

# Faith Lutheran Church



## AMBASSADOR

September 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,

In the Gospel reading for August 23, Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13-20). Rather than asking the disciples what others have told them about Jesus or what they expected the Messiah to be based on the tradition in which they had grown up, Jesus wanted to know how his disciples experienced Jesus. Who do you who have been with me, who have witnessed me healing the sick and casting out demons, who have eaten twice the multiplied food that I have provided, who have had front row seats to all of my teaching, who have experienced me calming the storm, who have been with me all of this time – who do you say that I am?

Peter had an answer. “You are the Messiah, Son of the Living God.” And that should be no surprise because Peter was the first disciple called. He has been there for every lesson Jesus has offered, has experienced the healings and heard sermons on justice, he was saved from the stormy waters by Jesus’ own hand – Peter has been paying attention, and through his experiences with Jesus, Peter has learned much about who Jesus is.

As Jesus affirms Peter’s confession, Jesus reminds Peter and the disciples – and us as well – that it is God who has revealed this promise of God’s presence in Jesus to them. All that they have experienced with Jesus has been God’s way of showing them that God is with them. It is in their experience with the sights and sound, the tastes and smells and healing touch that they have come to know God’s presence. And while their senses and experiences are imperfect, God’s revelation is not limited to that imperfection, and so while they cannot completely understand all that it means for Jesus to be the Messiah, they do know the presence of God in Jesus.

So how is it that we experience the power and presence of God in our lives? We do not have Jesus here in the flesh with us to teach us and feed us and heal us and catch us when we fall. Where do you see God in Christ at work in the world?

As Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans, God has gifted each of us by grace with gifts to be used individually and together to be one body of Christ. We, then, are called to be the experience of Christ for others around us. When we, as one body, use our gifts together to proclaim to the world who Jesus is—that Jesus is the Messiah, God with us—then we show the world where our trust lies, the rock on which we stand, even when all of the storms rage around us and the ground at our feet begins to shake. Then, others come to see who Jesus is – that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, the one in whom we put our trust.

Believe me, with all that is going on these days, I know that it is sometime hard to stand on that rock, to hold onto that faith, to be the church together in these times when we cannot always gather. I have felt this very much in recent days as everything around me began to fall.

You see, my family has taken every reasonable precaution in an attempt to keep ourselves and others around us safe during this pandemic. We wear masks, we keep distance, we do not do many social things to keep those around us as well as ourselves as safe and healthy as possible. We believe that is how we show the love of Christ to others. So, when we found out that we are COVID positive, having no idea where we came into contact with the virus, everything around us shook and shattered. Knowing that this would have implications on the congregation, I feared anger and frustration. Knowing that, even with every precaution we have taken, we could have spread this to others, left feelings of guilt. Knowing that the girls will not be able to start school with their classmates, and not knowing when they will be able to return, left feelings of sadness and uncertainty. Everything felt like it was crumbling.

Thankfully, however, we have experienced the presence of God in Jesus in the midst of all of this. With the support of the COVID-19 Subcommittee and the Council, we have determined the best ways to move forward to keep the work of the church moving forward while keeping everyone as safe as possible. We give thanks for the precautions that we have taken as a congregation which makes us more confident that possible exposure was minimal. I have had members of the congregation reach out to me to offer support as we are in isolation. I am sure there is still some frustration with the situation – we all have that at this point – but even as the earth has been shaking around us, we have felt the strength of God’s presence through the gifts that God has given to the body of Christ in this place.

If Jesus were to ask me today, “Who do you say that I am?” My answer would be “You are Jesus, the Messiah, Son of the living God. You are the one who gave everything so that we might have life. I am convinced that, regardless of what might come in the days ahead, you are the one living in and through each one of us, the one who will lead and guide us, strengthen and keep us. I pray that through us and the ways in which we live these days, others will experience your presence and your promise to be with us always and in all things.” I know that is an incomplete confession, but it is where I am.

When I was scrolling through Facebook this morning, a friend had posted this quote by Madeleine L’Engle from *Plough Daily Reader* which I found helpful as I thought about all of this:

It is when things go wrong, when the good things do not happen, when our prayers seem to have been lost, that God is most present. We do not need the sheltering wings when things go smoothly. We are closest to God in the darkness, stumbling along blindly. There is no such thing as belief without doubt or struggle.

This is as true as ever in these days. God is still present, even in the struggle. Jesus is still the Messiah even in the doubt. May we all experience the presence of God directly and through the lives of others and cling to that rock of faith that will never let us go.

In Christ’s Love,  
*Pastor Carrie*

## High School Youth Group Starting Soon!!

Wednesday, September 9, 7:00 pm

It seems like it has been forever since we were together, so it is exciting to say that we are going to be able to gather again soon. It will be a little different this year, but being able to be together again will be good. As usual, I would like to have our high school youth help us determine how we function as a group this year!

**Youth in grades 9 through 12 and their parents are invited to join us in the outdoor chapel on Wednesday, September 9 at 7:00 pm.** Please bring your own chairs, sit in the circles on the lawn by families, and wear face coverings so that we can follow our congregation guidelines. We will have some prepackaged refreshments available.

As always, this youth group is not only for members of Faith, so feel free to invite friends and their parents to join us as well!! Can’t wait to see you soon!



**Confirmation 2020-2021 Kicks Off on Wednesday, September 9, at 5:30 pm!**

This year will be a little different for Confirmation, but we are going to do our best to make it happen this year. Because of all of the changes in school this year, we are going to let kids get used to school before we begin our programming. **Therefore, we will gather for our kick-off event on Wednesday, September 9, at 5:30 pm.**

We will gather in the outdoor chapel. Please bring your own chairs and sit by families in the circles that are marked on the lawn. Please wear a face covering as well. We will go over expectations and opportunities for the year, how things will be different, and how we will pivot if there is a need to go online this year. We will not be able to have our normal pizza party due to COVID concerns, but we will have some pre-packaged refreshments available for our meeting.

I am looking forward to seeing the 8<sup>th</sup> graders again and welcoming the 7<sup>th</sup> graders!

Pastor Carrie



### Communion

We are excited to begin celebrating Holy Communion on the week-end of September 12 and 13. You will pick up your elements at the check-in table, and then we will all commune together when we come to that point in the service. We look forward to sharing the foretaste of the feast to come with you once again.



**Confirmation Service**  
**September 20, 2020**  
**11:00 am**

We will be celebrating the 2020 Confirmation Class on Sunday, September 20, 2020 at 11:00 am. In order to keep the size of the gathering at a safer level, this service will be open to the confirmands and their families only. We will livestream the service for the remainder of the congregation to participate.

We look forward to celebrating with the following youth as they affirm their baptism:

Rylee Daniels	Drew Eller	Kyler Gerardy
Carter Harms	Mackenzie Housenga	Kalob Kroeger
Kacey Newman	Connor Peck	Brody Schoenthaler
Ryan Stickler	Naomi Ubel	

Keep these youth in your prayers in the days ahead.



**WANTED: College Student & Military Addresses**



In an attempt to keep in better contact with our recent high school graduates, especially in these strange days, we would love to have addresses of those students so that we can send messages and care packages to them throughout the year. If you have one or more students who are in college or technical school or are serving in the military

this year and would be willing to share their address with us, please email their address to the church office ([faitheldridge@netins.net](mailto:faitheldridge@netins.net)) or call the church office at 285-4501. Thank you for your help in this effort to stay in communication with our young adults.

**BEER BIBLE STUDY**

Beer Bible Study is a time of conversation and learning for those who are 21+. We will meet at the home of John and Amy Powell on Wednesday, September 16 at 7:30 pm. Bring your own face coverings and favorite beer, wine or mixed drinks. A Zoom link will be available for those who would prefer to attend virtually. We hope to see you there.



**2020-2021 Centering faith formation in the home**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL-IN-A-BOX**

It's the beginning of another great year of Sunday School, and we are looking forward to partnering in faith with your family in new and changing ways that are different than we are used to. As we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, our primary focus for the upcoming year will be bringing faith formation into your home, as we will not be gathering in person for Sunday school. This is our solution for now, and we will adjust as the situation changes.

Our main goal has always been about empowering and equipping your home to be a place where Jesus is made known, and to help you, as parents and caregivers, to live out the baptismal promises made to your children. We know this will be different than we have done things in the past; however, we are going to keep it simple and make it as easy as possible.

This year's curriculum is entitled "God's Word at Home," which is designed for this style of family Sunday school. We will be creating boxes by trimester that will hold all of the lessons and essential supplies that your family unit will need. Each week during the children's message at worship, we will introduce story and lesson to help you get started. As we are used to, the lessons will follow the assigned readings used during weekly worship.

We will begin Sunday school on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The boxes will be available for pick-up during worship on that weekend. Any boxes that are not picked up will be delivered the following week to your homes as requested. To be sure we are making enough boxes, please reserve your box by calling the church office at 285-4501 or sending a quick note to [faithchildrenandyouth@gmail.com](mailto:faithchildrenandyouth@gmail.com).

If you have children 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and younger in your family and would like your own copy of the Spark Story Bible, let us know and we will include it in your box as the gift of God's Word for you.

Please know that we are in this new adventure together. We promise to keep it simple and streamlined. The pastors will send out a beginning video explaining the details and contents this year's Sunday school in a box. As always, the pastors are available to answer any questions or to make appointments to see your family individually. Most of all we are here to offer support, encouragement and grace for your family as we practice faith formation at home and in the world. We hope you will join us in deepening our relationship with God and nourishing healthy, life-giving relationships with one another.



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. As of 8/22, the 14 day trend for new coronavirus cases in Scott County and Clinton County was increasing.

For Scott county:

the 14 day rolling average of new cases is 19.4 vs. 15.3 on 8/8

the 14 day rolling average of % positive is 6.6% vs. 6.2% on 8/15

the total number of positive open cases is at 278 vs. 209 on 8/8

there were 8 deaths so far in August for a total of 19 since March

For Clinton county:

the 14 day rolling daily average of new cases is 17.2 vs. 12.4 on 8/8

the 14 day rolling average of % positive is 15.6% vs. 14.7% on 8/15

the total number of positive open cases is at 246 vs. 164 on 8/8

there were 4 deaths so far in August for a total of 6 since March

With the current status, we are able to continue outdoor worship and gatherings, but do not meet the criteria to move to indoor worship or indoor gatherings.

For our team, August was a very busy month. With declining new cases in Scott County, we were finally able to start up Outdoor Worship and Outdoor Gatherings. We oversaw a detailed plan of action to communicate and be ready for the return to Outdoor Worship. Outdoor Worship took place on 8/08-09 and 08/15-16. In-person Beer Bible Study resumed on 8/19.

Then, we learned that the Pastors were exposed to COVID-19. On 8/20, we made necessary recommendations to council to temporarily stop Outdoor Worship and other in-person pastoral activities. Also, we closed the church building for 7 days to prevent possible spread to others. We worked out plans with church staff to ensure necessary business could take place remotely and communicated the temporary changes as quick as possible.

We are praying for our Pastors and hoping for an uneventful and minimal quarantine period. Thus, we are preparing for a safe return to Outdoor Worship and in-person pastoral activities in September. We are also preparing for a safe return to other activities in September, such as communion, confirmation, team night, baptisms, etc.

COVID-19 Sub-Committee: Mike Garner, Linda Golinghorst, Gary King, Amy Murray, Matt Peck, Joni Schneider, Pastor Carrie

## FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
		1 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm  6:30 pm DIALOGUE on RACE	2
6  9:00 AM In Person Outdoor Worship  Ushers: Kevin & Diane Krebs	7  7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	8 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm  6:30 pm DIALOGUE on RACE	9 5:30 pm Confirm Kick-Off  7:00 pm High Sch Youth Group
13  9:00 AM In Person Outdoor Worship  Ushers: Kent & Michelle Wiebel	14  7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	15  Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm	16 5:30 pm Confirm Conversations 7:00 pm High Sch Youth Group 7:30 Beer Bible S the Powell's
20 9:00 AM In Person Outdoor Worship Baptism of Brantley Copley  11:00 AM Confirmation Service	21  7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	22  Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm	23 5:30 pm Confirm Conversations  7:00 pm High Sch Youth Group
27  9:00 AM In Person Outdoor Worship	28  7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	29  Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm	30 5:30 pm Confirm Conversations  7:00 pm High Sch Youth Group

# SEPTEMBER 2020

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		3 6:30 pm Team Night at Outdoor Chapel	4 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	5 5:00 PM In Person Outdoor and Live Online Worship  Ushers: Jan Bowman
Confirmation at School	10		11 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	12 5:00 PM In Person Outdoor and Live Online Worship  Ushers: Mike & Annette Tomlinson
Confirmation at School Bible Study at	17 7:30 Church Council Mtg. on Zoom	18 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	19 5:00 PM In Person Outdoor and Live Online Worship Baptism of Charlotte Lueder	
Confirmation at School	24	25 AMBASSADOR DEADLINE Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	26 5:00 PM In Person Outdoor and Live Online Worship	
Confirmation at School				



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

## GROWING YOUNG, CHAPTER 6: PRIORITIZE YOUNG PEOPLE (AND FAMILIES) EVERYWHERE

This chapter captures the importance of prioritizing our young people and young families in the church’s programming, as well as providing a place where they feel welcome and included.

The authors used First Baptist’s example of first-generation immigrant parents and second- and third-generation children use “selective acculturation”, to adapt to culture positively. In many cases, these children do not speak Spanish fluently. Instead of fighting to keep their traditional worship service in Spanish, the church has adapted it to one-third of the service done in English, with about half of the worship team comprised of teens and young adults. They have also embraced the young people in the planning of worship and special events. “When churches prioritize young people – and their families – everywhere, they take a step beyond both empathy and warmth. They allocate resources, energy and attention to teenagers and young adults, both inside and outside their walls.”

“What does prioritization mean? If you want to know the priorities of a church, look at their budget.” Resource allocation is a helpful indicator of prioritization. This includes not only budget, but personnel, facility space, time and programming. They consider the effect on young people in all aspects of church life. They intentionally pay attention. Young people are prioritized not only because it makes them happy, but the whole church benefits. There is a mutual respect and mutual need between the young and old alike. Parents are the most influential in their children’s’ faith, not only in childhood, but also through adolescence. Therefore, ministry leaders must also include the care of parents and families. How much a parent participates in church worship, programming and faith building outside the church directly correlates with the faith maturity of their children and vibrancy of the congregation. However, parents need all the help they can get. The worship staff is encouraged to daily pray for the parents, communicate with them regarding their children weekly, monthly and annually. Most importantly they ask, “How can we pray for your family?”

Often teenagers participate in church activities without their parents. When this happens, the church becomes a surrogate faith family, providing the spiritual nurture they may be missing at home. Often the parents are thought to be disinterested and uninvolved, but in reality they love their children and want to do the right thing. It is up to the church to reach out to the parents to initiate a relationship, which will provide better understanding and empathy toward parents and later nurture trust, which can open doors for a deeper connection. Divorce leaves kids permanently conflicted, often being ping-ponged between parents and feeling that they have one foot in each parents' worlds, while not fully belonging to either. Special occasions that used to enhance a sense of belonging, now heighten tensions of not belonging to either world. They are apt to feel three times more alone, twice as unsafe and are four times more likely to disrespect their parents. As they age, children from divorced families tend to have higher rates of alcohol and drug use, do more poorly in school and more likely to be depressed and withdrawn. Studies have found that two-thirds of young people who regularly attended church at the time of their parents' divorce reported that no one from their faith community reached out to help them during this painful episode in their life. As they feel they are being ripped apart, the faith community has the opportunity to step in and help them through this trying time.

Prioritizing young people and their families means being ready to empathize with and address the deep pain and brokenness within family systems. As you look around the congregation, is there someone who could use some support for family pain and brokenness?

So, what keeps the youth coming back? Many expressed "load-bearing" responsibilities in the church ministries – playing in the worship band, running the sound board, serving in children's ministry, mentor young kids, helping to feed the hungry – made them feel accountable and connected. Maybe the young people can lead our congregation in surprising ways through the use of digital technology, if we allow them to. Their voices, hands and hearts matter for the life and work of the congregation.

Rather than ask to volunteer, we may want to ask them to participate, which changes the perspective of "volunteering" to do a civic duty or "participating" to do work essential to the life of the church.

Growing Young churches have made prioritizing young people a lifestyle commitment. The young people know it, and are eager to express the fact that the church is crazy about them and committed to their lives' success.

Report by Joni King



### *We give thanks*

2020 continues to be a year of unexpected challenges. It is inspiring to see how people come together in difficult times like this.

We are praying for the families, farms and businesses that are impacted by the devastation of the derecho storm. We are thankful for the volunteers who cleared and cleaned up the church properties. We are thankful to Pastor Heather for connecting with Pastor Nate Montover at Hope Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids and Beth Ann Anderson who is co-ordinating our efforts to support Hope's community outreach. The Service in the World team is directing \$500 for their July and August ministry to the hardest hit areas in Iowa; thanks to the financial support of our congregation.

Due to the downturn of coronavirus cases in Scott County, we were able to return to in-person Outdoor Worship and Outdoor Gatherings in August. We appreciate all of the people who joined us both in-person and online. We owe a huge thanks to the people who helped to help make Outdoor Worship possible: Mike Garner, Joni Schneider, Jim Schneider, Amy Murray, Austin Lee, Joni King, Matt Peck, Neal Becker, Sue Becker, Jared Penning, Brad and Janet Merrick.

We had to say 'good bye' to Joni Johnson as she left her position with us for 'her dream job' with a kitchen design business. Besides taking care of the day to day church office duties, she brought a caring attitude with her each day. We will miss her and wish her well! We are indebted to Rhonda Webber and Carolyn Scheibe who are filling in short term, and for Kelly Penning who is volunteering her HR expertise and support throughout the hiring process.

Words cannot express our appreciation for Pastor Carrie and Pastor Heather, who continue to adjust to ever changing situations this year and the impact to our congregation, our neighbors, and their own families. Even with their exposure to COVID-19, they were committed to do whatever they could to keep things as normal as possible for everyone concerned. This is a difficult task in the middle of a situation when practically nothing is normal. We pray for their health and a safe return to in-person pastoral duties in September.

### *We are taking action*

We are a congregation with a passion for young people and families. We continue to learn and to grow in this space with our monthly discussion of the book *Growing Young. 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. Please see Joni King's article in this Ambassador where she shares the insights and lessons from Chapter 6. *Prioritize Young People [and Families] Everywhere*.

**We are inviting interested congregation members to apply for Office Administrator.** The Office Administrator opening is posted in the North Scott Press, Busy Bee and on Indeed.com. We have also shared the posting on our Website, Facebook, LinkedIn. We are in the process of phone screening applicants and will be hosting onsite interviews in September.


To follow the best practices outlined in our Constitution, we will be appointing **10 congregation members to two new committees** in the coming month. **The Staff**

**Support Committee** will have four members plus Pastor Carrie and a Council representative and will meet with non-rostered staff to review ministry and functioning of the congregation and to be a resource for issues and concerns. The **Mutual Ministry Committee** will have six members and will meet with our Pastors periodically to maintain strong connections with the congregation. **If you are interested, please contact the church office.**

***We need to hear from you***


This year, everything we do is made different and more challenging because of the pandemic. The last time we had normal in-person worship was March 14, which seems so long ago. At this point, there is no end in sight to the pandemic. The most difficult part of being on council this year is our inability to chat with you before and after worship or when working side by side on ministries. We invite you to share your thoughts and concerns for the benefit of our congregation. How are you doing? How are we doing? Where should we be headed next? Since I am retired, I am available most of the time. Will you please drop me an email or give me a call?

Thank you!  
 Linda Golinghorst  
 linda.golinghorst@gmail.com  
 563.209.2213



## Shine your light for Jesus!


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**SIMPLE ACTS**

I am finally in my last year of medical school at University of Iowa, and hope to join a Pediatrics Residency Program next summer. I want to be a Pediatrician because I love children and preventative medicine.

My current clinical rotation is Palliative Care at Stead Family Children's Hospital in Iowa City. It is challenging and rewarding to help families reach their goals of care for their children by providing comfort, relief, and guidance. One of my patients has been hospitalized for several weeks while healing from a severe burn. He is proud of the support people have shown him by drawing pictures for him to hang on his wall. So, I decided to join the competition for the best drawing by making him an 'Iowa Strong' poster. I could see how much this simple act cheered him up and made a positive impact on his recovery.



Kerri Golinghorst



**Seeing God's Work at the Farm**

The 1958 Massey Ferguson small square baler was in the airplane hanger covered with layers of dust. For years it was unused. Untouched. It was replaced by a round baler that took a fraction of the time and labor. One that did not require tons of sweat, shredded jeans, and scratched up arms. Leave it to my six-year old son to insist on rediscovering the excitement of small square baling. With this summer's third cutting of alfalfa, Otto's fascination with that old baler became a reality.

His 85-year old grandpa, Ed, who had broken his neck last fall, was on the Deutz tractor in front of the baler. For awhile, Otto was swinging the bale hook while Dieter stood back stacking the bales on the hayrack. After a few passes, Otto decided he'd rather sit on top of the bales on the rack. However, when he got to run the bales up the elevator into the hay mow, another adventure was added to his excitement.

Working side by side with his grandpa and dad, the clanging of the machinery, the constant movement of the bales, the sweet smell of curing hay; for Otto this was a dream come true. It was everything he had hoped for and more. To be a part of the old-time hay harvest brought joy to his grandpa also, as he shared memories of former times and felt younger than ever. He had a renewed sense of purpose passing the joys and secrets of the farm to a new generation. Otto still wakes up every morning wondering if it's time to make more square bales---which he calls "rectangle bales."

Ruth Staudt	September 9
Kenny Oetzmann	September 12
Donna Benskin	September 12
Tom Andresen	September 14
Barbara Weltzin	September 22
Lorenz Behrens	September 23
Christine Copley	September 23
Mary Flenker	September 24
Judi Hamann	September 25
Carol Kuehl	September 26
Teri Wittkowski	September 26
Arliss Whisler	September 30
Diana Doss	September 30



**Lorenz & Marian Behrens**  
September 7, 1957

**Kenny & Sue Oetzmann**  
September 10, 1966

**Don & Judi Hamann**  
September 26, 1968



September needs are:

- Cereal
- Side dishes
- Boxed potatoes
- Cleaning supplies



**MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP** Thank you to Myron and Carolyn Scheibe for sponsoring our missionaries, the Bencke family in Japan; and our Compassion Children, John Chima and Denisse Grefa. 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!

**FAITH CONNECTS (Daily Devotion) Monday @ 7:00 pm Online**  
**Weekly Worship, Saturday @ 5:00 pm in person and Live Stream Online & on our Facebook Page**  
**Sunday @ 9:00 am in person**

**Faith Lutheran Church**  
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Non-Profit Organization  
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 Eldridge, IA 52748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

