

Following Faith



Winter Season Newsletter 2023

Hello, friends!

I want to send out a message of warm thanks and gratitude for the community of this congregation. I remember with such fondness how I was welcomed as a new visitor so many years ago. Coming forward to now, I am filled with gratitude for those who supported me during these three months that I worked with Pastor Shaun, Dorothy, and Lukas as one of your staff members at Faith. My prayer is that some of the work I have done in these months will continue to serve the congregation in the future.

While my time as one of the staff of Faith ends with the end of November, I will still be worshipping with you and no doubt helping out here and there as I continue to wait for my first call. I expect (hopefully!) to hear news of my first call sometime this winter. Since this is not a time of goodbyes, I'll just say again thank you for your love and support as we turn our eyes and hearts to a new church year and the Advent season.

Advent is a time full of tension, when we are asked to slow down and listen for the coming of New Life in Jesus while we also manage the bustle of the holiday season. It is a time of gathering and celebration while we may also be overwhelmed by grief. In the coming weeks, we will no doubt sing Silent Night, potentially many times, while violence continues to rock Jesus' birthplace. There are always tensions in our lives that seem unresolvable. To those places of disjunction, let us pray, "Come Lord Jesus."

As an Advent gift to you, those of us in the Adult Forum on December 19th wanted to share this poem we had discussed that day with you, Let the Sun into Your Heart by David Whyte. This poem is full of the tensions we may feel stuck in and yet are resolved and redeemed in Christ; how things hidden and unspoken are eventually proclaimed or how the discarded are woven into being shelter for each other. May this Advent season and the coming of Christmas be a time of renewal, redemption, and new life through Christ in your life and for all the world.

In Christ,
† Vicar Sarah Toney

LET THE SUN INTO YOUR HEART

Be taught now, among the trees and rocks,
how the discarded is woven into shelter,
learn the way things hidden and unspoken
slowly proclaim their voice in the world.
Find that far inward symmetry
to all outward appearances, apprentice
yourself to yourself, begin to welcome back
all you sent away and be a new annunciation,
let the sun into your heart and broaden
your spacious mind, make yourself a door
through which to be hospitable,
even to the stranger in you.

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IN WORSHIP THIS MONTH



EXPECTATIONS

We expect rain to animate this creek: these rocks to harbor gurgles, these pebbles to creep downstream a little, those leaves to circle in the eddy, the stains and gloss of wet. The bed is ready but no rain yet.

Kay Ryan

“And what did you expect?”

December 3rd - First Sunday of Advent

The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers: Stir up your power, and come! Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. They are waiting, expectant. And our Christian posture in Advent is similar—waiting for the truth and righteousness of Christ to be born again among us. And what did you expect? Let's turn our hope toward the good news that is arriving in God's promised love.



Greening of the church this Sunday following worship!



December 10th - Second Sunday of Advent

In Advent, as we strive to “keep awake,” we hear from Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist.

It is as if he is asking us: And what did you expect?!

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up

our voices fearlessly and say, “See, your God is coming!” We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

IN WORSHIP THIS MONTH

December 17th - Third Sunday of Advent

Our children show us Advent Art they have been reflecting with. And they pick the hymns of the day, "Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.



December 24th - Fourth Sunday of Advent

At our morning service, 9:30am, we keep the theme of Advent. It will be a service of the Word. Here, God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

December 24th - Nativity of our Lord

Christmas Eve, 8pm Service

with Candle-lighting

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.



Wednesdays, Dec 6th, 13th & 20th

*Advent soup supper begins at 5:30pm
followed by Evening Prayer Service at 6pm*



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



On October 29th, **Reformation Sunday**, we received new members through Affirmation of Baptism! Let it be acclaimed, and we welcome with warm hearts:

- ◆ Sigrud Liersch
- ◆ Gordon Lok
- ◆ Rudolf Sommer
- ◆ Jim and Cindy Thompson
- ◆ Matthew Rhiley
- ◆ Erica Wilfrid

God's Blessings on our New Members and on our life of Faith!

*Welcome to
the Faith
Community!*



CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS



I want to say **THANK YOU!** to all the volunteers who helped to beautify the church property, inside and out. Our month started off with a cleanup of the outside grounds and the inside of the church. On Nov 4th we had 18 eager volunteers participate. Part of them helped fill a 20-yard dumpster to the brim with trash and debris from the yard and 2 helped with trash for dumpster on the 3rd as they were gone on the 4th. The rest worked inside; dusting, sweeping, cleaning windows, and general cleaning. It was part of *God's Work Our Hands* day. A light lunch was provided for the helpers by volunteers. Everything looks great and we are ready for Advent and the celebration of Jesus' birth.

-Sonja Dresbach, Property Chair



SHARING WITH EACH OTHER

OUTREACH

We are partnering with Elmcrest School for Advent with Angel Tree gifts for children in need. On the bulletin board, in the Narthex, each child has a list of wants and needs for you to shop for. Remove the card you wish to purchase for and **write your name & phone/email** on the clipboard list placed on the shelf below. This way no gifts are duplicated. Wrap or gift bag the items and label with the child's number/card. The gifts need to be returned to the church no later than Sunday, Dec 17th. The lists should be followed so that each child can feel loved and heard for their requests. Not everything on the list is required but they ask that each child in a family have a similar number of gifts. For example, the group of child cards in #9 are in the same family with the following letter, A,B, ... representing the children in that family. Address any questions to Judi Hein or Pastor Shaun.

Thank you for your support.
-Judi Hein, Outreach Chair



FOOD BANK

With the recent absence of Eileen Way, the Food Bank held at Faith Lutheran Church will take a temporary respite. The Food Bank will not be held for the months of November and December, 2023. The other locations will help to pick up the shortage during this especially difficult time for. Bless all of you who have participated, some for many years!

-Eileen Way, Food Bank Director

SHARED HARVEST

Items needed for this month's assembly are; 28 regular sized Jars of **Peanut Butter**, 56 Boxes of **Mac n Cheese**, 42 Cans of **Chicken Noodle Soup**, 42 Packets of **Powdered Milk**, and **Disposable Razors** in unlimited quantities. Packing will be on Sun, Dec 17th, 1pm @ Faith Lutheran Reno. Thank you so much for your support!

2023 FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

President: Ben Pesis

Vice President: Eric Weldon

Secretary: Judi Hein

Treasurer: LindaLu Miller

Members at Large: Jean Carter, Sonja Dresbach,
Amy Zimmerman, and Pastor Shaun O'Reilly

CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

December Bible Study Schedule

Join us Tuesday afternoons, from 1:30p-2:30p, to read and discuss the Bible scripture for the upcoming Sunday. We have space to reflect and talk, and to meditate on the lectionary coming up in worship. *All are welcome! In person, or on Zoom.*

Visit the website at faithlutheranreno.org to join Zoom - via phone or video -
Dial: 1 669-900-9128 Meeting ID: 97416357933 Password: 303457

Nov 28th reading for 12/3: Isaiah 64:1-9, Prayer that God come with power and compassion, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, Let your face shine upon us, we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7), 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end, Mark 13:24-37, The sudden coming of the Son of Man

Dec 5th reading for 12/10: Isaiah 40:1-11, Good news of God's coming to a people in exile Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13, Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13) 2 Peter 3:8-15a, Waiting for and hastening the day of God Mark 1:1-8, John appears from the wilderness

Dec 12th reading for 12/17: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, Righteousness & praise flourish like a garden Psalm 126, The Lord has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3) Luke 1:46b-55 (alternate) You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24, Kept in faith until the coming of Christ John 1:6-8, 19-28, A witness to the light

Dec 19th reading for 12/24: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16, The Lord's promise to David Luke 1:46b-55, You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52) Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 (alternate), Your love, O Lord, forever will I sing. (Ps. 89:1) Romans 16:25-27, The mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ Luke 1:26-38, The angel appears to Mary

For more information contact the office at office@faithlutheranreno.org or call 775.747-3246

Sunday Worship Online



<https://www.youtube.com/@faithlutheran-reno>

Click on the "LIVE" tab once in YouTube

If you feel so moved, you are welcome to set aside a designated space to worship. You are invited to light a candle, add a flower vase, or perhaps cover the space with a special cloth; whatever aids you in centering for worship.

Prayer Requests

Please send any prayer requests to the prayer team. They will be emailed to our team and read in Sunday worship

prayers@faithlutheranreno.org

Online Giving

For your convenience there is an online option at our website. A very small percentage is subtracted from each donation, but it is an option.

www.fithlutheranreno.org

Click on "Support Faith" drop down menu on the top right.

December 2023

Faith Lutheran Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10a Worship Team
3 9:30am Worship 11am COOKIE PALOOZA GREENING OF THE CHURCH AFTER WORSHIP	4 FOOD PANTRY CLOSED	5 1:30pm Bible Study	6 NO LUNCH BUNCH 5:30pm SOUP SUPPER 6pm EVENING SERVICE	7	8	9
10 9:30am Worship	11 FOOD PANTRY CLOSED	12 1:30pm Bible Study	13 12pm Finance Mtng 5:30pm SOUP SUPPER 6pm EVENING SERVICE	14	15	16
17 9:30am Worship	18 FOOD PANTRY CLOSED 6pm Council Mtng	19 11:45a NARFE 1:30pm Bible Study	20 5:30pm SOUP SUPPER 6pm EVENING SERVICE	21	22 WALDORF/LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR WINTER BREAK DEC 25TH THRU JAN 8TH	23
24 9:30am Worship 8pm Christmas Eve Service	25 FOOD PANTRY CLOSED 	26 No Bible Study	27	28	29	30
31 9:30am Worship NEW YEAR'S EVE				<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Weekly Group Meetings in the FLC Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ ACA ; Mondays at 5:30pm ✦ 4-H WhipStirs; 2nd Wednesday at 6:30pm ✦ Scouts; Thursdays at 7:00pm </div>		