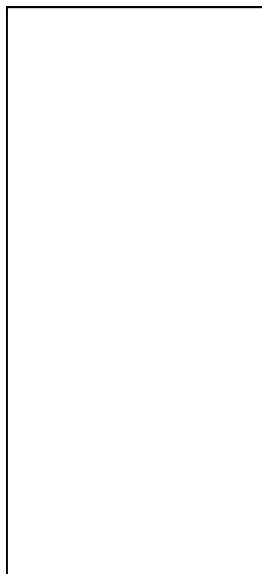


**Weekly Worship: Saturday @ 5:00 pm, In Person & Live Stream Online, and Sunday at 8am and 10:30am, In Person. Christmas Eve services listed on page 6.**  
**Worship Updates will be posted on**  
**www.faithlutheraneldridge.com and on our Facebook page.**

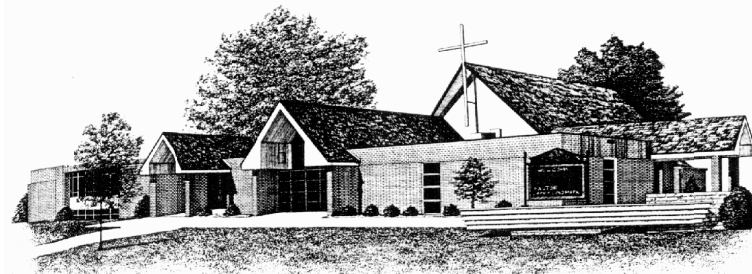
**Faith Lutheran Church**  
 500 W. LeClaire Road  
 Eldridge, IA 52748

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## Faith Lutheran Church



## AMBASSADOR December 2021

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

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

[www.faithlutheraneldridge.com](http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com)  
[faitheldridge@netins.net](mailto:faitheldridge@netins.net)

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

We have entered a new church year and a new season in the church year. We have returned to the season of Advent with its deep blue tones, the color of hope and promise in anticipation of everything new that is to come. We have the sanctuary decorated with the deep blue paraments and the advent wreath that helps us to count down the four weeks until Christmas.

Each week throughout the season there will be more decoration added to the worship space to help us to see that our celebration of the birth of our Savior in a manger in Bethlehem is coming closer. It is a time in the church year that brings memories of years gone by and hope and promise of all that is yet to come.

But Advent is not only a time to prepare for the coming of Jesus as a baby in Bethlehem, but also a reminder to all of us who follow Jesus to be prepared for that day when Jesus will come again. Just as we ended last year with many of these visions of the signs that Christ will come again, we began this Advent season in much the same way.

In the twenty-first chapter of Luke's Gospel, which was the Gospel reading for the first Sunday in Advent, Jesus, just days before his crucifixion, warns his disciples about the signs that will come in the sun and the moon and the stars and the waves as heaven and earth will shake just before the coming of the Son of Man. Jesus tells the disciples that there will be many who will "faint with fear and foreboding." However, Jesus tells his disciples that they need not fear. Instead, Jesus tells them that when these things happen they should, "stand up and raise [their] heads, for [their] redemption is drawing near." Jesus promises the disciples then and now that "[h]eaven and earth will pass away, but [Jesus'] words will never pass away." Jesus is telling the disciples that all that he has taught and promised throughout his life is trustworthy and true. All of what they know about who Jesus is and the salvation that Jesus brings can be relied upon in all circumstances. They do not need to fear when the world as they know it shakes and crumbles because Jesus will always be there for them.

We, as Jesus' disciples today, also live in this promise and hope that, even when the world around us seems to be shaking, we can stand in God's promises, in these words of Jesus, to find hope and promise with which we can face the world. In this Advent season, I want to invite you into a spiritual practice to help you stand up and raise your head in the promises of Jesus, the Word made flesh. This practice is known as the



## DECEMBER



Birthday wishes are extended to the following members who are celebrating birthday number 70 or above.

Doug Olson	December 1
Carol Judge	December 7
Mary Moore	December 8
Richard Cole	December 16
Susan Whitney	December 29



Welcome  
Our New  
Members

We welcome the following individuals and families that joined Faith on October 31, 2021:

**Koby Hillman**  
**Sue Hillman**  
**Mike & Betty Strom**  
**Sean & Tamlyn Polson and their sons Tayven, Alec, and Kyler**

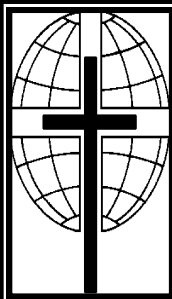


The North Scott Food Pantry thanks the Faith Lutheran Church congregation for food collections and monetary donations. Also, thank you for your time volunteering at the Food Pantry, picking up items from various locations, answering the phone calls and allowing for the Pantry to be located on the premises. This past year has been challenging for all, but we continue with our motto "Neighbors Helping Neighbors." Hoping everyone has a Blessed Holiday!



## Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

Join us on each Tuesday afternoon for a Bible study that looks at the lectionary texts for the week. **Tuesday afternoons at 1 pm.** We look forward to studying the scriptures together.



## MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to **Bob & Theresa White** for sponsoring the **Bencke family, John Chima and Denisse Grefa** in **December**. The cost for sponsorship is \$40/month each for our Compassion Children John and Denisse and \$45/month for the Bencke family. You can sign up online on Faith's web page, or by calling the church office.

*Thank you for your support!*



### With Appreciation...

Thank you to our November Ambassador Folding Crew: Tom Bauer, Donna Benskin, Sue Cassel, Carol Judge, Carol Marten, Mary Moore, and Carol Strobbe.


Thank you to Dennis Kelly for coming in extra days to dust, sweep, vacuum, mop, rinse, vacuum again, and wax the sanctuary floor. This is a 3 day process, and resulted in a glossy shine that should protect the floor for the winter. They look great!

Thank you to Linda Golinghorst for sprucing up the gathering space and welcome center in November. It looks very nice and welcoming!

Thank you to the crew that came in and decorated the Sanctuary for Advent. It looks festive and beautiful!

The Sanctuary Update Committee has continued our work this year. We are working with a designer and have the basic design elements for the sanctuary planned. We've also obtained bids on sound and flooring. We are working on selecting color scheme and materials. Once that is completed, we will receive finalized renderings from the designer. We should have more information to share with the congregation after the beginning of the year. *Respectfully submitted, Amy Murray*



 **IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN** - Time for snow removal volunteers! If you could help clear sidewalks after a snowfall, please sign up on the sheet in the gathering area or online (web page or link below). Additional information can be found on the sign up sheet. The sign up link is <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805094EABA62CAAF85-snow1>  
*Thank you for your help!*



Examen, and I invite you to do it each evening as you end the day. It can be done individually or together as a family as a way to stop, give thanks for God's promises and look forward to the future.

To start the Examen, find a quiet place in your house where you can focus on God and the review of your day. You may light a candle as a representation of the light of Christ being present with you. If you have an Advent wreath, you could light the number of candles for the week each night. Once the candle is lit, and you are comfortable, follow these five steps:

1. **Become aware of God's presence.** Take a moment to focus on the candle or close your eyes to help you center. Take a deep breath in to breathe in the Holy Spirit, and then exhale all of the burdens that you are carrying. Do this a few times, and you will be amazed at how the always present God can be experienced in the moment.
2. **Review the day with gratitude.** Go back through your day. What went well in your day? Where were opportunities that were missed? Who did you meet through the day? Then, take a moment to give thanks for all that happened, even for the hard things and fears you faced.
3. **Pay attention to your emotions.** How do you feel about the day? Where were the places you felt joy, fear, sadness, hope, promise? Where are your emotions leading you?
4. **Choose at least one thing that happened in the day and pray about it.** Give thanks for the good. Ask for help with the things that were tough. Commend to God those in need of God's care. Pray to stand tall in the midst of fears.
5. **Look toward tomorrow.** Having connected with God as you have reviewed the day, how does that inform how you will walk into the world tomorrow? What are the things you look forward to? What are the acts of love and compassion that can guide your next day?

When you have finished these five steps, I encourage you to blow out the candle(s), and to go to bed, resting securely in Jesus' care and promises for you, prepared to face the next day with hope and promise.

My prayer for all of us this Advent season is that we can take some time in God's presence, connecting to the promises of Jesus, God's Word made flesh. I pray that we might be filled with hope for the new ways God is calling us into this new year, even as we stand in confidence against any challenges we might face. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Blessed Advent to you all,  
*Pastor Carrie*



# CHURCH COUNCIL

## We are grateful.

We are thankful for the financial stewardship of our congregation, and for a generous donation to our Endowment Fund from an anonymous donor.

We are grateful for our Nominating Committee who are working to find members who feel called to serve in leadership roles within our congregation, which is particularly difficult this year. We are also grateful for the people who will grow in their discipleship by accepting nominations or team member roles next year.

We are blessed to have our *People of Praise* Senior Choir sharing their time and talents again at worship. We also would like to recognize two new members to the choir: Mary Moore and Lucas Golinghorst.

## Council Business.

Communications/Sharing: Pastor Heather shared in her Faith Story how we don't always know where God is taking us, and it may be different than what we plan for. We continue to receive thanks for the work of the congregation and shared a thank you note to council for their hard work and for their care of congregation at this time.

Updates: We reviewed the status of the Nominating Committee work. We still need to fill two council positions (Service in the World, Youth) and two Synod Assembly Voting Delegate positions. We are working with our Pastors to address stress and overload by working on a sabbatical plan and by reviewing a brief time study to help prioritize/offload work. Jim Schneider & Ida Weibel are working to define a study plan for next year's Adult Education program.

Actions: We reviewed the current proposed budget, and made some changes to reduce the operating budget where it made sense, or to use memorial funds instead for one time items. We developed our agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting on Jan 30. We began to collect ideas to appoint a new Audit Committee member for next year.

Approvals: We approved additional use of our basement and parking lot to the North Scott Food Pantry for their Food Basket and Angel Tree Gifts program. The COVID-19 Subcommittee shared that the community spread has decreased since September, but it is still in the substantial/high category of risk according to the CDC. The subcommittee moved to test a change to the Saturday 5pm worship by lifting the face covering requirement, but still asking everyone to take personal responsibility for



## POP-UP Christmas Program

As a simple way to celebrate the unexpected joy and wonder of Christmas we will be having a spontaneous Pop-up Christmas children's program on **December 12<sup>th</sup>** during the **10:30am** worship service. All children are welcome to participate. Because of the circumstances, we are keeping it simple and letting the children lead the congregation in telling the story of Jesus birth. **Children will be practicing Christmas carols during Sunday School December 5.** We hope you come make a joyful noise with us.



## Families Celebrate Advent and Christmas 2021-22

Advent is the first season of our church year. It is time of preparation, waiting and watching as we thoughtfully reflect on the coming of Christ. As a church we are invited to intentionally step back from the hustle of the holiday season and instead focus our thoughts on the gift God has given us in his son Jesus who came from heaven to earth to be our Savior.

As a fun way to celebrate Advent and to count down the days until Christmas, our church has purchased Families Celebrate Advent and Christmas. If your family would like to explore the entire season and Advent to Christmas and would like a deck of cards for your home, please sign up on the bulletin board, or contact Pastor Heather.



This past month, Confirmation Conversations have been studying the Apostles' Creed. This was broken into three separate weeks in order to study the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in depth. Martin Luther devoted much of his Small Catechism to

the Apostles' Creed because he felt it was so important to study these old testaments of faith.

The first week, we studied about God the Father and Creator. God makes everything, and continues to make everything in our lives. He has an intimate and loving relationship with all He has created.

The following week, we studied God's Son, Jesus. Oddly, the Apostles' Creed is a summary of Jesus' birth, death, resurrection and ascension. It does not go into detail of what went on in His life. It does, however tell us what we need to know, why Jesus matters to us, that He died to save us from Sin and brings us the grace of God.

The third week, we learned that the Holy Spirit works through us and in us to bring us to Christ. God sent the Holy Spirit to walk with us throughout life. The Holy Spirit moves us to do good works, in service to God and others.

On October 27, the Confirmation Youth traveled to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport. There we joined other Confirmation Youth from churches in the Quad Cities to participate in the annual IGNITE event. Held outdoors on a gorgeous evening, there was a lot of singing, games, fellowship with other churches, and communion at the end of the evening. The kids had a great time!

The High School Youth continue to meet at 7:00. Numbers vary, but we are still seeing 9-14 kids each evening. It is so nice to see new faces, as friends ask other friends to attend Youth Group with them. After Highs and Lows, we play games, Pastor Carrie has a short Bible Study, and usually as time allows, more games!

Something that I will remember forever is the blindfolded competition they did to find candy corn hidden in whipped cream, USING ONLY THEIR MOUTHS!!! Hilarious!

The weekend of December 11-12, the High School Youth will resume the pre-COVID tradition of baking cinnamon and caramel rolls and selling them at the Church services, to support their trip to the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering next summer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joni King, Youth Chair

themselves and for others by following the current CDC recommendation. The council approved the motion to take effect on 12/11, which allows appropriate time for communication and for staff and ministry teams to plan.

We would lift the face covering requirement, but still ask everyone to take personal responsibility for themselves and for others by following the current CDC recommendation.

### **We invite your feedback.**

As always, it is beneficial for us to hear directly from our members to support our work. Please feel free to contact any council member directly, or by emailing the church (a council member will then call you back).

### **Mark your calendar!**



Our Annual Congregational Meeting is planned for Sunday, January 30, 10:30 a.m. This is the time where a quorum of 40 voting members that are present will make congregational decisions. Voting members are confirmed and have communed with us (online or in-person) and have made a contribution of record to this congregation in 2020 or 2021.

We will hold a brief liturgy before we call the meeting to order. During the meeting we will approve 2021 reports, elect council members, elect nominating committee members, elect endowment committee members, elect Synod Assembly voting delegates, and adopt the 2022 Budget.

At the meeting, voting members may propose changes to the agenda, ask questions or make comments, make motions, second motions, amend motions, make nominations, etc.

Consider attending this important meeting, as we work to be faithful stewards of God's mission in this church.

### **Covid-19 Policy Change**

Starting on December 11th, we are testing a change to the Saturday 5:00 p.m. weekly worship. We are lifting the face covering requirement, and instead, we are asking everyone to take personal responsibility for themselves and for others by following the current CDC recommendation.

With this change, we hope that more of our members will gather for worship, while still showing care and love for those who are vulnerable.

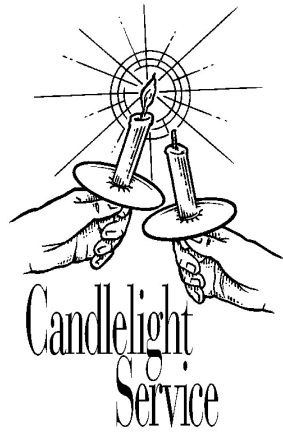
Please note, face coverings are still required at all other times while inside our building.





## Christmas Eve Worship Opportunities

Please join us for one of our five opportunities to worship on Christmas Eve!



Worship services will be held in person at 2:00pm, 4:00pm and 9:00pm on Christmas Eve. The 2:00pm and 4:00pm candlelight services will be particularly appropriate for children. The 9:00 p.m. service will be a traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Face masks are required for all over the age of 2 while inside the building.

If you plan on attending worship here at Faith and would be able to help usher, please let us know by signing up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the narthex area or calling the church office.

Online Options: The 4:00pm and 9:00pm services will be streamed online. We invite you to have bread and wine or grape juice available to celebrate Holy Communion and to have a candle available to light at the end of the service as we sing Silent Night.

We look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, with you this Christmas Eve.



### ANGEL ORNAMENTS



Thank you to the Krebs Family for making the angel ornaments which will be given to the children at our Christmas Eve Services!



### Cinnamon Roll Sunday

Youth who will be attending the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis will be making and selling cinnamon rolls the weekend of December 11 and 12 to help raise funds for their trip. You can purchase these delicious rolls in person around worship December 11 and 12, or pre-order by signing up online (link found on our website and on Facebook) or on the sheet in the gathering space. Cost is \$1/roll, \$5/6 rolls, and \$10/dozen. Along with baked rolls, we will have the option to purchase unbaked rolls by the dozen. Thank you for supporting our youth!



On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, several members of the group Hearts to Harvest picked 40 acres of corn for the benefit of farmers we will never meet. Being a part of Hearts to Harvest and raising money to fund projects around the world that help other farmers in other countries live better lives, reminds me how each of us have talents and resources that seems small to us, but create big impacts for others. This year, the money raised by Scott county farmers of faith will help farmers in Esteli, Nicaragua improve soil health through crop diversification, increasing income through marketing efforts and community savings and lending through the organization Growing Hope Globally. Sharing our time and talents rarely feels like a big deal, however some times they make large impacts beyond our knowledge. *Mike Garner*





## *Gifts that make a difference!*

Give something unexpected this Christmas! The Service in the World Committee is asking for your support of this year's Christmas Project through the ELCA Good Gifts program. In Christ, we receive the gift of God's love. Let us share God's love with others.

ELCA Good Gifts are a fun, meaningful way to honor friends and family with Christmas gifts that go on to make a difference in the world. Choose from more than 50 gift-giving options (goats, anyone?), each with the ability to make real, lasting change in the life of someone in need. Give in honor of someone special, and you can print, mail or email a card to let them know.

The animals of God's Global Barnyard are among some of the most popular gifts in the catalog. Your gifts to God's Global Barnyard support the sustainable development ministries of ELCA World Hunger, which include training, education, resources (and much more) to help the community care for animals and create new market opportunities like starting a small business selling eggs, meat or dairy products. Your gifts support this comprehensive approach to animal husbandry.

Good Gifts also has gifts that make a difference in the lives of people around the world, such as bibles, vaccinations, school supplies, school uniforms, water filters, backpack food programs, and more!

Giving is easy! A "Giving Tree" will be set up in the gathering area during Advent. Select an ornament with a symbol of the item you wish to purchase, place it on the tree and place your donation in the drop box. We will have a selection of cards available for you to use to let friends and loved ones know about ELCA Good Gifts that have been given in their honor. That's it! No crowds to fight, no shortages to contend with, and no delivery worries!

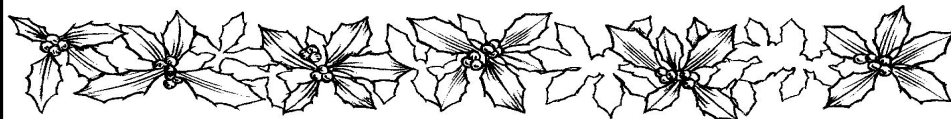
Thank you for your generosity during the holidays to help abate world hunger!

### *Service In the World*



## CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

If you wish to contribute toward Christmas poinsettias that will decorate the altar area this year, please list your name and the name(s) of those you wish to honor on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex area. We are asking for a contribution of \$9.00 to help offset the cost of the plants. **Please indicate 'flowers' on your envelope so we know how to allocate the funds.** Names will be published in the Christmas Eve worship bulletin.



## STEWARDSHIP GIFTS

Thank you for your generous giving to Faith Lutheran Church throughout 2021. You have helped make all the ministry in and through this place possible. As you consider your end of year gifts, please note that all contributions that you wish to have counted for 2021 must be received by **noon on December 30th**. Thank you!
















Our Christmas Special Offering this year will be split equally between Lutheran Services in Iowa and the Lutheran Disaster Response (designation: where needed).

Lutheran Services in Iowa "responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. Each year, we strengthen Iowa families through a variety of programs, ranging from early childhood education to behavioral and mental health services."

Lutheran Disaster Response "brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need."

# FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

# DECEMBER 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> 5pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 Confirmation 6:15 People of Praise 7pm High School Youth 7:15pm Resounding Joy!	<b>2</b> 6:30pm Team Night	<b>3</b> 9:30am Food Pantry  5:30pm Eldridge Hometown Holiday	<b>4</b> 5pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>5</b> 8am Worship 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship 	<b>6</b> 5:30-8:30 pm Lion's Club Mtg. (FH)	<b>7</b> 1pm Bible Study 5:30pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm VFW (FH) 7pm Jubilation	<b>8</b> 5pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 Confirmation 6:15 People of Praise 7pm High School Youth 7:15pm Resounding Joy!	<b>9</b> <i>Team Reports Due</i> 7pm Executive Committee Mtg.	<b>10</b> 9:30am Food Pantry 	<b>11</b> 5pm Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>12</b> 8am Jubilation Worship 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship—Pop Up Christmas Program Youth Cinnamon Roll Sale 	<b>13</b> 5:30-8:30 pm Lion's Club Mtg. (FH)	<b>14</b> 1pm Bible Study 5:30pm Food Pantry	<b>15</b> 5pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 Confirmation 6:15 People of Praise 7pm High School Youth 7:15pm Resounding Joy!	<b>16</b> 6:30pm Church Council Meeting Zoom 	<b>17</b> Noon-3pm Food Pantry Basket Distribution 	<b>18</b> 9am-11am Food Pantry Basket Distribution 5pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>19</b> 8am Worship 9:15am Adult Only Sunday School 10:30am Worship 	<b>20</b> 	<b>21</b> 5:30pm Food Pantry	<b>22</b> <u>No</u> Confirmation Meal or Conversation 6:15 People of Praise 7:15pm Resounding Joy!	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <i>Christmas Eve</i> <i>Office &amp; Pantry Closed</i> 2pm Worship 4pm Worship 9pm Worship	<b>25</b> <i>Christmas Day</i> 
<b>26</b> 9am Worship	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 5:30 Food Pantry	<b>29</b> <u>No</u> Confirmation Meal or Conversation, No Youth, No Choirs 9am Ambassador Folding 	<b>30</b> 2021 Year End Offerings Due by Noon	<b>31</b> <i>New Year's Eve</i> 9:30am Food Pantry 