

Faith Talks

December 2020



Online Worship 9:30am

Christmas Eve Live Nativity 3pm-6pm

Christmas Eve Online Service 9pm



Poinsettias To

Kathy and Grace Mahannah for doing the Torres Shelter Dinner

Joel, Judy, and Janine for being office manager while Michael is on vacation

Cindy Kampf and her grandkids for delivering the children's message

Sharon Robertson for taking care of Ken

Clark Colahan for writing the play for FACE Class; Don Heinz, Ralph Godwin, and Annalisa Colahan for reading the script in costume; Doug DeSoto and Steve Koch for their participation

Daun, Margaret and Linda for helping out Luke

The Bell Choir for bringing joy to us this advent season

The FLC youth for cleaning our windows

The quilters for making masks, as well as a quilt to raffle off for Veteran's Day

Troll and the crew at Stonewall Alliance Center for building the Trans Day of Remembrance altar

Stephen Jahn for the years he pastored in Orland and Artois

Dawn Stafford for arranging our poinsettias

Everyone who donated to the Jesus Center Harvest Drive and Michael's Backpack Drive

Those who came out for the Steve Troester Memorial Blood Drive

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The Covid Who Stole Christmas

There will be Christmas this year. We won't be packed in the sanctuary. We won't sing hymns while huddled close. But Christ is coming. God will dwell among us as a child and we shall rejoice. What's more, this Christmas at Faith will be radiant with beauty.

Advent Festivities will have three main parts: 1) Holden Evening Prayer, 2) Advent Workshop, and 3) Prayer in the Sanctuary. The decades-long tradition of **Advent Holden Evening Prayer** will continue this year online Wednesdays at 7pm, Dec. 2nd, 9th, and 16th. In addition to the beautiful music, during Holden Evening Prayer I will be teaching a three-part series called "Heaven, Resurrection, and Hope," exploring how the bible speaks about heaven that may surprise you.

We will also continue our tradition of the **Advent Workshop** in which families can create unique holiday crafts. We'll provide all the materials you need and a festive atmosphere to create decorations and gifts for the holidays. We simply ask that you register your family for a timeslot on Saturday, Dec. 5th by contacting the office.

Finally, Dec. 1st through 17th you can sign up to spend time in **Prayer and Contemplation in the Sanctuary**. The labyrinth will be set up along with a variety of prayer stations to help you connect with God through music, writing, coloring, and stillness. Sign up online at <https://www.chicofaithlutheran.org/news/contemplative-advent-prayer> or by contacting the office.

Christmas will have three services. Christmas Eve at 9pm and Christmas Morning at 9:30am we will have online worship services. To make these services extra special, our Worship and Music Director Luke has been working with musicians to pre-record music so we can experience the grandeur of dozens of voices and instruments praising God together.

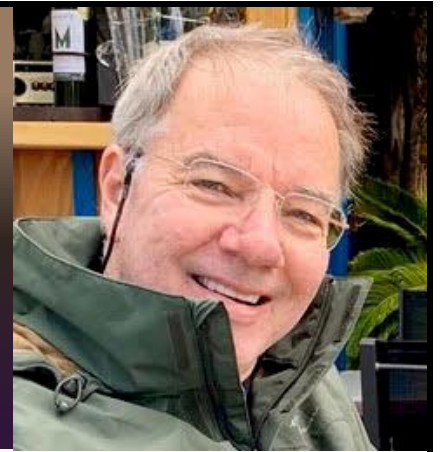
But it is our Christmas afternoon service about which I am most excited. We are going to create a **Living Nativity**. From 3-6pm on Christmas Eve, Faith's courtyard will become the little town of Bethlehem with farm animals in pens, lights shining from every surface, and musicians dressed as angels singing hosanna from the literal rooftops. At its heart will be the Christ child, and each visitor will be asked to bring a can of food as a gift to lay at the manger.

Christmas will be different this year. But as the Grinch discovers at the end of Dr. Seuss's classic tale, it is not the external trappings that make Christmas, but Jesus' love. That divine love we have in abundance. This Christmas will not be a pale imitation of years past. This Christmas will be boldly unique. And it will be remembered forever, for it will shine with the true magic of Christmas: celebrating Christ in our midst.



*Your Brother in Christ,
Pastor Ben Colahan*

Note from the Council President



Dear Members of Faith,

My bike got a flat the other day in Bidwell Park, and I walked it back to my car. It was one of the most beautiful, misty, quiet, and colorful mornings I can ever remember in the Park. Like you, I'm trying to balance a life of being bottled up and a bit isolated with one that works hard to get out and see the world in our back yard. It's especially great this time of year being on the other side of all that smoke! And I am looking forward to perhaps an unwinding of the pandemic after the first of the year.

The Church Council has worked hard this past month to keep up our support of our great staff (much appreciated by me as they go each week to get a Covid test—that many nasal swabs can't be fun). I admire their consistency, continuing communication and visitation with members; and the great Sunday services—it is my favorite online experience each week. We decided to regularize our worship over the next month or two with cold weather, rain, and the unpredictability of the virus (as I write this we just moved into the purple tier) so our Sundays will focus on the 9:30 a.m. online service going forward with no regular in-person worship planned for a while. The installation of our audio-visual system in the sanctuary and the campus networking project is underway. These projects were only possible because of your generosity and support for our stewardship

campaign. I will have an update on our gifts and progress working on the church building right after the first of the year, but we are on track to have the sound system ready to go for worship indoors very soon!

Our biggest challenge right now is our general fund budget. While we forged ahead with hardly a blip in giving for the first few months of this fiscal year, we have hit some rough going, and are facing some deficits increasing monthly in our general fund. Reserves help but don't solve our larger problem. I know that not all of us can give financially right now—*all* of the gifts that you give to our community (time, prayer, encouragement, hospitality, financial support) are appreciated—your generous hearts are what distinguish this community from others that we belong to. Our staff and programs depend on your diligent and consistent financial support, and so I am asking you to keep your regular contributions up as you are able. Just like our children and grandchildren, the Church Council and our financial officers welcome the generous gifts that others leave “under the tree” at the end of the year (in the same spirit as Ebenezer Scrooge's wonderful gift of a goose to Bob Cratchit's family at the end of *A Christmas Carol*!). That sort of financial generosity goes a long way towards covering us during the sometimes lean months in the spring.

Blessings to you all in the coming months as we (hopefully) move out of our fall and winter of discontent. Join a Face Class on Sunday mornings if you are looking for fellowship and a chance to talk about some great books and ideas. December and January bring a wonderful study of the Church calendar and the lectionary reading for 2021: The Gospel of Mark. And remember that each week there are lots of opportunities to connect with your fellow members in social time, worship, prayer, and mutual support. I would welcome the chance to get together with you for a short chat or cup of tea or coffee if you are willing and able. Let me know if that would work!

Joel Zimbelman, Council President



First Third of Life Ministry Update

Despite COVID-19, Faith Lutheran's youth and families have continued to find ways to connect and engage in service.

Our youngest age group meets every week for our Kids Call, an online video call full of fun! We sing together, do breathing exercises, pray, hear a bible story, and do basic crafts. This has been a great way for our youngest folks to connect with God and one another.

Our youth group met in-person recently for an outdoor youth event. It was the first in-person youth event since April, and it was great for all of us to gather together. Mason, Lily, Mit, and Julian joined Pastor Ben, Colter, and Luke to wash the exterior windows of the church that face the parking lot. There was quite a bit to clean, given a summer's worth of dust and soot from the wildfires. After they finished cleaning, we enjoyed some tasty s'mores and fellowship together. We even got a chance to meet Pastor Ben and Annalisa's new puppy, Eva!





Our confirmation cohort has been busy at work writing their statements of faith in preparation for an official spring ceremony when they will be confirmed as official voting members of the church. They look forward to sharing these statements with all of you!

By the time this article goes to print, the youth will have met another time for a bonfire out at the Massa Organics Farm. We'll also be gearing up for our December youth event, which is the Advent Workshop on December 5th! This event is not just for youth, but for folks of all ages.

If you're interested in reserving a table and doing crafts with us, please contact myself or Michael. This will be a reservation-only event.

Our college group has been understandably hesitant to meet for in-person events, and so instead we have been watching movies together (but in our own homes). Last month we watched A Knight's Tale, and this month we'll watch Enola Holmes. These movie nights are a fun way for us to connect with each other and bond over what we're watching, while still respecting each other's health and safety.

Thank you to all of you who continue to support Faith's youth and families!

Colter Murphy, Director of Youth and Service

Christmas Poinsettias



Join in the longstanding Faith tradition of adorning Faith Lutheran Church with poinsettias this Christmas season! This year, we'll have to do things a little different; but that doesn't mean we can't get creative! Poinsettias may be purchased for \$10 each and can be given in "memory" or in "thanksgiving" of somebody special to you. The flowers will adorn the sanctuary for online worship, but will also be featured in our living nativity scene on Christmas Eve, decorating the courtyard for all to see. You can drop off your \$10 at the office during hours, or call Dawn Stafford at (530) 514-4467 if you have any questions.

Faith Adult Christian Education

The Christian Liturgical Calendar and the Gospel of Mark



**Sundays November 29, December 6, 13, 20 and January 3 and 10
11 a.m. - 12 noon on ZOOM (login at 5308953754 and password 667)**

Perhaps the earliest Gospel in the New Testament, Mark's synoptic overview of Jesus' life and ministry is short, terse, energetic, theologically rich, and generates questions and discussions whenever it is read. On November 29, we begin a new Church year (Advent is the first month of the year for Christians!), and our classes will focus on providing context and unpacking this year's Gospel text. Get a head start on all of the Gospel readings for the year!

Join Pr. Ben, Joel Zimbelman, and other biblical readers and scholars as we explore Mark. The class will be a great introduction to those who have not delved into its wonderful message; but returning readers can take this time to get reacquainted with great bible stories, parables, and bumbling disciples who at times don't seem to have a clue about what is going on.

Nov 29: Pastor Ben's overview of the Christian liturgical calendar—why we have one; how it was formed; what it tries to communicate to the believing community; and how it structures our lives for prayer, worship, and service.

Dec 6: Introduction to Mark—what's going on in Jesus' Jewish world; who is Mark; and why do we have four Gospels?

Dec 13: Who is Jesus, and who does Mark think he is?

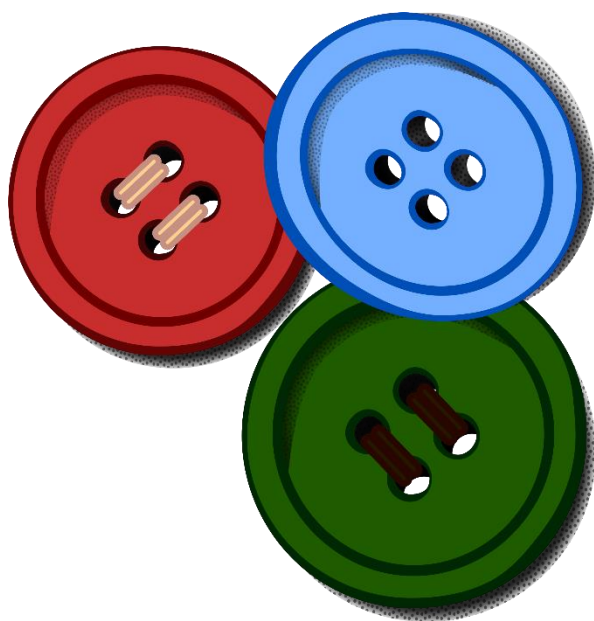
Dec 20: Making disciples, launching ministry, working miracles

Jan 3: Reading, explaining, and understanding parables for dummies

January 10: The trial, death and resurrection of Jesus

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Starting Monday, November 30, offering envelopes will be available for pickup at the office. Swing by between the hours of 10am-3:30pm and pick yours up!



BUTTONS NEEDED!

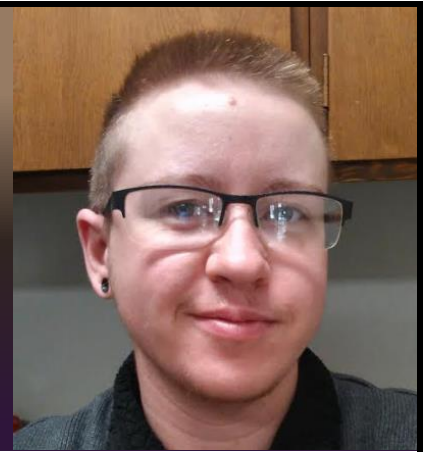
The Quilters are working on Christmas crafts...so you know they'll be fantastical! Our ladies are calling for any and all buttons. Drop them off at the office with Michael and he'll pass them on to Char, Mary and the gang.

BLUE BAGS

Please drop off items for Blue Bags by Thursday, December 10th at the office! For more information, contact Margaret McMillan at (530) 521-4498.



Pandemic Self-Care



We're 8 months into quarantine. At this point, everyone understands the foreign bouts of loneliness and awkwardness this pandemic has wrought; your neighbor knows as well as you do what it feels like not to be able to hug people, or what not leaving the house in a week feels like. But losing oneself in a sea of other people's shared emotions can feel isolating in and of itself. After all, just because other people are in the same boat doesn't make your voyage less difficult.

It's okay to have compassion fatigue. It's okay to take time to nurture yourself or to lean on others. Let others know honestly when you can't be emotionally available, and have faith that they will understand. The nature of this pandemic is a turbulent one; there will be times when we have plenty of energy to help our loved ones navigate through dark times, and there will be times when we are the ones in the darkness in need of a guiding light. Call to God for strength and reflection; call to those you hold dear for love and support. Being in this together doesn't mean *we're all having a hard time, get over it*; it means we will *all* need time to mend.

What does mending mean for you? Maybe it's talking to someone you trust, taking a vacation, or even meditating. Did you know that you can meditate while you're driving, talking, or even writing articles for *Faith Talks*? Meditation is the act of grounding yourself; realizing you aren't quite 'aligned' and correcting it. Sometimes it takes prayer or contemplation to achieve this, or sometimes just a single, deep breath. As I take my vacation to do a little realigning of my own, I ask that you do the same. Do something that replenishes your energy, something for you - - whether you take 10 seconds, 5 minutes, a day, or even a whole vacation for yourself. Make time for you this month... Michael said so! I would like to leave you with this wonderfully blunt, brash and beautiful sentiment from Bishop Mark W. Holmrud:

Four words: It's not time yet.

It's not time yet:

- + to return to indoor worship
- + to stop wearing masks
- + to forget physical distancing
- + to ignore science
- + to gather in large groups for Thanksgiving
- + to deny the exponential growth of cases of COVID-19 being diagnosed every day in this country and around the world

Four more words: I know you're tired.

I know you're tired:

- + of not being able to be with family and friends
- + of not being able to worship together in the sanctuary and sing
- + of not being able to travel
- + of not being able to leave your home
- + of not being able to hold your grandchildren/children/loved ones
- + of hearing admonitions like this from health professionals and bishops

Four last words: God is in control (Psalm 23).

God is in control:

- + even (and especially) in this time of pandemic (Psalm 91)
- + despite what some see as evidence to the contrary (Psalm 46)
- + through the work of health care workers, clinicians, and epidemiologists (Sirach 38)
- + in the presence of courageous essential workers (Ecclesiastes 3:1-15)
- + as we help God's reign come near in seeking the well-being of the most vulnerable among us (Matthew 25:31-46)
- + because nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:31-39)

Council Minutes
November 17, 2020, 6:30 PM Zoom

Present: Pr. Ben Colahan, Joel Zimbelman, Sky Sample, Mark Kimmelshue, Sherrill Heinz, Diane Knight, Susan Kimball, Cynthia Kampf, Meridith Woods, Penny Melvin, Doug DeSoto, Bonnie Pulliam. Absent: Tricia Homesley, Matt Reed.

Upcoming Meetings: All Zoom unless otherwise noted.

1. Devotion – Joel Z
2. Opening Prayer – Pr. Ben
3. Covenant
4. Approval of minutes from last meeting – Sky made the motion and Sherrill seconded, minutes approved.
5. Financial Report by Mark Kimmelshue. Mark led discussion of general giving and the need to let members know about the growing deficit. Capital Campaign – FLC has received \$160,000 in pledges and of that \$117,000 has been received from the commitments. Penny made motion to approve, Sky seconded. Motion carried.
6. Announcements and calendar events
 - o Sunday Worship schedule – Pr. Ben worship is at 9:30 online through the end of the year.
 - o Stewardship and Capital Campaign – Joel is sending a personal note for commitments.
 - o Signage – Joel should be finished within the next few weeks.
 - o Roof – Inspected in the next couple of days due rain to see if there are any additional issues.
 - o AV and networking progress – Comcast is running the conduit for the computer system throughout the FLC complex.
 - o Bookkeeper and Accountant reassignments upcoming.
 - o Sick leave policy for employees.
7. Life in the community during the lockdown. Discussed Council Check-in calls to parishioners
 - a. Divide out council to call members over Thanksgiving week to check-in
8. Closing Prayer – Pr. Ben
9. Meeting Adjourned at 7:19 pm

- Next Executive Meeting: Thursday December 3rd 8:30 a.m. Zoom.
- No Council Meeting scheduled for December, though we may try for a party! TBD

Respectfully submitted, Diane Knight

*General Fund Finances
as of 10/31/2020*

	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Percent Of Budget
TOTAL INCOME	\$122,873.67	\$112,608.83	91.65%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$148,126.33	\$144,446.86	97.52%
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(\$25,252.66)	(\$31,838.03)	
Beginning General Fund Balance as of 7/1/20		\$33,560.21	
Net Revenue through 10/31/2020		<u>(\$31,838.03)</u>	
Ending General Fund Balance		<u><u>\$1,722.18</u></u>	

In an effort to be transparent and keep the Faith Lutheran Community up to speed and in touch with the finances of the Church, this report will be posted in Faith Talks on a monthly basis.

Shown above are the General Fund financial results for the first four months of the fiscal year (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021). The report shows that actual expenses exceeded income by \$31,838.21 for the period. This is concerning as we had to borrow \$20,000 from the Capital fund to cover expenses. As we move forward please consider increasing the amount you give to the General Fund. We realize that we are in the midst of a Capital Campaign. However funds given to that effort should be over and above your general fund giving. We have to be able to cover the monthly operating expenses before capital improvements can be made.

Thank You All for your continued support. If you have questions, please feel free to contact:

Mark Kimmelshue
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kimmelshue@armcorice.com

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Faith Lutheran Church Council
council@chicofaithlutheran.org

Predisent: Joel Zimbelman
Treasurer: Mark Kimmelshue

Tricia Homesley
Meridith Woods
Cynthia Kampf
Bonnie Pulliam

Vice President: Sky Sample
Secretary: Diane Knight

Sherrill Heinz
Susan Kimball
Doug DeSoto
Penny Melvin

Matt Reed

Online Worship Sundays at 9:30 AM
Christmas Eve Live Nativity, December 24, 3:00 – 6:00 PM

Office: (530) 895-3754

Hours: Mon-Thu 10 AM-3:30 PM

Email: office@chicofaithlutheran.org

Website: chicofaithlutheran.org