

Bible Study M-F @ 7:00 pm Online
Weekly Worship, Saturday @ 5:00pm Online

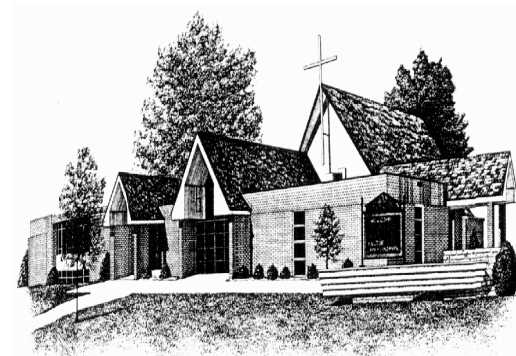
Faith Lutheran Church
500 W. LeClaire Road
Eldridge, IA 52748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
PERMIT NO. 1
Eldridge, IA 52748



Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR

May 2020

Rev. Dr. Carrie Lewis La Plante
Rev. Heather Geest

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**Grace-Gifted,
Faith-Lifted
Called to Share, Seek,
and Serve Christ**



Dear Friends in Christ,

On this past Sunday, we heard the story of the disciples who were walking home from Jerusalem to Emmaus on Easter evening (Luke 24:13-35). Along the way, Jesus begins to walk with them, but something keeps them from recognizing Jesus. Perhaps it was their grief at watching Jesus be crucified just three days before. Perhaps it was the disappointment that the one that they had hoped would be the Messiah had died. Perhaps it was the strange turn of fate that, when the women had gone to the tomb that morning, it was empty, and they were told that Jesus was risen, but there was no proof. Perhaps it was all too overwhelming for them to recognize anything in that moment.

When Jesus asks them what they are talking about, they can't believe that Jesus doesn't know about all that has happened to Jesus, and they begin to explain all that the previous week held. And then came the most poignant words in the whole passage as they say to Jesus, "We had hoped that he would be the one to redeem Israel." We had hoped...

How many times in the past several weeks have we said those words. We had hoped... We had hoped the virus would not come here. Our children had hoped to end the school year with their friends, on field trips, with class picnics, with celebrations as they prepared for the next year. Our high school and college seniors had hoped that this spring would bring prom and sorority or fraternity formals and graduation that just will not be the same now. We had hoped to go on vacations and visit family and friends that are just not possible in these days. We had hoped that the economy would be booming, and we would have jobs. We had hoped that our medical personnel could go to work to save lives without having to risk their lives. There are just so many things that we had hoped for in this time. And there is grief and sadness and pain that goes with that, and just like the disciples, sometimes it is hard to see Jesus on the road of this life when all of the things that we had hoped would happen just are not happening.

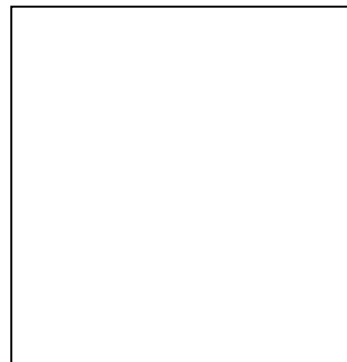
And yet, just like with the disciples, Jesus shows up on the road with us. Jesus walks with us and helps us to see how he is present even when we cannot see it for ourselves. When the time is right, Jesus reveals himself to us in ways that we can see him, in ways that we can recognize him. For the disciples, it was in the breaking of the bread at dinner in the house at Emmaus, an action that they had participated in so many times before with Jesus. For many of us, Jesus reveals himself to us in nature, in the birds and the butterflies in the new life in the trees and the flowers. Jesus reveals himself in calls from friends or family, or in a meal that we can share together, either around a table or over FaceTime or Zoom. Jesus shows up on the road and reveals himself so that we can know that we are not alone even on the days when we feel most alone. Just as the disciples came to realize that Jesus was with them all along, that their hearts were burning within them as Jesus was talking to them on the road, often, when Jesus reveals himself to us in a way that we recognize, we can look back and see that Jesus was on the road with us the whole time.

And for the disciples, this meant running back to Jerusalem to share with the others that Jesus was alive and had revealed himself to them. And I pray, especially in these days, that in those times when we recognized Jesus among us,

THIS IS HOW WE'RE STAYING TOGETHER WHILE WE'RE APART...



LA PLANTE family doing Sunday School with Illustrated Ministry



Worship
with us
from
HOME



GEEST family at home watching Sunday School video worship...



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP Thank you to Theresa and Bob White for sponsoring our missionaries, the Bencke family in Japan and one of our Compassion children, Denisse Grefa. Also thanks to Tom and Pam Carlson for sponsoring our Compassion Child, John Chima for May. The cost for sponsorship is \$40/month each for John and Denisse and \$45/month for the Bencke family.

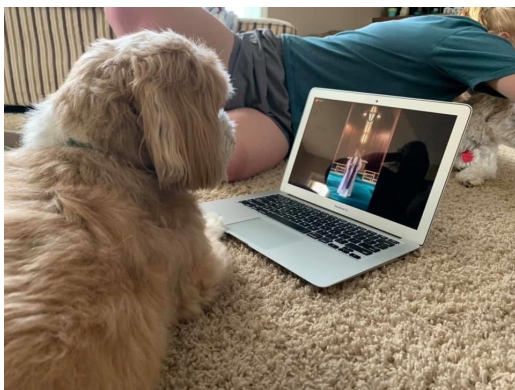
Your sponsorship can be placed in the offering plate, in a pew envelope marked appropriately for the person you are sponsoring.



Palms in the planter boxes
and on the lawn...



POWELL family sharing
the peace during online
worship...



Murphy, the fur
baby of the
NEWMAN family,
intently
watches
worship....



that we will share our experience with others, with those who are wondering where Jesus is for them, and perhaps, in our story and our show of God's love to them, they will recognize Jesus walking right there beside them as well. Jesus promises to always be with us, in the highs and the lows, in the grief and the joy, and this is a promise that we can trust as we wait to see how God will make all things new.

Blessings in these days,
Pastor Carrie



Current Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

I want to begin here by saying that we are so grateful to all of you during this time of pandemic as we have been trying new things, sometimes with great success and other times with less, and you are sticking with us. We love to see the passing of the peace on the Facebook feeds and the other ways in which you are connecting with one another during this time. We are truly grateful for the generosity that you continue to show in the giving of your time and your financial gifts to the church and to other organizations that are trying to help in these days. We are humbled by the notes that you send us to thank us for the work that we are doing to hold this community together even when we have to be apart. We thank you for your patience with all of this as we navigate these new waters together.

One of the things that many of us had hoped would happen by now, or at least soon, is that we would be able to have in-person gatherings at 500 West Le Claire Road again; however, while the Governor has allowed for the possibility of worshipping communities to begin to gather again, using precautions and recommendations of the CDC, Faith Lutheran Church is not ready to gather in-person at this time.

Because Scott County is included in the 22 counties which have not had restrictions lifted at this time and because our schools will not be resuming through the end of the school year, we do not feel that it is wise or safe to begin to gather in person. Our current plan is to continue the ways that we have been meeting and worshipping, through virtual worship on Facebook and our website, through at-home worship materials for those who do not have access to our virtual services, and through meetings on Zoom, through at least the end of May. The soonest that we will gather again in person will be the weekend of June 6 and 7, which still depends on how things progress and whether or not restrictions in this area are lifted.

When we do return to in-person gatherings, you need to be prepared that things will look and feel different from the ways in which we have done it in the past, at least for a time. There will be precautions in place in an attempt to keep everyone who enters the doors safe. In these next several weeks, the Congregation Council will be working through the documents that inform safe procedures for in-person gatherings in order to determine our procedures for moving forward. For example, this will require teams to clean the space between worship, will limit the number of people who can be in the building at

any time, will limit the things that we are able to do during worship, and will require specific seating arrangements in the space, as well as other precautionary measures for the safety of all. All of this has to be carefully worked out and communicated in advance so that we can continue to be a welcoming place as well as a safe place for people to be as we gather and worship the God who has gotten us this far on the road.

Look for more communication to be coming in the weeks ahead as we continue to figure out all of the details. Our highest priority is the safety and health of those who gather in our space and worship with us, and we pray that God will continue to guide us on our way.

If you have any questions about any of this or need to contact us for any reason, please do not hesitate to call the office (563-285-4501), call Pastor Carrie (641-275-1326) or send us an email (faitheldridge@netins.net).

Easter blessings to you and yours,

Pastor Carrie



Thank you!

We give thanks to everyone who supports our ministry in so many ways, which allows us to continue to do the work of Jesus

through our ministries! Unlike many other churches in the area, the financial gifts of our congregation continue to be strong. We are relieved that we do not have to apply for government assistance at this time, which leaves more for others that are less fortunate. We were happily surprised to find our outdoor worship space refreshed with new decking, and grateful for the work of the volunteers who did this! We are looking forward to enjoying this space when we can be together!

Several members are supporting the health care workers by making face masks and scrub caps as part of the Quad City - Million Masks Challenge. See this group on facebook if you would like to help sew or have supplies to donate. We especially appreciate the spiritual and relational gifts of our pastors that give us peace and hope during this uncertain time through their actions, worship and prayer.

Council Update

The council met twice using Zoom web conferencing in the past month for the March and April meetings and the Annual Retreat. The commitment of the council members to our church is obvious in the meaningful discussions we are having, and actions being taken. A highlight of this month was the installation of our new outdoor sign! Look for Matt Peck's article in this Ambassador. Pastor Carrie kicked off our monthly discussion of the book *Growing Young, 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* with Chapter 1. *What Congregations are Doing Right.*



FAITH LUTHERAN ENDOWMENT FUND

Twenty years ago, Faith Lutheran Church established an endowment fund, which was intended to enhance the mission outreach of the church. The fund was set up to continue to grow the principal and when it reached \$50,000, interest would be used for the following:

- Minimum of 20% for outreach into the community and synod.
- Minimum of 20% for missions of the ELCA.
- Minimum of 20% for capital improvements.
Additional up to 40% for any of the above.

At the end of 2019, the fund balance went over the \$50,000 threshold, which resulted in \$1,071.17 of interest. The Endowment Committee decided to utilize the income for the following:

- \$355 for preparation of plans for the sanctuary update.
- \$355 to ELCA Disaster Response.
- \$120 to the North Scott High School Food Pantry.
- \$120 to Lutheran Lakeside.
\$120 to the University of Iowa Chaplaincy Outreach.

It is the hope of the committee that the Fund principal will continue to grow resulting in more interest income to provide more outreach.

For more information on how to help grow this Fund, please contact Pastor Carrie or pick up a brochure in the welcome station.

Myron Scheibe



Summer Camp Update

At this time, the plans for camp for grades 3-8 at Lutheran Lakeside July 26-31 are scheduled as planned. In addition, we have made arrangements for the high school youth who were planning to go on the now cancelled mission trip to do mission work with the adults at the camp that week. The Lakeside Board of Directors is continuing to monitor the situation, and should it be determined that it would be unsafe to hold camp this summer, Pastor Carrie will let you know as soon as possible. The top priority is the safety of our children and adults. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Pastor Carrie (641-275-1326 or pastorcarrie@steldridge.com).

Council Book Study: *Growing Young, 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*

In April, Joni Schneider did a great job leading Council through **Chapter 2. Unlock Keychain Leadership, Sharing Power with the Right People at the Right Time**, which is the first of six core commitments needed for a church to grow young. We learned that churches that grow young have staff, volunteers, and parents who all demonstrate **keychain leadership**. What we mean by **keys** are the capabilities, power, and access of leaders that can be used to empower young people. By **keychain leaders**, we mean people who are aware of the **keys** on their keychain and are intentional about entrusting and empowering young people with their **keys**. In churches studied that are growing young, **Keychain leadership** is a spirit and commitment demonstrated by everyone that permeates every area of the church.

We learned that there are four types of key leadership: key-less, key-hoarding, key-loaning and keychain (you can imagine what these are by their names!) and shared thoughts about examples of where we reflect these different types of leadership ourselves. Finally, we learned that keychain leaders are mature, not always young; are real, not 'relevant'; are warm, not distant; know what matters to people; entrust and empower others; don't try to be superman; and take the long view, not shortsighted steps. We acknowledge different ways that we are real, warm, and caring, and that we are working to take the longer term view. At the same time, we were inspired by the book to better understand the keys that we have so we could know how best to use them.

We discussed places where we have already shared keys with young people, like 'Feed Our Children', but recognize we could do more. We believe that as we work to become better keychain leaders, we need to make sure we train, mentor and support young people so they feel valued and are successful at taking the keys. We invite everyone to think about how keychain leadership can be demonstrated more within our church, and to email the church with your thoughts.



OUTDOOR CHANGES The outdoor chapel got some brand new decking in preparation for the time we can worship together. You also may have noticed that one of the big trees along the church sidewalk is gone. The Garner and Keppy families came with equipment and muscles to take down the big tree which was a

problem due to a rotted middle core. Watch for a new tree in the future funded by Barb Elmegreen's Memorial. A big thank you to the Garner and Keppy families for their hard work getting this done!

We read that the majority of churches in the US are shrinking and aging. The book shares lessons from the research of 250 churches that are especially effective with young people (15-29 year olds). In these churches, young people add great vitality by increasing service, passion, innovation, financial resources and overall health. For the next 6 months, we will study the *six core commitments* the authors believe are needed to *grow young*. Look for the article in this Ambassador where I discuss the first core commitment: *Unlock Keychain Leadership, Sharing Power with the Right People at the Right Time*. We have had hours of thoughtful conversations seeking to understand what work Jesus is asking us to do this year. These conversations gave us an opportunity to reflect, clarify objectives and build consensus prior to action planning. The result was the development of a 2020 theme and 2020 top three priorities.

Our theme for 2020 is 'Shine Your Light for Jesus' and is based upon: Matthew 5:14-16: "14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Our top three priorities are to:

1. Maintain Relationships With Jesus and Each Other Through Prayer and Worship
2. Engage and Empower Youth by Strengthening Intergenerational Relationships
3. Expand Community Involvement and Outreach by Understanding our Neighbors' Needs

Next, we will be generating ideas to support these priorities. We are excited about this focus for the year, and are very interested in your thoughts and feedback! Additionally, we will be starting conversations of how we might come back together when higher authorities allow us to do so.

Together, while we are apart

It has been uplifting to hear from our Faith Families, who are calling our church members to check-in, that most of us have the support we need from families, neighbors, and local services. During this difficult time when we are apart, we are coming together as a family to follow Jesus and to love one another. To make it easy to stay in touch, we have initiated a short three question online survey, 'Faith Check In', on our website. We invite you to use this new survey to let us know how you are doing, to share ideas for the church, and to offer ways you can help. In addition to online worship, we are continuing 'Faith Connects' for weekday conversations and prayer that remind us that Jesus is always with us, even now. And, we are excited to see (Virtual) Beer Bible Study (BBS) is starting up again! Check the website for the next BBS event.

As always, our greatest hope is that you find comfort and strength in being

able to stay connected to the church and doing the work of Jesus through our ministries! If you want to reach out to the council for any reason, please send an email to the church.

Blessings!

Linda Golinghorst, President



Congratulafions To Our Seniors!

While we cannot gather to recognize our seniors the way we would like to due to the limitations that we have for worship right now, we want to let our seniors know that we are thinking of them in these days. We celebrate your accomplishments, and we wish you all of God's blessings in all that lies ahead for each of you. We hold you in prayer as you transifion to the next part of your journey and wish you all the best.

Congratulations to the high school senior class of 2020!

Quentin Allison
Derick Cudd
Arbor Danielson
Paige Durant
Owen Fahrenkrog
Nate Fenn
Katie Garner
Camryn Hanson
Isabella Haas
Wall
Lilia Johnson

Davis Lee
Logan Lee
Samantha Lee
Kendall McNaul
Emma Powell
Sydney Puls
Jackson Stoeffen
Joie Stoeffen
Lauren



Seniors, keep an eye out for a special surprise from the congregation toward the end of May, and when we feel it is safe to gather together again, we will provide an opportunity for a more traditional recognition and celebration with you all.



Jim Weibel	May 5
Sandra Knoche	May 5
Pam White	May 9
Kris Schwein	May 12
Leonard Hanson	May 15
Janice Sanders	May 26
Barb Mohr	May 27

NEW SIGN IS HERE!!

As you drive by the church to run to get groceries, you may notice something new in front of the church. On April 9th, a crew from MediaQuest Signs physically installed a new electronic sign in front of the church with church members assisting in the initial setup. This sign is another way to keep our congregation and our community informed with what happens at Faith as well as messages of support. Church personnel no longer have to physically go out to the electronic sign to change messages as displays are now



created from a computer and then shown on the sign outside. Special thanks to Mike Garner, Linda Golinghorst, and the Evangelism Team for their work throughout the project.

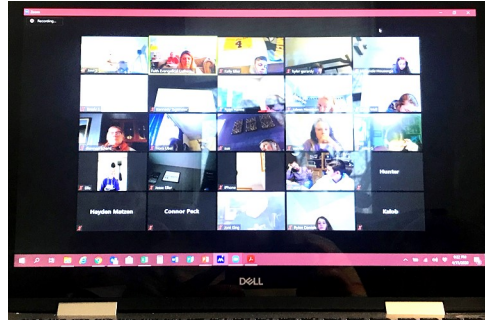
-Matt Peck





This has indeed been a strange month! I hope everyone takes the time to enjoy family members they are quarantined with, and if possible, make great memories.

Since the Covid-19 quarantine, we have "met" with our Confirmation and High School Youth via Zoom meetings on Wednesday nights. Although it is a great way to get together in light of our quarantine situation, we have found that they aren't quite as vocal as usual! However, on April 15, we were able to complete Confirmation via Zoom conferencing for this year. The 8th Grade Confirmation Meal and the date for Confirmation have been postponed until we know it is safe to proceed.



The turnout for the High School kids has not been too bad with the Zoom meetings (about 8-12 per evening). We began a Bible Study on Wholeness and Holiness, and last week, the High School youth decided to meet on Zoom every other week, just to catch up and visit.

The High School Mission Trip to West Virginia has been cancelled, but Confirmation Camp is still on (so far). Options for the High School Youth may be to do mission work with the adults at the Camp, or do a High School Church camp.

Respectfully submitted,
Joni King, Youth Chair



PEACE
BE WITH
you

Five Thoughts on Faithful Parenting During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Tim Brown, a pastor, writer, and mission ambassador and gifts officer for the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, shared these ideas about how to parent through the pandemic in the April 7, 2020, edition of *Lutheran Living Magazine*. We hope that they are helpful as you navigate these days.

I don't have many answers, but as a pastor and former educator, I have some honest thoughts.

1. Boredom is your friend.

Boredom is a breeding ground for ingenuity and imagination! If you're at home caring for children, resist the urge to fill up every second of their day with education or structured play. Kids need to be bored for their imaginations to flourish, and you need them to be bored so that you have space to rest. A rallying cry in these days of social distancing might be: embrace the boredom.

2. "Hug the cactus."

This is a favorite phrase of mine, and it's often used in 12-step programs as a visual metaphor for embracing the truth of the current situation. Our time in this new reality will feel like a marathon, and returning to normalcy will probably take even longer. We parents need to accept that. Ration your ideas and energy as much as possible and encourage your family to do the same. "Hugging the cactus" lessens the pain.

3. You're a teacher, but you're not necessarily an educator.


















It's OK not to know how to teach every subject, and indeed you don't need to! In these days, teach your children *how* to learn, not necessarily what to learn. Teach them by modeling curiosity, asking good questions and not moving too quickly to solutions. Use educational resources and virtual sites offered in these days. Explain when you support local businesses and why you're doing it: you're seeing a need and responding to it. You can be a good model in these days, and they will learn much by observing.

4. Take these days of intense presence to practice being the church in diaspora.

Pray together. Teach your children the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed and the Ten Commandments, not just with rote memorization but by applying your imagination to our current situation. These prayers, the three legs of our confessional footstool, are baptismal promises we vow to teach our children. Use this time to keep that promise. By doing so, you connect yourself to the church universal, even when we're not physically together.

5. Lead with grace as much as possible.

With yourself and with your family. This is not easy. There is no road map. We're making the road as we walk it. So do what you can and trust that love and forgiveness are enough in these stressful days. Take the opportunity to check in around the dinner table each night (and what better time to start that daily practice?), to do "highs and lows," to take stock of yourself and those you love, to pray together and to remind yourself that God's grace is present and real, even in these strange days.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 May		FAITH CONNECTS EVERY WEEKDAY @ 7:00 pm		“When I am afraid I put my trust in you.” -Psalm 56.3	1  May Day	2 LIVE ONLINE WORSHIP EACH SATURDAY @ 5:00 pm
3 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” -Matthew 11:28	4 	5  Cinco de Mayo	6 	7 	8 	9 “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God: believe also in me.” - John 14:1
10 	11 Write down something you're thankful for and why...	12  -MATTHEW 5:14	13 “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” -Philippians 4:13	14 Growing in Grace 	15  -MATTHEW 17:20	16 “...but who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles: they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” -Isaiah 40:31
17 “May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace.” -Numbers 6:24-26	18  MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK	19 Be sure to talk to yourself today like you would talk to someone you love.	20 “...fear not, For I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” - Isaiah 41:10	21 Sit outside and be still. Feel the sun, listen to nature around you, take in the green grass and blue sky, smell the spring air...	22 Write down something you're thankful for and why... 	23 ”But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” -Psalm 86:15
24 “You can go to bed Without fear; you will lie down and sleep soundly.” -Proverbs 3:24 31	25 	26 	27 “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” -2 Timothy 1:7	28 NATIONAL HAMBURGER DAY 	29  Isaiah 12:2	30 “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” -John 16:33