

# Faith Talks

January 2021



Online Worship 9:30 AM

**ABOUT THE FRONT COVER:** The Greek word in the Gospel of Matthew describing the “wisemen” is *magoi*. This word implies that multiple people – of which at least one was male – sought the Christ child. The word contains the possibility that women also joined the great journey to seek Jesus.



# Roses To

Darby Sample, Greg Massa, Susan Reed, Kelly Tipton, Dave and Janine Rush, and Grant Sautner for all the hard work they put into the Advent Workshop

The newly-baptized baby Jude Russell Rose

Marie Flickert for organizing the Fire Department Gift-Wrapping event; Carol Gates and family, Janine Rush, and Molly and Dave Barnum for wrapping; and to everyone else who reached out but did not get the opportunity to wrap

Bill and Carolyn Kees for the love and passion they poured into setting up the Labyrinth and contemplative Advent prayer

The Faith Lutheran Church Choir and every intrepid musician who contributed toward December’s musical endeavors

Our Living Nativity helpers: Ralph Godwin for building the manger, Cindy Kampf for the sound system, Char Miller for angel halos, Raquel Krach and Greg Massa for sheep, chickens, and a duck, Graham and Laura Skinner for Pumpkin the tiny horse, Matt Plotkin and Rebecca Schneider for goats, Dax and Dustin Kimmelshue for straw bales, Grace Massa and Vaughn Quinlan for being Mary and Joseph, the Rose family for being the Holy Family, Julie Marenco for preparing candles, and our Welcome Team – Tricia Homesley, Ron Heath, Meridith Woods, Annette Jefferson, and Vickie James

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# Pastor's Article: House Blessings

January 6<sup>th</sup>, Epiphany, is traditionally the day on which to bless homes. House blessings are done on Epiphany because Epiphany is the celebration of the Magi arriving at Jesus' house to honor him. We bless our homes in hopes that we too might receive visitors bearing gifts, blessings, and joy.

This year we haven't had many visitors in our homes. We pray that 2021 will be different. While we haven't had visitors, our homes have become an even more central part of our lives. At times they may have felt like refuges, at times they may have felt like prisons. My hope is that in these final few months while we wait for the pandemic to end, our homes may be our sanctuaries—the place where we encounter God.

And so in this *Faith Talks*, I am including the order of service for a house blessing. I encourage you, on or around January 6<sup>th</sup>, to bless your home in gratitude for the safe harbor it has provided this past year, in faith that the Spirit fills it now with grace, and in hope that it soon may be filled with friends, family, and visitors from afar bearing gifts and glad tidings. To do your house blessing, you'll need:

- 1) A candle
- 2) A bowl of water
- 3) A small leafy branch or bouquet (for flinging water)
- 4) Chalk (or something else with which you can write on your door's lintel)

Light the candle and say, “Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life.” Then as a family walk to each room following the person carrying the candle. For each room find the appropriate scripture reading and prayer listed below. After reading the passage and saying the prayer, bless the room by using the branch or bouquet to fling water around the room three times, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

After you have blessed all the rooms, use the chalk to write on the lintel about your front door “20 + C M B + 21.” The initials stand for the Latin blessing “Christe mansionem benedicat” (“Christ, bless this house”) and also for the legendary names of the magi (Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar). The numbers stand for the year in which the blessing is made.

***A place of entering and leaving, such as the outside doors***

*A reading from the Psalms:* The LORD will watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forevermore. (Psalm 121:8)

Let us pray.

O God, watch over us in all our going out and our coming in; keep all evil away from our door; and let us share the hospitality of this home with all who visit, that those who enter here may know your love and peace. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place of welcoming guests, such as a chair for a visitor***

*A reading from Romans:* Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:7)

Let us pray.

O God, bless all who visit this home; may they find here warmth and peace. Bless us who welcome others into our home, as you blessed Sarah and Abraham when they entertained angels unawares. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place where common activities are shared, such as a living room***

*A reading from Ecclesiastes:* So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 8:15)

Let us pray.

O God, you set apart time for rest and enjoyment of the world you made. Bless those who gather here for fellowship and recreation, that they may be renewed and refreshed. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place for studying and communicating with others***

*A reading from Proverbs:* Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. (Proverbs 25:25)

Let us pray.

O God, you are the teacher who leads us to all truth. Grant that those who learn in this place may use knowledge to heal and help your world. Draw us together through our technology for every good purpose. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place for making or fixing things, such as a sewing area or workshop***

*A reading from the Psalms:* May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us; prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork. (Psalm 90:17)

Let us pray.

O God, you are the source of our creativity. You fashioned our minds to imagine and our hands to shape new things. Prosper the work that is done in this place. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place for preparing meals, such as the kitchen***

A reading from John: When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." (John 21: 9, 12)

Let us pray.

O God, you fill the hungry with good things. Send your blessing on those who prepare food here, and make us all ever thankful for daily bread. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place for sharing the gift of food, such as a dining table***

A reading from the Psalms: The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season. You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

(Psalm 145:15-16)

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, Creator of heaven and earth, for you give us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Make us grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place for recognizing the gift of clothing, such as a laundry area***

A reading from Exodus: So Moses went down from the mountain to the people. He consecrated the people, and they washed their clothes. (Exodus 19:14)

Let us pray.

O God, you are our clothing, wrapping us in love. We bless you for the gift of clothing, and we pray that we may be clothed and blanketed in safety. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place of caring for the body, such as a bathroom or an exercise area***

A reading from the Psalms: You yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will thank you because I am marvelously made; your works are wonderful, and I know it well. (Psalm 139:13-14)

Let us pray.

O God, you revealed yourself in human flesh, making holy what is ordinary and earthly. Bless us as we care for our ordinary, marvelous bodies. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

***A place of rest for the body, such as a person's bedroom***

A reading from the Psalms: In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me rest secure. (Psalm 4:8)

Let us pray.

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

**Amen.**

**—a child's bedroom**

*A reading from the Psalms:* The LORD watches over you; God will not fall asleep. (Psalm 121:5, 3)

Let us pray.

O God, hold [name] in your unfailing love. May she/he dream peacefully and grow in health and strength. Bring her/him in safety to each new day. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

**—a teenager's bedroom**

*A reading from the Psalms:* It is in vain to rise so early and go to bed so late. You, LORD, give sleep to your beloved. (Psalm 127:2)

Let us pray.

O God, may [name] find here rest and respite, privacy and connection, challenge and enjoyment. And in all these things, may she/he hear you calling her/him by name. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

**A place where a pet sleeps or animals are kept**

*A reading from the Psalms:* Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds, young men and maidens, old and young together. (Psalm 148:7, 10, 12)

Let us pray.

O God, we thank you for bringing [pet's name] to [name/s] to be their companion and friend. May they be blessings one to another. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

**OR (at, for example, an aquarium)**

O God, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all. Give [name/s] the wisdom to care for these creatures and to delight in them. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**

**A garden or an outdoor space**

*A reading from Job:* Ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? In God's hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being. (Job 12:7-10)

Let us pray.

O God, we praise you for the green plants that make the oxygen we breathe and for the animals that breathe it with us. Sustain us all together in this place by your Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray.

**Amen.**



# A Letter From Luke

Whoosh! Just like that, the holidays are here and gone! This holiday was something different, despite the pandemic we found new ways to celebrate together; we found new ways to celebrate our Savior's birth; we found new hope even when other hopes seemed to be dim; but most importantly we continued to praise and worship our great Creator!

December was packed full for the worship and music teams/groups. We recorded, planned, decorated, brainstormed, laughed and worked alongside each other to create meaningful worship experiences for the entire congregation. At times this was hard because we weren't sure how an idea would work out, or we weren't sure if it was safe. Luckily, due to creativity from many great minds, we were able to come up with ideas that allowed us to create safe experiences for all.

December included a phenomenal Live Nativity, a beautiful pre-recorded Christmas Eve service, lots of fantastic recordings for the services in Advent by many talented musicians/readers, and a beautiful, ever-changing heart by Gayle Palys that signified the growth of beauty from the brokenness of this year and from the human plight.

January is gearing up to be a wonderful and exciting month! Here's the few things to be on the lookout for:

1. Bell choir will resume on Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM. We will begin working towards Lent/Easter and general time as well. If you're interested, please come and join us! We will continue to wear masks and social distance during rehearsals.
2. Choir will continue to meet via zoom every other week. We will begin discussions for our next virtual choir anthem which will be taking place during both Lent and Easter.
3. Music Team rehearsals/recording sessions will resume on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>. If you're interested in leading worship through music (for Sunday services), please let me know. I will share a link to a google doc that will allow you to sign up to help lead worship. We will continue to meet with the 3 guitarists and 1 vocalist each week.

I want to thank each and every person who helped make this holiday season so special and meaningful. The number of people is far too great to thank individually here, but know that the giving of your time, resources, energy, help and (most importantly, I might add) your SMILES are appreciated beyond what words can convey. Cheers to the closing of one door and to the opening of the New Year and to many blessings on it!

*With love and gratitude,  
Luke Nicolay, Director of Worship and Music*



# News from the Office

## New Hours & Procedures



This December, I was promoted from manager to... well, manager! (This isn't a post-Advent mental break; I can explain.) If you haven't met our bookkeepers, their names are Jeanette and Lottie and they're awesome. Lottie is graduating from CSU this year, so she'll be moving on from being our bookkeeper to working in her field. So first of all - a huge congrats to Lottie, and a million thanks to her not only for keeping our books but for putting up with me for the last 2 years. Starting this January, I'll be taking over some of the bookkeeping duties, like working with Quickbooks and getting to know the financial parts of our ministry scheduling program better. What this means for me is more hours, which I'm grateful to have earned. What this means for you is ~ drumroll ~ new office hours!

**OFFICE HOURS**  
**MONDAY – FRIDAY**  
**10 AM – 3:30 PM**

So now you're stuck with me on Fridays too! That's the fun news. The not-fun news is that I will be implementing more stringent COVID policies. You know, like a strict dad who says "you can't do that" so the kids ask mom instead, except there is no mom here, just Mike and his rules. It's exciting that we have a vaccine, but until everyone has access to it, I must take the following safety precautions to protect the health of the congregation and staff:

- **Face coverings over your mouth and nose are required in the office at all times**
- **Please do not bring food to share or leave out on the counter for others to take (you may still donate goods for the staff to distribute appropriately, or pick up supplies which I have given you permission to take from the back table)**
- **If possible, use the Parish Hall restroom; the staff restroom should be for emergencies only**
- **There is a blue line of tape on the floor separating my desk from the entryway; please do not cross it**
- **I have unfortunately removed the guest chair from my desk, so I will not be able to sit with you in the main office at this time, for which I am sorry**

In other office news ~ ~ ~ if you're ever interested in submitting a *Faith Talks* article, they are always due the third Sunday of the month. Email them to [office@chicofaithlutheran.org](mailto:office@chicofaithlutheran.org). If you haven't told me your birthday, please do, so that the office can wish you a happy birthday in 2021! Here's to a safe and healthy new year.

Michael





# The Trip Report: Advent Workshop

2020 has been one for the books, and not in a good way. Between the thick layers of smoke that covered Chico for months, the reckoning we've all done regarding racial injustices, and a global pandemic, we've been through a lot. Many of our favorite annual traditions have gone by the wayside as we opt to keep our friends, neighbors, and loved ones safe by not meeting in-person.

With all of this in mind, I was a bit tepid when I contacted Susan Reed regarding our annual Advent Workshop. This is one of the hallmarks of Faith Lutheran's commitment to intergenerational community, and I worried that perhaps this year we would choose to skip the event. However, Susan was excited to work together to see what we could do, and so we moved forward with planning. As more and more families began to sign up for their own outdoor crafting table, the anticipation was building.

On the day of the event I arrived at the church to find Susan and Kelly Tipton busy making preparations for our crafters. Each craft was neatly put together in individual kits, perfect for folks to pick up and return to the tables they had reserved. The most complex craft was the macromet angel, involving knot-tying and the use of a hairbrush. Crafters also made cute snowmen out of wooden beads, and a small nativity scene made of round wooden clothespins. Of course, Kelly did a terrific job of guiding our crafters in making their own beautiful Christmas wreaths. For the younger children there were several basic ornaments to be painted.

As I wandered between the tables chatting with our crafters, everyone seemed very impressed with the quality of the crafts. Some die-hard crafters even remarked, "I do crafts all the time, and these are really good ones!" This is a testament to Susan's preparations and vision! More than that, though, all of the families crafting together at their tables were enjoying quality time spent with one another.



One benefit of holding the event outside was the access to our playground. All of the young kids that came to the event seemed equally keen on running around and climbing on it as they did making crafts. For many of them, this was the first time they had played on a playground in a long time due to the COVID-19 closure of playgrounds in California. It was special to hear their excited, joyful shouts as they raced around playing.

While children were playing and crafters were crafting, it is worth mentioning that a team of folks were busy putting up Christmas lights in the courtyard. Led by Pastor Ben and Luke, Darby Sample, Dave Rush, Grant Sautner, and Greg Massa were able to put up an impressive array of lights.

As our final crafters said their farewells, I helped Susan tidy things up and get things put away. We both felt quite encouraged by the attendance of this year's event, especially considering its modified format. And, we both agreed, it was terrific to spend time with everyone as a Faith Lutheran community. As I powered down the speaker playing Christmas music and picked up the remaining branches of wreath greenery, I gave a quiet prayer of thanks for all the ways we have shown up for each other this year. We are indeed blessings to one another.

*Do you have an idea for an outdoor, socially-distanced event for our youth and families? Contact Colter at [colter@chicofaithlutheran.org](mailto:colter@chicofaithlutheran.org), as he is currently putting together the spring events calendar.*



## Intergenerational Snowshoe Hike!

**January 23rd, 2021 @ 8am**

Come and experience the joy of walking atop deep snow as Colter leads you on a hike near Lassen Volcanic National Park. All ages are welcome, and don't worry if you don't own snowshoes or haven't been snowshoeing before. We will rent enough gear for everyone who wants to join, and show you how. This will be a socially distanced, outdoor event. Please plan on driving your own vehicle to and from the hike. For more details, and to sign up, email Colter at [colter@chicofaithlutheran.org](mailto:colter@chicofaithlutheran.org).





# Poinsettias

~ Carol Grandy ~

In memory of Doris Grandy and in memory of those who have died from COVID.

~ Bill and Marj Bebensee ~

In memory of George Doring

~ Randy Franken ~

In memory of Jackie Roessel, Betty Whitmore, and Marnie Jolliffe, her dear friends; in memory of Matthew and Bill Franken, beloved son and husband; in memory of Buddy Black, dearest cousin

~ Joel and Linda Zimbelman ~

In memory of Jim and Elaine Waples, and Ernie Zimbelman, Joel and Linda's parents

~ Sue Ligon ~

In memory of Michael Costello and in memory of Herbie Ligon, and *thank you to Faith Lutheran volunteers for their wonderful work during the pandemic*

~ Annette Jefferson ~

In memory of Greg Henman

~ Bill and Carolyn Kees ~

In memory of Carolyn's parents, Pr. Roy and Selma Malde, and Bill's parents, Lena and Bill Woodmansee; In memory of Marnie Jolliffe, Jackie Roessel, Max Newman, Betty Whitmore, Giff Wilde, Bill Korte, and Bill Crowston

~ Howie and Lynette Stensrud ~

In honor of our Faith Lutheran Family, and in honor of the firefighters

~ Margaret Bergman ~

In memory of beloved husband Dick Bergman

~ Dave and Janine Rush ~

In memory of their fathers, Bert Rush, and Hank Schlichting

~ Luke Nicolay ~

In memory of Shalan Gannon

~ Michael Nicholson ~

In honor of Anne Tsong, for calling to check in on Faith's staff and members

# Equipping Amidst A Pandemic: Part II



Hopefully some recall an article 2 months ago about Pastor Ben, Luke, Kai, myself, and the Faith Audio Visual (A/V) team. The article focused on how Pastor Ben and Luke had made it their job to equip themselves with knowledge of multiple and simultaneous new computer programs, a string of cameras and a suddenly new way to bring weekly worship into the homes of our Faith family due to Covid-19. The story went on to tell how Pastor Ben and Luke spent time equipping Kai and myself to learn those skills and give away that part of their ministry, allowing them to continue preaching and leading worship in front of the cameras. Faith has had a talented group of people running the A/V desk for a number of years, but like so many other areas of our lives, Covid has introduced a new set of rules which required this team to be re-trained and re-educated to take something fairly simple and produce a similar result in a not-so-simple way. Equipping Ministry has, from its inception, believed that there are 5 simple steps to training for most any position within the church:

**1) I DO IT**

**2) I DO IT AND TAKE YOU WITH ME**

**3) YOU DO IT AND TAKE ME WITH YOU**

**4) YOU DO IT**

**5) YOU DO IT AND TAKE SOMEONE WITH YOU**

This is pretty much the process that was employed by Pastor Ben and Luke. Along comes Kyle. Kyle not only has an interest in working the A/V desk, Kyle is a natural at the sound board. Luke started to recruit others from the “old normal” team and some new members. As of this writing, Cindy and Adelio have gone through 4 of the 5 steps in the process. Kai and Kyle are now producing and training others to hone their passion for this area of ministry. With the soon to be installed A/V system, there will again be lots to learn, but it SHOULD be easier in the end and likewise make it easier for others to become involved. Faith has a group of volunteers that continue to amaze me. As far as worship goes, we have a fantastic staff, talented musicians, a dedicated Altar Guild, and dozens who work behind the scenes. Covid has brought challenges to most of these. I would be remiss if I did not say that without the Equipping, training, and education of these gifted volunteers, those of us who have tried to maintain some level of community by worshipping online would simply not be able to do so. I personally know so many churches who have sadly all but shut down. Not Faith. Next time you find yourself able, either personally or online, please post a special “thank you” to this amazing team!



One of the main theories behind Equipping Ministry is to give your ministry away or work yourself out of a job. If a leader's job is done properly, the more ministry they give away, the more ministry opportunity they will have to grow! I cannot begin to describe how fun it has been to be the "old guy" who has been welcomed into this area of ministry and I am thankful for that. At least temporarily, I have given away my job and get to see what is next. Ministry leaders, my challenge to you is to consider what parts of your job can you give to someone else? Give it a try and you will be amazed by the results.

Kim Schweder, Equipping Ministry



## Staff Away Time

Colter will be gone  
December 28 - January 7

Luke will be gone  
December 28 - January 10

Pastor Ben will be gone  
January 11 - January 17  
Bill Kees presiding over worship  
Lynette Stensrud preaching



# Men's Breakfast

Are you a man isolating during the pandemic, hoping to connect with other men? Join us Friday mornings at 8am over Zoom at [zoom.us/j/5308953754](https://zoom.us/j/5308953754) using the passcode 667. Good company and good conversation!

And don't forget to pick up your  
**Giving Envelopes**  
at the office, Monday thru Friday  
from 10am-3:30pm



## January Scriptures

**Sunday, January 3 ~ Second Sunday of Christmas**

Ephesians 1:3-14, Psalm 147:12-20, John 1:10-18

**Sunday, January 10 ~ Baptism of Our Lord**

Genesis 1:1-5, Psalm 29, Mark 1:4-11

**Sunday, January 17 ~ Second Sunday after Epiphany**

1 Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18, John 1:43-51

**Sunday, January 24 ~ Third Sunday after Epiphany**

Jonah 3:1-5, 10, Psalm 62:5-12, Mark 1:14-20

**January 31 ~ Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Psalm 111, Mark 1:21-28

# General Fund Finances as of 11/30/2020

	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Percent Of Budget
TOTAL INCOME	\$155,682.01	\$138,905.38	89.22%
TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>\$185,157.92</u>	<u>\$176,697.38</u>	95.43%
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(\$29,475.91)	(\$37,792.00)	
Beginning General Fund Balance as of 7/1/20		\$33,560.21	
Net Revenue through 11/30/20		<u>(\$37,792.00)</u>	
Ending General Fund Balance		<u><u>(\$4,231.79)</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.

As shown above we have a deficit in the General Fund of \$4,231.79 as of the end of November. We have had to borrow from the Capital Reserve Fund to cover this deficit. Hopefully, General Fund giving in December which historically has been our largest month for giving, will rectify this short fall.

Have a Very Merry Christmas!!!

Thank You All for your continued support.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact:

Mark Kimmelshue

(530) 520-8228

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