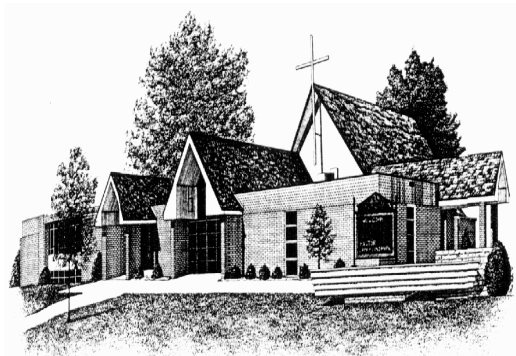


Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR

August 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,



As I was looking at the readings for the first weekend in August, I was struck by the very beginning of the Gospel reading appointed for that weekend. The Gospel story is a story many of us know quite well. It is the story of the feeding of the 5,000 men, plus women and children. And while this story is one of the more familiar ones, I have to admit that I had forgotten how Matthew's telling of the story begins. Matthew tells us, "Now when Jesus heard [about the beheading of John the Baptist], he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself" (Matthew 14:13a).

What struck me about this reading as I read it again is that even Jesus needed time to get away. Having gotten word that John the Baptist had been beheaded, Jesus, in his grief, in his sadness, decided he needed time to be alone. He needed time to get away from the crowds (of course we will find that the crowd ends up following him - but that is a discussion for another time), and perhaps he needed time to simply be - maybe to simply be with God. Jesus needed time to be with his own emotions, to center himself, to prepare and restore himself for the ministry that was yet to come.

Now, I know that it seems strange that I would bring up this need for Jesus to go to a deserted place as a revelation to me in these days when we are so often separated from one another. Many of us have had this feeling that we are off in a deserted place far more than we would like to be in these days. However, for some of us, especially those of us who live with other people in our households, we are finding that we still need time to get away by ourselves. In the midst of the anxiety, fear, grief, unknown, questions and so much more, being around people, even people that we deeply love, all of the time can be too much. Sometimes we need time to get away from others to process our feelings, to just be - to be alone, to be by ourselves, maybe to pray or simply be still and know that God is God. I have found that my time to be alone is generally late at night, when the rest of the family is in bed. It is my time to just be with myself, to decompress and let go of everything that they day held, to be alone, to pray, to listen, to seek God's peace. It is a time to get refreshed and renewed for whatever will lie ahead the following day.

As I have talked with others in these days, for some of us getting away means getting away from the news that bombards us and finding a time away from it all. The never-ending news cycle can overwhelm us and cause more anxiety, and so getting away from the noise by turning off the TV, putting down the newspaper, even closing down the social media for a while can help us to clear our heads and find renewal. We may even find that getting away from the media gives us strength to move ahead and continue to be what God calls us to be in this world.

If you are like me, finding time to get away can be tough. Especially for those of us who are caring for others, whether it is our spouse, our children, our parents, or our friends, it can be hard to give ourselves permission to get away, to 2

take time to be by ourselves in a deserted place, to give ourselves permission to be still in the face of all that is going on. We feel like we must always be responsible and taking time away might appear to be neglecting our responsibilities. Yet, even Jesus needed that time away, and if the Savior of the world took that time to be by himself, to be with God, his Father, to prepare himself for the ministry to come in healing the sick and feeding the crowds, perhaps it is a good model for us to follow in our lives.

May we all find time in these crazy days to take the time to get away, to be with God, so that we can find some “normal” in the midst of the abnormal and be refreshed and renewed to do all that it is that God is calling us to do to be God’s presence in this world, trusting that God will provide what we need on the way.

Blessings,
Pastor Carrie



The COVID-19 sub-committee is meeting weekly on Sunday at 11am to monitor COVID-19 data and to make sure we are prepared for eventual in-person gatherings. In looking at the trends on Iowa’s coronavirus website (<https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/>), we see that the hospitals have adequate ICU beds and ventilators, so this criteria is met. However as of 7/18, both Scott and Clinton counties had a steeply increasing trend of new cases for 14 days so we could not move to Phase 1. Outdoor In-Person Gatherings with Restrictions. Here were the statistics as of 7/18:

For Scott county:

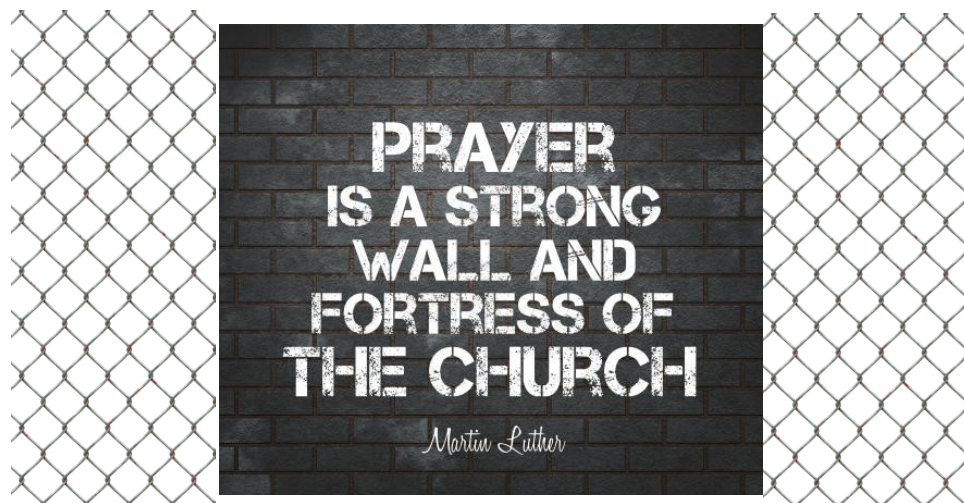
- the 14 day average of new cases was 32.9, vs. 24.1 on 7/4
- the total number of positive open cases was at 482, vs. 325 on 7/4
- there was 1 death in July for a total of 11

For Clinton county:

- the 14 day average of new cases was 4.4 vs. 1.6 on 7/4
- the total number of positive open cases was at 50, vs. 36 on 7/4
- there was 1 death in July for a total of 2

Once we see a two week period of new cases for Scott County and Clinton County stabilizing (flat or decreasing), then we meet our criteria for Phase 1. Outdoor In-Person Gatherings with Restrictions. If this happens, we are prepared to start outdoor worship the following weekend, provided we obtain council approval. Once we set a date for outdoor worship, communication will go out via US mail, our website, our Facebook page, and email.

We are hoping to identify volunteers for eventual outdoor worship that are not in the high risk population as defined by the CDC and who have been practicing precautions outlined by the CDC. If you are interested and able to volunteer, please let us know by calling or emailing the church office.



Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 4:6-7**

Worry. It’s a human response. And sometimes, it’s just not helpful. In our worry, we forget that we have a God who is with us and for us, encouraging and supporting us. God promises to walk with us in ventures which we can not see the end. And God gives us courage to face our deepest fears, all our worries and concerns, as we give them to the Lord, trusting God will answer.

In the coming weeks, you will find a community prayer wall located in the front yard of the church. We want to provide church members and our neighbors with the opportunity to post their requests, prayers, praises and fears on the wall. It will serve as visual reminder that God is with us and has woven us together, as we support one another in this neighborhood. It will provide an opportunity for us to lay our prayer concerns and joys before God in a tangible way. If you would like your prayer requests included on the prayer chain or in weekly prayers during worship, please contact Pastor Carrie or Pastor Heather in the church office at 285-4501.



Blessing of the Backpacks, Teachers and School Staff

It is hard to believe that school will soon be starting again, and we would like to send our students, teachers and school staff back to school with a blessing. On the weekend of August 22 and 23, we will celebrate the blessing of backpacks, teachers and school staff during worship. Whether we are in-

person or online, we invite the children to have their backpacks with them for worship and for teachers and school staff to be with us, and during the children's message, we will take time to bless those who are heading back to school. If we are worshipping in person, we will have backpack tags available for those who would like them to take them following worship. In addition, whether we are online or gathered for worship in person, we will also have a drive-thru opportunity to pick up backpack tags from 10:30 to 11:15 am on Sunday, August 23. We hope that you will choose to join us as we pray for God's blessing upon those who are heading back to school.

Confirmation Is Coming!



This year is certainly different than we had expected and the ways that we are doing things will have to be different as well. We were not able to have the Confirmation service for the eighth grade class in April as we had planned. I will be sending an email to those parents in the first week of August to suggest a way forward to have that Confirmation service happen, so please keep your eyes open for that email.

For those who have children in seventh and eighth grade this school year, we will have Confirmation classes, but they will look a little different. I am still working out those details, but it will probably be a combination of in-person and online classes as well as an opportunity to have a mentor relationship with a trusted adult in the congregation who is not a parent. While our normal pizza party kick-off is not a possibility this year, I would still like to meet with parents and Confirmation students to go over the plan for the year on the evening of Wednesday, September 2. Exactly how we will meet (online or in-person) will be determined closer to the date, and the information will be sent out to families.

Blessings!

Thank you!

We can't help but note that it has been a strange year so far! As we hope to be able to be together in-person sooner than later, we continue to live out our ministries in the name of Jesus in other ways.

In this strange year perhaps even more than other years, we are grateful for the strong financial support from our congregation. Our operating fund balance was down in June, it is typical to see offerings drop in the summer and then pick back up with the start of school. Compared to last year, our year to date operating fund balance is higher than that it was then.

In the past month, Myron Scheibe pushed forward to install the new handicap accessible entrance into the basement, for the benefit of the North Scott Food Pantry and our church. We are very thankful to Myron and Mike Garner for their hard work, and to all of the generous donors for making this project a reality!

Matt Peck is improving our audio and video experience for online worship by installing a new web cam. It is not easy to find time for church service these days, but he is making it happen and we owe him a big 'Thanks!'.

We cannot forget to give thanks to our pastors and staff who are providing us with a meaningful online worship experience each Saturday at 5 pm. We have missed our music ministries, so it was really special to see Sue and Neal Becker sing the Anthem 'Fountain of God' at worship on July 4th. And, everyone enjoyed the 'Christmas in July' worship with some of our favorite Christmas carols on July 25!

Council Update

The council met using Zoom web conferencing for our July meeting.

Scott Wiley led our monthly discussion of the book *Growing Young, 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church* with *Chapter 5: Fuel a Warm Community*. Warm is the New Cool. See the separate article in this Ambassador where we share take aways from this chapter.

The COVID-19 subcommittee provided an update on the increasing trend for coronavirus in our area which prevents us from gatherings, and we reviewed great progress made to prepare for eventual in-person gatherings. That said, I am happy to note that since our council meeting on 7/16 the trend for new cases is now decreasing in Scott County. If the trend for new cases continues to decrease or at least stabilize, we may be able to move into Phase 1: Outdoor Worship and Gatherings (with restrictions). Look for updates in the US mail and through our electronic communications (website, facebook, email, outdoor sign).

On a final note regarding coronavirus, we agreed that we don't want to wait indefinitely to perform sacramental activities that require in-person gatherings,



e.g. confirmation and baptism. The Covid-19 subcommittee will explore new ideas for how to safely perform sacramental activities.

We always love to see our church utilized by our congregation and the community. We discussed a request from a local homeschool group to use our space once a week during the school year, once the building opened again for large in-person gatherings, we agreed to this use of the building.

On July 23, we had a really meaningful review of the past 12 months with Pastor Carrie. We are so thankful for Pastor Carrie and this annual review allows us to support her in her continued call with our congregation. It is a two way dialogue, and also allows council to reflect on the past 12 months and discuss accomplishments and opportunities for the following year. As you can imagine, in the past year there has been a lot of learning, hard work and lament due to Covid-19. Also, there have been many new ideas implemented that will persist into the future, e.g. community events on our lawn and online worship. As a result of our discussion, we agreed that our goals for the next 12 months need to include: safely returning to in-person gatherings, new support teams for pastors and staff, more effective mentoring and development of young people and new leaders, and enthusiasm for our ministries in the name of Jesus.

Together, while we are apart

We keep finding ways to shine our light for Jesus in this strange year, and hope that you join us in our virtual ministries!

Virtual Beer Bible Study (BBS) was held again on July 15th, with the big idea being discussed 'To Weed the Garden or Not?', following Bible readings from Romans 8:12-25 and Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 (The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat). Virtual BBS will meet again on August 19th at 7:30pm. All over 21 are welcome!

Pastor Carrie initiated a new series of online conversation using the Spark House program 'Dialogues On: Race'. The group watched a video and discussed the first chapter of the book, *What Does It Mean to Be White? History and the Social Construct of Race*.

Faith Connects now meets on Mondays and Wednesdays at 7pm. All are welcome to join this online conversation and devotional opportunity that is good for the mind and the soul!





Pastor Heather and Pastor Carrie held a Virtual Campfire to engage children in singing camp songs and sharing the spirit of camp and friendship.

Blessings and prayers as we move into a new school year in August!













Linda Golinghorst, President

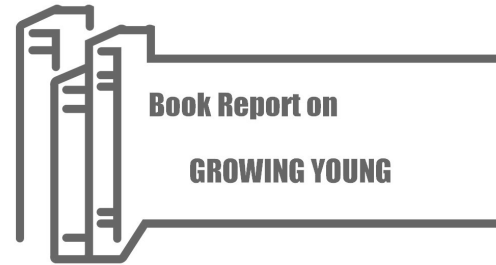


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	W
LIVE ONLINE WORSHIP EACH SATURDAY @ 5:00 pm 	FAITH CONNECTS MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS@ 7:00 pm		
2 Send a positive message to someone you can't be with	3 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS Treat everyone you interact with as though they are a friend	4 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm 	5 7:00 pm CONN Spend time other people from st
9 Ask a friend how they are and really listen to them 	10 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS Contact a friend to let them know you're thinking of them	11 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm  7:00 pm DIALOGUE on RACE	12 7:00 pm CONNECTS Share an e news s inspire
16 No Plans Day Be kind to yourself so you can be kinder to others	17 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS Make a thoughtful gift as a surprise for someone	18 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm  7:00 pm DIALOGUE on RACE	19 7:00 pm CONN  7:30 B Bible S Check in w who may b feeling
23 Turn off your phone and give people your full attention 	24 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS Find a way To Pay it forward 31	25 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm  7:00 pm DIALOGUE on RACE	26 7:00 pm CONN Tell some book or a found

AUGUST 2020

ed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	IN A WORLD WHERE YOU CAN BE ANYTHING, BE KIND		1 5:00 PM  Choose to be kind to others (and yourself) all this month
FAITH ECTS praying for le to be free uffering	6 Smile and be friendly, even when 'physical distancing' 	7 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am 	8 5:00 PM  Give unused items, clothes, food or money
FAITH S ncouraging story to e others	13 Look for the good side in everyone you meet today	14 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am 	15 5:00 PM  Try to bring a smile to everyone you meet today
FAITH ECTS Beer Study with someone be lonely or anxious	20 7:30 Church Council Mtg. on Zoom Take time to forgive someone who hurt you in the past 	21 Ambassador Deadline Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am 	22 5:00 PM  Today do something to make life easier for someone else
FAITH ECTS one about a article you helpful	27 9:00 am Ambassador Folding Notice when someone is down and try to brighten their day	28 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am 	29 5:00 PM  Today do something kind to nature or our planet 



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

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

In June, Scott Wiley did a great job leading the book discussion for Chapter 5. Fuel a Warm Community, Warm Is the new Cool, which is the fourth of six core commitments needed for a church to grow young.

This chapter focused on how when young people talk about their churches, they talk about people and warmth. They want authenticity (being real) and connection and a feeling of 'family' more than flashy worship.

We learned that structure is necessary for growing young, but it's not enough. Churches that grow young sometimes program less to free up more space for relational connections.

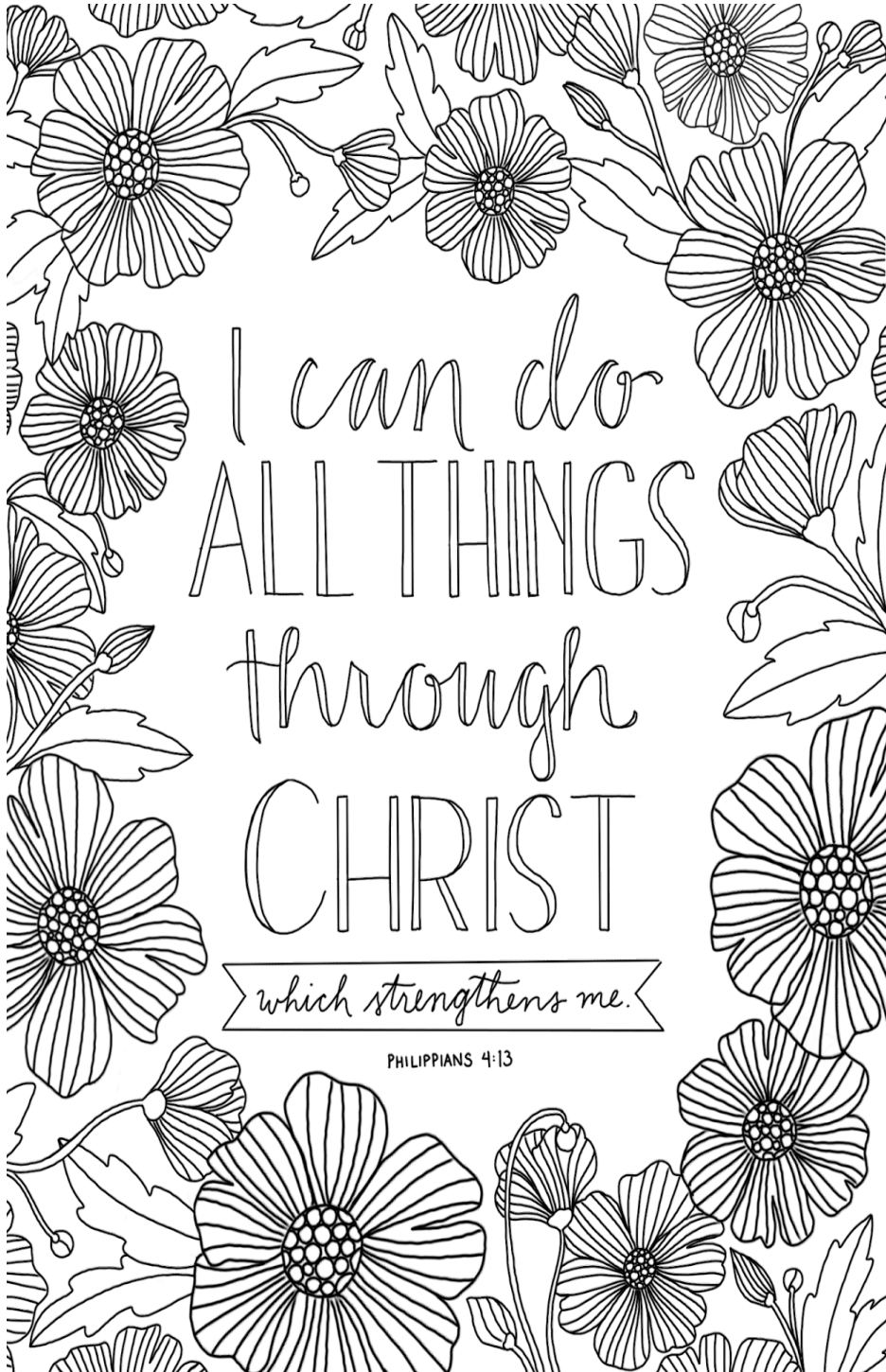
Bringing different generations together grows everyone young. We talked about how intergenerational relationships are passed around, not passed down, and that the different generations rely on each other in different ways to support each other, like a family.

Scott shared his church experiences when he was younger. He described how real life is messy, and how we need to related to other people's messiness and help each other through the messiness. This prompted interesting thoughts from others in the group in sharing their own experiences which helped us to relate to the chapter and what young people need now.

It is important to consider how we fuel warmth in our church. How might we better provide the support of a family across generations in our congregation? How might our gathering spaces or sanctuary be updated to be more like a family room?

Linda Golinghorst





Shine your light for Jesus!

Serendipity: noun. The occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way. The food pantry ramp was a fortunate stroke of serendipity.

One day pastor Heather was chatting with a person from our community. The visitor was commenting how it would be nice for the Food Pantry be more accessible for those who are physically challenged. Carolyn walked into church about that time and they passed along the idea and called Myron, who is retired civil engineer to see if it might be feasible.

We both volunteer at the pantry and thought it was a great idea, for the Food Pantry clients, delivery of food and to have handicap accessibility to the lower level of the church. Myron drew up a sketch and sent out for bids. It was designed to meet or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and made wide enough for deliveries to back up to the door.

Ihrig Works, LLC from Long Grove came in with a bid of \$25,200. The biggest challenge was how to fund it. With Covid, many of the normal funding opportunities were not available.. We applied for a grant from the Scott County Regional Authority and were awarded \$10,000 toward the project.

This community we live in is extremely generous. We sent requests asking for donations to a variety of organizations, businesses and people to help us reach our goal. In addition to the SCRA grant, donations were received from First Central State Bank, North Scott Rotary, Eldridge Lions, North Scott Optimist, Aqua-Tech Car Wash, Faith Lutheran Memorial Fund, the Schwein's, the Cota's, the Lenker's, Lu Wiese, the Looney's and the Scheibe's. Sod will be used to help with erosion control and Puls Co has offered to hydro seed the remainder of the area.

This was a perfect project for a retired engineer who had the skills of design and to oversee the construction. Many thanks to the Property Committee for their help and to Ihrig Works for doing a very professional job in a timely manner. The Scheibe's are so thankful to be able to help with this serendipity moment.

Myron & Carolyn



**North Scott
Food Pantry**



... do not be anxious
about anything,
but in everything
by prayer and
supplication with
thanksgiving let
your requests
be made
known to God.

Philippians 4:6



This is a simple family activity. Find an empty canning or food jar, clean it and decorate the outside proclaiming it the GRATITUDE JAR.

Have a conversation about gratitude. The concept can be tricky for the littles but talking about it helps make them aware of the power of gratitude.

Make a supply of paper strips available for family members to jot down something they are grateful for that day. You can go a step further and print the strips ahead with fill in the blank spaces (I am grateful for _____ today because _____.) Adults can help fill out the slips for younger family members.

Try making it part of a daily ritual at supper or bedtime. When the jar becomes full, take turns pulling a slip out and reading it aloud. This simple activity can net powerful life lessons.

David Griffin	August 5
Betty Griffin	August 7
Donna Knapper	August 7
Jaclynn Snyder	August 8
Deloris Schatz	August 9
Harold Nelson	August 12
Connie Braet	August 21
Doug Garner	August 22
Vi Westphal	August 26
Mark Copley	August 29
George Braden	August 30
Jeanne Willems	August 30



Rob & Pam White
August 3, 1968



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP Thank you to Sue Sissel for sponsoring our missionaries, the Bencke family in Japan and Evan Keppy for sponsoring John Chima and Tom & Pam Carlson for sponsoring Denisse Grefa, our Compassion Children. 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 an envelope marked appropriately for the person /persons you are sponsoring. Thank you for your support!

*Now
is the time!*

FAITH CONNECTS (Daily Devotion) M&W @ 7:00 pm Online
Weekly Worship, Saturday @ 5:00pm Live Stream
Available Online & on our Facebook Page

Faith Lutheran Church
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Eldridge, IA 52748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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