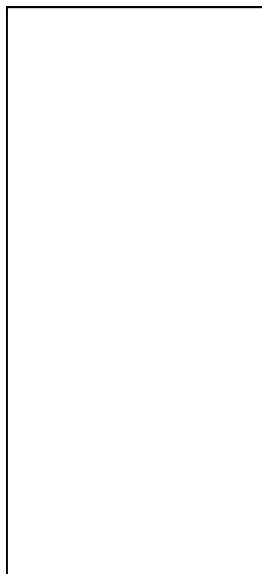


FAITH CONNECTS (Conversation and Devotion) Monday @ 7:00 pm Online. Weekly Worship: Saturday @ 5:00 pm Live Stream Online & on our Facebook Page and Sunday @ 9am (starting Jan. 9.) Worship Updates will be posted on [www. faithlutheraneldridge.com](http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com) and on our Facebook page.

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

January 2021



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

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

www.faithlutheraneldridge.com
faitheldridge@netins.net

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

New Year's Message

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends in Christ,

We all know that there was nearly nothing about 2020 that was as we had hoped and planned it to be. We learned a lot in this last year about quick decision-making, innovative thinking, flexibility, and resilience. At the same time, we all experienced many losses and disappointments, grief and fear throughout the year. I know that, as we come to the end of 2020, many of us are more than ready to say good-bye to the year and look ahead to 2021 to be a better year for all of us. We are all holding onto hope that there is a light coming at the end of the tunnel, and by the time we get to next Christmas, we will be able to celebrate in ways that are more "normal" than the ways that we found to celebrate this year. Hope is what we hold onto.

And as I was thinking about this hope, these words from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians came to mind, "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). In the midst of everything that we have faced this year, faith, hope and love have been what have gotten most, if not all, of us through these times.

Faith has been what has carried me through these last ten months. My faith in Jesus' promise to be with us always until the end of the age (Matthew 28:20) has helped me to face the challenges this year has brought. Believing that Jesus is walking this journey with all of us, through the highs and the lows, through the struggles and the celebrations has made the journey more bearable. Having faith in God's promises made in our baptism to bring us to eternal life, has helped me to cope with the death of a dear friend in recent days from the coronavirus and with the strange ways we have all had to deal with our grief as friends and family have died this year. Having faith that God hears our prayers, even the prayers for which we cannot find words, has helped me to cope with the stress and the questions, the fears and loneliness that this year has brought. And as I have considered worship and teaching, gatherings and other events that we have been able to do this year, the goal has been to find a way to connect our faith to the realities of life around us so that we can see and hear and feel God's presence with us. Faith has been a lifeline for me, and I pray that it has been a lifeline for you as well.

Hope is what keeps us looking forward. Early on, I had hope that this pandemic would be short-lived and quickly resolved. As it became clear that this would not be the case, I continued to hold out hope that there would be a light at the end of the tunnel, regardless of how dim that light



Bob and Ann Bainter on
January 15, 1961



Katie Dittmer	January 1	James Hamann	January 13
Bud House	January 1	Joyce Rathjen	January 14
Gary Rohwer	January 1	Wyatt Frahm	January 16
David Rose	January 3	Dan Anderson	January 18
Patricia St. John	January 4	Don Hamann	January 18
Shirley Cole	January 5	Phyllis Hamann	January 18
Shirley Baustian	January 7	Fae Harvey	January 29
Marian Behrens	January 7	Velma Riley	January 29
Sue Braack	January 10	Ron Arp	January 31



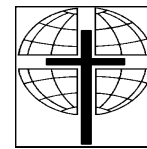
Thanksgiving Special Offering Update

\$630 Collected
\$315 to SEIAS Derecho
Disaster Fund &
\$315 to Tapestry Farms

Thank you!

Food Pantry Needs:

Soup
Pasta
Hot Cereal
Cold Cereal



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP Thank you to Chris Schroeder & Rhonda Webber for sponsoring the Bencke family and John Chima in January, and to David & Diane Cole for sponsoring Denisse Grefa in January. The cost for sponsorship is \$40/month each for our Compassion Children 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!

Dialogues On Race 2.0

DIA
LOG
UES
IN
RACE

In light of recent events in this country surrounding issues of race, this past fall, a small group of members and friends of Faith gathered to have a conversation about the difficult topic of race in this country in a safe environment using a study called *Dialogues on Race*. Over the last several months, you have had the opportunity to read testimonials from the participants in that group here in the Ambassador. As you have read, this small group grew so much in our understanding of race and so valued the opportunity for conversation on this important topic with others with varying viewpoints on the issue that we would like to offer this opportunity again for others to join the conversation. Therefore, Pastor Carrie La Plante will lead another series of these conversations on Zoom beginning Sunday, February 7. These conversations will begin at 10:30 am on Sunday morning, and we will aim to keep to 60 to 75 minutes of conversation. The study will last for eight weeks.

In order to try to keep this conversation as safe as possible and to protect against Zoom-bombing, we ask that all who wish to participate (friends who are not members of the congregation are welcome) to register for the class so that we can send the Zoom link to those who would like to be part of this study. Please register using this sign-up here (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A49ADA62FAAFF2-dialogues1>) or by calling the church office (563-285-4501). Please let us know whether you would like to order your own book (you can purchase them at www.augsburgfortress.org) or would like to buy one from the church (\$11).

We look forward to having these conversations together.

Thanks!

Thank you for the many cards and sweet treats we received during the holidays. You brought us joy with your many surprises! ~ *Faith Staff*

Thank you to Rita Smith and Rhonda Webber, who have served as our weekly offering counters for the last 3 months! ~ *Beth Ann*

Thank you for the wonderful cards and birthday wishes. I have enjoyed reading all of your special notes! Also, thank you for the prayers and delicious meals during my recovery. ~ *Carol Judge*

Thank you to the December Ambassador folding crew: Mary Bender, Donna Benskin, Sue Braack, and Carol Strobbe. ~ *Beth Ann*

Thank you to all the families and musicians that helped to make our Christmas Eve services special. ~ *Pastor Carrie*

might feel at times. I have found that in the darkest of times, hope has been peeking in, shining a light on the pathway ahead, reminding me of where God is at work around us. When I begin to lose hope and wonder whether all that we have been seeking to do to bring hope to those around us is making a difference, I have received signs of hope and promise from God through many of you. I find signs of hope in the notes of appreciation that have been sent, in the continued giving which has allowed us to continue to do God's mission in this place, in the Confirmation students and high school youth and their questions, in the comments on sermons that have been meaningful to you. In all of these experiences, I find hope for the future. I find a light shining into this darkness which is getting brighter each day. I hold onto hope that we will be heading to a more "normal" way of being throughout 2021 even if I cannot see exactly what that will look like right now. Can you see that hope as you look into the new year?

Finally, there is love – the greatest of the three. You see, more than anything this year, love has gotten me through all of this. The love of family and friends that kept us connected even when gathering meant seeing one another through phone and computer screens or, when we could be together in person, meant sitting apart and masked to keep one another safe. The love within this congregation has helped to gather us even when we have been apart and has driven us to care for one another's need throughout this year, perhaps in ways very different from what we have been used to in the past. Ultimately, this love that has held us together is the love of God that is flowing through us. This love of God is greater than we can even imagine. This is the love that led God to become human in Jesus and to be born as a baby in a manger in Bethlehem. This is the love that led Jesus to live among us to experience the joy and sorrow, celebration and heartache of this life. This is the love that Jesus came into this world to show us in ways we could understand. This is the love for which Jesus died on the cross to bring us to life everlasting. This is the love that holds us together, that grows our faith, that shines the light of hope into the world and into each one of us. I want to thank you for the love that you have shared with me and with one another this year as we have navigated this adventure together, and I pray that you have felt that love in your lives as well.

As we move into 2021, may faith, hope and love continue to abide in and among us, to guide us through the ups and downs and to shine a light onto the path ahead as we continue to share the story of God's faith, hope and love with the world together.

All of God's blessings be with you in this new year,
Pastor Carrie



CHURCH COUNCIL



In Appreciation

At the end of November this year, our offerings were about \$14,100 less than our expenses year to date. However, we are blessed with strong offerings after two weeks into December and believe we will end the year without a short fall. Thanks you for your ongoing financial support of our ministries!

Our Pastors worked with the Worship and Music Team and associated volunteers to help make the Advent and Christmas season worship special. They found ways to include vocal and instrumental music with worship. For Christmas Eve, they provided two opportunities to join in-person worship outdoors on Christmas eve, in addition to providing two online worship services. Invaluable support was provided by Matt Peck to help record our online events and for finding ways to improve the quality of online events.

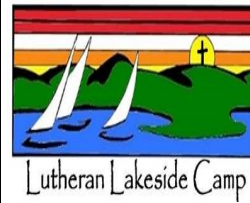
The Beer Bible Study group hosted an online Christmas Party with ugly sweaters, a scavenger hunt complete with prizes, and good fellowship! Thanks to Kelly Penning for getting the group together to share good cheer!

As we approached Christmas, Pastor Heather provided a new opportunity to center our hearts on Jesus. Through four online sessions of Advent Pause, we had good conversation and reflections by sharing Christmas Traditions and Advent devotions.

Happy New Year!

We are relieved to see that trend for community spread of COVID-19 in Scott and Clinton counties has been decreasing in the past few weeks. On 1/3/2021, the church council will decide if we are able to return to *Phase 2: In-Person gatherings indoors with precautions beginning January 9*. We will update the congregation by our normal communication methods once we have the decision.

Our Annual Congregational meeting will be held on January 31 at 9:00 am. In preparation for the Annual Congregational Meeting, there will be two informational meetings to share the proposed 2021 Budget and to answer any questions on the proposed budget. The budget meetings will be held on January 17th and January 24th at 10:00 am. At the Annual Meeting, the congregation will elect nominees into important leadership roles: four Council members, two Endowment Committee members, two Synod Voting Delegates, and five Nominating Committee members. The congregation will



Summer Camp Registration is Here!!

Lutheran Lakeside is moving ahead with plans to hold camp this summer with precautions in place, and registration is now open. We are planning to attend camp during week 6 which **July 18-23**. There is Junior Camp for those who have completed grades 3-5 and Confirmation Camp for those who have completed grades 6-8. This year, registration is risk-free, so if you register now, and either the camp cancels due to COVID or you decide later not to send your child due to COVID-related concerns (numbers increasing, need to quarantine, diagnosed with COVID, etc.), you will receive a refund of any money that you have already paid, unless you decide to donate it to camp. How we will get to camp will be determined at a later date.

For more information about camp, please go to www.lutheranlakeside.com and click on the Summer Camp tabs for more information and the Register Here tab if you are ready to register. The total cost for a week at camp is \$465 for the first child. If you send more than one child from your household, there is a \$15 sibling discount for the second and subsequent children. A \$100 deposit is due at registration. **There is an Early Bird Discount of \$50 for all those who register by February 28.** As in years past, Faith will cover \$150 of the cost of camp per child (including friends that they might invite). Therefore, the out-of-pocket cost, if you register by February 28, would be \$265 for your first child and \$250 for any additional children from your household. When you register, be sure to let them know that you are going with Faith Lutheran Church so that they apply the \$150 discount. Also let Pastor Carrie know when you have registered so that she can make sure that the discount is applied and have an accurate count of who is planning to go to help with transportation plans.

Also, adults are invited to join us for the adult mission trip to do work around the camp that week as well, so if that is something that would interest you, please let Pastor Carrie know.

If you have any questions about camp, please contact Pastor Carrie (pastorcarrie@csteldridge.com or call or text 641-275-1326).





Confirmation students have been meeting weekly on Zoom, due to the rise in COVID numbers. This month, we learned that after Moses lead the Israelites to the Promised Land, the people of Israel made bad choices that turned them from God, and were then captured by the Babylonians, for roughly 70 years. Even as they were held captive, God was always present. We also learned about the Prophets (usually a member of the community, communicating God's word to the people), the Psalms (chants praising God, and offering comfort to the weary), and the story of Job (a man of God, rich in wealth and family, who lost everything in an instant. Throughout it all, he praised God. The lesson: Why do bad things happen to good people?).

The High School Youth have also been meeting on Zoom. Before adjourning for Christmas, Pastor Carrie came up with the idea to sit outside on the front patio around a fire pit. Six students and three adults wrapped in coats, hats, gloves and blankets, sat on chairs around a fire, and enjoyed the time together. We were even thrilled to have Katie Garner visit the group during her Christmas break.

Respectfully submitted,
Joni King, Youth Chair



also vote on the proposed 2021 budget. We will need to have a quorum of 40 voting members in order to hold the Annual Congregational Meeting. More information on how to join and how to obtain associated reports will be provided in our normal communication methods by January 15.

Please note: We will use Zoom to enable voting members to join the Annual Meeting and the Budget Information Meetings online or by phone call. If council votes before then to resume indoor gatherings, we will be able to host a limited number of voting members at the church for these meetings as well (with social distancing and face coverings).

January Poll

As we prepare to onboard the 2021 Church Council and Ministry Team Leaders and to define goals for 2021, we need input from our congregation, whom we represent and serve. Will you please consider providing your input to the January Poll by calling or emailing the church office or by responding to the poll on our website or Facebook post?

Linda Golinghorst
Faith Lutheran Church Council

December Poll Results

How satisfied are you with our current online worship and ministries?

Not Satisfied - 0%
Somewhat Satisfied - 0%
Moderately Satisfied - 17%
Highly Satisfied - 83%



Respondents shared appreciation for online worship, at home Sunday school, and online confirmation conversations and will be grateful for singing when it is safe again.

January Poll Question

In this difficult time, where are the areas in the community and beyond in which we can respond to make a difference in people's lives? Check all that apply.

Food
Spiritual
Financial Management
Family Support
Other

Clothing
Educational
Isolation/Loneliness
Personal Services

Will you please help us by providing specific ideas for how to respond to the needs you checked above?



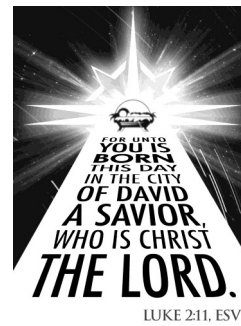
FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING NOTIFICATION

- January 17, 2021** 10:00 am Budget Meeting
- January 24, 2021** 10:00 am Budget Meeting
- January 31, 2021** 9:00 am Annual Congregational Meeting
(Review of Reports, Election of Congregational Leaders, 2021 Budget Approval)
- January 31, 2021** 10:00 am - 4:00 pm Annual Meeting Election
Ballots Collected by Drop Off at Church
- January 31, 2021** 5:00 pm Council Special Meeting (Election of Officers)

All meetings will be available online and by phone call using Zoom. If the church council votes to return to indoor gatherings beginning 1/9/2021, then these meetings will include limited in-person attendance at the Church. We will provide updates regarding indoor gatherings no later than the week of January 3rd. Reports will be available in advance of these meetings by email and outdoor pick-up at the church.



You should have received your 2021 offering envelopes in the US mail by now. We mailed them to save you a trip to pick them up, and hope they arrived in good condition. If you did not receive envelopes or if they did not arrive in good condition, please call the office (563-285-4501) or email the church (faitheldridge@netins.net), and we can make arrangements to get some to you.



"Do not be afraid; for see I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:8-11

This Christmas Eve as we gathered together under the sky, huddling in front of our church, in the safest place for the gift of meeting others face-to-face, I heard the Christmas gospel ring with even more promise, amazement and wonder.

We know this important story and tell it every year. And yet, sometimes the simplicity of the message and the beauty of God's truth gets complicated by all the pageantry of Christmas.

It's incredibly good news that God sent Jesus to be born for us. We have a God who becomes human and was born as a baby in a manger. God with us, Immanuel. This is a mind-blowing historical event that changes the trajectory of all creation. The announcement of Jesus' arrival, God's Son, who came to us, who was born for us makes a difference for us. God came into the world "for you."

---"to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."---

Like the angels on that first Christmas night carrying God's message, we are called to share the story of Jesus with others. During Lent we are offering an opportunity to share stories of Jesus in our lives with each other. The study will be called "Why Jesus?" As you think about your story with Jesus, here are a couple of sentence prompts to get you started:

One thing I love about Jesus is...
To me, grace means...
My favorite Bible story is...
I share my faith by...
When I look at my life I can see how God....

Shine your light



More information about our Lenten study is coming.
Keep shining Jesus' light and love!

Thank you for sharing the Jesus' joy with me! ~Pastor Heather



It's the time of the year when we need help with snow removal. Please call the office at 285-8661 or sign up online at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805094EABA62CAAF85-snow>

Thank you!

Women of Faith

The Women of Southeast Iowa Synod Board's stewardship challenge for this year is to collect cancelled postage stamps. We need you and anyone you know to save your cancelled postage stamps. When trimming off envelopes, leave 1/4" around the stamp so as not to damage it. We will collect them and send to a distribution center who in turn sends the money back to go to Lutheran World Relief to provide fundraising for the shipping of quilts and kits around the world to those in need. It takes 27,000 stamps to make 1 pound of stamps. They have collected 65 million so far and sent \$42,000 to the shipping fund! All stamps are welcome.



- Commemorative and seasonal stamps are most valued.
- Cut the stamps from the envelope leaving 1/4 inch around the stamps so as not to damage the stamps.
- Save the stamps and bring them (or send them) to our Gathering at the Hotel Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids on September 10 & 11, 2021.



The Quilts of Many Colors group at Faith donated 24 quilts in December to The Center in Davenport.

Their donation included 15 child quilts and 9 adult quilts.



Photo credit by Mark Ridolfi, NSP

Photo credit by Mark Ridolfi, NSP



Due to the current pandemic, the Fellowship Committee is hosting the Annual Cheeseburger In Paradise Party – Quarantine Style! What this will entail is to dress up in your favorite summer Hawaiian shirt, lei or any tropical attire. Take a picture of you and/or your family and submit it to the church office by January 31st, 2021. Be as creative as you want for the picture – ex: eating a cheeseburger, holding a tropical drink, doing the hula, etc. We will then compile all of the submitted pictures and post a fun slide show on the Church's website in February in lieu of an actual "get together" event. You can go to the website and enjoy the slideshow of members in their Hawaiian outfits in the safety of your own home! I know it won't be the same, but it will still be fun!!! So, get out those Hawaiian shirts and get your creative juices flowing! Looking forward to seeing everyone's pictures!!!! "Aloha!"

- The Fellowship Committee

Email pictures to: faitheldridge@netins.net Subject line – Cheeseburger In Paradise
























Stewards of Resources - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We want to make good use of the resources God has provided to us. As we begin the new year, it is a good time to put new practices in place. Here are two ideas you can consider to help us save time and money:

Sign up for automated giving. There are different options for automated giving. Please call the church office to discuss the best way for you to do this.

We are now sending The Ambassador by email, in addition to sending it by US Mail. If you would rather receive The Ambassador by email only, just let us know by sending us an email, giving us a phone call, or by filling out the form on our website.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>We are hoping to return to worship according to this calendar. A final decision will be made and communicated soon.</p> </div>				<p>1</p> <p>Food Pantry Closed</p>  <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5:00 PM</p> <p>Online Worship</p> 
<p>3</p> <p>Online Worship Available</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>5:30—7:00 pm</p> 	<p>6</p> <p><i>Epiphany</i></p> <p>10:30 am Chime Choir</p> <p>5:30 pm Confirmation Conversation Online</p> <p>7:00 pm High School Youth Group Online</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:30 pm Team Night</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>9:30—11:00 am</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>5:00 PM In-Person & Online Worship</p> 
<p>10</p> <p>9am Worship In-Person</p> <p><i>Baptism of Our Lord</i></p> <p>4pm 4H Meeting Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>5:30—7:00 pm</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations Online</p> <p>7:00 pm High School Youth Group Online</p>	<p>14</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>9:30—11:00 am</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>5:00 PM In-Person & Online Worship</p> 
<p>17</p> <p>9am Worship In-Person</p> <p><i>Second Sunday of Epiphany</i></p> <p>10am 2021 Budget Meeting</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>5:30—7:00 pm</p>  <p>7:00 pm Executive Committee Mtg.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations Online</p> <p>7:00 pm High School Youth Group Online</p>	<p>21</p> <p>7:00 pm Church Council Meeting</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>9:30—11:00 am</p>  	<p>23</p> <p>5:00 PM In-Person & Online Worship</p> 
<p>24</p> <p>9am Worship In-Person</p> <p>10am 2021 Budget Mtg</p> <p>31 9am Annual Meeting</p> <p>10am-4pm Return Ballots to Church</p> <p>5pm Council Special</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7:00 pm FAITH CONNECTS</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>5:30—7:00 pm</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>10:30 am Chime Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>5:30 pm Confirmation Conversations Online</p> <p>7:00 pm High School</p>	<p>28</p> <p>9:00 am Ambassador Folding</p> 	<p>29</p> <p>Food Pantry</p> <p>9:30—11:00 am.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>5:00 PM</p> <p>In-Person & Online Worship</p> 