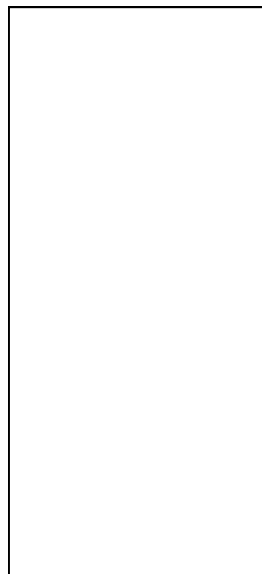


FAITH CONNECTS (Conversation and Devotion) Monday @ 7:00 pm Online
Weekly Worship, Saturday @ 5:00 pm In person and Live Stream Online & on our Facebook Page
Sunday @ 9:00 am in person

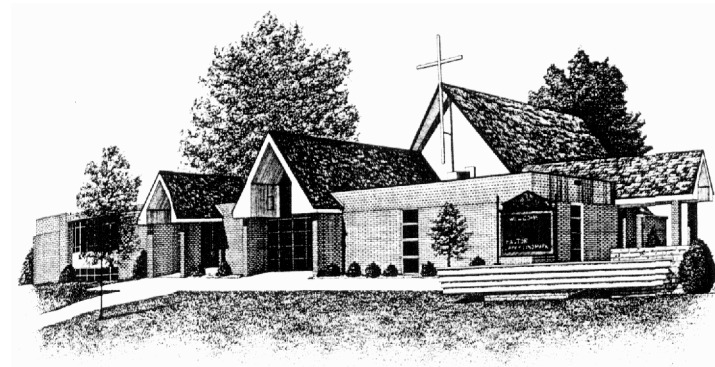
Faith Lutheran Church
 500 W. LeClaire Road
 Eldridge, IA 52748

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR

November 2020

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

500 W. LeClaire Road
 Eldridge, IA 52748
 (563) 285-4501

www.faithlutheraneldridge.com
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Grace-Gifted, Faith-Lifted
Called to Share, Seek, and Serve Christ



Dear Friends in Christ,

It is hard to believe that we have come to November, the month of Thanksgiving. There are so many events that normally mark the year that we have not been able to participate in this year that time seems to move in a very different way this year. And with all that has happened this year, giving thanks may not be something that feels very natural in this year. Later in this Ambassador, you will find an article from Pastor Heather about rejoicing and giving thanks in these days, and I pray that we can all take some time to give thanks for those things that are going well, even if in an unexpected way, in these days. And as I enter into this month of Thanksgiving, I want to share some of the things for which I am thankful.

On a personal note, one of the joys of this pandemic time has been the ways in which Abby and Madelyn have been able to connect in new ways with their cousin, Kaya, in Los Angeles. We normally get to be together two to three times during the year, none of which have happened this year (the last time we were together in person was last Thanksgiving); however, the three girls have used technology on their phones to see one another several times a week, to have conversations and commiserate about some of the things they are missing, and to play games with one another. Of course, with three girls who are all within two-and-a-half years of age, there are arguments and hurt feelings along with the good times, but the ways in which they have built a relationship across the distance has been heartwarming for this mom.

And while I am grateful for these family opportunities, I am also very thankful for all of you and the ways that you have been living in and through this time that seems so upside down. As I think about this, I turn to the apostle Paul.

Paul began nearly all of his letters with a thanksgiving to those to whom he wrote. My favorite of these thanksgivings is written in the book of Philippians. Paul writes:

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:3-6, NRSV)



Linda Johnson	November 4
Mary Ann Anderson	November 7
Sharon Goldsmith	November 8
Myra Kreiter	November 11
Mike Staples	November 16
Deborah Peterson	November 25
Mary Arp	November 30



Ronald & Nancy Meyer on November 16, 1962

Richard & Shirley Cole on November 22, 1958

Ron & Mary Arp on November 30, 1963

BAPTISMS

We welcome these children into the Body of Christ and into our Faith family through the sacrament of Holy Baptism:

October 17: Bryce Tyler Gray
Emery Lee Gray, daughter of Bryce and Kylie Gray

NEW MEMBERS

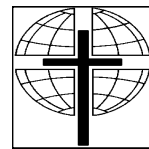
We welcome these new member to Faith:

October 10: Kim Claeys-Hemphill and Mark Hemphill
October 17: Kylie Gray

WE KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS. . .

..... the family of Shirley Stoltenberg Shirley passed away on October 8th and services were held October 15th at Faith.

.....the family of Melvia Ewoldt. Melvia passed away on October 13th and graveside services were held October 15th.



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP Sponsorships are available for November and December for our Missionaries in Japan, the Benecke Family, 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 Benecke family. Sign up by calling the office or on the board in the gathering area. Your

sponsorship can be placed in an envelope marked for whom you are sponsoring. Thank you for your support!

Finance Update

As you are all well aware, 2020 has certainly been full of surprises which has created many challenges. As you can imagine it has created challenges for the your church as well. With that being said, I thought it would be appropriate to give the congregation an update on the financial position of the church thru September 30, 2020. I believe the easiest way to explain our position is to break it down into percentages. We are 75% of the way through the year (9/12). As of September 30, 2020 we have realized 62% (\$224,360) of our budgeted annual income (\$360,000), \$270,000 of income would represent 75% of our budgeted income (\$360,000 x 75%). The difference from the actual received, to budget is \$45,640. For the same time period of 2019 we had received 68% of our budgeted income, and for 2018 for the same time period, we had received 66% of our budgeted income. So as we analyze theses numbers, you can see there is not a big spread over the past three years. As we analyze the expense side of the budget, we have realized 56% of our budgeted expenses for 2020. For the same time period of 2019 we had realized 64.6% of our budgeted expenses, and for 2018 for the same time period, we had realized 66% of our budgeted expenses.

Obviously the past 6 months have not allowed us to operate in the same way we have in the prior years. If there is a silver lining in all of this, as the numbers would indicate, our operating expenses are down. Most of these cost savings can be attributed to utility expense and the summer programs including camp among others being canceled. As a council we chose not to utilize the government sponsored programs available to us, as we felt based on the overall financial strength of church, it was best not to access the funds, rather leave them available for those who were less fortunate than us. We also recognized a need for another option for members of the congregation to be able to electronically make their offerings, since we were not allowed to attend weekly church services. This new program is currently being utilized along with the other options already in place prior to March.

In closing, I would like to say thank you, thank you for continuing to financially support your church through these unprecedented times. It is because of your faith and generosity we will continue to be financially stable and work through these challenging times. As a council we continue to look forward to the opportunities ahead that will help grow the congregation, grow the membership and provide programs and improvements we can all be proud of. Again, I want to personally thank you for your generosity over the past 9 months, and ask for your continued support for the balance of the year, as we move towards what we all hope will be a better 2021.

Scott Wiley
Finance Team Leader



I want you to know that I do give thanks every time I think of you because I know that you are shining Christ's light in the world, even in these strange days. I give thanks for the ways in which you reach out to one another, caring for each other, sharing God's love with those around you. This is so much needed in these days.

I also give thanks for all of the leaders of the congregation who have worked tirelessly to think through the precautions that we are following to keep everyone as safe as possible. I am thankful for the ways in which they have paid attention as new knowledge has been made known and new guidelines have been put in place so that we can evolve our practices to meet the current needs in the pandemic. This work is more appreciated than you know.

I also want you to know that I am keeping all of you in my prayers because I know that, while each of us is faced with different struggles, joys, questions, fears, and excitement, none of us expected all that this year has brought. I continue to pray for God's presence and peace to surround all of you through all of this. I continue to pray for God's guidance as you seek new ways to face the challenges of life. I continue to pray that love might fill your life and heart. I continue to pray for you when I do not have the words to pray and trust the Spirit to intercede. All of this I do because I am convinced that God continues to walk with us through this crazy time. While we may not be living out all that God has called us to in the ways that we had imagined we would be doing so this year, I am thankful for the promise that God will continue to lead us and guide us to be the Body of Christ in the world, no matter what challenges we face along the way.

I also want to give thanks to all of you for the ways that you have reached out to Pastor Heather and me throughout the pandemic, but particularly in this last month as we have celebrated Pastor Appreciation Month. Receiving your notes and love, your gifts and words of encouragement has meant so much to both of us and have brought many smiles to our faces. Thanks to all of you, from the bottom of our hearts.

I wish all of you a joy-filled November as we all take some time to give thanks to God for all that God has provided for us in this year. I pray that you find ways to celebrate with family, even if it is in ways that are very different than you had planned. I pray that you all feel God's presence surrounding you in all that you do. I give thanks for you and for the ways you shine your light for Christ in the world.

Blessings,
Pastor Carrie



Dialogues On Race 2.0

After completing the course, *Dialogues on Race*, those who participated found the information presented in the book and the video to be eye-opening and helpful to them as they learned more about race in this country. They also felt that it would be important to invite others to join this conversation. Because we know that fall is a hard time to commit to an eight week journey together, we are planning to host another session of *Dialogues on Race* after the new year. This month we hear from two more participants who share their experiences. We hope that their experiences will encourage you to join the conversation in the new year.

.....

Dialogues On: Race was an experience that I think needs to happen more often in predominantly white churches across America. I connected with members of the church in ways that I never had before, and learned a lot in the process. It was refreshing to have open conversations about race with folks in a safe environment. As the book progressed, I began to realize how little I know. The unique perspectives of the authors gives voice and life to the struggles you might have only heard about and never fully understood. As the weeks continued, our discussions got better. We got more comfortable together and related on a deeper level. Going into **Dialogues On: Race**, I was not sure what to expect. Now, I view this small group as a starting point for anyone looking to challenge their current perspectives and world view. This happened to me as I learned about the history of this country and the Christian faith's role. I encourage others to do the same

Lucas Gohlinghorst

.....

I joined **Dialogues On: Race** because I was trying to understand why the racial divide in our country is so persistent. Why do some people judge other people so negatively just because they are different? What can I do to change this? I felt it would be 'safe' to meet with a small group from church to learn and to talk about race. My experience with the small group was exactly that. Through a series of short essays, we learned *what race is* and *why it was created*. Together, we learned *how to talk* with one another about this *difficult subject* - and we practiced *how to listen* to one another...*without judgement*. What woke me up was how Christianity played such a role in the creation of race and how race is still deeply ingrained American Christianity. I realized that even with my Christian upbringing, corporate diversity training and affinity groups, and some friends and family that are people of color, it is difficult for me to escape racism in my own thoughts and actions. I want to change this. I hope and pray that others will consider joining the next 'Dialogues On: Race'. Maybe together we can change this.

Linda Gohlinghorst



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

Chapter 8- Growing Young in Your Context

The final chapter of *Growing Young* was about applying the six core commitments to growing young in the context of our church. As a reminder, those six core commitments are: unlock keychain leadership, empathize with today's young people, take Jesus' message seriously, fuel a warm community, prioritize young people (and families) everywhere, and be the best neighbors. Any church has the ability to grow young, and this chapter outlined ways to help implement change.

Listening at the beginning and throughout the growing young process is crucial to understanding our church's unique context. All generations should participate in this step. Through careful and systematic listening, we will ensure our church is meeting the real needs of our congregation and community.

Sharing stories of our future hope is a way to illustrate our vision for our church and allows others to connect to that vision. This is how congregations develop and communicate their vision for growing young.

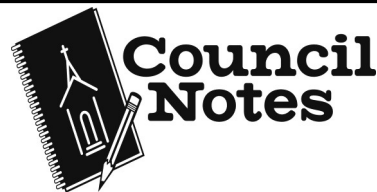
Implementing change can be difficult and the book outlined a few ways to help. First, changes can be made easier when we focus on what the church can influence. Second, the book discussed constructing a holding environment in order to change at a pace that the congregation can tolerate. Third, a suggestion to experiment on the margins would allow change to start on a smaller scale and ease into more visible change. Lastly, maintaining disciplined attention is imperative to change because this process will take time.

In Council's discussion, we talked about how we've already started to create a vision through the priorities we've set for the council, and we can apply the six core commitments for growing young to all of them. Those priorities are: maintain relationships with Jesus and each other through prayer and worship, engage and empower youth by strengthening intergenerational relationships, and expand community involvement and outreach by understanding our neighbor's needs. We felt building intergenerational relationships was a key step for our church to begin growing young. Small connections and interactions with young people can lead to lasting relationships that make a difference in their lives. We are excited to begin a mentorship program with confirmation students and adult congregation members. We began brainstorming other ways to build intergenerational relationships and underscored the importance of listening to the congregation to make sure our church is providing opportunities that meet actual needs.

I invite you to think about the needs in your life and how our church might help fill those needs. What future hopes do you have for our church? How might you be able to connect with someone in our congregation from a different generation? Please feel free to share your ideas with Council.

Amy Murray

Clergy Appreciation Month



I hope you had a chance to let Pastor Carrie and Pastor Heather know how much they are appreciated during October. This year, it is especially important to let them know that the work they do makes a difference for our congregation and for our neighbors. If you forgot, don't worry! Gestures of appreciation are welcome anytime!

Actions & Decisions

Amy Murray lead our book study of *Growing Young, Chapter 8: How to Create a Plan for Change*. Check out her article in this month's Ambassador.

Tim Broberg is this year's Nominating Committee Chair. The team is looking for nominees for the following positions to start next year: 4 council positions (finance, worship and music, christian ed, 1 youth representative), 2 synod assembly representatives, 2 endowment committee members, and 5 nominating committee members. Our congregation requires good leaders to function. Please consider your sense of calling for any of these roles in 2021!

We are excited to be on boarding Beth Ann Anderson to the staff position of Office Administrator! Welcome to the staff team Beth Ann and best wishes in your new role!

We are happy to approve the use of our outdoors and building for Carrie Keppy's 4H group again this year! They plan to meet monthly on Sundays at 4pm.

Before the end of the year, we will be making sure our membership records are up to date. Usually, inquiry letters are sent to members who have not communed or made a contribution of record for the past two years. This year, we will drop the requirement for communing and will use three years for contributions of record due to the pandemic.

Although COVID-19 community spread is increasing, we are working to increase use of precautions so that we can remain indoors if possible. We cannot avoid all risk. If you have been exposed, have COVID-19 symptoms, are ill or vulnerable - please stay safely at home. Don't worry, we will have a seat for you when you are able to return!

It's to start plans for Christmas Eve!

In order to help us plan Christmas Eve in-person worship services, we are taking a quick poll of the congregation. Will you please participate in this poll on our website or by calling or emailing the church office?

November Poll:

For Christmas Eve, what is your preferred in-person worship time? (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)? How many people may be in your party?

Please provide any comments that will give us insight to your answer.



We are here			
Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Online & At Home	Online & At Home	Online & At Home	Online & At Home
	Outdoors	Outdoors	Outdoors
	Masks & Distancing	Indoors	Indoors
		Masks & Distancing	

We are currently in Phase 2 of our **Return To In-Person Gatherings** plan. We began indoor gatherings on the weekend of October 10/11 including Worship, Confirmation Conversations, High School Youth, Team Night, and Funerals.

All of these indoor gatherings follow our guidelines with precautions and procedure changes to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19. Beyond wearing masks, physical distancing, hand hygiene, cleaning, and contact tracing, there are many other things we must do to manage the COVID-19 risk to the people who choose to gather in person. This includes limiting the amount of time we are gathered, reducing the number of people who are gathered, limiting shared items and keeping from talking and singing as a group. Even when we wear masks, when groups of people talk or sing together the risk of spread is greatly increased. To improve ventilation, we are purchasing mobile air filtration systems. Please know, these are not our preferred ways of operating, however these things allow us to gather in person.

Unfortunately, the community spread is continuing to worsen. The number of new cases and the % of positive tests are both very high and hospitals are starting to have reduced capacity.

We will continue to monitor the community spread while working to ensure consistent and effective use of precautions and procedure changes. If the community spread continues to increase, we may need to further reduce time together, number of people together and group talking or we may need to stop in person gatherings again.

We ask for your understanding as we respond to the changing risks. We must underscore, if you have COVID-19 symptoms, have been exposed, are ill, or vulnerable, please stay home. We will keep a seat for you when it is safe to return!

Covid-19 Sub-committee: Pastor Carrie, Linda Golinghorst, Mike Garner, Gary King, Amy Murray, Matt Peck, Joni Schneider.

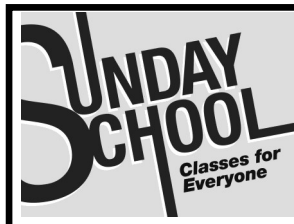
Youth Group News

Prior to returning to inside learning, the 7th and 8th Grade Confirmation kids had been meeting outdoors on the patio, under beautiful evening skies. Our study this year is on the Old Testament, which includes stories of heroes and villains, battles, murder, love, birth and death, displacement and heartbreak as well as promises made and broken. Zoom meetings have been available for those who can not participate in person, due to quarantine or for other reasons.

Beginning in September, the Confirmation Children were given the task of finding an adult mentor whom they feel comfortable speaking to. As suggested in our study of *Growing Young*, this mentor is someone the child can depend on to be a part of his/her growing up, as another outlet to open up to and guide them throughout their lives. October 14, we took a small break from Confirmation to train these mentors chosen by each child. Confirmation then resumed Wednesday, October 21, inside the Fellowship Hall (while practicing CDC Guidelines of social distancing and wearing masks).

The High School Youth were also meeting outside on the patio, curled up in their lawn chairs and snuggled in cozy blankets. We have had approximately 10 High School students so far each time we have met. After "highs and lows", a short devotion, and some catching up, the kids have been excited to play Family Feud. Pastor Carrie located an online version which allows the use of a TV to display the survey answers, making the game more realistic. The High School Youth moved inside on October 14, as the cooler weather came upon us. Zoom meetings have also been available (and have been accessed) for those who are unable to attend in person.

Joni King, Youth Chair



NEW Sunday School In A Box materials will arrive mid-November. Be on the look out for communication regarding pick up of your next box! If you are not already signed up for a box and would like to join in the fun, please let us know.

Rowan home with me during that time, which was wonderful, especially while she was still so young. Additionally, I typically travel 6-8 times a year for work, which has not happened this year due to Covid, allowing me to spend more time with Rowan during this very formative first year. ~ Amy Murray

I am grateful for the extra time I was allowed to spend with Katie before she went off to college. I am grateful for the way I feel by eating more healthy by cooking at home, and not grabbing fast food as we dash between practice/ event/lesson. ~ Mike Garner

With limited family in the area finding a way to celebrate special times has been a challenge. I am so grateful for the time Pastor Carrie's family joined us for outdoor picnics on the 4th of July and Labor Day Weekend. Additionally, my children really enjoyed riding bikes and playing at the school playground during our virtual Synod Assembly. The joy of riding bikes on pavement instead of gravel is a notable gift for farm kids, and sharing the joy of eating a fancily frosted mermaid cake creation from Abby and Maddy's cooking class is not an everyday event! ~ Pastor Heather

While I am not traveling, eating out, or seeing family as I planned to do during retirement, I am really enjoying the opportunity to pick up on sewing, spend more time gardening, and cook great food from scratch. I may never eat out again! ~ Linda Golinghorst

I am so blessed. I feel so grateful for all that God has provided me; a loving husband and family, beautiful home, steady employment and great friends. It has been a challenge during the pandemic to not see my family or friends like we want to. But God is with us through this and in time we will be reunited with our loved ones and that love will be even stronger than ever! I cannot wait to hug my family again!! ~ Melody Sawvell

Since the pandemic began, we've spent many hours outdoors exploring Iowa's State and County Parks. While we primarily head to the parks in NE Iowa that have trout streams, we have also ventured to some in the middle of the state, such as Beaver Creek, where we were delightfully surprised by acres and acres of bright, happy sunflowers dancing and nodding in the Iowa breeze. We visited Big Creek, where we picnicked and watched boats while listening to the water lap on the shore. We also visited the Mines of Spain, where the both the trails and views were breathtaking. Most recently, we explored the area north of Decorah, along South Bear Creek, where the water runs cold, the owls sing, the fish bite and campers just pitch their tents along the side of the road! We've enjoyed getting to understand the history of the land and people of Iowa, while marveling at God's creations. There are many of God's treasures hidden among the fields and hills in Iowa. Finding and experiencing them with our family has been a pleasure, and something we did not have time to do before the pandemic. ~ Beth Ann Anderson



THANKFUL
Grateful
BLESSED

A Note from Pastor Heather...

Giving thanks during a pandemic. It sounds impossible, but is it? All of us have been affected and had to change aspects of how we live our daily lives. And for many of us, change is difficult and often unwelcome. In worship, we recently heard the words of Paul: “⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with

thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phillipian 4:4-17)

Maybe giving thanks in all things sounds a little out of touch with reality. How is it that the apostle Paul can rejoice while sitting in jail and have the audacity to advise others to rejoice with him? Paul’s whole letter to the church in Philippi is written from his tiny jail cell as he encourages fellow followers of Christ to continue giving thanks and rejoicing in the Lord, regardless of the temporary situations and obstacles they face. It is Paul’s bold faith in Christ that triumphs over adversity and causes him to have an attitude of gratitude. Keeping Paul behind bars did not dampen his spirit. He keeps his focus on the main event and that is the good news of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection on the cross. He lets everything else fall to the wayside as temporary. Held in the grip of God’s promises, Paul encourages others to live into these same promises that are given to all of us in Christ. We trust that God is always with us and is continually bringing about new life, sometimes in ways that aren’t always easy to see. It is the assurance that God’s presence is permanent and is undeterred by life’s changing circumstances that allows us to rejoice even in the midst of adversity.

Here are a few examples of where members of Faith are finding gratitude and reasons to rejoice in unlikely circumstances like this pandemic:

I am grateful for the ability to keep my grandkids during and after spring break, due to their daycare being shut down and the parents being essential workers. The grandkids were here for a month, then went home for two weeks, and returned for another month. It was a wonderful opportunity to make memories during a not so fun time. I am also grateful for the prayers, pastoral and hospital care for Gary as he fought double pneumonia and sepsis.

~ Joni King

Although this year has been hard for me for a number of reasons, my daughter, Rowan has been my ray of sunlight every day to help get me through hard times. I am so thankful God brought her into my life last December. Because of the pandemic, I’ve been afforded more time with Rowan than I ever expected. Shortly after returning to work from maternity leave in March, I had to work from home for about a month when my office shut down due to Covid. I kept

CONFIRMED
In Faith

Congratulations To Our Confirmands!

It took us six months and three worship services to confirm our Confirmation Class of 2020, but we are so grateful that we were able to celebrate with all of them. At a special service on Sunday, September 20, Rylee Daniels, Drew Eller, Kyler Gerardy, Connor Peck, Brody Schoenthaler and Naomi Ubel affirmed their baptism in the outdoor chapel. On Saturday, October 10, we celebrated with Carter Harms and Ryan Stickler as they affirmed their baptism. On Sunday, October 18, we celebrated with Makenzie Housenga, Kalob James-Kroeger and Kaycee Newman as they affirmed their baptism. Congratulations to all of them and blessings on everything that lies ahead!

We give thanks to God for the gift of baptism, the promise of life, now and forever, and for each of these youth who have affirmed their baptism as they continue on this journey of faith and life. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue to grow in their faith



November needs are:
•Chili Fixings •Muffin mixes
•Fruit

A note from Stewardship:

God has given us all that we have, including our health and each other!

You can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 by following precautions that protect yourself and others.

Thank you!

This year’s Special Thanksgiving Offering will be split between the following organizations:





Southeast Iowa Synod Derecho Disaster Fund

Tapestry Farms (see <https://www.tapestryfarms.org/> for information)



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1  9:00 am All Saints Worship In Person w/Chime Choir	2	3	4 10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal 5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations 7:00 pm High School Youth	5 6:30 pm Team Night	6 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	7 5:00 pm In Person And Live Online Worship
8 9:00 am Worship In Person 4:00pm 4H Fellowship Hall	9 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	10 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm	11 10:30 am Chime Choir 5:00-7:00 pm Shoebox Drive Up Return 5:30 pm Confirmation 7:00 pm High School Youth	12	13 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	14 5:00 pm In Person and Live Online Worship
15 9:00 am In Person Worship  1:00-2:00 pm—Shoebox Drive Up Return	16 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	17 Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm	18 10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal 5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations 7:00 pm High School Youth Group	19 AMBASSADOR DEADLINE 7:00 pm Church Council Mtg. on Zoom	20 Food Pantry 9:30—11:00 am	21 5:00 pm In Person and Live Online Worship
22 9:00 am In Person Worship 	23 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS	24 9:00 am Ambassador Folding 10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal Food Pantry 5:30—7:00 pm	25	26 Thanksgiving Day  Office Closed	27 Food Pantry CLOSED Office Closed	28 5:00 pm In Person and Live Online Worship
29 9:00 am In Person Worship, w/Chime Choir	30 7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS					