

# Following Faith

August Newsletter 2024

*Friends of Faith,*

*Here in the days of summer I will offer you a letter from our Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. I read this last month and found some solace. She is speaking to our day and time and where our country is right now. All of life is connected to our faith, so I offer this reflection to you.*

*†Pastor Shaun O'Reilly*

The airwaves are filled with contentious political discourse. And, as we get closer to the November election, it will undoubtedly get louder and coarser. Each side seeks to catch the other with questions that aren't designed for clarity and dialogue but to further its own agenda. Martin Luther's explanation of the Eighth Commandment in the Small Catechism—"We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. *Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light*"—is barely visible in the rearview mirror.

But the "gotcha" question isn't a modern invention. "Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ... Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar (the emperor) or not?" (Matthew 22:15-17). We know the answer. Jesus told them: "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (21).

This passage has been used to inform the relationship between the institutions of the state and the community of faith. In this relationship the authority of the state is real and respected—but limited. God's authority is acknowledged as ultimate and deserving of ultimate devotion and obedience, yet it doesn't necessitate withdrawal from or opposition to participation in civic life and its responsibilities. We Lutherans call this the doctrine of two kingdoms, and we understand that the church and the state, the spiritual and the temporal, are both established by God and are both part of God's twofold rule. Both church and state are good gifts from God.

Lutherans have been accused of congenital quietism. Our understanding of God's twofold rule and even the story about paying taxes in Matthew have been used to discourage participation in civic life. However, active participation in public life has been part of the Lutheran movement from

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its beginning. Lutherans don't withdraw from public life. In fact, the ELCA's constitution pledges us to "work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining institutional separation of church and state in a relation of functional interaction."

I have been voting for 51 years. I can't think of an election cycle more fraught and divisive than this one. People all across the political spectrum claim that life as we know it is on the line. It's not possible to agree to disagree—one must decide and put a stake in the ground. There is the potential for violence.

But division and violence don't have to be our inevitable future. On Nov. 5, no matter the outcome, we will still be here together. Our church, our people, our congregations will still be here and will witness that unity doesn't mean uniformity; that what binds us together is new life in Christ; that the church—and our country—are bigger than our "tribe"; and that baptism proves that water is thicker than blood.

This is not "both side-ism." Based on Scripture and the Confessions and forged through prayer, there are principles that aren't debatable: love, community, sacrifice for the common good, to name a few. Instead, we are free and forgiven in Christ so that even when we disagree on deeply held convictions, we can still see the other as someone for whom Christ died.

Something that is missed when reading the story of Jesus and taxes is what he reveals about God and the world God so loves. We focus on Caesar. If Caesar's image and title are imprinted on a base metal coin, a humanly created, literal graven image, where is God's image to be found? Human creatures—the living beings whom God created in God's own image, into whom God breathed the breath of life—are bearers of God's image in the world.

Dear church, our citizenship is ultimately in heaven. But we are also citizens of this country—this flawed, fractious, unequal, imperfect union. In U.S. political history, people have yearned and given their lives for what they had hoped for—democratic life for the sake of the flourishing of all. One of the ways we serve our neighbor is to participate in civic life. Can we see Election Day as a unifying event when the whole country goes to the polls?

**Vote.**

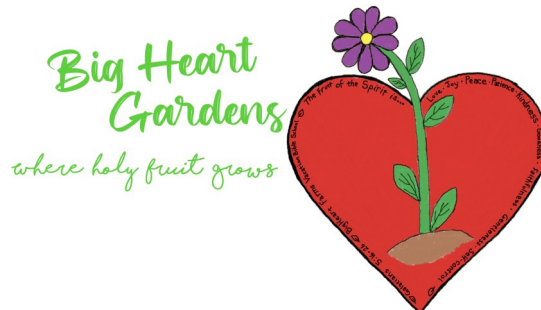
- From ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, June 14, 2024

## IN WORSHIP THIS MONTH

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### August 11th - Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

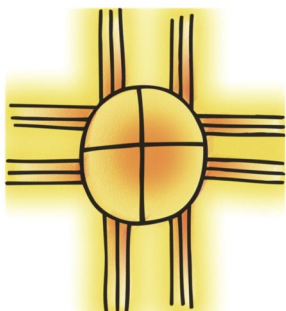
In our readings: Jesus says that the bread he gives for the life of the world is his flesh. Ephesians tells us what this life Jesus gives us looks like, this life we live as those marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit in baptism. We live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. The whole purpose of life is giving yourself for the other. What a heart we can be given, and what fruit we may bear! So, this Sunday, on the precipice of summer's end and Washoe County students/teachers headed back to school, we reflect on our summer camp Vacation Bible School, inviting kiddos to sing and play, and we celebrate how God is a gardener that brings us to growing good fruit. Come and worship, and celebrate our summer focus with kids: Big Heart Gardens! We bless teachers and students and school workers headed back to school.



### August 18th - Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

#### ***Annual Church Picnic follows after Worship!***

We continue in the "Bread of Life Discourse" of John, chapter six, and we notice: Wisdom prepares a feast, sets her table, and invites all to come and eat her bread and drink her wine. The first chapter of John's gospel owes much to the biblical tradition that imagined Wisdom as existing before anything was created and having a role in the work of creation. Christ, the wisdom of God, (1 Cor. 1:24), today invites us to eat his flesh and drink his blood. John's gospel includes no account of the institution of the Lord's supper, but here we can't help hearing Jesus' words as an invitation to the meal of bread and wine we share.



### August 25th - Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

#### ***Gospel-Country Style Music as we worship and close out August!***

This Sunday's psalm completes our singing of Psalm 34. In Psalm 34:15-22, the troubles and evils of the world are honestly faced, in prayer that God will keep us safe. The claim that not one of our bones will be broken entered Christian imagination when describing Christ's passion (John 19:36). We continue to uphold God's gift — bread for the world — as our life and ultimate source!



# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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THANK YOU to everyone who is helping with all the church renovations that were started in 2022. We have come a long way in caring for God's house. We are the caretakers and we are doing a great job.

As we look forward to fall, it is thrilling to see the "thermometer" for the kitchen upgrade rising so quickly. Thank you to everyone who sees the vision that Faith Lutheran has for improvement of our church home.

We started with painting the outside of the building in July 2022. We upgraded the roof October 2022. A loan was taken out for the painting and roof. As the interest was low, we chose to continue paying on that loan when we considered the cost of paving the parking lot.

Our next large project was paving the parking lot in October 2023. Interest was higher, so we decided to use church funds for seed money and you all contributed towards the balance and we paid off the cost of the paving. No loan was taken out for this project, it was PAID IN FULL. You all really stepped up on this one.

Now we are raising money for the kitchen. We are ½ way to our goal of \$30,000. When the money is raised, we will begin the renovation. Again, no new loan. Thank you for being so faithful. Fundraisers are happening to help raise funds.

As so many have helped in the process of all these projects, I will not try and give a thank you to individuals. You have all helped in some way, perhaps financially, phone calls, meetings, discussion groups, and prayers. Too many to list. Just know you all are very special and are appreciated for all you do.

Please remember when you give to a dedicated fund, to make it a special donation, in addition to your regular giving. We still have our monthly financial responsibility to keep the church running. Just like our own home, we have church bills that need to be paid to keep the doors open. We thank you for being so faithful.

Your church council meets monthly to oversee all the goals you have helped us set and we all say THANK YOU for working with us in completing these goals.

Sonja Dresbach, Council President



Message  
from the  
President

# FAITH IN ACTION

## 2024 FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

**President:** Sonja Dresbach

**Vice President:** Eric Weldon

**Secretary:** Benjamin Pesis

**Treasurer:** LindaLu Miller

**Members at Large:** Jean Carter, Matthew Rhiley,  
Amy Zimmerman, and Pr. Shaun O'Reilly

## 2024 TEAMS & LEADERS

### **Faith Formation:**

Adult (Sundays) Pr. Shaun, Adult (Saturdays) Pr. Stan, Youth - Sharon Scagliotti

**Communications:** Amy Zimmerman

**Fellowship/Hospitality:** Pat Porter, Jean Carter

**Finance:** LindaLu Miller

**Property:** Eric Weldon

**Outreach/Social Action:** Judi Hein

**Stewardship:** Eric Weldon

**Worship and Music:** Sharon Scagliotti

**Personnel:** Linda Zimmerman

## **ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC -WESTERN BBQ!-**

**Sunday, August 18th, 11am**

BBQ pulled pork, smoked brisket, fried chicken and hot dogs will be furnished by the Fellowship Team. The pulled pork and brisket will be prepared by Grill Master Eric, and the fried chicken is courtesy of the "Colonel".

A SIDE DISH sign up sheet is on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

This year we have added a new twist!

The two beautiful (donated) quilts on display in the Narthex will be raffled off!

**Buy 1 ticket for \$5 or 3 tickets for \$12**

In addition, the Worship, Fellowship, Communications, Building & Grounds Teams, along with the Church Council, will be preparing gift baskets for a silent auction.

All proceeds from these items will go directly to the Kitchen Remodel Fund.

The gift baskets will be on display during the Sunday of the BBQ.

Our last Western BBQ was a huge success!

So - dig out your boots, hats, and Wranglers and come join the fun!

# FAITH FORMATION

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## If Grace Is True

WHY GOD WILL  
SAVE EVERY PERSON



\*Gulley and Mulholland have done what many Christians have failed to do: they have honestly faced the Church's traditional doctrines of salvation and eternal justice. —Christianity Today

PHILIP GULLEY  
JAMES MULHOLLAND



### ADULT FORUM

At 11am on Sundays, join us for learning and discussion following worship. It's our Adult Forum!

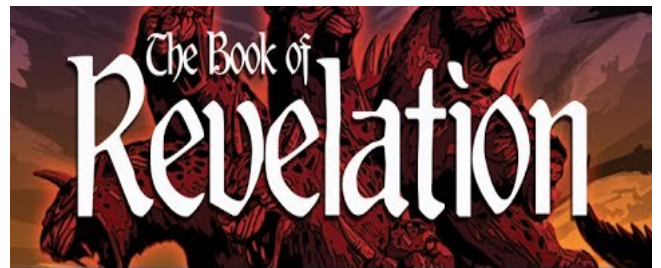
We continue "Salvation, Heaven and Hell." Consider purchasing the book *If Grace is True*, by Gulley and Mulholland, to reference as we go. There are many inexpensive used copies out there! Join us!

*Just come along!*

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## SATURDAY FAITH FORMATION CLASSES

Join Pastor Stan as we study the books of the new testament. Beginning **August 10th** we will start a series of presentations on the Book of Revelation. This conversation is open to everyone and all of your questions are encouraged, *especially* from those who are novices on the new testament.



**Join us for fun & learning, questions, wonderings, and of course, treats!**  
**All are welcome and encouraged! Led by Stan Pesis and Elizabeth King.**

**SATURDAY'S @ 1PM**

*Please note that no classes will be held on September 14th or 21st*

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**Faith Kids' Place! will resume Sept 8th!**



# OUTREACH & COMMUNITY

The cookbook is just getting ready to go to print. The cost of the cookbook is \$15 and proceeds will go to the Kitchen Remodel Fund!

There are 137 recipes in this cookbook. Please let me know how many you would like to order.

**Amy Zimmerman**

amyzimmerman818@gmail.com



## SHARED HARVEST

In August, we need only 28 boxes of **cold cereal**, and **bar soap** in unlimited quantities.

Packing is Sun, 08/25, 1pm @ Holy Cross, Reno.

## OUTREACH TEAM

We will be partnering again this year with Elmcrest Elementary. Stay tuned for our school supply list requests which we will start collecting in August to help the kids get started for their new '24-25 school year.

Judi Hein, Outreach Chair



## BIBLE STUDY

Join us Tuesday afternoons, from 1:30p-2:30p, to read and discuss the Bible scripture for the following Sunday. This helps us prepare for the next Sunday's Service. Study schedules may be found on the table in the Narthex. Everyone is welcome!

### Prayer Requests

Please send any prayer requests to the prayer team at:

[prayers@faithlutheranreno.org](mailto:prayers@faithlutheranreno.org)

### Online Giving



For your convenience we offer an online option at our website:

[faithlutheranreno.org](http://faithlutheranreno.org)

Click on "Support Faith" at the top right of the page.

# August 2024

Faith Lutheran Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL</b> <b>JUL 29th - AUG 2nd</b>					
4 9:30am Worship 11am Adult Forum No Kids Place	5	6 1:30pm Bible Study	7	8	9	10 10am Worship Mtng 1pm FAITH FORMATION CLASS
11 9:30am Worship 11am Adult Forum No Kids Place	12	13 1:30pm Bible Study	14 12pm Finance Mtng	15	16	17 1pm FAITH FORMATION CLASS
18 9:30am Worship  <b>ANNUAL BBQ!</b>	19 6pm Council Mtng	20 11:45am NARFE 1:30pm Bible Study	21	22	23	24 1pm FAITH FORMATION CLASS
25 9:30am Worship 11am Adult Forum No Kids Place	26	27 1:30pm Bible Study	28	29	30	31 1pm FAITH FORMATION CLASS
<b>PASTOR SHAUN OUT</b> <b>AUG 26th - SEP 3rd</b>						
<b>Weekly Group Meetings in the FLC Space</b> ♦ ACA: Mondays at 5:30pm ♦ 4-H WhipStirs: 2nd Wednesday at 6:30pm ♦ Scouts: Thursdays at 7:00pm						