



FAITH'S FOUNDATIONS

December 2023

FROM PASTOR CATIE

As we head into the Advent season, I find Isaiah 40 speaking to me on many levels. The passage starts with a word of comfort.

"Comfort o comfort my people." -Isaiah 40:1

While this sounds simple at first, upon further reflection I think at times this can be quite the task. Comfort is not the same for everyone. I find comfort in running and working out. While others get uncomfortable at me mentioning that this is something I enjoy. What makes us comfortable is something that is unique to each and every one of us. The true beauty of the comfort that Isaiah speaks of is that God knows exactly what we need. We see this as we continue through the passage.

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain." -Isaiah 40: 3-4

God shows us comfort in how we journey through the wilderness. God is helping us along the way. Valleys are being raised up, mountains and hills lowered, and the ground is being leveled. God does not leave us in the wilderness alone.

This is represented in Hannah Garrity's art piece *The Flower Fades*. In the background, straight vertical lines represent the paths made straight, the leveling of the ground, the smoothing of the rough places. Even if traveling in or preparing straight lines are not our strength, God is there for us. There is hope, as Isaiah cries out, for God continues to speak peace into being within us. God continues to whisper God's meaning and purpose into us, teaching us to rely on God who comforts and challenges us. The passage continues:

"The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever." -Isaiah 40:8

In Garrity's image, a single iris stalk rises up with three flowers. Representing the inconstancy of the people, the flower is just beginning to fade and the grasses begin to bend. The breath of the Lord swirls through the frame.

As I looked at the piece I reflected on times of wilderness. I thought of how wilderness places, times of betrayals and disappointments, times of pains of loss

and regret, times of uncertainty are all caught up in the glory of God's appearing. Because no past burden or suffering can delay God's deliverance. During this time of Advent, we look forward to God's deliverance through the birth of Jesus. This is one of many ways that God provides us with comfort. In what other ways is God providing for you during this holiday season?

Peace,
 Pastor Catie



Artwork: The Flower Fades by Hannah Garrity
 Received from "A Sanctified Art"

FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Be at peace among yourselves” . That is from verse 13 of Chapter 5 of Paul’ s letter to the Thessalonians. The day I sat down to write this I had just read and meditated on verses 12-18 of Chapter 5 from 1 Thessalonians. What a great reminder for all of us at this time of year when we start our holidays by giving thanks for so many things before we vault into Advent to prepare for Christmas. Paul is calling for us to respect, esteem, admonish, encourage, help, and pray for one another. And to pray fervently for God’s church. The word admonish is an interesting word. I choose to use the definition of admonish as to urge someone earnestly. So I want to admonish you all to think again about the Stewardship Committee needed for Faith. We do have a couple of people who have expressed interest but these people already serve in various positions. The Stewardship committee would meet at least 4 times a year and plan a varied approach to reach out to people in our church and community to be good stewards of our blessings. It might be perfect if two couples would step forward to work together, think outside the box, and come up with a program of stewardship we need here at Faith.

If you are like me and rely on Livestreaming when unable to worship in church on some Sundays, you may have noticed a few problems we have been having with the equipment we have been using since we started live streaming. We have come to the point when we need to upgrade our equipment and method of live streaming. At the November Council meeting, a decision was made to have Dillon Ford and Linda Swanson look for suitable replacements to upgrade our system. So we will also need to begin fundraising for the upgrade.

As always if there is any question or concern you have please bring it to the attention of a member of the Council.

Robin Peterson

FROM THE BISHOP



Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

By the time you read this, I will have completed leading a book study through our Lifelong Faith Formation classes on “Embracing God’s Future without Forgetting the Past: A Conversation about Loss, Grief, and Nostalgia in Congregational Life.” It is a sobering read,

full of truth about what many of our congregations are facing and how grief is being experienced.

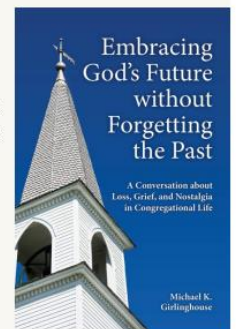
The author, former bishop Michael Girlinghouse, advises that this grief must be processed before a congregation can move forward, and he offers some ideas, workshops, and methods of how to address this grief, not just as individuals, but as communities of faith that are collectively experiencing loss and change.

I agree with him that naming the points of pain regarding loss is important. And I believe that we are only just beginning to understand what those points of pain are, as our congregations are at different places in the arc of their lifecycles and facing these challenges at different times.

I did suspect when I accepted this call to a second term that the church was going to change more in the next six years than it had in the past twenty. Changes in the last 20 - 30 years have sort of snuck up on us. But the challenges we thought of then as “some day maybe” have now arrived.

With shifts in culture, with the acceleration of institutional decline pushed by Covid, with anxiety increasing, there is gathering momentum to do more to equip lay leaders for the work of ministry.

Of course, the work of ministry has always rested on lay leaders who more often than not are working in



partnership with a pastoral leader or keeping ministry in motion during pastoral transition. However, increasingly fewer people are entering seminary. And while it is true that fewer congregations can afford a full-time pastor, even the ones that have the financial capacity must compete with each other for a shrinking pool of pastoral leaders.

Yet, our synod is a great place to serve in ministry! I have observed a respect for the pastoral office and a deep appreciation for that partnership. I see people who love their church and the ministry accomplished through their combined efforts, and all of it in communities that have a sense of what it means to be neighbor. There is pride in self-sufficiency: the garden, the homemade, the do-it-yourself kind of attitude. Add to that the beauty of God's creation and we want to ask who wouldn't want to live here?

Unfortunately, as I seek to recruit pastoral leaders, we are an unknown entity. Much as I try to educate, it is the exceptional pastoral candidate that is willing to move to the northern top of the U.S. possibly away from family.

So...what is the answer to this current challenge?

I appeal to your own sense of pride in the homemade. Look around your congregations. Who has gifts for ministry? Who is already leading? We have several Lay Schools (with NGLS scholarship funds available) ready to equip people for the work they are already doing. Between the Lay school offered at Luther Seminary to the Lay schools in our neighboring synods of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, the tools needed to equip lay leaders for ministry are within reach. I suggest we raise up our own leaders who can then discern if they have a call to ordained ministry (we have scholarship funds for seminary

too) or wish to be equipped, educated, and supported for a larger role as a lay leader.

I am grateful to our currently serving Licensed Lay Ministers, and to our lay leaders and congregation members who are such an asset and blessing to the work of Christ. As I continue to recruit pastoral leaders TO our synod, I ask you to do the same IN our synod. Whatever the future brings, I know that the work of Christ will continue.



Yours in Christ,

Bishop Katherine Finegan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FACEBOOK

It's true! Faith Lutheran Church now has a Facebook page. "Like" us at <http://www.facebook.com/faith3lakes/> and watch the page for updates about what's happening in the life of our faith community.



LIVE STREAMING

Did you know that when you're away, you can watch the entire service as it's delivered LIVE on Sunday morning? You can! Simply go to our church's website (<https://www.faithlutheran-threelakes.org/>) and click "Click here to watch live streaming during worship (Sundays at 9:00 am)" right on the front page. Just put in a name and hit "Enter Live Service". Streaming will start, which usually happens around 8:55, 9:00 am, give or take a few minutes, so if nothing is happening yet when you start watching, just wait a few minutes. You can also watch a recording of many of our services on our website. Simply go to our church website and click "Click here to view recordings of worship" to watch any past services. It's that easy!

QUILTING

Quilting is back in session! Please join us every Wednesday at 12:30 pm in the lower level of the church. No experience necessary!

ONLINE GIVING

You can support our mission easier than ever with our donation platform! You can visit <https://secure.myvanco.com/YHQE/home> and contribute securely online. Thank you for your continued support!

BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study is offered following Sunday church services EVERY Sunday! All are invited and welcome to attend! No bible required! Please join us for some lively discussions!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24

This year on Sunday, December 24, we will have Advent Service at 9:00 am, AND Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 pm.

BAPTISMS WE REMEMBER THIS MONTH

During December, we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth. The gift of Christmas is just the start of the story of salvation through Jesus Christ.

In our baptism, we are joined to the death of Jesus. We also receive the promise that as Christ was raised from the dead, so too shall we have new life – a gift given by the grace of God.

Celebrate the gift of Jesus, and the gift of new life through our baptism into Jesus. As you celebrate, rejoice with your brothers and sisters who remember this month their worn baptisms!

- 4th – Traeton Fogerty
- 8th – Phoebe Pettingell
- 10th – Beth Schomisch
- 15th – Marge Anderson
- 24th – Paul Matthiae
- 25th – Robin Peterson
- 26th – Perry Anderson

Also remember: Tammy Sherry and Kristi Erikson

MONTHLY OFFERING AND ATTENDANCE

SEPTEMBER 2023	MONTH	YTD SEP – JULY
INCOME	\$5,967	\$84,447
RESTRICTED	\$600 (fence)	\$22,061
EXPENSES	\$7,914	\$152,218
NET	\$ -1,309	\$ -5751

****THIS WILL BE PROVIDED ON A QUARTERLY BASIS**

Year: 2023	Year: 2023
Month: August	Month: September
# of Sun.: 4	# of Sun.: 4
Average: 21	Average:31
Average online:6	Average online:11

IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

THOSE STRUGGLING WITH ILLNESS, PAIN, LOSS OF HEALTH IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT:

Kyle Smith, Paul Kragh, Ollie DeMuth, Megan Schiller, Ann Woelfel, Duane and Colleen Bonack, Abbey Swanson, Rick Gensler, Sr., Hailey Schultz, Ruth Sammetinger, Beth Schomisch, Kay Moericke, Jim Stroschein, Bonnie Pegel, Doug Wallschlaeger, Kris Tenges, Lou Medeiros, Myrna Stroschein, Heidi Lulloff, and Dan Paremski

ALL THOSE WHO ARE ANXIOUS AND WORRIED ABOUT MANY THINGS

OUR CHURCH MINISTRIES

- Congregational Care
- Congregation Council
- Board of Worship Life (BOWL)
- Board of Outreach
- Board of Trustees
- Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center

OUR PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, INCLUDING

- St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church
- Three Lakes Evangelical Free Church
- Union Congregational Church
- Grace Lutheran Church

OUR SYNOD, THE NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD OF THE ELCA, AND ITS CONGREGATIONS.

OUR COMPANION SYNOD, THE EASTERN AND COASTAL DIOCESE OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANZANIA, AND ITS CONGREGATIONS.

STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2023 (CONTINUED)


	12/3/23	12/10/23	12/17/23
Reader	Robin Peterson	Gretchen Dobbins	Phoebe Pettingell
Greeter	-	-	-
Music	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss
Video	Dillon Ford	Dillon Ford	Dillon Ford

DECEMBER 2023

	12/24/23 AM	12/24/23 EVE.	12/31/23
Reader	Robin Peterson	Jan Harris	Gretchen Dobbins
Greeter	-	Jan Harris	-
Music	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss
Video	Dillon Ford	Dillon Ford	Dillon Ford

*** If you cannot serve on your assigned day, please find a replacement, then notify the church office. ***

DECEMBER 2023

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
					1 Office Closed	2
3 9:00 am Holy Communion	4	5	6 12:30 pm Quilting 5:15 pm-7:00 pm Wednesday Night Connect	7	8 Office Closed	9
10 9:00 am Holy Communion Sunday School	11	12 6:00 pm Council Christmas party at Swansons	13 12:30 pm Quilting 5:15 pm-7:00 pm Wednesday Night Connect	14	15 Office Closed	16
17 9:00 am Holy Communion	18	19	20 12:30 pm Quilting	21	22 Office Closed	23
24 9:00 am Holy Communion 7:00 pm Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day 	26	27 12:30 pm Quilting	28	29 Office Closed	30
31 9:00 am Holy Communion Sunday School						

Faith Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 436
Three Lakes, WI 54562

WORKING TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL HERE AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

A member of the Northern Great Lakes Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

P.O. Box 436
6995 U.S. Highway 45 South
Three Lakes, WI 54562

Church Office: 715-546-2770

Pastor Catie's Office Hours: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
Monday – Thursday

Office Hours: 10:00 am – 1:00 pm
Tuesday – Thursday

WEEKLY WORSHIP

Sunday Morning – 9:00 am
Holy Communion

STAFF

Office Administrator: MaryBeth Koslowski
office6995@gmail.com

Pastor: Reverend Catie Ford
pastorcatieford@gmail.com
Work Phone: 715-600-3980

Organist: Rhonda Buss

VISIT US ON THE WEB

<https://www.faithlutheran-threelakes.org>

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/faith3lakes>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

