at maryhmazy@gmail.com. Lynn and Mary are working together to show off and share your photos on our bulletin boards, on our social media accounts, the Forecaster, etc.

Thank you in advance!



Wishing you a blessed, joyous Christmas!
Jesus is the reason for the season! Spread the word!



Please email one of your family Christmas photos to
faithlutheranmenifee@gmail.com for next month's Forecaster!
Thank you!

Faith Lutheran Church

28200 Portsmouth Drive, Menifee, CA 92586

Office Phone: (951) 679-1518 | **Pastor John's Direct Phone:** (949) 258-3452

Email: FaithLutheranMenifee@gmail.com | **Website:** www.faithmenifee.com

Church Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 8:30am-5:00pm | Fri 8:30am-12:30pm

December 2023

December 2023							January 2024						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
31							29	30	31				

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nov 26	27	28	29	30	Dec 1	2
AM: Roderick; Lector: Pat; PPT: Mike 9:30am Advent. Week 1	4 10:00am Worship & Music 1:00pm Movie Day-The Endowment	5 10:00am Outreach Team 2:00pm Fellowship Team 3:30pm Outreach- In Person & Zoom	6 10:00am Bible Study Leaders 5:00pm Advent Worship 5:00pm PPT: Marlene	7 9:00am Snip 'N' Stitch 2:00pm Book Study at SCMC	8 10:30am AI-Anon	9 10:00am WELCA General Meeting & Christmas Party
10 AM: Marlene; Lector: Bill; PPT: Lynn 9:30am Advent Week 2 11:00am Caroling	11 10:00am Hymn Planners 1:00pm FR&D (Faith R&D)-In Person & Zoom	12 2:00pm Game Day: Domino Train	13 10:00am Mary & Lydia 2:00pm Remembering & 5:00pm Advent Worship 5:00pm PPT: Candy	14 2:00pm Book Study at SCMC 2:00pm Canceled-Bible 4:00pm Cheer	15 10:30am AI-Anon	16
17 AM: Harold; Lector: Sandy; Bill; PPT 9:30am Advent Week 3	18 10:00am Canceled-4 Plus 1 10:00am Executive Council	19 10:00am WELCA Board 1:00pm Finance Team 5:00pm Advent Worship 5:00pm PPT: Candy	20 10:00am WELCA Board 1:00pm Finance Team 5:00pm Advent Worship 5:00pm PPT: Candy	21 10:00am Stewardship 2:00pm Book Study at SCMC 5:00pm Longest Night	22 10:30am AI-Anon	23 Forecaster Deadline
24 5:00: AM: Marlene; 9:30: Joanne; Lector: 9:30am Advent Week 4 5:00pm Christmas Eve	25 Pt. Vacation	26	27	28 2:00pm Canceled-Bible Study	29 10:30am AI-Anon	30
31 AM: Joanne; PPT: Candy 9:30am Lessons & Carols	Jan 1, 24	2	3	4	5	6