



December

take up the shield of faith Ephesians 6:16

December 2020 Newsletter

From Pastor Nate

“For unto you is born this day... a Savior.” (Luke 2:11)

The angel did not speak these words to Mary, the mother of Jesus. These words were spoken to the shepherds. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.” (Isaiah 9:6) This message is for us! As the expression goes - it is the reason for the season. The shepherds were amazed by this message – “To you is born this day... a Savior.” And so they went with haste to behold this baby lying in a manger. This is a message that transforms lives.

But what does it mean for us when we hear the Christmas message that the Christ child is given for us? Most parents believe that their new born child is an awesome gift from God. Most parents who have adopted a child hold the same belief. But how is this child born of Mary such an awesome and unimaginable gift for us? The key to understanding the gift of this baby born in Bethlehem is found in Scripture. He is our Savior! “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

Isaiah says that He will be called the “Prince of Peace” and that His kingdom will be established forever. (Isaiah 9:6-7) John says, “All things were made through Him... and in Him was life.” (John 1:3-4) When you hold a new born infant, you can sense the miracle of life that is in your hands. You can also sense the hope and promise that lies within a newborn baby.

Our life is found in the child’s birth that we celebrate at Christmas. Our hope and promise is found in this “babe wrapped in swaddling clothes.” He is our Savior! He is the door into an eternal paradise with God, who will wipe away every tear and will also wipe away all mourning, crying, pain, and even death itself will be no more. (John 10:9; Revelation 21:4)

I love to hold a new born baby following his or her baptism. I feel a peace in my heart holding a newly adopted child of God. And I am reminded that it is through this child from heaven, born of woman, that we receive adoption as children of God. (Galatians 4:4-5) He is the Prince of Peace who gives us a peace which passes all understanding.

This child born to us brings us peace with God. Jesus saves us from the sin that separates us from God. He saves us from a life without meaning and purpose. Jesus is the key to understanding the message, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.” The child is God’s Son! The child is our Savior! Our life, our hope, our peace, our joy, and our love are all wrapped up in this “inexpressible gift from God.” Jesus is the greatest gift that we can receive and the greatest gift that we can share this Christmas.

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Nate Bjorge

Twice in Paul’s letter to the church at Thessalonica, he writes, “We are bound to give thanks to God always for you.” Like Paul, our family gives thanks to God for all of you, our family of Faith. God has blessed us through this congregation and we thank God and you for your love and support. “Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with you!” (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

Merry Christmas from our family to yours!
Pastor Nate, Kate, Kaj, Annika, and Haakon

Faith’s Core Values:
*Discipleship,
Hospitality,
Prayer,
Service,
Stewardship,
Worship,
and Unity*

President's Message



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Think about the marvelous gifts God gave us in our senses.

The sense of sight.

Seeing one of these is a sight to behold. Hearing...Have you ever heard a bull elk bugle? It will make your hair stand on end <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYzWmKlZtrU>

But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

Matthew 13:16

Smell...well there are a lot of I mean a lot of things that smell better than a bull elk. (someday they will invent smellovision) And ohhh to touch that rough hide and feel those antlers. Taste.. The best yet is to taste a huge elk steak cooked over a blazing fire under that Colorado evening sky. My mouth is watering. YUM!

Faye and I just fought a round with Covid-19, not fun. It is scary to lose one or more of your senses. We both lost smell and taste and thankfully have regained it. And after experiencing the last election we fear a lot of people have lost their common sense. I know not one of the five senses but important nonetheless. I believe we are all praying that it is found again soon.

Good sense is a fountain of life to him who has it, but the instruction of fools is folly. Proverb 16:22

Losing our sense of what's right and wrong can happen too if we let the powerful media slip too far into our homes and into our minds. Now more than ever it is important to keep our sense and senses.

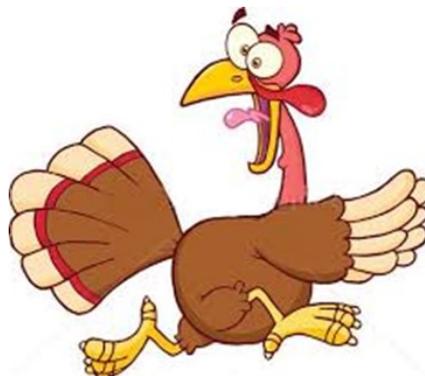
In this busy time of year, keep your sense of wonder. Be amazed at all the good and beauty around you. Keep your sense of inspiration. Be inspired to continue to do God's work and give to God's church. Keep your sense of thankfulness. Be ever so thankful for all the gifts God gives us each and everyday.. The Church Council is so thankful for all of our joyful givers! All of you sharing your many many gifts of time, money and talent! Keep your sense of prayerfulness. Prayer is the most powerful tool we have to combat evil. Keep that sense of smell, that freshly cut Christmas tree, reminding us of the greatest gift of all, Jesus. Keep your sense of sight focused on God's word.

*How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Psalm 119:103*

Keep your sense of hearing enjoying the beautiful Christmas carols being belted out in church and played by our fantastic musicians.

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
Romans 10:17*

Keep your common sense, our world needs it. Keep your sense of humour. It will, I fear, come in handy. God's Peace and Happy Thanksgiving, George



Mission Statement

As Children of God, we are called to love, glorify and submit to the Living Christ, ministering to others by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.



Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand** your ground, and after you have done everything, **to stand**. **Stand** firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:16

Faith Lutheran Church

303 18th St. SE

Little Falls, MN 56345

320-414-0533

faithlutheranlittelfalls.org
secretaryfaithlutheran@gmail.com

Youth & Family Team

In the midst of a global pandemic and divided nation, my heart is yearning like never before for the return of our Savior this Advent season. A longing for our Savior who made his first humble appearance in a borrowed manger as his throne over 2,000 years ago. The people living at the time of Jesus' birth surely didn't *expect* the long awaited Messiah's entrance as it was revealed. Surely, the Messiah could not come from poor, teenage parents with seemingly insignificant backgrounds, could he? This leads me to question... if Jesus made his promised second return today, would it be as I *expect* it? Furthermore, where is Jesus working today that we don't *expect*? The high school youth have been studying Revelation together this fall and one promise we have been reminding ourselves of is the return of Jesus at a time we least *expect* it (Luke 12:40). We have been encouraged in the hardships of 2020 as we look toward Jesus' return and experience God's care revealed to us in Revelation. Therefore, in the midst of our hardships, we can and are singing, "A weary world rejoices!" because our eyes are fixed on the victory of Jesus and his promised return.

And rejoicing we have been (and will continue to do) through events like the Family Fall Festival, Operation Christmas Child (OCC) Service Project, and the upcoming Shield Christmas and New Year's Eve Parties. The Family Fall Festival was Friday, October 30 out at Fellbaum's Farm. There were fall themed activities for all ages including a hayride, dinner, kid games, and paintball. On Wednesday, November 11, during our OCC Service Project, the high school youth and adult volunteers were able to pack 125 shoeboxes using Thrivent Cards, financial donations from students, and items donated by a very generous community member. Money donated by the congregation was used for shipping costs.

During the Shield Christmas Party on Wednesday, December 16th, we plan to rejoice in our Savior's birth through Christmas games and student-led worship. Additionally, youth will be encouraged to bring in a gift to support Hope at the Brickhouse in the Quad Cities. Also at the end of December we will have a New Year's Eve (NYEE) Bash for high school students and friends on Wednesday, December 30 from 8pm-12am. The NYEE Bash will be an opportunity to reflect on the ways God cared and provided for us in 2020 and look forward in hope to 2021. During this event there will be a powerful prayer and worship time, broomball outside, and other fun minute-to-win-it games.

In Christ,
Sara Stanton

Congregational Life

Remember our Faith Christmas boutique and bake sale before and after church services on

Sunday December 6th and Sunday December 13th!

Our wish to everyone ...A Blessed and Merry Christmas from our team, Becky, Beckie, Jodi, Julie, Lois, Karen, Howie, and Bev

Blessing Boxes

Genesis 12:2 tells us we are blessed to be a blessing to others. That is the idea behind the blessing boxes. Who in your life could use the hope of Jesus in this season? Ask God who he has intentionally connected you with so that he can make his blessings known through you! Maybe it is a neighbor, coworker, family member, or friend... Our goal is to bless 100 people/families in our community through YOU! Please see sign-up sheet (linked in email), to add your name and the person you will bring a box to.

Blessing boxes will be ready for delivery and available for pick-up after the Advent Worship, Wednesday 12/2 @ 7pm or at this Sunday's (12/6) worship. Please contact Sara Stanton (youthministryfaithlutheran@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

November Council Minutes

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting, November 19th, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Kennard Fellbaum, Justin Juelke, Howie Larsen, Tom Lippert, Jim Nelson, Renae Stueber and Pastor Nate

Absent: Joel Hanson, Denny Myers, Cheryl Rioux, George Sandy, Karen Underhill and Dave ZumBerge

The meeting was called to order and opening prayer led by Howie Larsen

Justin Juelke moved and Jim Nelson seconded to accept the agenda. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report: Justin Juelke moved and Kennard Fellbaum seconded to accept the October Council Minutes. Motion carried. Sarah Kalkbrenner shared that the refrigerator has been repaired by Roger and the new copier is installed and working great! Thelen has repaired the furnace but we have not received the bill yet.

Treasurer's Report: George Sandy had previously reported that there are requirements to the grant money he was looking into so we will not pursue it further.

Jim reported the revenue was \$17,946 this month. The revenues have been a little lower since June, averaging around 22,000/month. The large purchase on the expense report is the copier with \$2485 coming from the copier fund and \$710 coming from Men's Bible Study. We are over six thousand below budget for the month of October and for the year we are still \$16,000 below budget so we are doing well.

Tom Lippert moved and Renae Stueber seconded to accept the October Treasurer's reports. Motion carried.

Youth Director's Report: Sara Stanton's report shared the Family Fall Festival was a success with 40-50 attendees. The Operation Christmas Child shoebox packing event went well with them packing 125 shoeboxes.

Upcoming the Youth will be volunteering with Living Hope's Farmers to Families Food Distribution on Tuesday, December 8th.

They will also be putting together college care packages and sending them out. The Youth Group will also be having a Christmas party on Wednesday, December 16th. Sara has also planned a Homework Hangout day to encourage students to work at the church on Tuesday, November 24th from 8 am-4 pm. COVID safety protocol will be followed. Kennard Fellbaum moved and Tom Lippert seconded to approve the Homework Hangout with attendance not to exceed 20 per day to start. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Nate reported that a private family-only funeral will be held on December 8th for Tom Campbell. They will have a memorial next summer in Oslo as well. We will also be hosting a wedding on March 20 for Adam Hyatt and Shelby Skinnemoen.

The Community Thanksgiving meal had to be canceled this year so several members of the Ministerial Association spoke with the ballroom and will be preparing and distributing 500 meals for free. They already have almost all the meals spoken for.

Confirmation is going well. They had a test on Genesis Wednesday, November 18th.

Thanksgiving Eve Worship will continue as planned but there will be no pie fellowship this year.

Old Business:

Ministry Team Reports:

Congregational Life Team: An abbreviated Christmas Boutique has been planned but with the new regulations the team will decide if they still wish to proceed.

Security Team: The outdoor cameras are not finished yet so instead of planning for the key fobs or the indoor cameras, the outdoor part of the system will be finished first when we are ready to move forward.

Finance & Management Team: Lyle Frehrichs continues to do our plowing but we should keep in mind that it's something we will need to cover when he decides he no longer wants to do it.

Fire Extinguishers: Justin Juelke is working with the Finance Team to get the boxes ordered and installed to get the fire extinguishers placed better.

Photo Directory: This project is on hold for now with the regulations in our state but it is still something we know we want to start working on soon.

New Members: There are two people who have discussed joining Faith Lutheran with Pastor Nate. We would like them to be able to join before the Annual Meeting in January. Discussion on how to handle their membership will be discussed at December meeting.

New Business:

Council Nomination Committee: We need 2 council members and three congregation members on this committee. Justin Juelke and Howie Larsen agreed to head this up. They will choose the congregation members. Council members leaving are: Dave ZumBerge; who is not eligible to run again, Denny Myers; who will run again, Cheryl Rioux and Joel Hanson; who are both eligible to run again. In addition, Greg Hyatt and Judy Berger have both expressed interest in running for Council.

Mission Donation: The Mission team would like to donate up to \$3,000 toward the Blessing Boxes project. Justin Juelke moved and Jim Nelson seconded to allow this donation. Motion carried.

Staff Bonuses: This will be discussed at the budget discussion. In addition to the main staff, several people have been recommended to be added to the bonus list.

Audit Team: Renee Miller has agreed to do our audit in January. She will choose someone else to help complete it with her.

Blessing Boxes: The team coordinating the Blessing boxes have requested that they spend \$522.28 to order mugs from Range Printing and \$350 for sample bags of coffee from Reality Roasters. This would come from the \$920 already raised for this project/ the mission team's donation. Kennard Fellbaum moved and Justin Juelke seconded to approve these purchases. Motion carried.

Budget: Cheryl Rioux put together notes for Jim Nelson with Year-to-date figures through October. Jim has all the reports out to the teams with a deadline for them to return them by December 6th. The Building and Facilities budget is done. The Executive Team will meet to discuss staffing prior to the council meeting in December. Jim will collect all the reports and the Finance Team will meet and pre-approve the budget prior to the December Council meeting.

Tom Lippert moved and Renae Stueber seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with prayer.

The next meeting will take place December 17th, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Sarah Kalkbrenner, Faith Lutheran Church Secretary

Attendance & Offering

November	1:	126	\$ 8,114
November	8:	68	\$ 3,537
November	15:	76	\$ 2,067
November	22:	82	\$ 4,002
November	29:	117	\$ 8,049