

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

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A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP ELIZABETH EATON



Dear friends in Christ,

We have seen many changes throughout the years and throughout the world. Sometimes we've been left yearning for the days when things didn't feel so complicated. Other times, we have seen something new happen and have asked, "Why did this take so long?" The church has been through its own changes as well. Some of these have left us wishing for simpler times while others have us waiting for even more to come about.

But, dear church, God still is unchanging. God's love is still the foundation on which the church was built. While we have seen many changes, both in the world and at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the eternal love of God and the good news that dwells with Christ's death and resurrection continue to provide hope for everyone. This is why our mission remains steadfast, whether that is through our traditional mission work in places near and far or from new ventures and visions that encourage us to think of different ways to reach even more people.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (13:16). That could not be truer in the work we have been doing in each expression of the church. Your gifts continue to benefit the good work of spreading the good news throughout your communities, your synods and the whole church. We are all answering the call to continue to do good work with the help of your support, whether that is through your resources, your time or your talents.

I am grateful for your generous support of each expression of the church. God calls all of us to continue to do the good work, and you continue to answer that call. We also continue to join you in that call and will remain true to looking toward God's unchanging promise. There is still much change and learning that will come before us, but God's steadfast love energizes us for the work God is still doing in the world through this church.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God”

(Hebrews 13:16).

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

OPENING LITURGY

Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in the key of B-flat major (two flats) and 4/4 time. The score consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;
2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,
3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
4 Teach me to love you as your an - gels love,

wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;
no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay;
all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?
one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame:

stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,
no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;
I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.
the bap - tism of the heav'n - de - scend - ed dove,

and make me love you as I ought to love.
but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.
Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
my heart an al - tar, and your love the flame.

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860

Music: MORECAMBE, Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897

Text and music are in the public domain. Reproduced from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, hymn #800. May be reproduced without restriction.

Today's Agenda

Welcome by Council President Cynthia Kampf

Opening Litany & Prayer by Pastor Ben Colahan

Approval of May 22, 2022 Congregational Minutes

A Year in Review by Pastor Ben

Staff, Financial Secretary, Council, and Faith Family Appreciation
by Cynthia Kampf

Election of new Council Members & Officers

Presentation of the 2022-2023 Budget

***** TIME FOR QUESTIONS *****

Vote on Budget

Update on Stewardship & Capital Campaign

***** TIME FOR QUESTIONS *****

Closing, The Lord's Prayer

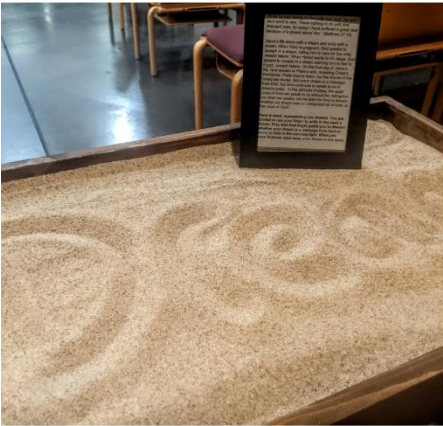
2022 Congregational Meeting Minutes

Annual Meeting Minutes May 22, 2022

- WELCOME by Council President Cynthia Kampf
- LITANY & PRAYERS by Pastor Ben Colahan
- MOTION TO APPROVE May 23, 2021 congregational minutes:
made/seconded/approved.
- VIDEO OF OUR YEAR IN REVIEW by Pastor Ben
- APPRECIATION of Staff, Financial Secretary & Council for jobs well
done by Council president Cynthia Kampf and a special thank you to
our “Faith Family” for faithfully continuing God’s work.
- SLATE OF NEW MEMBERS FOR COUNCIL was presented. Motion
made to accept/seconded/approved.
- PRESENTATION OF 2022-2023 BUDGET by Mark Kimmelshue,
discussion and questions answered. Motion made to approve the
budget/seconded/approved.
- UPDATE ON STEWARDSHIP & CAPITAL CAMPAIGN by Joel
Zimbelman and Tod Kimmelshue
- INITIAL PRESENTATION OF PASTORAL SABBATICAL for 2024
- CLOSING WITH THE LORD’S PRAYER

Submitted by Sherrill Heinz, Council Secretary

A Year in Review...



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

Death and Resurrection. In July of 2022, we turned off the water on our front lawn. We haven't watered it since. Our lawn is now dead and gone, and, though we can just barely see it, in its place is the beginning of something new and beautiful: flowers and shrubs that are hardy, resilient, and life-giving to the birds and the bees. That feels like an appropriate metaphor for this year.

There has been a wave of deaths in our congregation this year, both young and old. We have said goodbye to so many of our dear friends. And at the same time, we have said hello to so many new friends. This year, 16 new members officially joined Faith Lutheran! And while the kids in Sunday school do not count as members, the number of children each Sunday is growing at such a rate that our Director of Family Life, Dani Vogel is preparing to start a second classroom for Sunday school in the fall.

I believe the reason we have seen such growth this year is because we are living out our mission to be a community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone. We have done this by returning to traditions not seen since before the pandemic, like sharing potlucks and soup suppers during Advent and Lent. We are also leaning into new ways to fulfill our mission.

Our Hospitality Team has done an amazing job training greeters to welcome visitors on Sunday mornings. Our new name tags make sure people can greet each other by name, and because visitors can get a name tag within a week of their first visit, they know we care about their presence here. And not only does our Hospitality Team do a great job of making visitors feel welcomed, they also do a great job training new members how to be a part of welcoming others!"

Once people are welcomed in worship, we strive to gather them into community. Whether you want to gather with people your own age, young or old, or meet up with people who share your interests, be it hiking, painting, quilting, or theater, there is a place at the table for you to make meaningful Spirit-filled connections with your siblings in Christ.

And having been gathered into community, we are intentionally equipping people with the purpose that Jesus gives us: to love and serve our neighbors. We've been stepping up trainings to teach people how to share communion with the sick and elderly, how to praise God and inspire hearts through music, and how to raise up a new generation in faith in Sunday school.

This year, seven members of our Faith community and I had an amazing opportunity to visit the Holy Land. And as much as I was inspired by seeing where Jesus walked 2000 years ago, I was even more inspired by the preaching done by lay members of Faith while I was away from the pulpit. Their preaching inspired me to want to train other members to do the same. And so for six weeks I worked with nearly 20 people on how to read scripture and craft a message that will move hearts to trust in Christ's love for us.

The people of Faith Lutheran reflect God's love every single day. Our Sunday school families organized a night of children's Christmas caroling for our seniors. You all rolled up your sleeves and brought compassion to clean up Tiechert Ponds. You baked love into the pumpkin pies we sent to the Esplanade House for Thanksgiving. You welcomed the stranger at both our summer cooling center and our winter emergence shelter. You made sure our community knows that God's love is for everyone at Chico Pride and Trans Day of Remembrance. You literally gave your blood so that others might have life. Twice a month, you continue to feed hundreds of families at our drive-up food bank. And every day you make sure women with long-term medical needs have housing through our Mercy House.

On All Saints Day, we had a massive celebration. In worship, we gave thanks for all the saints who have died, who passed on the faith, built up the church, and inspired us by their example. And then at a feast in the fellowship hall we gave thanks for all the saints who are alive, who to this day pass on the faith, build up the church, and inspire us by their example.

Those saints are you. Those saints are us. We are a community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

*Your Brother in Christ,
Pastor Ben Colahan*

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms: 2
Confirmations: 0
Burials: 15
Marriages: 7

Members received by:
Affirmation: 15
Transfer: 1

Members removed by:
Death: 7
Transfer: 1

Total baptized members: 467

Total confirmed members: 400

2023-2024 Council Nominations

Retiring Council Members

Cynthia Kampf, President
Sky Sample, Vice President
Sherrill Heinz, Secretary
Joel Zimbelman (member at large)
Kyle Groh (member at large)
Meridith Woods (member at large)

New Council Officers

(a vote will be conducted to approve these candidates)
Jill Bentler, Council President (former member at large)
Steve Hall, Vice President (former member at large)
Alyssa Manes, Secretary (former member at large)

New Council Members

(a vote will be conducted to approve these candidates)
Leanne Chrisman (member at large)
Elaine Lund (member at large)
Martha McDermott (member at large)
Sharon Prindle (member at large)
Mary Schweder (member at large)

Proposed Council for 2023-2024

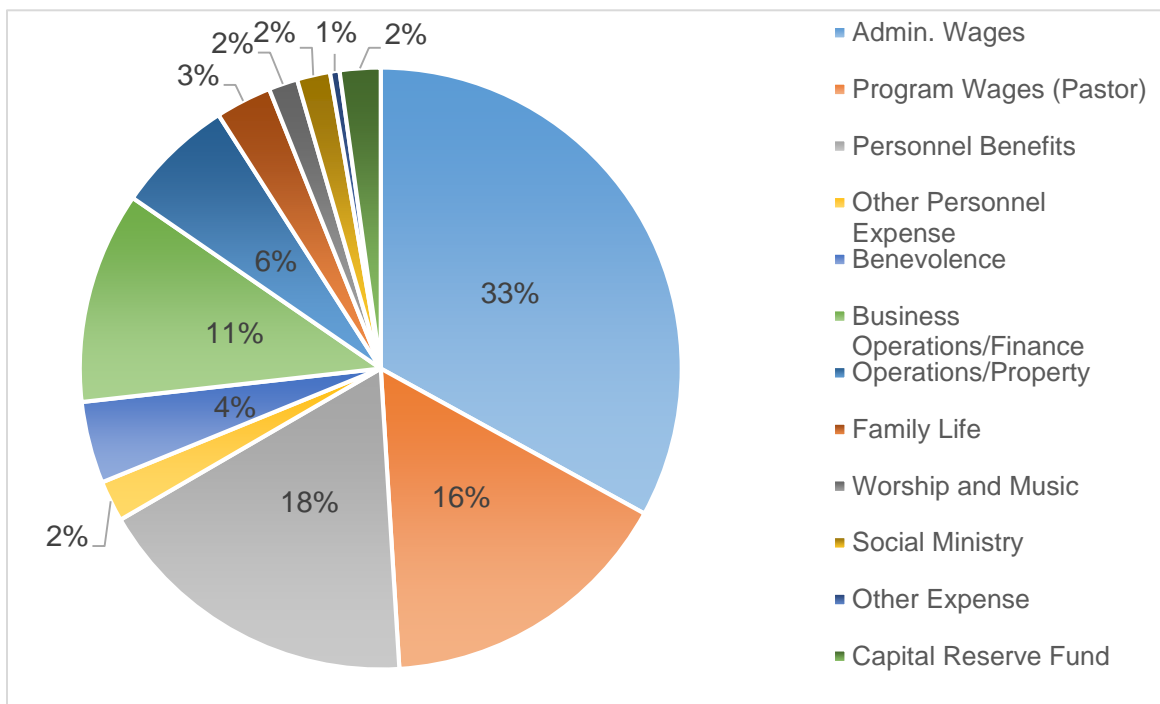
Pr. Ben Colahan, continuing ex officio member
Jill Bentler, Council President
Steve Hall, Vice President
Alyssa Manes, Secretary
Mark Kimmelshue, Treasurer (continuing)
Pat Snyder (continuing member at large)
Sky Sample (Member at large - former Vice President)

New Members at Large:

Leanne Chrisman, Elaine Lund, Martha McDermott, Sharon Prindle, and
Mary Schweder

2023-2024 Proposed Budget

Faith Lutheran Church 2023/2024 Budget – Consolidated				
	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	Budget Difference	Actual Through 3/31/2022
Admin. Wages Staff	175,080.00	180,700.00	5,620.00	125,056.37
Program Wages Pastor	85,160.00	87,651.00	2,491.00	62,369.64
All Personnel Wages	260,240.00	268,351.00	8,111.00	187,426.01
Personnel Benefits	96,709.14	96,414.20	(294.94)	60,332.74
Other Personnel Expenses	9,900.00	12,084.00	2,184.00	1,768.97
Benevolence	26,050.00	24,050.00	(2,000.00)	19,663.95
Business Operations/Finance	57,845.00	62,225.00	4,380.00	46,619.77
Subtotal Operations Property	38,200.00	34,772.00	(3,428.00)	25,907.14
Discipleship	700.00	700.00	0.00	0.00
Family Life Ministry	7,350.00	16,500.00	9,150.00	2,246.26
Worship and Music	10,500.00	8,550.00	(1,950.00)	4,597.24
Social Ministry	11,600.00	9,750.00	(1,850.00)	4,242.33
Mission Resources/Stewardship	1,100.00	1,100.00	0.00	250.24
Equipping Ministry	2,250.00	1,000.00	(1,250.00)	103.92
Search Committee	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Reserve Fund	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00	9,000.00
TOTAL BUDGET	534,444.14	547,496.20	12,733.06	362,158.60



Faith Lutheran Church
2023/2024 Budget - Comprehensive

	2022/2023 Budget	2023/2024 Budget	Budget Difference	Actual Through 3/31/2022
Administrative Wages				
Subtotal Admin. Wages	175,080.00	180,700.00	5,620.00	125,056.37
Program Wages				
Pastor Compensation	79,250.00	81,422.00	2,172.00	57,937.50
SSI Reimbursement	5,910.00	6,229.00	319.00	4,432.14
Subtotal Program Wages	85,160.00	87,651.00	2,172.00	62,369.64
Subtotal All Personnel Wages	260,240.00	268,351.00	7,792.00	187,426.01
Personnel Benefits				
Social Security	19,320.26	19,333.00	12.74	9,278.68
Pastor's Pension and Benefits	38,956.20	39,361.20	405.00	25,758.20
Worship and Music Coordinator Benefits	13,415.52	12,718.00	(697.52)	8,739.06
Family Life Director Benefits	14,989.80	14,349.00	(640.80)	9,958.85
Office Manager	9,027.36	9,653.00	625.64	6,501.95
Workers Comp Package	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	96.00
Subtotal Personnel Benefits	96,709.14	96,414.20	(294.94)	60,332.74
Other Personnel Expenses				
Council Spending	400.00	400.00	0.00	0.00
Synod Assembly/Leadership Conference	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	150.42
Staff Appreciation	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.00
Pastor's Reimbursed Expenses	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	
Staff Reimbursed Expenses	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	
Clergy Continuing Education	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	
Staff Continuing Education	2,000.00	4,184.00	2,184.00	1,343.55
Pulpit Supply	1,100.00	1,100.00	0.00	275.00
Staff Mileage	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.00
Subtotal Other Personnel Expenses	9,900.00	12,084.00	2,184.00	1,768.97
Benevolence				
Synod Benevolence	21,900.00	21,900.00	0.00	16,425.00
Seminary Student	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Interfaith Council & Conference Dues	150.00	150.00	0.00	0.00
Joseph Project	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	1,738.95
Rwanda Kagitumba Parish	2,000.00	0.00	(2,000.00)	1,500.00
Subtotal Benevolence	26,050.00	24,050.00	(2,000.00)	19,663.95

Business Operations/Finance				
Bank Charges/Tithely	1,850.00	1,850.00	0.00	1,366.82
Postage and Mailing	2,775.00	2,000.00	(775.00)	1,000.00
Machine Leases/Copiers/Overage	1,550.00	2,000.00	450.00	2,181.82
Office Supplies	1,300.00	1,300.00	0.00	1,488.43
Equipment Purchases	2,000.00	3,565.00	1,565.00	918.50
Insurance, Permits & Taxes	9,250.00	10,000.00	750.00	10,465.97
Utilities	31,250.00	34,000.00	2,750.00	27,400.88
HVAC Maintenance	4,500.00	4,500.00	0.00	
Software Rental	1,860.00	1,500.00	(360.00)	1,124.41
Advertising	750.00	750.00	0.00	200.00
Living Lutheran	600.00	600.00	0.00	436.54
Christ in Our Home	160.00	160.00	0.00	36.40
Subtotal Business Operations/Finance	57,845.00	62,225.00	4,380.00	46,619.77
Operations Property				
Janitorial Supplies	1,000.00	750.00	(250.00)	776.74
Fair Street (Janitorial/Landscaping	21,200.00	20,022.00	(1,178.00)	15,181.77
Misc. Landscaping	1,000.00	0.00	(1,000.00)	0.00
Repairs and Maintenance	7,500.00	7,500.00	0.00	4,693.77
Security	6,500.00	5,500.00	(1,000.00)	5,226.56
Kitchen Supplies for Cong. Meals	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	28.30
Subtotal Operations Property	38,200.00	34,772.00	(3,428.00)	25,907.14
Discipleship				
Faith Adult Christian Education (FACE)	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.00
Stephen Ministry	500.00	500.00	0.00	
Subtotal Discipleship	700.00	700.00	0.00	0.00
Family Life				
Advertising	550.00	250.00	(300.00)	0.00
Confirmation	300.00	300.00	0.00	0.00
Nursery Child Care Supplies	200.00	650.00	450.00	49.76
Cross Generational/Family Ministries	700.00	700.00	0.00	599.85
Vacation Bible School	650.00	650.00	0.00	565.62
Jr. High/High School Ministry	800.00	800.00	0.00	133.77
College/Young Adult	800.00	600.00	(200.00)	60.93
Scholarship Fund	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00	0.00
Adult Sponsor Expenses	1,500.00	3,200.00	1,700.00	0.00
Sunday School	350.00	0.00	(350.00)	401.79
Small Groups	500.00	350.00	(150.00)	434.54
ELCA Youth Gathering	0.00	8,000.00	8,000.00	
Subtotal Family Life Ministry	7,350.00	16,500.00	9,150.00	2,246.26

Worship and Music				
Arts & Environment	2,500.00	1,200.00	(1,300.00)	288.43
CCLI/Copyrights	600.00	900.00	300.00	559.00
Music	1,000.00	1,500.00	500.00	213.89
Supplies	4,000.00	3,000.00	(1,000.00)	2,244.13
Equipment Maintenance	1,900.00	1,500.00	(400.00)	600.00
Resources (calendars Sundays & Seasons etc.)	500.00	450.00	(50.00)	691.82
Subtotal Worship and Music	10,500.00	8,550.00	(1,950.00)	4,597.27
Outreach/Evangelism				
Social Ministry				
Jesus Center Garden	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.00
Pride Ministry	1,000.00	750.00	(250.00)	0.00
Safe Space	1,500.00	2,000.00	500.00	675.00
God's Work Our Hands	500.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
Rise Against Hunger	0.00	0.00	0.00	250.24
Torres Shelter	4,500.00	4,800.00	300.00	3,317.09
Misc.	300.00	1,500.00	1,200.00	0.00
Monthly Giving to CHAT	1,200.00	0.00	(1,200.00)	0.00
Monthly Giving to Hunger Trolley	1,200.00	0.00	(1,200.00)	0.00
Monthly Giving to Shalom Clinic	1,200.00	0.00	(1,200.00)	
Subtotal Social Ministry	11,600.00	9,750.00	(1,850.00)	4,242.33
Mission Resources/Stewardship				
Stewardship	500.00	500.00	0.00	0.00
Giving Envelopes	600.00	600.00	0.00	250.24
Subtotal Mission Resources/Stewardship	1,100.00	1,100.00	0.00	250.24
Subtotal Outreach/Evangelism	12,700.00	10,850.00	(1,850.00)	4,492.57
Equipping Ministry	2,250.00	1,000.00	(1,250.00)	103.92
Welcome Table			0.00	0.00
Coffee Hour Supplies			0.00	0.00
Subtotal Equipping Ministry	2,250.00	1,000.00	(1,250.00)	103.92
Search Committee	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Reserve Fund	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00	9,000.00
Subtotal Capital Reserve Fund	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00	9,000.00
TOTAL BUDGET	534,444.14	547,496.20	12,733.06	362,158.60

Capital Campaign



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

Our church mission statement has been the center of our capital campaign over the past three years. A central location to many neighborhoods in Chico, we are gifted with a wonderful campus of worship and education buildings, and a wide, open parking lot with enough space to support our ministries. We want to keep this mission-forward service orientation in the coming years.

We've installed our new sound system and campus digital network, and have taken care of a slew of repair and maintenance tasks (see the Facilities Report on page 27 for details). And our children, family, and worship ministries are all growing. To keep up this momentum and empower over 50 ministries in which we are engaged with every week, we need to work extra hard to keep our spaces and landscaping fresh, well maintained, and welcoming.

The capital campaign was launched at the Annual Meeting three years ago, just months after COVID-19 hit. Originally, we thought we would complete the campaign by the end of 2022, but Covid challenges and a drop-off in general fund giving during 2022 slowed our progress. We've been gratified with the rebound in general fund giving this past fiscal year, and look forward to completing the work of the campaign in the next year and a half.

As the numbers below reveal, we are now well over half-way to our goal of \$400,000. Recent giving has been steady and faithful, with some new commitments coming forward at the end of 2022.

Financial Report (figures as of 23 April 2023):

Stewardship Campaign Goal: **\$400,000.00**

Pledges made to date: **\$234,627.45**

Receipts on pledges to date: **\$215,573.53**

Outstanding pledges: **\$19,033.92**

Campaign Goal less pledges made: **\$165,372.55**

Current cash on hand committed to the landscaping project: **\$25,000.**

Current cash on hand for future commitments to campus
maintenance: **\$0**

What a wonderful outpour of support we've experienced over the years! Our pledges have spanned huge numbers of members—and guests as well—and have made clear the commitment that this community has to our mission.

Where do we go from here? It's not too complicated, though it will take some work to reach our goal. Going forward, we need to raise an additional \$165,000 to complete our original goal of \$400,000. We will address the congregation in coming months to complete important projects through additional pledges. The funds that we raise in the final portion of our campaign will pay for the following renovations and maintenance expenses. Work will be contracted and completed for ranked priority items only as funds become available. Should emergencies arise (as they did over the past three years with the need for five new air conditioners), they will take priority. Here are our priorities:

- Exterior repair and painting of all three buildings.
- Add an exterior access handicapped certified bathroom in the education building's room 1 slot.
- Paint the sanctuary and attached rooms; install new lighting and baseboards where needed.
- Renovate the Sunday school rooms, as well as rooms 4 and 5, including the installation of better lighting, new paint, flooring, and baseboards.
- Paint the fellowship hall and attached spaces; install new flooring, baseboards, and window treatments.
- Renovate the church office, pastor's office, staff office, and chapel, including the installation of better lighting, flooring, and paint.
- Install new audio-visual equipment in Room 6 so that it can be used as a functional classroom.

We welcome your pledges at any time to advance this work. You can talk directly with us, Joel Zimbelman or Tod Kimmelshue, or simply note "capital campaign" when you give on Sundays. If you give online, you will be able to select "capital campaign" from a dropdown menu when asked where you'd like your gift allocated. And if you would like to join the Stewardship Team in the coming months as we complete our commitment, Let us know.

*Respectfully Submitted, Joel Zimbelman and Tod Kimmelshue
Co-Chairs, FLC Stewardship Team*

Audit Report

The Faith Lutheran Church Council requested that Bill Youngstrom form committee to audit the church's 2021-2021 fiscal year. The Audit Committee consists of the following three members of the Church: Bill Youngstrom, Chairman; Dianne Knight; Phil Rowberg.

ELCA Congregational Audit Guide

The Audit Committee met in early September, 2022 to review the ELCA Congregational Audit Guide. The financial records for Faith Lutheran Church were not audited under the guidelines of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. None of the members of the audit committee felt they have the expertise to do this. To completely meet the Audit Guide's requirements, the Committee believes an outside accounting firm would need to be hired. Given the considerable cost of hiring an outside accounting firm and the limited capability of the Audit Committee, it was decided to undertake a more limited audit encompassing the following:

- Verify the process for distribution of church funds;
- Review how offerings and other funds are handled and recorded;
- Do a limited sampling of financial transactions, including bill payments and receipt of contributions; and
- Review other financial information as required.

Audit Committee's Actions

The Audit Committee met or talked by telephone with the following members of the Church staff and others who are responsible for handling Church funds: Michael Nicholson, Office Manager; Jeanette Joslyn, Bookkeeper; Mark Kimmelshue, Treasurer; Lynette Stensrud, Financial Secretary.

Audit Results

All church funds reviewed by the Audit Committee appeared to be handled properly and there were no discrepancies found.

Audit Committee's Recommendations and Suggestions

In making the following Recommendations and Suggestions, the Audit Committee recognizes that the vast majority of people who give of their time and talent are volunteers and unpaid. We also know that many of the members give

a lot of personal time providing services that our Church could never afford to pay someone to perform. Because of limits in available volunteer time, it may not be possible to implement all of the following Recommendations and Suggestions. The following are only suggestions for ways to improve the financial operation of our Church.

Develop Written Financial Procedure

The Church's staff and financial officers are following a set of unwritten procedures to pay bills and do other financial transactions. The Committee recommends that a written procedure be developed and approved by the Council that includes the following recommendations as well as other sound financial processes.

1. All requests for payment of committee expenditures should have a Request for Payment Form completely filled out and signed by the committee chair. It should not be up to Michael to determine where expenditures are charged. This would also give the committee chairs better control over their budget.
2. When checks or expenses are signed and reviewed by the executive committee, two individuals should initial the supporting document (e.g., invoice) and attach it to the Request for Payment Form.
3. Any reimbursement to an individual (not a business) should be closely reviewed.
4. There should be a three-way separation between the person who produces the check or makes periodic payments (payroll, utilities or contract services), the people who approve the expenses and the person who enters the data into our bookkeeping system. This provides a separation of the process and could limit possible future problems.
5. Create a file folder for each month that would have all bills, invoices and automatic expenditures (payroll, utilities, contracted services, etc.) in it. Currently, documents are filed by vendor. From an accounting standpoint, filing document either by month or by vendor is appropriate. However, it is easier to do an audit if the documents are filed by month.
6. The Church Council should review monthly financial statements that include a year-to-date cash flow statement. If there is a serious deficit position, Council should provide a plan to correct or mitigate the situation.
7. A committee should be formed to collect employee information (I-9's, W-4's, recommended pay raises, reviews, etc.) and to keep the payroll files complete and accurate. The Audit Committee could not find an existing central source for this information.

8. The team counting weekly offering should not be related and, if possible, teams should be periodically rotated. The Audit Team recognizes that this may not be possible while retaining members to do this valuable service.
9. A detailed list of expenditures should be given to each committee head quarterly for review of their budget.
10. There needs to be a written procedure on how to record yearend cashflow that is either negative or positive. This includes the account name for recording the cashflow excess/shortfall and a process for Council to approve its recording in the Church's books.
11. Faith should be issuing 1099's at the end of each year for any unincorporated firm or individual which performs services for the Church of \$600 or more. Establish a procedure for identifying who should get 1099's and issuing them.

Payroll Provider

Currently, Jeanette does the payrolls for Faith on her own personal version of QuickBooks on her personal computer. This can create a problem if Jeanette is ill or out of town. Jeanette would like to see Faith move to a payroll provider such as Paychecks.

Potential Migration of Financial Software

Currently, Faith uses the Icon software to keep its financial records. It is very powerful and difficult to use. Since Jeanette is considering retiring in a few years, finding someone in the future to utilize Icon may be difficult. Jeanette is recommending Faith migrate from Icon to QuickBooks. The Audit Committee is suggesting a separate committee be established to consider this migration.

Clean up Balance Sheet and Books

Jeanette, Michael and Lynette would like to review in detail and clean up the FLC's balance sheet/books. Any significant changes would be submitted to Council for approval.

Respectfully submitted
Bill Youngstrom
Dianne Knight
Phil Rowberg

A Letter from the Council President

Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

As I close my second year as the Faith Church Council President, I am thankful for the work of the Faith family in all aspects of spiritual and community service.

Special thanks to Joel Zimbelman who has served as a tireless steward of our Operations and Property. In addition, he has continued his work with Tod Kimmelshue on the Stewardship and Capital Campaign to facilitate the continued upgrades to our campus. The growth of our congregation during the last several years would not have been possible without their leadership. We thank them for their continuing involvement.

Sunday and special worship services are made possible by the continued support of many volunteers. Worship leaders, musicians, bell ringers, singers, welcoming table greeters, ushers, the audio/visual team, altar guild communion preparers and servers, assisting ministers, coffee servers, and choir members all give generously of their time and talents.

During the week, we are graciously served by small group leaders, quilt makers, prayer groups, and numerous volunteers who keep the campus looking good by watering plants and decorating the sanctuary. Our Social Ministry Team (now called Community Service) has been led in the past by Doug DeSoto. We were very fortunate to have Doug and his team serve the Chico community through their energetic support of numerous projects. Michael, our office manager, has taken on the task of equipping volunteers to help them organize and lead many continuing initiatives and activities.

We are very fortunate to have so many members of our congregation take part in building the spirit and passion of this place. All are welcome. All are needed. Thank you all. In July and August of 2022, the church council met for a two day retreat. We spent hours discussing our vision for the coming year. The 2021 areas of focus continued into 2022-23. Welcoming everyone to worship,

building community through small groups, and equipping members for service are ongoing goals. In addition, the council talked with the staff about ways to support the work that they do.

The welcome table continues to provide name tags for visitors and makes everyone feel comfortable at worship. Christmas services and Easter week were monumental tasks for the staff and worship volunteers. Unfortunately, a usually large number of funerals were held and supported by the work of many volunteers. Pastor Ben was called upon by families within the congregation and in the greater Chico community. His skill in providing comforting words and personal stories about the deceased is widely recognized and appreciated.

Today we will nominate and elect several new church council members. Members serve for two-year terms. They provide support to staff and manage church finances, policies, and oversight of our buildings. We also provide strategic vision for the congregation. Meetings are held at least once a month as a group (including Pastor Ben). Our Executive Committee (president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary) meet as needed with Pastor Ben to deal with necessary business issues. It has been an honor to serve as your president for the past two years.

You are a key member of this Faith family. Thank you for your continued involvement and support for your brothers and sisters in Christ. You are welcome in this place.

Cynthia Kampf
President of the Congregation

Leadership and Committees



Endowment Committee

The church council approved Faith Lutheran's Endowment Continuing Resolution in 2012, which is now part of the Faith Lutheran Constitution (2018). The purpose of the endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of this congregation, at home and around the world.

This fund provides ways for members to be a community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone. This is done through charitable giving consistent with our mission. The fund reaches out in response to human need by making grants that promote and support education for Christian life and service; a message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

In 2022 the Endowment Fund received a gift in stock valued at over \$10,000 dollars. We are grateful for this sizable gift which is moving the endowment close to \$100,000 in the fund. Presently, the endowment fund value is \$89,594.06 (April 15, 2023).

The Faith Lutheran Endowment Fund is managed by Thrivent Charitable Impact and Investing. This name change occurred in 2021. The Endowment Committee appointed by the council are Bill Youngstrom (chair), Leanne Chrisman, Joan Palmer, and Bill Kees (recorder). Submitted by Bill Kees, Recorder.

Columbarium Committee

The Columbarium Garden continues to evolve into a space where our congregation can gather together in peace, contemplation and the celebration of everlasting life. We hope to expand and construct some new areas for more niches in the near future. Thanks and appreciation to Robert Bay for his ongoing support and help with maintaining our sacred space. Please contact the Columbarium chair, Susan Reed, if you have any questions.

ELCA Synod Assembly

President Cynthia Kampf, Director of Worship and Music Luke Nicolay, and Director of Family Life Dani Vogel attended the ELCA Synod Assembly last summer. Luke was a part of the worship team, and Dani worked with A/V.

Meeting the Bishop

Interim Bishop Claire Burkat travelled to various parishes throughout the synod. The churches in our area were able to meet her in October when she joined us at St. Paul's Lutheran in Artois for their annual tradition of Oktoberfest. St. Paul's, their sister parish First Lutheran in Orland, and Faith Lutheran in Chico celebrated together with Bishop Claire.

Paradise 75th

Our friends from Paradise Lutheran Church celebrated their 75th year on October 9th, 2022.

Installment of Pastor Jose Luis

First Lutheran Church in Orland had been without a pastor since our dear friend Pastor Stephen Jahn returned to Minnesota in 2020. In May 2023, Pastor Jose Luis was installed at First Lutheran.

Chrism Mass

Pastor Ben, Margaret McMillan, and Linn Brownmiller led worship for the synod, a chrism mass in Citrus Heights. At the chrism mass, Bishop Claire Burkat preached and led a gathering of pastors in the renewal of their ordination vows. In addition, all present renewed their baptismal vows and then were anointed with oil which the bishop blessed. That oil was then sent to congregations around the synod for anointing the baptized, the sick, and confirmands.

Facilities



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

Faith Lutheran Church has been ministering to our community for decades. And hopefully we will be around on this site for our centenary celebration in a few years. For that to happen, however, we need to have a functional physical presence here. With the substantial resources invested by past generations in buildings, ministry, and open spaces, it's our obligation to keep those facilities and spaces in good shape. That's part of the way that successful ministry gets done. Our mission statement can come alive daily if we wisely manage the gifts we have been given.

It has been a busy year on our campus. We had some significant renovations to undertake. A new AC unit in the business building had to be installed. All thirteen thermostats across campus were replaced with state of the art equipment that gives us greater control over our heating and air conditioning. We installed new lights in the Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, storage areas, and Bathrooms. Gutters were repaired and cleaned. The Fire Marshall was on our case on a couple things (now taken care of).

We trained twenty staff and parishioners on how to perform CPR and the use of our AED medical device. Some new signage was produced and installed. Most importantly--because of the generous giving of members--we were able to finally address our landscaping and irrigation challenges. Songbird Landscaping out of Glenn County took on that monumental task (hopefully now behind us as you read this) and solved a slew of our problems while gracing us with a beautiful exterior to our buildings. We finished up April with a successful campus cleanup day, and I'm hoping that more of these can be scheduled once or twice a year so we can keep ahead of some of our challenges.

The coming year promises to be a busy one. Our capital campaign continues, and if as I suspect the churchwide support for that undertaking is as positive as it has been in the past, we should have funds to be able to accomplish some of the priorities on the list below:

- Exterior repair and painting of all three buildings—including structural work on the business building.
- Add an exterior access handicapped certified bathroom in the education building's room 1 slot.
- Paint the Sanctuary and attached rooms; install new lighting and baseboards where needed.
- Renovate the Nursery and Preschool rooms, as well as Rooms 4 and 5, including the installation of better lighting, new paint, flooring, and baseboards.
- Paint the Fellowship Hall and attached spaces; install new flooring, baseboards, and window treatments.
- Renovate the church office, pastor's office, staff office, and chapel, including the installation of better lighting, flooring, and paint.
- Install new audio-visual equipment in Room 6 to create a multipurpose space to hold classes.

Let the church office know if you are interested in joining the Property Team. We don't do regular meetings, but if you have a few hours a month to spare, there are always small jobs, managing a work team, or running errands that help us accomplish our ministry goal. We welcome those who would like to invest their energy into a particular area of the church, such as the sacristy, kitchen, or Fellowship Hall, who can bring maintenance issues within that realm to our attention. Those tasks really do make FLC a place where people are welcomed and invited to join the banquet that is so generously extended to us by our God.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Joel Zimbelman*

Facility Use Status: our facility is currently being shared by 3 Anonymous groups, the Chico Children's Choir, P.E.O., Passages, Stephen Ministry, BSA, and multiple FLC small groups inside and outside of the realm of Family Life. We have had excellent reception from the groups who meet here, especially since room 7/8 was renovated, the room used by our Scouts and Anonymous groups.

Worship + Music



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

Every year, we write articles for the annual report detailing the goings-on of each ministry, and each year I feel like there's always so much to write about. This year is no different. In fact, with so many wonderful artistic and musical opportunities we've had over the last year, I think I've got even *more* to write about!

At the start of pandemic we were told that groups such as the choir would need to take a break until COVID was under control and we knew more about it and how it spread. Little did we know that it would be about 2.5 years before we could actually sing together again. In the meantime, figuring out ways to nurture the church's musical was the name of the game.

One of the first ways to reconnect the congregation musically was the return of the handbell choir. Logistically it was easy to spread everyone out at least six feet apart, and we already had all of the supplies we needed to make it work: tables, bell pads, the bells themselves, and music! It was meant to be! Once the announcement had gone out about the bells meeting, the response was immediate. We had a bell choir, and people were excited for it! Now 3 years later, here we are! The bell choir has played consistently at all of our major festival Sundays including Reformation, All-Saints, Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Pentecost. Additionally, the bell choir has played during ordinary times, Advent, and Lent. We've got a growing group of 10 ringers who are here every week without fail. They are dedicated, hard-working, and have accomplished so much. And one of the coolest things—many of these folks came in either not being able to read music, or needed some brushing-up.

The handbell choir spends a lot of its time reading music, naming notes, discussing music symbols such as crescendos (to get louder) and decrescendos (to get softer), and more. Their understanding of music and how it's written has grown immensely, and their abilities continue to flourish every single week. This group is open to everyone. If you have any desire to ring, learn music, brush-up on your musical skills, or if you're just curious, we welcome you to join us.

As we continue into the year, you'll see a small giving-wall going up in the sanctuary called "Adopt-a-Bell." The bell choir has grown enough in the last couple of years that we feel it's time to invest in a set of hand-chimes. Hand-chimes function similarly to handbells; they've got the main metal portion (body) which rings and resonates, a clapper that slaps the body of the bell, and a handle with which to ring the chime. The difference between the chimes and bells is that the chimes are gentler and produce an ethereal sound. In some ways hand-chimes are more durable than bells are. We'd like to invest in chimes to encourage participation of our young friends in Sunday School, and to create a diversity of sound in the bell choir. More details will go out about this as the new church year starts for us in July.

The bell choir, however, is not the only group making exciting leaps and doing awesome things in and out of worship. The sanctuary choir here at Faith has had such an exciting year! In the Fall of 2022, we were able to finally come back together for a true fall season, especially after enduring a couple of years of not being able to sing together as a group. The choir resumed after summer recess at the end of August and were busy the minute they got back. Preparations for Reformation, All-Saints, Advent and the Christmas season began immediately.

We welcomed back many choir members—many who had been in the choir pre-pandemic and also many new faces who had just begun to attend. The choir's ability throughout this last year to work together, produce beautiful sounds, and have a great time has been so exciting to see! The Advent season of 2022 was a particularly notable season for the choir. After much planning, Jeff Cooper (Director of Music at St. John's Episcopal) and I announced that we would again partner up to put on the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols. This was an exciting undertaking for Jeff, the choirs of FLC and St. John's, and for myself. Community collaborations are an aspect of my job that excite me, but due to pandemic, such events were put on hold. It was a treat to be able to conduct and work with each of these talented folks this year, to share songs and support the North State Shelter Team's Shower Trailer.

The choir worked diligently for the Christmas season and prepared a stirring rendition of "The Sussex Carol," arranged by Elaine Hagenberg and accompanied by a chamber ensemble of strings and piano. After rehearsing

and singing with the chamber ensemble, many remarked that they wished the piece would never have ended (including myself) because it was such a joy and so life-giving.

The choir came together again at the start the Lent, and concluded on Easter Sunday. They created beautiful sounds, bonded together, and even kept going in the midst of my getting covid (which everyone will tell you—I was soooo thrilled to get, haha) by rehearsing in individual sections. I'm overjoyed by this group of people and their abilities. In fact, during one of our rehearsals, I had to stop just to celebrate our choir's capability to read, convey a message, and *be the music*. I truly look forward to every experience we have together.

The contemporary group, a group of about 15, has also been instrumental to worship. We were finally able to meet again in the fall of 2022, and continue to meet on Thursday evenings. This group is a joy not only to lead, but also to learn from. The contemporary group in particular works on listening, being sensitive to each other, and as a group, discerns the times and places in which contemporary music is most beneficial to worship.

One of the exciting things about contemporary music is that we can highlight specific colors, words, etc. by varying who's playing, by varying which instruments play, and also by how many are playing. This year, I encouraged the group to have fun and to not always follow the music note-for-note, and they've excelled and had fun with that. We've also been able to add different instruments such as the flute, sax, and glockenspiel!

The contemporary group has taught me so much about looking, listening, and leading. And more importantly, they've reminded me about what it is to be authentic to Faith Lutheran's sound and mission.

Moving forward we are going to start focusing on small group music making. This includes solos, duets, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, etc., brass ensembles, string ensembles, wind ensembles, small vocal ensembles and more. Our community is bursting with musical talent, and we can't wait for you to see what is brought to the table over the next year.

In addition to the musical life of the church, the worship side has been equally as exciting! Our welcome table team greets each of us right when we arrive. The ushers facilitate the comfort of worship for all. The communion team assists in making the Eucharist available to all. The sacristans prepare the Eucharist. The assisting ministers, lectors, and presiders help make the sharing of the word of God engaging and accessible for all. Our healing ministers pray with us during the good times and the hard. And lastly, the AV team works diligently to create a pleasing experience in-person and online.

Through ministry trainings, exploration and implementation of new procedures, and the creativity brought forth by each worship team, it's been exciting to see how worship has developed and flourished throughout the last year. Without every single one of our ministers, worship would not happen.

It's been exciting to see how we are truly one body, serving Christ and ensuring that there is a place at the table for everyone. The beauty that is created here through music and service is a joy to experience. And with that, I say to each of you: this is not possible without YOU! YOU are the hands and feet of Faith Lutheran, and I am so blessed and thankful to be able to share time and space with each of you.

*With great love,
Luke Nicolay, Director of Worship & Music*

Family Life



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

From the vast and occasionally glittery brain of Dani Vogel. Stardate spring 2023: Dear Friends, it's been a busy year at the USS Faith Lutheran Church. Wait. This is not an episode of *Star Trek*. If you're wearing red while reading this, I did not mean to alarm you. In all seriousness, it's been a year of fruitful ministry here at Faith. With fruitful ministry comes growing pains that come with rapid growth. We have more people worship on Sundays and participating in a variety of programs, events and activities at Faith. I want to highlight a few of these groups and programs for you all!

Small Groups were reignited, and Preschool Playgroup was launched. Preschool Playgroup is for our smallest Lutherans to gather together for story time and sensory play. It's also an opportunity for their designated grownups to connect and encourage one another as they raise their kiddos. This group continued to grow last year, and was so successful that we will offer it again this summer on a weekly basis.

We're continuing to expand our table in so many creative and fun ways as our children's ministry grows by leaps and bounds. Last Holy Week, I was able to share about one table in particular. When I started working at Faith, we were doing Sunday school online to promote the safety and wellbeing of our families. Over the last 21 months, we've gone through many transitions; from meeting in person, to meeting in our own space during the first portion of our worship services so that we can better meet the educational needs of our children. In that time, our numbers have grown from 2 to 18 consistently attending children. This includes a dedicated team of adults who help them grown in their faith. But their faith isn't the only thing that has grown! Our table in Sunday school became too small. Too small for the number of children, and too small for our growing kids to fit their knees under! So we went and bought a new table to fit their growing needs and will be expanding beyond our current walls.

This fall, we will transition to 2 separate Sunday school spaces that can better meet the needs of our older elementary students, and will also prevent

overcrowding in our rooms. Each room will also be equipped to meet the differing needs of these two distinct groups of students.

Our youth continue to grow in connection with each other. Two of our students, plus Dawn Stafford and myself, attended Rebound Camp in Yucaipa, CA as a replacement for the canceled Youth Gathering. It was fantastic to be able to connect with other Lutheran youth, and to spend time with our new friends. We were able to hang out with Lutherans from Hawaii, Arizona, Minnesota, North Dakota, southern California and of course, our neighbors from St. John's in Sacramento. We did service work, camp activities, spent a day at Disneyland, and were able to worship in a variety of ways, and were able to meet 3 different bishops from California.

Our Young Adults gather regularly at Faith, and we continue to ebb and flow with the needs of the group. This past year, we repeated some of our popular events like mini golf, the corn maze, the Easter egg hunt, and the Faithtucky Derby. We offered a number of movie nights with Bible Studies. We will be adding a book study and a few more events geared towards connecting with more of our friends at Faith.

With so much growth and change, we are adapting some of our events that reach the whole church as well. This year, we separated our Advent Workshop into two times to allow more folks to be able to participate: one for decorating the sanctuary, and one for creating Advent and Christmas crafts. Our Mardi Gras party also returned this year with fun for all ages. This coming summer, we are adapting our Vacation Bible School to be all-age focused, with opportunities for whole families and our Faith friends to gather together and learn some fun Bible stories, do crafts, and play games.

Through our growth and commitment to helping create a place for everyone at our table, we will continue to adapt and try new activities and programs for years to come. We encourage you to think about small groups or other activities and programs you'd like to participate in, and which new friends you'd like to invite to sit alongside you at our ever growing table.

Dani Vogel, Director of Family Life

Small Groups



During the height of the pandemic, we felt disconnected from one another, especially when we couldn't meet face to face. Faith Lutheran has returned to an old tradition: small groups. Small groups are groups of 6-12 people who meet regularly for mutual support and spiritual growth. They gather around various shared interests or needs, from parenting, to bible study, to walking in nature. But no matter the type of group, the goal of each group is first and foremost building relationships with each other and God.

Not only did small groups launch last year, but so did facilitator training. We also reignited some groups that had been dormant for a period of time, and continue to expand small group ministry. It's the church's hope to cultivate new facilitators this spring and summer to launch more opportunities to grow together.

If you are interested in joining any of the following groups or starting a new one, please contact Dani Vogel at the office.

A Good Enough Lent – Concluded

Using Kate Bowler's book, *Good Enough*, this group of about 8 led by Raquel Krach discussed how sometimes, we set high expectations for ourselves. What does being good enough really mean? The group began during Lent and concluded after Easter, and enjoyed getting to know each other and sharing their highs and lows.

Alphabet Soup – Ongoing

Our LGBTQ group meets about once a month, and around 10 people come to each event, give or take. The group has more members than that, but they all have different schedules. They try to alternate meeting on weekdays and weekends, evenings and afternoons, so that everybody has a chance to participate. So far, the group has done a Bible study on the book of Esther, a summer BBQ, a potluck or two, and most recently, a paint-and-sip session led by Faith artist Candy Munson. This June, the group plans to participate in Pride month. All queer-identifying members of Faith are encouraged to join this group. They are constantly throwing out fun activities to try, and never turn down a game or food!

Contemporary Worship Team – Ongoing

The contemporary team is made up of a number of folks from varying skill levels and skill sets who play contemporary instruments like the guitar, drums, and others. The team had a particularly exciting year. It was a joy for them to start meeting regularly to learn and share new music together inside and outside of worship. The contemporary team continues to play on Sunday mornings. They feel it is fun to create music that is unique and authentic to Faith's worship. They meet once a week, and encourage new musicians and veteran musicians to join in, learning new skills and sharing old ones.

Handbell Choir – Ongoing

The handbell choir has had a wonderful and successful year together. Each year they continue to grow not only in their knowledge and understanding of music, but in size! The bell choir participated in a number of events throughout the year including Reformation, Christmas Eve, selected Sundays during the Season of Pentecost as well as during Holy Week on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. They are hoping to expand their musical selection and purchase a set of hand chimes, allowing them to include children in the choir, and also grow the different sounds that they are able to make. They always welcome folks to come and check out the bells and to be a part of the fun!

JOYS – Just Older Youth Seniors – Ongoing, seasonal

J.O.Y.S. is one of our book-study-related small groups. Join our seniors as they discuss growing older, the challenges they are faced with like caring for aging parents, things impacting our Chico community, and topics of faith. The group completed 2 studies this year, one focused on the book *I Love Growing Older, But I'll Never Grow Old* and the other focused on *Vesper Time: The Spiritual Practice of Growing Older*.

Men's Breakfast – Ongoing

Friday Men's Breakfast continues to grow and is a great way to meet and get to know others from church. They meet weekly at Farmer's Skillet at 8 am on Friday mornings.

Pray & Play – Concluded

Our Play & Pray group for adults was small; they averaged 4-6 in their group, met once a month for 6 months. They enjoyed bowling, axe throwing, wine tasting, hard cider tasting, tour and picnic, bocce ball and an escape room.

Prayer Shawls – Ongoing

The prayer shawl ministry took a hiatus during the height of covid, but is meeting once again on the 4th Tuesdays of the month at 5pm in room 7/8. Prayer shawls are lovingly hand-crafted and given to those who are homebound, sick, or in need of love and care. They are currently making shawls to share with graduates, older friends, and anyone who desires to be surrounded by God's love. This group has 6 members at present, and looks forward to getting others involved, especially those who would like to learn knitting or crocheting for the first time, or long-time crafters.

Preschool Play Group – Upcoming

Preschool playgroup began last summer and served as a group for toddlers and their parents to play and connect. They took a winter hiatus, but this group will be starting up again this summer.

Sanctuary Choir – Ongoing, seasonal

The Sanctuary Choir at FLC has had another wonderful year. They started properly again in the fall after arduously working around the confines of the pandemic. They welcomed several new faces, celebrated returning members, and learned a lot of wonderful music. The choir immediately went to work preparing for Reformation, All-Saints, Advent, Christmas Eve, Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. It was a true joy for the choir to partner once again with St. John's Episcopal Church for the annual Festival of Lessons and Carols during Advent. They look forward to more partnerships with St. John's, and also working with the community of Chico to create beautiful and enriching music.

Time Out for Art – Ongoing

The Time Out for Art Small Group has been meeting once a month on the second Monday since the first of this year. They start with a time of devotion followed by time to work on art/craft projects they bring from home or create from materials supplied. Everyone is welcome...no art experience necessary. It's a relaxed time of fun and fellowship. Join them 1:00-4:00 pm in Room 6.

Wilderness Worship – Ongoing

Each month for the past year, a crew of intrepid explorers have admired God's handiwork in creation in and around Butte County. Their outings have ranged from an easy stroll through Clotilde Merlo Park to an adventurous hike along Deer Creek to a lazy float down the Sacramento River. Amazingly, nearly half of the outings have had rain or been rescheduled due to rain. While this means they now schedule outings with shorter notice to better gauge the weather, they give thanks for the live-giving gift of water! Check church announcements for upcoming outings. (Some activities are hard and others are easy.)

Working Dad's Group – Ongoing

A group of eight fathers in the midst of their professional career meet every other week to share joys and struggles, bible study, and pray for one another. They meet at 8pm so that they can first put their children to bed. Currently they are reading 1 Samuel. If you are a working father who would be interested in joining, please contact Pastor Ben.

Young Adults – Ongoing

Our Young Adult program continues to meet here at Faith Lutheran for those age 18-40. They participated in a number of fun events over the last year including our Faithtucky Derby, Corn Maze, Reindeer Games, and had another spectacular year helping put on our Easter Egg hunt here at Faith. They are hoping to expand to offer a book study and a few more events to invite more friends to join them, as well as do some intentional gatherings with other groups at Faith.

Youth – Ongoing

Last year, the youth attended Camp Rebound, had rootbeer floats and froyo, played lots of games together, did an egg hunt, and competed in games with each other and with our young adults. The youth meet 1-2 times a month, usually on Sundays, and consist of Junior High and High Schoolers.

Administration



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

For those of you who haven't met me yet, I'm Michael, office manager of 4+ years. I take care of our website, social media, E-blast, banners, brochures, and other content. I compile and edit *Faith Talks* and the annual report, as well as *Equipped to Serve*, our brochure of ministries. In addition, I run the front desk and work with our property manager, finance people, council, and staff to make sure everybody has what they need to keep things a'movin'.

As read in last year's report, my focus in 2022 was helping Dani, Ben, and our facilitators get small groups off the ground. It has been a huge success thanks to their leadership. It's a joy to communicate with our facilitators. When they need things printed, created, or advertised, they let me know, and I love love love helping them!

Another one of last year's foci was updating our social media and maintaining a more regular presence on Facebook, Youtube, and our website. So far so good!

- We have 679 followers on our main Facebook page.
- Our private Facebook group for members and visitors has 328 members (last year we had 304).
- Worship services, classes, funerals, concerts, and weddings are regularly streamed to our website, and saved on Youtube so that people can watch them at their convenience. These videos are all sorted and easily accessible.
- Last year, we had 304 people getting our E-blasts. We now have 340 subscribers.

Last year I was offered a unique promotion: going full-time and taking over the bookkeeping position (currently maintained by Jeanette Joslyn who is very slowly phasing into retirement). The council offered to pay for my education, a finance class at Butte College. After months of deliberation and seeking advice from parishioners, coworkers, family and friends, I made the difficult decision to turn it down.

First, the management of “giving” –in the financial sense– is not something I am spiritually (or mentally) gifted with. I understand that I would improve with practice, but I feel this would detract from the quality of the work I already do. You don’t deserve okay office management and okay bookkeeping; you deserve good, attentive management AND bookkeeping.

Second, I feel like being the manager and the bookkeeper would put the church’s eggs in one basket, and that such a metaphorical basket cannot be held as accountable as two baskets.

And third, as soon as I would have accepted the position, I would have had to train somebody else to take over for me! John and I plan to expand our family in the next year or so. We aren’t jumping into anything right this very second, but we will share news once there is news to share. Namely, when and how we have chosen to acquire a child.

Regardless of not taking the job, I’m grateful that the council put their faith in me and offered to equip me. As I mentioned, our bookkeeper, Jeanette, is slowly on the road to retirement. This is a very gradual process, and she is presently training a young woman named Vivi to take over. Vivi has been coming into the office to do some of Jeanette’s duties and taking care of our payroll. We have also signed on with a payroll company instead of doing it in-house. This makes it more reliable for the staff to look up our financial records, and it makes it easier for us to keep track of sick leave, vacation time, etc. As I said though, Jeanette’s retirement is gradual, and we’ll have her with us for a few more years.

One project that I’ve been putting on the back-burner is making a digital copy of our Great Book to preserve our records. The Great Book is a roster that began at the founding of this church, and includes the name of every member, pastor, death, and marriage that has taken place in our congregation. At this point in time, Elvanto (our member database) gives a more accurate member roster than the Great Book does.

We’re looking at a *LOTTTT* of data-entry. It will take hours. It needs to be done though! I worked as a junior personal property appraiser before I came here, and too often did I see the despair on people’s faces when their priceless

items were burned up, waterlogged, stolen, or destroyed. We need to get to work preserving this priceless information. Please, please let me know if you can help me decipher cursive, proofread, or literally just sit there with me while we drink coffee and enter data together.

One last thing – my husband and I have never been as touched in our lives as we were during our wedding. We were prepared to get married, but we were not prepared to process the emotions that came with the outpour of love from you all. Your love was Mt. Everest, and we were unprepared, asthmatic climbers. We are so happy that you shared that day with us. We love life as married men together more and more every day.

Please come to me if you have any questions about the church, or if you'd like to help out with *my* ministry! There's lots to do, lots to see, and lots to explore here, and I'm always down to adventure with you!

Michael N-D

Community Service



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

The History of Social Ministry, and the Development of Community Service

Three years ago, we had a position called “Director of Youth and Service.” This was a paid position held by Colter Murphy. Picture a tall camp-counselor type with a beard, a pair of Chacos, and a cool hat. That was Colter. Colter brought families together through prayer, learning, exploring the outdoors, and community investment. He returned to his beloved home state, Montana, with his wife, Stephanie in 2020, but laid much of the groundwork for Social Ministry and what is now Dani’s position (Director of Family Life).

Before he returned to Montana, the council spoke with Colter and asked what his recommendations were for social and family ministries moving forward. He recommended that family and Social Ministry be separate so that each area could receive the attention it deserved. Faith Lutheran hired Dani full-time to work specifically with families and groups, and sure enough, those ministries have grown because they are nurtured with full-time attention.

Social Ministry was appointed a volunteer chair, Doug De Soto. For two years, Doug organized monthly Social Ministry meetings over Zoom. He discovered and implemented unique ways to minister during a pandemic. His perseverance was contagious, and through his devout leadership and commitment to serving the Chico community, Faith served in ways that were safe and helpful during a global pandemic.

Doug resigned effective January 1st, 2023 so that he could spend more time with his family. Those who were active at our meetings saw that a lot of responsibility was put onto one person. We felt it would be more sustainable to share the leadership role amongst two or more people at a time on an event-by-event basis while striving to commit to the same amount of perseverance and heart that Doug showed.

In February, we had a congregational discussion about “Community Service,” which is what we have chosen to label this ministry moving forward. On that

day, we reviewed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to re-familiarize ourselves with a human's basic needs starting with food, shelter, and sleep, then love, human connection, and the desire to receive peer respect. With this in mind, we brainstormed ways in which we would like to serve our community over the next year. We asked who –specifically– would be interested in serving at each proposed event. The staff then reached out to these folks to get the ball rolling.

Again, the goal was to avoid having one person “in charge.” We don't want any single person to be responsible for every event. That's how people burn out. We *would* like a variety of parishioners to minister in ways they feel called to minister though! We are *all* a part of the community service ministry, and our staff and council want to better equip individuals to minister in their passion areas.

As such, we intend to plan on an event-by-event basis. Though we will still keep in mind that February is Random Acts of Kindness month or August is traditionally when we do Blessing of the Backpacks, we will take a more flexible approach and minister where we are *needed*, not just committing to something because it's scrawled on a calendar in the office. This might mean that instead of celebrating Random Acts of Kindness Day, we do something Black History Month-related; or instead of blessing backpacks, we collect and bless more supplies because that's what our schools need.

We also intend to more deliberately share leadership. Our goal is to have at *least* two people organizing events and acts of service. Less burnout, more aid. And in the future, there will be at least two people who can advise others if the event is repeated.

Continue reading for a recap on the service projects we accomplished last year.

Community Service, 2022-2023

We had an eventful year! **The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties** is still operating from our parking lot on the first and third Fridays of the month. At the time of publishing this report, the food bank is running from 9:30am-noon. You can spot Doug De Soto, Elise Gladu, Linn Brownmiller, and Michael Campi volunteering there when they're able.

The North State Shelter Team continues to provide showers to folks in Chico who lack access to basic hygiene. Parishioners like Vicki Doeden have a history of serving in this selfless and merciful ministry. The shower trailer began at Comanche Creek in the early days of the pandemic when folks started to camp there, and goes where it is needed and able.

Chico Housing Action Team (CHAT)'s Mercy House was purchased by Pastor Ben's mom, Patricia, and is currently used to house 4 women who would otherwise be homeless or at risk of being homeless. These are vulnerable women with medical needs, and those needs are able to be met by living at the Mercy House. In the past, Ralph Godwin has built a planter box and a Free Little Library for them. Doug De Soto and Bonnie Pulliam visit regularly as liaisons from Faith and as friends to the women there.

The Hunger Trolley has officially concluded. It served the Chico community for years; people purchasing food, home-cooking hot meals, and serving them to Comanche Creek and other places where healthy, warm food was difficult to access. For the last 2 years, the Hunger Trolley used our commercial kitchen. Not only did they offer a kind and merciful service to Chico, but they were a joy to have in our kitchen. They cared so deeply for our space, loved it, and kept it organized. Thank you, Elizabeth and friends!

Blessing of the Backpacks took place in August. Backpacks were filled with school supplies donated by the congregation, blessed, and gifted to students at Fair View High School. We also welcomed Becky Rouse back in August after she spent a year in Baltimore serving folks with mental illness as a part of **Lutheran Volunteer Corps**.

In September, we carried out ***God's Work, Our Hands***. This is an annual day of service in lieu of traditional worship. GWOH Sunday is “an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor” (ELCA). Last year, we cleaned up Teichert Pond. Our friends at the North State Shelter Team, Charles Withuhn in particular, met us there with a trailer and equipment. We cleared trails, picked up litter, and ministered to who we were able to minister to in the process.

In October, our Women's Ministry, largely consisting of the Tuesday Quilters, held their **bake sale and boutique**. As is tradition, money raised went to fund scholarships for students transitioning into community college, university, or technical school. Money also goes to provide paratransit tickets to folks who need to take public transportation to get to church. We also held our annual **Steve Troester Memorial Blood Drive**. Steve was a long-time member of Faith, and his wife Marge organized a blood drive in his honor through Vitalant.

In November, we partnered with Stonewall Alliance Center to host **Transgender Day of Remembrance**, a vigil for lives lost to anti-transgender violence over the last year. This annual vigil takes place nation-wide on November 20th. Each year, Faith Lutheran posts an altar in one of our classrooms. We open the door to that room during office hours and let anyone from the community come in and decorate, pray, and meditate. The altar is then displayed during the community vigil.

In December we held a **sock drive**. This is where parishioners purchase and donate socks, gift-wrap them, and attach a Christmas card. The packages and cards are then delivered to folks who need socks. Last year, they were taken to the Torres Shelter.

In January we hosted **Safe Space Winter Shelter**. This low-barrier shelter lasted for 2 weeks and took place in our fellowship hall. Guests and their pets were fed warm meals and given cots with warm blankets to sleep on. They were served breakfast, then bussed back to the intake center on Fair Street, a safe place to store the majority of their belongings.

In February, we celebrated **Random Acts of Kindness** month by playing bingo together. A big, pink bingo board was put up in the sanctuary. Each box had a random act of kindness one could commit, some to strangers and others to family or friends. At the end of the month, we had 5 bingos as a church!

March was **Red Cross month**. We advertised ways that we could give back to the medical community. Enloe, for example, will collect activity kits for kids in waiting rooms. The most prominent feature of Red Cross Month was that we offered a **CPR/AED course** to 20 members of Faith Lutheran Church. While our Director of Family Life was already certified, Dani was able to renew her certification, and Pastor Ben, Michael, and Luke all became certified.

In May, we sponsored **Growing Healthy Children**, a walk/run for families in Chico. Aside from being money sponsors for this walk, run, pop-up fair, and educational experience, Pastor Ben and baby Sophia, Marge Troester, Andrew Lavin and his son Wesley went directly to One Mile and set up a booth, prepared with games and prizes for Chico's families. And the Tuesday Quilters dedicated a slew of quilts to the **Jesus Center's Renewal Center** –a shelter for families– in the month of May as well.

In June, we will celebrate **Pride Month** by boothing at Stonewall Alliance's festival, and by contributing to what is now Chico's 4th Annual Interfaith Pride Service hosted by Faith Lutheran Church, including the voices of affirming congregations throughout Chico.

I'm excited to see our community service ministry flourish, as it already does in so many ways. I see us honoring tradition, continuing to serve through God's Work Our Hands, pride, and the school supply drive, while still exploring new and exciting ways to serve. I see Faith Lutheran Church as a force of good in Chico. Every last one of you contributes to that. Thank you, and I look forward to our adventures to come!

Michael N-D

Fellowship



For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

-Ephesians 2:14-22

Just as Jesus is the cornerstone of Christian foundation, our siblings in Christ are our doors, windows, and pillars. Like doors you open the way to paths of truth. Like windows you shed light. And like pillars, you are the support structures of Faith Lutheran Church, lifting up our congregation in times of celebration, times of strife, and times of uncertainty.

8 Meal Trains were provided last year. These meals were made to support people who had just gotten home from a medical procedure, or went to families taking care of their homebound family. During Advent and Easter, you brought meals to the staff during their busiest season.

We **welcomed back** members who were away, and **sent off** members who were moving. Cyla Nelson, Darlene Hollmann, and Margaret Bergman were all given beautiful sendoffs. Margaret writes to us on occasion; you can find her letters in some of our *Faith Talks*. And finally, we welcomed Becky Rouse back after she was serving in Baltimore for a year.

We prayed for those in mourning, and nourished their bodies and souls. There were many **memorials** this year. Many of those services included a luncheon or potluck after the service. Your outpour of love and help with those services was unparalleled. We would like to especially say thank you to Judy Struck. She has organized and served at funeral lunches for *years*, on weekdays, weekends, whenever hospitality is needed. We would also like to thank our A/V team members for serving outside of worship to capture and stream memorial services so that anyone across the globe can attend with their loved ones.

CDs of our services are still being delivered each week to 3-4 congregants. We began burning CDs for members without access to the internet in 2020 when we couldn't meet in person. Most of our original recipients have since come back to church or have begun to watch online.

More people have taken an interest in our **Birthday Card Ministry**. One member began writing out celebratory cards in 2020 as a way of staying positive and connected during the pandemic. But the cards were so loved by our congregants that others have joined in! Now we have what is, in all but name, a small group who write out cards for you.

The **Women's Ministry** is a constant at Faith, meeting for quilting every Tuesday, and using their talents to support one another. They don't just lift each other up...they lift up the community! See page 59 to learn more about the scholarships they provide. Aside from that, they invite anyone (not just women) to quilt with them on Tuesdays. Their items are sold at Faith as well as craft fairs around Chico. And in May, the Quilters dedicated a slew of quilts to the Jesus Center's Renewal Center, a place for families who need shelter.

Prayer

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS take communion from Sunday morning worship to people who are homebound due to health concerns. This ministry was challenging to navigate during the pandemic, but over the last year, we've bounced back by meeting in person again and even training new ministers. If you would be interested in bringing Christ's presence to people who cannot attend church, please contact Pastor Ben.

CENTERING PRAYER has been happening for about 20 years. Anyone is invited to participate. We gather to listen to the stillness that comes in the quiet. When our minds are quieted, we are then prepared to listen to God's word. The hope is that there will be refreshment for our soul. We continue to gather on Zoom every Tuesday at 4pm. People can connect by clicking the button that says "Connect to Zoom" on our homepage at chicofaithlutheran.org, and entering the password 667. The only Tuesdays we don't meet are if Christmas or New Year's falls on a Tuesday. We have about 10 people gathering.

HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER took place over Advent. We shared soup and broke bread with the congregation. The soup was homemade by our own parishioners. In worship, we reflected on how Christ fulfills the prophecies from ancient scripture and that the hopes and fears of all the years are met in him.

Faith Lutheran Church has had an active **PRAYER CHAIN** for years. There are two chains, each headed by a parishioner who then calls other "links" on the chain when there is an urgent need for prayer. For example, if somebody is taken to the hospital for an emergency, the office will notify the two heads, and those heads will call the first link in their chain. That link calls the next, and so on. This is done through phone call, email, or text depending on the preference of the people in each chain. Over the last couple of years, many of our links were reunited with our heavenly father. Our cherished sister Betty Whitmore was the head of one of the chains, with Molly Barnum being the other. Lynette Stensrud graciously took Betty's place so that Betty's links could continue to pray. Three or four other members have passed away, and other

parishioners volunteered to be a part of the chain in their stead. Those on the prayer chain who have died laid the foundation of strength and care that is the prayer chain.

Early in 2023, we held a church brainstorming session to talk about acts of community service we'd like to see in the upcoming year. **PRAYER SHAWLS** are a long-time ministry of Faith, but there were no meetings during the pandemic. Several people expressed their desire to meet again and immediately set this ministry into action! The Prayer Shawl Group meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month in Room 7. Read more about it on page 41.

Education



THE PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY continues to meet online every Tuesday at 5pm. Parishioners meet on Zoom by going to the homepage of our website, clicking the button that says **CONNECT TO ZOOM**, and entering the password 667. "How does the pastor go from the bible passages assigned each week to the Sunday morning sermon? Come find out and be a part of the process! Study the upcoming Sunday's bible passages with Pastor Ben. We will talk a little about history and context, then focus on using Martin Luther's techniques for understanding how the bible addresses the needs and concerns of our community today."

We offered **NEW MEMBERS CLASSES** twice in the last year, one in the fall and one in the spring. The classes covered: Intro to Lutheran Theology, Why We Worship the Way We Do, How Lutherans Read the Bible, What it Means to Be a Member, and History of Lutheranism. Though not everyone joined as a new member, a total of 30 people participated in the class.

The church utilizes its all-encompassing software, Elvanto. This program gives us the ability to keep updated records of guests and members, run the church website, schedule teams for Sundays and more! Luke Nicolay hosted several **ELVANTO TRAININGS** throughout the year to empower folks to schedule their worship roles like ushers, communion servers, lectors, etc. We taught folks how to accept, swap, and replace roles, how to note their availability and unavailability to serve, and more. Training sessions consisted of 3-5 people, but Luke reminds you that if you have a question about Elvanto or worship scheduling, go to him anytime and he will train you during a time that works for you. The goal is for our parishioners to feel comfortable using our software, and to maintain a self-sustaining system.

The Women's Ministry of Faith Lutheran, in particular the Quilters, continue to host bake sale-boutiques to collect money for **SCHOLARSHIPS**. These scholarships go to graduating high school seniors or those entering university, a junior college, or a technical or trade school.

In March, Lifeline Training Center provided **FIRST AID TRAINING** to about 20 parishioners. Training included AED (defibrillator) use, how to perform CPR on adults, children and infants, and how to provide basic first aid. This training also opened the eyes of the staff and council to better safety and first

aid precautions. A first aid kit can now be found by the AED device in the sanctuary (in the back, near the A/V desk). First aid can also be found in the office, nursery, and kitchen. We are in the process of ordering child-sized AED shock-pads.

Mike and Melisse Boyd opened up their coffee shop, Has Beans, after hours to teach our young adult group **ROASTING 101**: a learning session about about coffee, roasting, and how the finished product turns into that delectable treat we all love. We learned about green, unroasted beans and the regions from which they come, the roasting process, flavoring, caffeine content, and how we get the best finished cup to match our preferred bean. Our young adults even create their own special roast called “Rapture Roast,” a highly-caffeinated, creative mixture of beans that turned out to be so successful that it is now a Has Beans original available to purchase!

We partnered with St John’s Episcopal to offer **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**, or “VBS” in 2022. Our small but enthusiastic group studied 4 different stories in the Bible alongside Dr. Sunny Day and the rest of the archeologists at our dig site. We collected different artifacts that connected to our stories, and did a variety of crafts.

SOME PEOPLE IN OUR CONGREGATION EDUCATED US IN THEIR MINISTRY. Parishioner Becky Rouse served the Lutheran Volunteer Corps for a year in Baltimore working with folks with mental illness. She returned in August, 2022 and shared her experience with the congregation. The youth shared their experience at the Youth Trip with our congregation in the spring.

Our staff underwent **CONTINUING EDUCATION**. Dani headed to Anaheim this year to attend her annual ELCA Youth Ministry Network continuing education event called the Extravaganza. She was asked to serve on the technical team as an online host and event programmer. This helped offset the trip cost for her to attend over 17 hours of continuing education classes and workshops. Michael has been offered a continuing ed budget this year. If the congregation approves the budget, Michael plans to worship with a variety of ELCA churches over the next year, and shadow their office aids to learn what they do differently than we do. His hope is to get fresh ideas for content, and develop new administrative organizational skills. Earlier in the year, Luke

had the opportunity to travel to Valparaiso, Indiana to attend the regional conference for the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) at Valparaiso University. During his time at Valpo, Luke spent his days in workshops focused on contemporary music. Throughout these workshops, the presenter Clayton Faulkner, discussed with the group about music, music resources, instruments/instrumentation, plus more. Along with these sessions on contemporary worship, Luke was able to attend opening and closing worship each day. These worship experiences were full of creative utilization of choirs, bells, strings, brass, and more. In addition, each night at Valpo before closing worship there was some type of concert by a primarily Lutheran group. In the coming year, Luke will be traveling to Philadelphia to the national ALCM conference where he and members from all over the country will join together to learn more about the diversity and creativity in Lutheran music and worship.

While he is still waiting on funding approval from a grant, Pastor Ben plans to take a sabbatical in the summer of 2024 after 8 years of serving as pastor of Faith. The goal during his time on sabbatical is for the church and each of its ministries to be self-sustaining; to work with one another to conduct worship, music, and carry out our usual ministries. This spring, Ben taught the class **“HOW TO PREACH A SERMON”** to prepare and excite our congregation, that parishioners may have a turn preaching while he is away. Over the last year, Jill Bentler, Beth Bradley, Annette Jefferson, and Daun Weiss have all preached incredible sermons. **BEN ALSO INVITED THE CONGREGATION TO HELP HIM PLAN HIS SABBATICAL.** Between helping to plan the sabbatical and learning how we can continue to grow while he is away, we have shown proof of sustainability already and are well on the road to supporting Pastor Ben and each other.

Equipping Ministry



Faith Lutheran Church: A community reflecting God's love with a place at the table for everyone.

Over the last year, the Equipping Team accomplished a number of huge tasks and promoted the concept of Equipping Ministry at every turn.

First and foremost, it has been an incredible blessing and opportunity to work with such a group of committed individuals who want to learn and to serve. I believe they have earned high scores in both. The Equipping Team is a fun group, and I would encourage anyone who might have some interest in seeing Faith “through the eyes of a visitor” to become involved.

The Equipping season started with our “Welcome Home” potluck in the fall. During that season, ministry leaders and Pastor Ben talked about their ministries and associated spiritual gifts during worship. This was done through written word and videos showcasing these ministries. The whole season culminated toward our biggest and most celebrated event of the year: All Saints Day.

All Saints Sunday was a time to celebrate saints past as well as saints present. I think most of us are used to a very solemn celebration in worship. In order to mourn those past and honor those present, we needed to find a theme that fit both mourning and honor. I would describe our theme with the words “respect” and “dignity.” Knowing the day was typically to honor those who have gone before us, the team artfully chose to use dignified decorations and specific color choices that would lend a more formal touch to what was an equally dignified celebration.

While my number is not completely accurate, we had in excess of 900 volunteer hours to pull together the day. 900 hours! 900 hours of celebration of the saints today and the saints triumphant; 900 hours of involving an exceptionally wide variety of people and skills in preparation for the day. Most of all, it was 900 hours of community building from planning to preparation to setup. Did I mention 900 hours?

We look at ourselves to be as welcoming to visitors as possible. That being the case, nametags play a large part in Equipping. Cindy Kampf and Lynette

Stensrud took on the task of setting the nametags back on the rack in an organized manner. Several others also contributed to this task. Thank you to these dedicated and patient people! The team cannot stress how important nametags are at Faith. While it is true that most of us know each other, we provide nametags with the goal of assisting new people and remembering names. If you are like me, you occasionally draw a blank on a name. With nametags, it is so much easier (and far more personal) to both serve and receive communion by first name. This, I believe, is a vital component to our weekly worship.

Mary Schweder has been leading the Welcoming Team, which includes ushers and greeters. Greeting and ushering are not simply jobs to be done; team members are chosen because they have the gift of hospitality. They are the first faces a visitor sees upon entering worship. They are Faith's front line. Greeters and ushers are a valuable asset for any church, and thank you to all who have taken on this area of ministry.

We have spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to best use our database, Elvanto, to let individuals know about ministry opportunities in and around our Faith community. That project will continue into this coming year. The church council was asked to take a spiritual gifts inventory which they did. We will sort through that data and store it in our database so that our Equipping leaders can view the spiritual gifts of others and connect them to ministries.

To the congregation, thank you for actively supporting so many of our ideas. Your support is an incredible blessing!

Kim Schweder, Equipping Ministry

Through your generosity, God is at work across the ELCA. A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice. Read stories and learn more at [ELCA.org/SOFIA](https://elca.org/SOFIA).



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