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# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH | NOVEMBER 2020

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# Virtual Bi-Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, November 8 at 10:00 AM

We will have our Congregational Meeting on Sunday, November 8 by ZOOM to discuss and approve the 2021 Financial Mission Plan and to approve leaders for the Church Council.

Click here to join the ZOOM meeting.

# **Scattered Thoughts**

by Rev. Kerry Nelson, Senior Pastor



For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.

### For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. -Jeremiah 29:10-14

November opens with All Saints' Day, a service which reminds us every year of the brevity of life, the loved ones who have gone on before us, and the ultimate triumph of God's love over the powers of death and destruction. This year will be especially poignant as we remember saints like Cindy Long, Sharon Richter, John Wittenbraker, Doris Rosenbaum, and all who have died during this painful time of social distancing and uncertainty. Over time, grief gives way to gratitude but that is even more bitter without the comforts of physical community.

November ends with a national holiday, Thanksgiving Day, and the beginning of a new liturgical year, Advent. We do well to remember that the first Thanksgiving Day was also celebrated at the end of a brutal year of death and uncertainty. That the voices of the prophets, Isaiah of old and John the Baptizer

Continued on next page...

# Check out FaithBellaire.InFellowship.com!

<u>InFellowship</u> is our secure and easy to use online tool that allows our members and guests to connect to what's happening at Faith. Through your online accounts, you will be able to:



#### 1) Access and update your contact information

Our Privacy Settings allow individuals to determine which pieces of personal information can be viewed by others.

#### 2) Search and manage group involvement

This allows group leaders to manage groups and contact members of their group and prospects to find and inquire about joining a group.

#### 3) Use the church directory - You MUST OPT-IN

Allows users to opt in to have their information displayed in an online directory. All access to information is controlled by the user by configuring your privacy settings.

#### 4) View your contribution statements

Once enrolled, the church office will approve the user profile and contributions will be posted to the head of household's profile.

#### 5) Find a group

Click "Find a group" and "Search" to see a listing of current Learning Groups and Relational Groups. See topic descriptions, times and locations, and sign up to participate. The mission of Faith Lutheran Church is to follow Jesus in blessing the world with faith, hope, and love.

#### Continued...

the contemporary, both sang promises of the Messiah in the midst of seasons of tremendous social pain and dislocation.

Again, the people of God took comfort and purpose in the promises of God. They didn't see the painful times as evidence of God's absence - they saw God's loving presence even more clearly. 2020 has been a year of global trauma. We need not run through the list again of the traumatic realities of this year. We have all been affected. No one has been spared. Some have suffered worse than others. We have all found ourselves reacting to the trauma through the inevitable self-protective options of fight, flight, or freeze.

But we are people who trust in God's care, God's providence. We know that there is one more "f" word that is even more powerful than fight, flight or freeze - FAITH is the most powerful antibody to fear that the world has ever known. No matter how bad things get, our faith clings to the promise - "For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

Between All Saints' and Advent, we will all pass through an Election Day that cannot come too soon. Even though the stakes are historically high in this one, we do well to remember that nothing will change for the better immediately, regardless of who is elected in the November elections. Leaders are always a reflection of the people they lead, and no leader can be effective without followers. And, since I am writing this in October, we should be prepared for a particularly messy conclusion to the election itself. Nothing has been easy in 2020.

As has long been the open question before us, we all wonder when we will be able to worship together publicly rather than virtually. We will bring an update to that question to our congregational meeting on November 8. I know that I deeply miss seeing faces on Sunday mornings. It is truly an act of faith to preach to an empty room. And I know your shared pain runs far more deeply as you miss seeing friends with whom you have shared many years of your lives. There will come a time when we get to a new normal. Right now, our decisions are driven by love for our neighbor rather than by politics or political pressure. We all need to keep the faith, to be loyal to our mission and to one another, and to each do our part to keep the congregation strong and effective in all that happens through us, for the good of the world.

it and



# **CCSC Food Pantry Drive**

entrepreneur.

Christian Community Service Center is on the front lines of feeding people and meeting their basic needs. During this national COVID-19 crisis, CCSC is experiencing difficulty obtaining groceries from its distributors, so your food donations will help keep the shelves stocked.

You can drop off food donations at the following two locations:

1. Food Pantry at 3230 Mercer St. (77027) Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM -2:00 PM and Saturdays 9:00 AM -11:00 AM.

2. Food Pantry at 6856 Bellaire Blvd (77074) Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM, CCSC's Bellaire food pantry is located in the church's Canterbury Hall on the east side of the church campus (the same side as KIPP Connect school). Go to the blue double doors of the building closest to the athletic field.

# Here's a list of items that will help the most:

- Bags with handles for packing groceries (paper, reusable, plastic)
- Pasta
- Hearty soups (with meat or beans)
- Canned tuna or chicken
- Boxed dry cereal
- Canned vegetables (all types)
- Canned fruit (all types) •
- **Cleaning wipes**
- Toilet paper
- Bar soap
- Baby wipes/diapers (sizes 4, 5, and 6)



# News from the Langdjis Living in Yaounde, Cameroon Serving Madagascar, West and Central Africa



For several months we have wondered how to share with you what our work and life is like now in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is a pandemic, that means it is everywhere and thus has affected everyone in some way. We know that your lives have all been affected: health, work, vacations, gatherings with friends and family and church or other groups. We watch and listen to how people have struggled and managed to adapt. It is a new experience for most. Because of conflict or another disaster which may have forced them to leave their homes

or shelter in place before, some people are experiencing this as a repeat of a past experience. Yet others are in communities that, due to their distance from urban centers, have been somewhat protected from Covid-19.

In this region there is a combination of experiences. But all the countries where we normally would make visits to companion churches and organizations have been impacted. They have all taken measures to limit the spread of Covid-19. The churches and organizations too have had to either stop their activities or slow them down or adapt. Over the past several months here are some examples from the region:



- The Lutheran Church of Guinea has implemented a Covid-19 response program with ELCA support which included things like providing handwashing materials and supplies to people in the community. The project has successfully reached about 250 of the people in the community where this young lutheran church is present in a prode
- 250 of the poorest families where this young Lutheran church is present, in a predominantly Muslim context.
  The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon, following the measures put in place by the government,



changed how congregations worshipped. Due to a limitation in the number of people who could gather together and physical distancing requirements, some congregations shortened their worship services to have more services with fewer people at each. In some places the treasurer of the congregation received offerings via mobile money, using cell phones.

• In Madagascar, national gatherings were not able to be held. The Malagasy Lutheran Church, who sadly lost their national president (presiding bishop) due to Covid-19, is waiting for the time to gather again in order to elect a new leader for their vibrant, growing church.

We know that you in the US and elsewhere have also had joys and sorrows during this time and we are all still wondering how to best be the church and serve today. Through these days and months, God is present and will continue to support us all.



# Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

# **A Difficult Conversation**

by Dr. Clayton Faulkner, Director of Worship, Music, and Technology



Dear Faith Lutheran Church family and friends: We need to talk. I acknowledge that this is a difficult conversation to have. It requires a certain amount of truth telling, but it is something that you need to hear.

Here is the truth. The Covid-19 pandemic is not ending soon. We stopped worshipping in-person at Faith on March 15. As of this writing that is seven and a half months of being apart. In that time we

have been without in-person fellowship, singing, sharing communion, or passing the peace. And our

time apart is not over.

I know that many had hoped for the chance to be together for Christmas. But that isn't going to happen. We had hoped to observe Lessons and Carols together, which is a long-standing tradition that all our musical ensembles prepare for. We had hoped to sing Christmas carols together and light candles as we recessed from the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. But that won't happen.

It seems hard to believe that we will not be together for both Easter and Christmas this year. The truth is that it is still not safe for everyone to be together. We have many people that are in vulnerable categories. To gather together and invite you to worship in-person is not valuing your health and well-being. And we know that expressing our love to God is pointless if it does not also include expressing our love for our neighbors.

It is difficult to acknowledge that our Christmas celebrations will be more somber this year. It is hard to imagine that after these many months into the pandemic, we are still far from an end. We have to wait, hope, and remember. We have to exercise patience and live with the memory of our fellowship, singing, sharing communion, and passing the peace.

One day they will return, but even when it does it will be different. Truthfully, when we do return to in-person worship one day in the distant future, it will be missing the things that make church special. You won't be able to see each other's faces unmasked. You won't be able to receive communion in the same way. You won't be able to sing freely. It is hard to imagine how long it will be before Faith Choir gathers to rehearse and sing again. The truth is that the majority of Faith Choir members are in a vulnerable category. Gathering in a group is unsafe. Gathering vulnerable people in a group is doubly unsafe. Gathering in a group, with vulnerable people, to forcibly expel air from their mouths by singing is triply unsafe. In this case, loving our neighbor looks like not having a Faith Choir for a while.

This is why we use the same small-but-consistent group of worship leaders every week. By doing this we reduce their exposure to a minimum. When we gather to sing, even while wearing masks, even standing distant from each other, it is risky. But the risk of their exposure is lessened by only having one service, limiting our time of interaction, and not bringing in additional people.

I realize this is a difficult conversation to swallow. I'm also aware of the heightened anxiety all of us are already living with. I pray that this will not add more anxiety to your life. But I also want to point out this is a loss to be grieved. There is no doubt about that. The loss of our assembling together will be different for each individual, but the grief is real, even if it seems small in comparison to all else happening in the world. Allow yourself to grieve and trust that God is with us during the exile as well as the return.

# **Celebrating 75 Years at Faith Lutheran Church**

Preparations are underway for a year-long celebration to commemorate Faith Lutheran Church's 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Anniversary. If you would like to volunteer for one or more of the activities, we want to hear from you! Please email **jubileeteam@faithbellaire.org** and let us know what area(s) you are interested in, or if you are willing to help as needed. Specific areas where help is needed include: audio-visual, photo journalism, event hosts, fundraising, and archiving.

What: Celebrating 75 Years of God's Blessings: 1946 - 2021

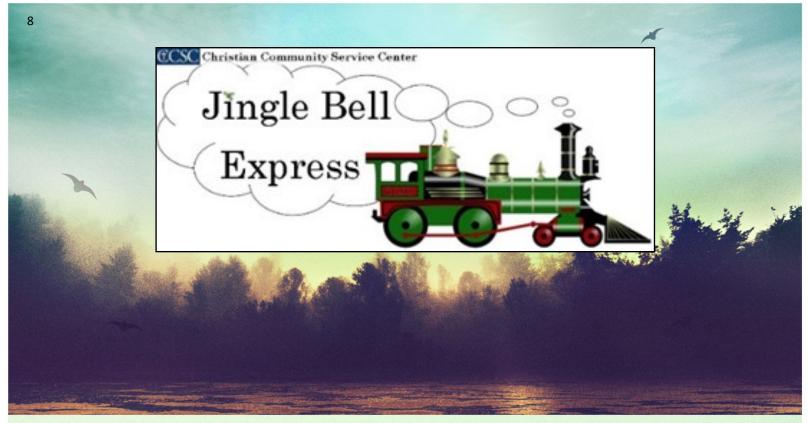
- Why: In 1 Corinthians 13:13, Paul writes, "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (NRSV). The mission of Faith Lutheran Church is to follow Jesus in blessing the world with faith, hope and love. During the Jubilee, we will celebrate how we carry out our mission through worship, healing, and learning.
- When: Please save the following dates:

January 31, 2021: Commencement March 21, 2021: Celebrating 75 years of Worship at Faith June 6, 2021: Celebrating 75 years of Healing Ministries at Faith November 21, 2021: Celebrating 75 years of Learning at Faith January 23, 2022: Celebrating 75 Years of Faith Gala

- How: The following will be heard or seen consistently throughout the year-long celebration: Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSV)
   Prayer: "Anniversary of a Church" from ELW page 62
   Song: "Be a Blessing" written and performed by Faith Alive! Band
  - Hymn(s): "Healer of our Every Ill" and "You are the Light of the World"
  - The Faith Lutheran 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Anniversary Commemorative Book is under construction
- Who: Jubilee Anniversary Planning Committee co-chairs are: Karen Elsen and George Amundson

We look forward to celebrating with you!





# Jingle Bell Express – 2020 Program Updates!

Christian Community Service Center (CCSC) has designed a SAFE and NEW approach to **Jingle Bell Express** ensuring families in need receive help this Christmas. CCSC's goal is to provide 1,000 children (ages 0 – 15 years) with new toys and books. Families will receive a grocery gift card to purchase pantry essentials or prepare a special meal.

The December event will still take place at our host site, Bellaire United Methodist Church (4417 Bellaire Blvd), but is being modified as a drive-thru event to safely serve our community. Gifts will be packaged in advance and placed in vehicles by a limited number of volunteers. All clients and volunteers must register with CCSC in advance.

# Jingle Bell Express Dates

November 30	Last day to order toy donations from CCSC's online WISH LIST
December 4	Last day to drop off toy donations at CCSC – 3434 Branard St (9 AM – 3 PM)
December 7	Drop off toy donations at Jingle Bell Express – 4417 Bellaire Blvd (9 AM – 6 PM)
December 7 – 9	Event Setup (TBD)
December 10 – 12	Gift Distribution (TBD)

#### How Can I Help?

**Donate new TOYS!** Please consider purchasing new, unwrapped, nonviolent **primary toys** for children ages newborn – 15 years old. To access our Jingle Bell Express **WISH LIST** for online purchasing or gift suggestions visit <u>www.ccschouston.org</u>. The deadline for toy donations is earlier this year: December 7.

Thanks to the generosity of the **Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation's Ladies for Literacy Guild**, each child will receive multiple books from popular authors to delight and inspire a love for reading. CCSC is thrilled to receive this level of support for Jingle Bell Express. Because of their generosity, we do not need additional book donations for this year's program.

**Volunteers** are still needed, but in a limited quantity through pre-required sign-ups. Indoor and outdoor volunteer opportunity information will be made available in November. Spanish speaking volunteers are especially helpful during the Gift Distribution days.

Jingle Bell Express Contact: Cathy Brown – Youth Services Manager, <u>seasonal@ccschouston.org</u> or 713-961-3993

# From Fear to Hope

by Rev. Junfeng Tan, Associate Pastor



As I am writing, cases of Covid-19 are trending upward in the Greater Houston Area. Many other parts of the country and the world are also seeing new records of Covid cases and hospitalizations as the cold/flu season and holidays are fast approaching. Some public health experts are giving a stark warning: we are perhaps at the cusp of what is going to be exponential spread. With this in mind, we may ask, "How shall we prepare for the celebration of Thanksgiving during a global pandemic?"

The Bible says, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). How can we rejoice when tens of thousands of people are dying from the coronavirus in the world? How can we give thanks when millions of people are experiencing great loses and suffering? The Bible also says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). How can we not be anxious when we do not seem to know how and when this pandemic will end? I do not have easy and straightforward answers to these questions. When I pray, I find myself repeating these verses in Psalm 13:

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? (Psalm 13:1-2)

As I keep reciting Psalm 13 from the beginning to the end, I become less anxious and more hopeful because the lament in the psalm gives way to hope for a better day.

But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13:5-6)

If we trust in the almighty God, let us become trustworthy in doing everything we can to help stop the spread of the coronavirus.

If we have faith in the unfailing love of the Lord, let us be found faithful, accountable, and helpful to one another, especially the most vulnerable in our community.

If our heart is to rejoice in God's salvation, let us shake off our Covid fatigue and follow the Covid -19 Health and Safety Protocols religiously.

It goes without saying this Thanksgiving is going to be different for all of us. It is my prayer and hope that, despite all the loses and challenges we are facing, we can still count our blessings, share our blessings, and give thanks to God "because he has dealt bountifully with me."



Ways to stay connected with Faith Lutheran Church throughout the week You can find links to join all our groups at our website: <u>https://faithbellaire.org/launch-day-august-23/</u>



# SUNDAY

8:30 AM - Online Worship in English

- 9:30 AM Virtual Family Learning
- 9:45 AM Virtual Fellowship Hall

10:00 AM - Kindergarten-2nd Grade Group

10:00 AM - 3rd-5th Grade Group

10:00 AM - Taking Faith Home Group

10:00 AM - Circle of Friends Group

10:30 AM - The Universal Christ Group

10:30 AM - Parents of Young Families Group

10:50 AM - Online Worship in Chinese 星期天中文敬拜

4:00 PM - Confirmation for Middle School

5:30 PM - Young Adult Learning Group

6:00 PM - High School Learning Group

6:00 PM - DivorceCare Group

#### TUESDAY

7:00 PM - First Place for Health Group

#### WEDNESDAY

10:00 AM - GriefShare Group

12:00 PM - The Word on Wednesday with Pastor Kerry

7:00 PM - Weight God's Way Group

7:30 PM - Learning Group with Clayton Faulkner

8:00 PM - Chinese Learning Group 周三查经

#### THURSDAY

7:30 PM - Faith Choir Group

#### FRIDAY

6:30 PM - First Fridays at Faith Group with Kathy Patrick

#### SATURDAY

8:00 PM - Chinese Couples Group 夫妻小组



# News from the Children's Ministry

by Courtney Lerch, Children's Ministry Coordinator



Throughout this fall, Virtual Family Learning has walked through the first two books of the Old Testament, focusing our study on the major figures of these early years of the faith. Beginning with Abraham and following his descendants through Joseph, we then picked up the story of the Israelites in Egypt with Moses, exploring his leadership during this crucial time in the history of the faith. Our focus during the month of November will be on the Ten Commandments, and we will conclude our Old Testament study this fall with the Battle of Jericho from the book of Joshua. These Old Testament stories are an important component of Christian spirituality. Although children will not fully understand all the rich meaning in

each of these stories, it is important for them to be introduced to the stories and some of the basic elements that influence and enrich our faith. These initial explorations will be the foundation from which they gradually build up to a deeper understanding.

During these long months of absence from worshipping together, my main goal is to support families in their faith formation in the home. My hope is that the Virtual Family Learning videos and supporting resources help families continue their faith journey at home during these months apart. We all long for a time when we can come together again, but in the meantime, let us reflect on what we can learn from this experience and what lessons we can carry with us long after the pandemic is over. Now is the perfect time to establish some family rituals that nurture our own

faith and that of our children. It is important to remember that certain things that work for some families do not work for others. I encourage you to look at the resources we send out each week with the Virtual Family Learning video and try out different ideas and see what works for your family. Despite the many difficulties endured during the pandemic, I hope that we can look back and say that our families strengthened their spirituality during this time and incorporated some new family faith rituals that they will continue to practice for many years to come.





**Childlike Faith** by John Vickery, Director of Youth and Family Ministry



The other day I was sitting in the living room working on some work, and across the room was Addy, crawling from place to place, exploring her surroundings. As many of you know, Addy is now about nine months old, and she is beginning to really show her personality, especially through her need to explore. As she moved about, a seemingly constant stream of babbling came out of her mouth. At times it sounded like sincere excitement, and at others extreme curiosity. I didn't think much of it at the time, but that was only the tip of the iceberg.

Later that evening, it was my turn to give Addy her bath. Now that she is able to sit up on her own,

Kelsey and I put a very small amount of water in the bottom of the tub, and let her sit up and play with some toys that float around in the water. Addy will watch them intently, trying to catch them. Again, constantly, she would look up to me with wide eyes, almost as if she was looking for an explanation of how water itself worked to keep the toys afloat, or even how it had the capability of cleaning.

In a similar fashion, I find myself viewing my faith in the same ways. There are times that I read the Bible, even stories that I have heard hundreds of times, and I have to believe that it is true. Time and time again we read about instances of Jesus performing acts that no one could understand or explain, and the only thing that is expected of us is to believe. How does spitting into dirt, making mud, smearing it on the eyes restore sight to the blind man? The truth is, that we don't know. But we do know that that healing is possible for Jesus, so we believe. I picture myself being placed in the same situation as an onlooker. I would imagine that I would be astonished, wide-eyed with amazement because I would have no understanding of how it was physically possible.

We often hear that we ought to have a childlike faith, and I think that this is the sort of thing that it means. Similar to how Addy doesn't understand how the water in her bathtub works, we don't understand the full power of God. But, we long to learn, and we long to believe. We should do these things wide-eyed and ready to share, even if we don't know exactly what words to use!

# A Message from the Council President

by Yvonne Moody, Church Council President



Please make plans to join us for the annual congregational meeting on November 8 at 10:00 AM. Details for joining the virtual meeting using a Zoom link have been provided in the weekly church email update. We have several important issues on the agenda, including a vote to approve our 2021 church budget and the election of new lay leaders for next year. In addition, we will plan to review the metrics that the Church Council will use to determine when we will return to in-person worship and what you can expect worship to look like at that time.

The 2021 proposed budget has been provided in the weekly email updates for your review, as well as three open budget forums on the Sundays prior to the meeting. Following is a brief summary of what is included in next year's operating budget.

Given that we have seen significant budget shortfalls over the past three years, we began the budgeting process with a goal of cutting up to 10% of our operating costs. This requires that we focus our efforts on what is essential to our mission as a congregation.

The 10% overall decrease compared to the 2020 budget includes the following:

- Planned 10% reduction in income. We cannot plan to receive a significant financial gift from the Day School, and external rental income is down due to the pandemic. General offerings are also down this year.
- Paid staff are being held to current salaries and for the second year in a row we are not budgeting for merit raises or cost of living increase.
- The Children's Ministry Coordinator position will be paid by the church instead of the Day School.
- Clayton Faulkner will be paid through the end of his seminary classes mid-year. However, unless we see significant increased giving, his position will end when he completes seminary, and we pray that he receives his first call as a pastor. Worship duties will be assumed by other church staff.
- Other significant line item reductions include:
  - Decrease in community life budget due to fewer in-person community events.
  - Reduction of part-time staff when the building is closed.
  - Reduction in hospitality due to required food service restrictions during the pandemic.
  - Reduced synod mission support in proportion to reduced general giving. However, we will maintain giving levels for community partners like CCSC, Santiago Apostol, Lutherhill, missionary sponsorship, seminary, campus ministry and TLU.
  - Reduced sponsor expenses and supplies for Youth and Family ministry.

The church council looks forward to your participation and support of our annual congregational meeting. If you have any questions or concerns about participating virtually, please contact the church office.



**Continue to Financially Support Our Mission Through These Challenging Times** 

The ministry of Faith Lutheran is made possible only by the generous financial support of our members and guests.

As we have joined the rest of the country in moving our worship life online, we anticipate a possible significant impact on our congregational finances. Your continued support of the church and mission is ever more



important. Since only about 30% of our giving comes through online giving or automatic bank drafts, we run the risk of losing 70% of our financial support.

# Here is how you can help...by giving online or through bank automated checks.

1. If you use the "bill pay" feature at your bank, 100% of your gift will come in a check sent directly to Faith.

2. Giving online at <u>www.faithbellaire.org/give</u> can be very convenient but every gift costs the congregation a small service change if giving by credit card. Giving online can be set up to give electronically by check (no fee) or credit card and there is also a feature to set up your frequency.

3. Mail a check to the church office using one of our prepaid postage offering envelopes. Please send an email to the church office at *info@faithbellaire.org* and request for us to mail some to you.

4. If you are required to make annual IRA withdrawals, consider giving a portion directly to the congregation. Consult your financial advisor for the tax savings and charitable contribution impact of such gifts.

If you have questions about setting up online giving, processing a one time gift, or other types of gifts, please call Stacy Williams at 713-664-3381 or email her at swilliams@faithbellaire.org.

Here's our mailing address for your reference.

Faith Lutheran Church 4600 Bellaire Blvd Bellaire, TX 77401

# **Salem Keenagers - Upcoming Events**

The Keenagers **November 12** luncheon at St John's Presbyterian Church and our **November 19** bus trip have been **cancelled** due to the continued spread of the Covid-19 virus.

#### UPCOMING KEENAGER TRIPS

Mark your calendars for the following upcoming bus trip dates. More information about these trips will be coming later. Hopefully we will be able to get together again soon.

Thursday, December 17 - No plans at this time Thursday, January 21 – No plans at this time Friday, February 12 – No plans at this time Thursday, March 18 – No plans at this time

PLEASE NOTE: All payments for bus trips must be paid in full at least a week before our trip unless you are on a waiting list or unless tickets need to be purchased in advance. Please use separate checks for each event. If paying in person, please place the money in an envelope and mark on the front of the envelope: the event, the amount, and your name. Please make all checks payable to Carole Knaub as Keenagers does not have a bank checking account. Checks may be mailed to me at 1802 Thompson Crossing Drive, Richmond, TX 77406. Please call Carole Knaub at 281 -344-0312 if interested in this luncheon or any of the above trips.

Remember, Keenagers is for anyone age 50 or older regardless of religious preference. Come and get involved and have fun.

Faith Lutheran Church 4600 Bellaire Boulevard at Avenue B Bellaire, Texas 77401

Office: 713-664-3048 Fax: 713-664-3371 Faith Day School: 713-664-3233 Mother's Day Out: 713-664-7726

FaithBellaire.org FaithDaySchool.org FaithHouseHouston.org info@faithbellaire.org Rev. Kerry Nelson Rev. Junfeng Tan Stacy Williams Dr. Clayton Faulkner John Vickery Courtney Lerch Kendolyn Pope Yu Cao Alan Balius Nettie Rodriguez Senior Pastor Associate Pastor Director of Operations Director of Worship, Music, and Technology Director of Youth and Family Children's Ministry Coordinator Director of Faith Schools Office Coordinator Organist/Choir Director Evening Facility Manager

# **Celebrating Advent at Home**

by Clayton Faulkner, Director of Worship, Music, and Technology

One of the important traditions of our faith is the observance of the Christian liturgical calendar. The new calendar year begins with Advent, the four Sundays that lead up to Christmas. This year Advent begins on Sunday, November 29. Since we will not be in-person for worship during Advent, now might be a good time to bring some of our church rituals into your home. One of the easiest ways to do this is to have an Advent wreath at home. I researched a few different options for your consideration...



If you're a nerd or you've got pre-teen boys, Lego makes an Advent wreath. Need I say more? The trick is that it is marketed as a "Christmas" wreath. I guess the folks at Lego don't understand the church year. Oh well. It's \$35 on the <u>Lego website</u>. The other option would be to challenge your kid to make one out of all the spare bricks laying around.



Augsburg Fortress sells a nice, simple wreath with four blue candles (the official color of Advent, although sometimes there is a pink candle on the third Sunday which is called "gaudete"). You could spice this up with your own fresh evergreens or decorations to make it less plain. Also don't forget to add a white pillar candle in the center. That is the Christ candle and it gets lit on Christmas Eve. You could keep it going through the 12 days of Christmas as well. This one is \$15.95 at the <u>Augsburg Fortress website</u>.



This beautiful yet simple version comes from a site called Sacred Ordinary Days. The Waiting Candles: Advent Candle Base from Liturgy Wood is a beautiful and simple way to observe Advent as a family or a community. In addition to the beautiful base, this set includes a stunning pack of Advent Reflection Cards. The Cards include Scripture readings and a short prayer to correspond with the candles for each week of Advent. The Reflection Cards come with a wooden cardholder for easy display wherever you light your Advent candles, and can also be purchased separately. Cost is \$55 at the <u>Sacred Ordinary Days website</u>.



You know what has a lot of really cool stuff? Etsy does. There are pages and pages of Advent related items on Etsy. And I like Etsy because they are usually products created by small businesses and mom-and-pop type shops. This is a really nice wreath I found on Etsy that incorporates a Celtic cross into the design. This is \$55 on the Etsy website and does not include the candles.



This is another beautiful design that comes from Etsy. This one is a little more intricate with a nice spiral design. It has spaces to hold 24 candles so you can mark down every day in December leading to Christmas. This is \$50 on the <u>Etsy website</u>.