

JAN 2024



FAITH TALKS



WORSHIP SUNDAYS 9:30 AM AT
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, CHICO, CA

ABOUT THE COVER

As read in the gospel of Matthew, the three “wise men” or “magi” followed the Star of Bethlehem to Judea where baby Jesus was, offering him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.



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NEW YEARS RESOLUTION: SEASONAL BRAINSTORMING

BY PASTOR BEN

It's amazing how much of our lives are governed by habits. What you eat for breakfast, where you drive each morning, what you watch to relax at the end of the day: you likely don't make a conscious decision each day to choose these things. Odds are, habits have you running largely on autopilot.

In many ways, habits are very helpful. If I had to decide each morning to choose what to eat from all the possible food options in the world, I'd start every day overwhelmed. Instead, my subconscious grabs toast, peanut butter, and milk, while my active mind plans out my day. But even healthy habits can cause problems. Many mornings I've driven my car toward church for 3 blocks before realizing I had intended to go somewhere else!

Before the pandemic, we had a habit as a congregation: seasonal brainstorming. A month or so before Advent, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost, I would prepare a summary of the scriptures we would be reading in worship, along with themes and images that connected those scriptures. Then we'd have a gathering to which anyone in congregation was invited. After I explained the scriptures and themes for the season, we would brainstorm how to bring those scriptures to life through our worship, fellowship, and acts of service.

From these brainstorming sessions we developed ideas for art installations in worship, shaped our liturgy, rearranged chairs, came up with ideas for parties, and considered community partners we wanted to invite to collaborate with us. There were two guiding principles:

- 1) All ideas are welcome,
- 2) If you want an idea to happen, you must take leadership of it.



We got out of the habit of doing this seasonal brainstorming. It still happens on a smaller scale with individuals and committees. The Equipping Ministry has been developing exciting ideas for how we can encourage people to volunteer in the community during Lent. But the Spirit has a powerful way of working when we open wide the doors and invite everyone to contribute their inspiration and gifts. My New Year's Resolution is to have us return to this spiritual habit of seasonal brainstorming.

So on Sunday, January 14th, I invite you to stick around the sanctuary after worship. I will share the scriptures, and invite *you* to share with us what word the Holy Spirit puts in your heart and how to live it out. And together, we will discover new, old, and joyous ways to be the body of Christ together.

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Ben Colahan

SABBATICAL UPDATE



We have a plan to provide pastoral coverage while Pastor Ben is on sabbatical this coming summer! Pastors Carl Wilfrid, Greg Cootsona, and Bill Kees will each take a turn shepherding Faith Lutheran.



Bill Kees, a retired Lutheran pastor and long-time member of Faith Lutheran, will cover the first week of the sabbatical: May 27th-June 3rd.

Greg Cootsona, a pastor who served at Bidwell Presbyterian for many years, is now a professor at Chico State. He officiated the wedding of Pastor Ben and Annalisa, and will cover June 4th-June 30th.



Carl Wilfrid, former pastor of Faith Lutheran for 20 years, will cover from July 1st to the end of the sabbatical on August 18th. Pastor Carl's presence is made possible by Don and Carolyn Heinz donating the use of their house to Carl and his wife throughout their time in Chico.

Pastors Carl, Greg, and Bill: these three wisemen have decades of pastoring experience, know both Chico and the people of Faith Lutheran intimately, and will bring their spiritual gifts to enrich our community while Pastor Ben is away.



WORSHIP & MUSIC

LUKE NICOLAY, DIR. WORSHIP & MUSIC

MUSIC PRACTICE

Handbell Choir Practice - Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m.

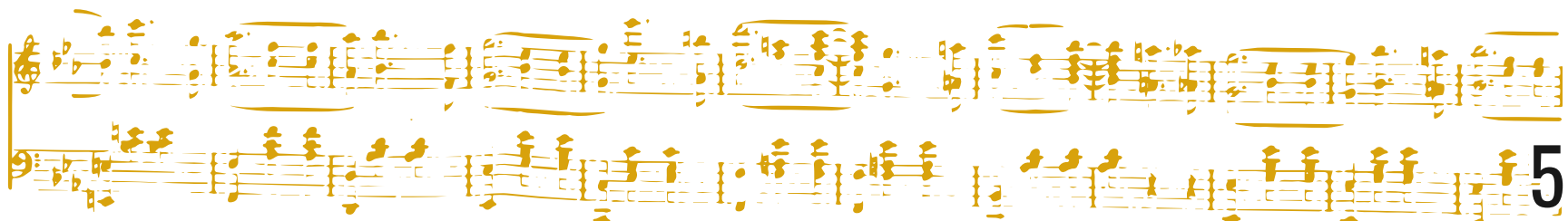
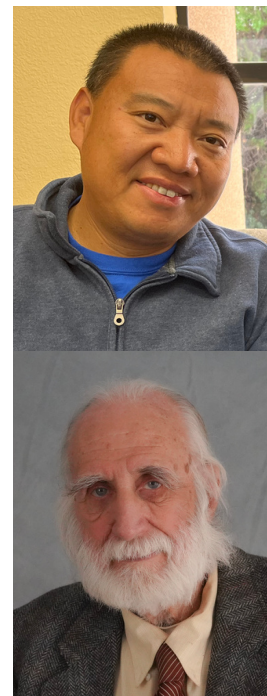
Choir Practice - Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.

Contemporary Music Practice - Thursdays at 7:00 p.m.

MELISSE BOYD PREACHING Sunday, January 7th

FAITH ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: THE HISTORY OF BOOK OF GENESIS Sundays, January 7th-28th at 11:00 a.m. in Room 7

If you heard Pastor Ben's Advent Wednesday lectures on how the Bible came to be, you learned that the Holy Spirit gave us scripture not in one single miracle but through hundreds of miracles over thousands of years. Continuing this theme, in January, a Faith Adult Continuing Education class will be offered on the Book of Genesis. This class will use video lectures from The Great Courses series in which a professor from Rutgers University examines the historical, literary, and theological background of Genesis. Rather than asking participants to apply Genesis to their personal spiritual lives, the class will invite participants to learn new tools for better understanding the context of Genesis. The class will be facilitated by Bill Augros and Alex Jia in Rooms 7-8 at 11am on Sundays after worship, January 7th-28th, with the possibility of continuing if there is interest.



SEASONAL BRAINSTORMING - LENT **Sunday, January 14th after Worship**

Pastor Ben will prepare a summary of the scriptures we will be reading in Lent, along with themes and images that connect those scriptures. After the pastor explains the scriptures and themes for the season, we will brainstorm how to bring those scriptures to life through our worship, fellowship, and acts of service. Everybody in the congregation is invited and encouraged to attend.



CUMULATIVE 160TH BIRTHDAY BRUNCH FOR CAROLYN & BILL **Sunday, January 28th** **after Worship**

In celebration of Carolyn and Bill Kees' combined birthday years of 160, you are invited to a light birthday brunch after worship on Sunday, January 28th. (Carolyn's birthday was November 17, 2023 and Bill's is on Wednesday, January 24th, 2024.)

We will begin eating immediately and pause for a prayer when the pastor gets here. There will be a 15-20 minute video sharing their lives together. No RSVP is needed, and thank you for sharing this special day with them!





ROOTED IN MUSIC

BY ALECIA GRAY

I have lived in seven states (GA, VA, FL, KS, OK, MT, CA) and one international city (London). Within those eight places, I have moved 16 times and have one more move on the horizon (next summer, more on that in a minute).

With each of those moves, there has been a need – and an opportunity – to say goodbye to places, people, activities, and items. I say an opportunity because sometimes it's good to have a clean slate; however, it's also tiring to start building connections. Thankfully one of the constants through all of the moves has been music – and building community through music.

I have been involved with music for as long as I can remember. That's what happens when you are raised by a professional singer, I guess. My mother was the soprano soloist for the First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta and performed around Atlanta. She also directed The Atlanta Opera productions that went into the local schools, performing for children and getting them involved in the performances too.



I remember riding in my mom's station wagon stuffed high with PVC pipes and painted canvases that assembled to be the sets for the traveling opera program, her dazzling costumes, her pretty false eyelashes, her somewhat strange stage make-up, and her blingy stage jewelry. I also remember her beautiful voice – which was most magically on display every Christmas Eve at the candlelight service when she would sing, "O Holy Night." (I still get to hear her lovely voice every year when she sings "Happy Birthday" to me.)

While my mom was the professional singer in the family, my dad wasn't a slouch and had a beautiful voice himself. However, he preferred performing in comedic roles and I have a fuzzy memory of him making King Nebuchadnezzar a funny character in a church production.



Whether it was written that way or my dad simply brought that element to it, I don't recall. My dad's / The family's motto was pretty much "always go for the laugh."

With two parents who performed – on- and off-stage – it's no surprise that my brother, Marthame, and I were also involved with music and performing. Marthame took piano and organ lessons, sang in the choir, performed in church musicals, and played the bass in several bands. When Ben (AKA BJ) and I got married in 2005, Marthame sang the Lord's Prayer in Arabic – he and his wife, Elizabeth, lived in a Christian town in Palestine for a few years. He is still involved with music – usually from the production side of things – but every now and then on his podcast (AIJcast) I get to hear him sing or play an instrument.

Like my mother and brother, I was also involved with church music – singing in the choir, ringing handbells, and performing in church musicals. My closest friends were my fellow church musicians, friends from church youth group, and school friends with whom I performed in chorus and musicals. In college I was lucky enough to go to a small liberal arts school where I continued singing. Even in the year that I studied in London, I sang with the London Philharmonic Choir and traveled with them to sing in Spain.

When I graduated from college, I aspired to become a cheesy lounge singer. I got signed on to a cruise ship, not as a performer, but as a hospitality hostess. I quickly realized that wasn't what I wanted to do and headed to work at Disney World as a cast member (Disney's word for employee). There I became involved with choirs and musical productions (not for the guests and tourists,

but for other cast members) and found fellow music lovers and friends there.

As BJ and I started dating, I learned that he had grown up playing French horn. It was fascinating to sit and listen to a piece of music with him because I was listening to the melody and the singing voices, while he was focused on the instrumentation. (I find the same is true with Ben – since he plays trombone in the school band – he’s listening to the bass clef instruments.)

When BJ and I moved to Lawrence, KS, I found a community choir to sing with, while also singing with the church choir. (Rinse and repeat for Stillwater, OK.) With our move to Missoula, MT and then here in Chico, I’ve been involved with the church choirs. As we look to moving to the Santa Maria area (for BJ’s job) next summer, I’m already searching up what options I will have to be involved with music, and we’re looking strategically for schools with bands for Ben.



For me, being part of making music is one of the ways that a new location feels like home. That is what the choir at Faith Lutheran Church has been for me, a place to feel at home, and I am exceedingly grateful. If you have ever wanted to try singing with the choir and ringing bells, I would encourage you to do it! You’ll find a group of welcoming, supportive, and fun people!

Written by Alecia Gray, Choir



FAITH FAMILY NEWS

DANI VOGEL, DIR. FAMILY LIFE

In lieu of an article this month, enjoy photos from the advent season of children and family life at the church!





COMMUNITY SERVICE

MICHAEL N.D., OFFICE MANAGER

SAFE SPACE WINTER SHELTER SUNDAY, JANUARY 7TH - SUNDAY, JANUARY 21ST

Safe Space Winter Shelter is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization providing low-barrier emergency shelter during the coldest winter months for people experiencing homelessness in Chico, California. This year's shelter started in December, and will rotate from church to church until March.



From January 7th-21st, Faith Lutheran will host Safe Space. I encourage everybody to pick up a shift or make a meal - - there are roles for everyone and their unique skills and abilities! Serving at Safe Space is an excellent way to show mercy and compassion this cold winter season, whether it's the gift of food, conversation, or helping hands. You can contact me at the office if you'd like to learn more!

MAKING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

If you haven't read December's edition yet, you've gotta check out Steve Hall's Equipping Ministry article! The Equipping Ministry is working with the congregation to make new (and rekindle old) community connections by inviting representatives to share about their organizations during Lent this year.

Consider organizations who can use volunteers, who make positive impacts on the community.

If you can think of an organization who would be a good fit for this, please reach out to Steve Hall or myself and let us know what your thoughts are!



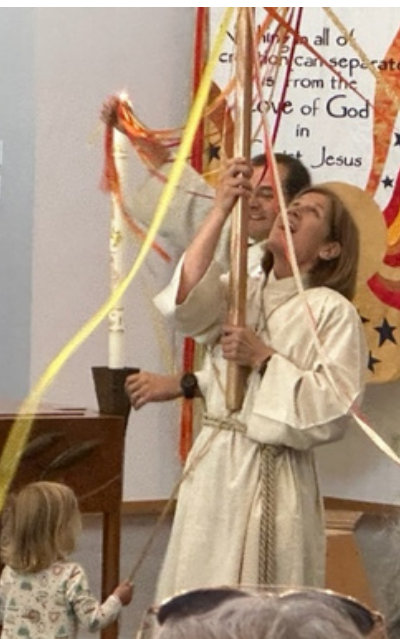
RICH CHURCH, POOR CHURCH

JILL BENTLER, COUNCIL PRESIDENT

I've started and stopped and deleted the beginning sentence of this message at least three times now. Why? At the root of it my answer is "money." But woven into that answer is ministry, staff, and infrastructure. And that web gets more intricate as all of them are so closely woven together.

This year the church council has made it a priority to learn more about the various ministries that operate at Faith Lutheran and how we can better support their outreach. Among the things we want to know are who do they serve, how can we support their efforts, and does their budget meet their needs? Money can be a difficult subject to talk about but if I am honest, it is at the root of many of our council discussions.

Another task the council has taken on this year is reading a book titled *Rich Church, Poor Church: Keys to Effective Financial Ministry*. Simply put the book contrasts the habits of congregations that are financially sound and those that struggle. Most recently we read a chapter titled, "Asking." At its essence, this chapter details that the poor church is afraid to ask for money while the rich church has learned that great gifts usually come from a great ask. The poor church makes decisions that will keep people content while the rich church has a passion for the gospel and helping the congregation grow spiritually.





It feels very bold to me to ask for money but when you give to our church you support that web I mentioned in my first paragraph. Each part of that web is dependent upon the others. Your support of Faith Lutheran allows us to pay living wages to our staff. Having excellent staff supports our many ministries and groups at the church. In turn, those ministries and groups perform outreach to our community and spread the good news of the gospel and to help us to learn and grow in our Christian faith. The last part of that web is infrastructure, perhaps the least interesting part of that web but a critical one as we recently realized at the demise of yet another aging HVAC system in the Sunday school rooms. But without heat we cannot meet the needs of our rapidly growing Sunday school population.

So, I boldly ask you to help Faith Lutheran to be a Rich Church. To be passionate about

sharing the gospel and growing our faith. To give your talents and your treasure. I ask also for your prayers that our council be good stewards of the financial contributions of this congregation. This is a burden we strive to willingly and thoughtfully bear. As always, we welcome your presence and input at any of our meetings.

With thanks for the many blessings you bring to Faith, Jill.



COUNCIL MINUTES

ALYSSA MANES, COUNCIL SECRETARY

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, December 12, 2023
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the home of Jill Bentler

Members Present: Pastor Ben Colahan, Jill Bentler, Steve Hall, Mark Kimmelshue, Alyssa Manes, Pat Snyder, Sharon Prindle, Martha McDermott, Elaine Lund, Mary Schweder. **Members Absent:** Leanne Chrisman, Sky Sample.

Call to Order and Celebrations

Devotion – Pastor Ben: two years ago the Bishop of our Lutheran synod removed a pastor from a church without tactfulness – a reminder that leaders make mistakes but it's important to listen to others after the fact. Acronym LAST to deal with situations: L – Listen, A – Acknowledge (express sympathy that there is a problem), S – Solve (sometimes we can solve a situation, and sometimes we need to point someone in the right direction/person, or for a team to address an issue), T – Thank the person

Ministry Reports

Equipping Team – presented by Steve Hall

Welcome Table – presented by Mary Schweder

Budget discussion - in February we will touch base with ministries. In March we will start finalizing budget. We want to make sure it's well-communicated that the congregation is invited to be included in the budget process, e.g. to view the budget draft before the annual meeting.

Approval of minutes from November / approved

Financial Report – presented by Mark Kimmelshue / approved

Staff Report - Sabbatical coverage arranged for Pastor Ben next summer. Youth will be raising money for Youth Gathering trip next summer.

New Business

Heating and Air unit needs to be replaced. We have some money in the refinance account. Motion and second to replace HVAC for Sunday School/passed.

New business to discuss next year

Ben's housing allowance; we may have to consider facility use price increase; liaisons from council to check in with ministries to see how they're doing and how we can support.

Adjournment





FINANCIAL REPORT

MARK KIMMELSHUE, COUNCIL TREASURER

Faith Lutheran Church General Fund Finances as of 11/30/23

	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Percent Of Budget
TOTAL INCOME	\$183,667.60	\$191,213.75	104.11%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$228,123.33	\$217,576.35	95.38%
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(\$44,455.73)	(\$26,362.60)	
Beginning General Fund Balance as of 7/1/2022		\$25,381.31	
Net Revenue through 11/30/23		<u>(\$26,362.60)</u>	
Ending General Fund Balance		<u><u>(\$981.29)</u></u>	

The figures shown above are for the first 5 months of the fiscal year. As shown, expenses have exceeded income by \$26,362.60 leaving a negative balance in the General Fund of \$981.29. This negative balance was covered by a temporary transfer from the Capital/Savings account which will be repaid to that account. Year end giving in December has been good which hopefully will replenish the General Fund.

Thank You All for your continued support.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact:

Mark Kimmelshue

530-520-8228

kimmelshue@armcorice.com



POINSETTIAS



**From Eileen Wayne & Marnie Smith:
In memory of Marci Miller, in memory of Bill and Rita
Wayne, in thanksgiving for a happy marriage, and in
thanksgiving for wonderful children and grandchildren.**

**Michael and John Nicholson-Dick:
In thanksgiving of all of you at FLC.**

**Roseanna Cassetta:
In memory of Rosemary Smith.**

**Greg & Vickie James:
In memory of Cal and Margie James, and in memory of
Sam and Dorothy Albin.**

**Janine & Dave Rush:
In celebration of our families.**

**Faye Johnson:
In memory of Carl.**

**Dax, Karen, and Dustin Kimmelshue:
In memory of Ed & Ruby Kimmelshue, and in memory of
Keith and Anneliese Williams.**

**Dave & Molly Barnum:
In celebration of our kiddos, in laws, and grandkiddos.**





ROSES



Safe Space Winter Shelter for collaborating with us in January, with a shoutout to Quin Troester for his presentation after church in December.

Dawn Stafford for organizing the advent poinsettias.

Each and every one of you who brought meals and healthy snacks for the staff.

Bill Winn, who is clear of cancer!

Everybody who provided soup and bread for Holden Soup Suppers this advent.

All those who made or brought treats to share during coffee hour or with each other.

The FLC choir, handbell choir, contemporary team, Fairchilds, and vocalists who made this Christmas season so special.

St. John's Episcopal with a shoutout to Jeff Johnson for collaborating with us for Lessons and Carols.

Elaine Lund and Leanne Chrisman for organizing the Giving Tree.

Each and every one of you who offered your time and talents to make this Christmas bright.

Everyone who made gluten-free bread for our Communion taste-testing.

Each and every one of you who (unbeknownst to the staff!) contributed to our Christmas bonuses. That was quite a surprise!

The Tuesday Quilters, who raised \$470 for Toys for Tots with their awesome winter bake sale!

There were 3 Wise Men. Each one gave a gift to baby Jesus: frankincense, gold, and myrrh. Do you know which of those three gifts is not a kind of perfume?



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CHURCH COUNCIL

President Jill Bentler | VP Steve Hall | Treasurer Mark Kimmelshue
Secretary Alyssa Manes | Members Pat Snyder, Elaine Lund, Sky Sample, Leanne
Chrisman, Martha McDermott, Sharon Prindle, Mary Schweder

A COMMUNITY REFLECTING GOD'S LOVE WITH A PLACE AT THE TABLE FOR EVERYONE

Office Hours: Monday-Friday from 10A-4:30P

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