



Faith Lutheran Church

**We warmly greet members
and visitors in Jesus' name**

Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:15 a.m., December 24, 2023

Hymns, Prayers for the Day, Scripture Readings
and Parish Announcements



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."

Welcome to Worship at Faith Lutheran Church
Gathered faithfully to love and serve God and all others

7750 Beneva Road, Sarasota, FL, 34238 | 941-924-4664 | www.faithlutheransrq.com

All the baptized are invited to the celebration of Holy Communion, trusting that Christ is present in this sacrament for the forgiveness of our sin and the strengthening of our faith.



The flowers on the altar today are given by
Jerry and Kaye Kempson
in celebration of their 64th wedding anniversary.



Presiding Ministers

Rev. Eric Olaf Olsen
Rev. Marianne Powrie
Rev. Larry Wright

Lector

Joan Searles

Director of Music/Organist

David V. Patrick

Cantor

Jesse V. Martin

Vocals

Voices of Faith Choir

Greeters & Ushers

Jerry Cooper, Eloise Dettmer, Ashley Garlitz,
Dottie Gustavson, Grace Kaarre, Alf Kirkeeng,
Gail Lidinsky, Judy Millard, Mark Nelson, Jan Phillips,
Scott Rice, Joan Searles, Dave Wardach

Videographers

Kelly Ashlock, Greg Cooper, Kevin Fewell,
Andrea & Sergio Gamboa, Mark Greenwood

Altar Guild

Linda Fewell, Carole Inkrott, Judy Millard,
Mark Nelson, Jan Phillips, Steve & Peggy Ragan

Congregation Council

Scott Rice, president; Ann Greenwood, vice
president; Peggy Ragan, secretary; Anita Wooton,
treasurer; Jane Sanks, assistant treasurer;
Jerry Cooper; Gail Lidinsky; Mark Nelson;
Joan Searles; Lauren Wardach

* * * * *

Pastor

Rev. Eric Olaf Olsen

Assistant to the Pastor

Rev. Larry Wright

Retired Pastors in Residence

Rev. John Hilficker

Rev. Marianne Powrie

Rev. John Spittal

Rev. David Wagner

Director of Family and Child Ministry

Deborah Dornemann

Lead Cantor/Music Librarian

Tom Tryon

Operations Administrator

Jenniffer Shaffer

Communications Administrator

Linda Fewell

Noted throughout the service - P: Presiding Minister L: Lector **C: Congregation**

Faith has a T-Coil-enabled hearing loop for those whose hearing aid(s) also are enabled.

This service is being live-streamed and recorded. We try to avoid filming congregants, but it may happen at times.

GATHERING HYMN **Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn**

ELW 242

We sing together

1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

WE SIT

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

L: A Reading from 2 Samuel.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan,

“See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.”

³Nathan said to the king,

“Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan:

⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD:

Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”

⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts:

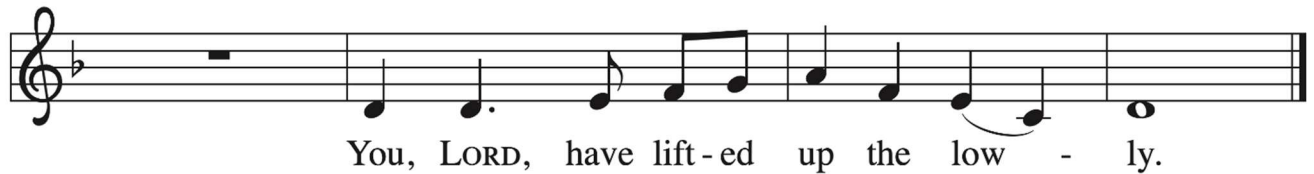
I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM REFRAIN: Luke 1:48

To begin, the organist plays the refrain once, the cantor sings it once, and then we all sing it together.



Luke 1:48

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.

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PSALMODY: Luke 1:46b-55

L: ^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.

⁵⁰You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

C: Refrain

L: ⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm

and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵²casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,

⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

C: Refrain

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

L: A Reading from Romans.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — ²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

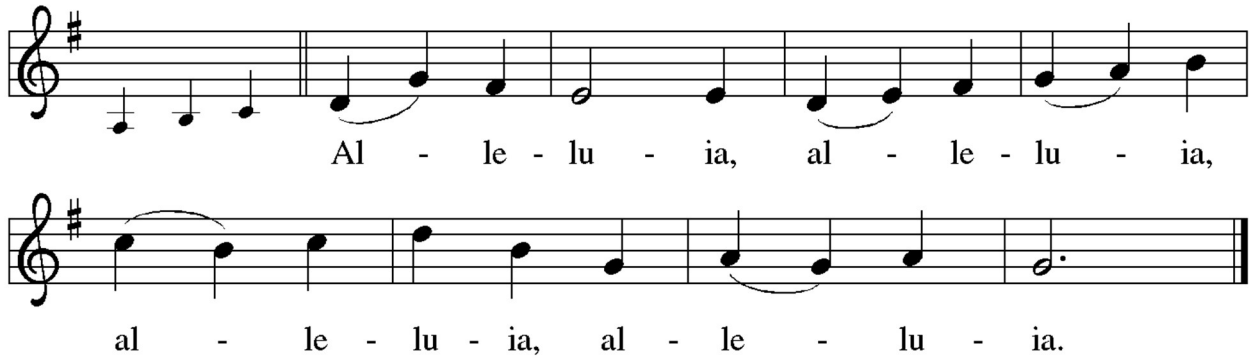
Word of God, word of life.

C: Thanks be to God.

WE STAND

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

We sing together



GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: ²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God."

³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Pastor Marianne Powrie

We sing together

1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
 2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
 3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre-prepare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da-vid's tree.
 the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;
 to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm
 that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
 Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
 in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.
 to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

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*WE SIT***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world and all who await God's day of restoration.

(brief silence)

L: You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we may work together in caring for our world. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Where fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they may provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate, and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

L: You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. Bring an end to unrest around the world, including in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill. Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home. We especially ask your blessing for those on our prayer list and those we name before you now, aloud or in our hearts. (pause)
Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

L: You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

L: Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. Merciful God,

C: receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

C: Amen.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

Tell Out, My Soul

Words by Timothy Dudley-Smith, Arranged by Joe Raney

Voices of Faith Choir

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of His Word;
In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His Holy name, the Lord, the mighty one.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.
Tell out, my soul, the glories of His Word!
Firm is His promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and forever more.

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OFFERTORY ANTHEM

O Come, Let Us Adore Him

Setting by Patrick M. Liebergen

Voices of Faith Choir

The snow lay on the ground,
The star shone bright,
When Christ, our Lord,
Was born on Christmas night.
O come, come adore the Lord.
Above the holy Child the angels sing,
The shepherds gather round the newborn King.
O hear the joyful sounds proclaim the birth,
Emmanuel is born for all the earth.
Venite Adoremus Dominum!

We sing together

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

POSTLUDE

God Rest Ye Merry

Alfred Fedak

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Welcome, Visitors!

We are so glad you have joined us for worship. Please let us know that you visited by filling out a Visitor Card located on the table near the entrance. Kindly give the card to an usher or place it in the offering plate.

Poinsettias Honor Loved Ones, Give Glory to God



The poinsettias that grace the sanctuary were graciously given by:

- † Loretta Braun, in loving memory of Roy and Diana Biehayn.
- † Linda Burton, in loving memory of her husband, Tom Schneider.
- † Dorcas (Dee) Burlingame, in loving memory of John Burlingame.
- † Allan and Nancy Dandino, in loving memory of Joan Marie Dandino.
- † Eloise Dettmer, in memory of loved ones.
- † Carolyn DeZutter and Carrie, in loving memory of Chuck DeZutter.
- † Pamela Enright, in memory of love from the Radesk family.
- † Dorothy Gustavson, in loving memory of her husband, Raymond A. Gustavson; and her parents, Otto and Lilly Stoll.
- † Joan Hirsch, in loving memory of Hal Hirsch.
- † Grace Kaarre, in loving memory of her husband, Paul Kaarre.
- † Jerry and Kaye Kempson, in loving memory of family members.
- † Alf and Denise Kirkeeng, in loving memory of their parents.
- † Karen and Jerry Kolschowsky, in honor of family.
- † Mama Lehmann, AKA Susan Lehmann, in loving memory of Bill Lehmann; and in honor of their five sons.
- † Karla Lewis and Michael Leonhardt, in memory of their beloved parents.
- † Florence Marer, in loving memory of her stepdaughter, Carol; her husband, Walter; her parents, August and Margaret Ziegler; and in honor of her loved ones.
- † Patricia McKee, with joyful gratitude for family and all Christmases past!
- † John and Judy Millard, in memory of loved ones.
- † Gail Murphy, in loving memory of her husband, Brian Murphy.
- † Mark A. and Amy Nelson, in loving memory of Frank Nelson.
- † Donna Pappalardo, in loving memory of her husband, Dennis Pappalardo; and her parents, Marion and Danny Ozsvath.
- † Floyd Ryder, in loving memory of his wife, Beverly Ryder.
- † Jane Sanks, in loving memory of her mother, Mildred Cole.
- † Joan Searles, in loving memory of her parents, Clara and Christian Fick; and in honor of her five grandchildren.
- † Pastor Larry and Ann Wright, in memory of loved ones.

If you donated one or more plants, you may take them home following the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service. Thank you!

Your Worship Service Bulletin Comes in Two Parts

Worship service bulletins come in two parts. The insert, which you are reading now, contains information for today only. Take it home or recycle it after worship. The other part contains the Setting One order of worship, which we will use for some time. Please return it to the table in the narthex after worship so it can be used again.

Join Us for Christmas Worship

Today, Christmas Eve, Sunday, Dec. 24

- 4:15 p.m. Carols on the Carillon
4:30 p.m. Music from the Voices of Faith Choir,
Quartet, Organ and Piano
4:45 p.m. Candlelight Service with Holy Communion
7 p.m. Candlelight Service with Holy Communion



New Year's Eve, Sunday, Dec. 31

No 8 a.m. service

10:15 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion



Adult Forum Takes a Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve Break

Adult Forum is on holiday hiatus. On Sunday, Jan. 7, it will reconvene between the two worship services to focus on "Isreal in Bondage," in Volume 8, "God Heard Their Cry – Finding Freedom in the Midst of Life's Trials," in the "That the World May Know" video series.

Faith Sunday School Welcomes All Young People

Following the Children's Sermon, Director of Family and Child Ministry Deborah Dornemann and volunteers show young people to the classroom, where they learn about the gospel of the day through age-appropriate lessons and fun activities. The children rejoin the congregation for Holy Communion.



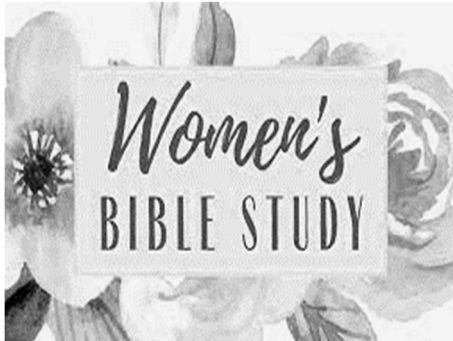
Coffee Hour: Volunteer to Set Up, Clean Up



Coffee hour is an important fellowship ministry at Faith that needs additional volunteers. All you have to do is put out snacks and clean up afterward. Please sign up on the sheet beside the coffee pot in fellowship hall. Questions? Contact Karen Naulty, knaulty@yahoo.com or 406-334-1063; or Denise Kirkeeng, kirkeengd@verizon.net or 941-468-6668.

Men of Faith Meet for Prayer Breakfast

All Men of Faith are invited to breakfast and prayer at **8:30 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 26, at Skillet's, 8635 S. Tamiami Trail**. Join in. All are welcome!



Women's Bible Study Takes a Two-Week Break

G.I.F.T.S (Growing in Faith Through Scripture) Women's Bible Study is on holiday break. It will reconvene **9:30-10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, in the conference room** to resume study of "Be Still and Know — A Study of Rest and Refuge" by Deb Burma. Questions? Contact Peggy Ragan, 941-302-7722 or pragan12@aol.com. All women are welcome!

Prayer Group Gatjers at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday

Join in prayer with Faith friends at **10:30 a.m. Wednesday in the chapel**. We pray for ourselves, loved ones, those in need, our community, our nation and our world. We conclude with Holy Communion. Can't attend in person? Join via Zoom: **Meeting ID 871 4720 3661, Passcode 041291**.



Bereavement Group Meets at 1 p.m. Wednesday



The Bereavement Group meets at **1 p.m. Wednesday in the chapel**. If you or a friend can use help bearing the burden of grief, this group is for you. There is strength and hope in community.

Stitch 'n' Chatter Meets Thursdays

Ladies and gents, grab your hooks and needles for Stitch 'n' Chatter, **1-2:30 p.m. Thursdays in room 212**. For info, contact Doris Anne Prieur-Lucia, 941-266-8101.



Confirmation Class Meets Thursday Evening



Confirmation Class meets at 7 p.m., Thursdays via Zoom:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83054124705?pwd=jkQYOlazk519ubnglAeJxxa6USxWOA.1>,
Meeting ID 830 5412 4705, Passcode 688400.

Contact Pastor Eric with questions.

Faith Food Pantry Needs Your Donations and Volunteer Spirit



The Faith Food Pantry needs your help on Thursdays! Sign up on the sheet on the narthex table, via the online sign-up in the Faith Friday Update email, or contact Karen Naulty, 406-334-1063 or knaulty@yahoo.com.

Especially during the holidays, remember BOGO – Buy One Give One – for food and paper products (toilet paper, facial tissues, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, etc.), then leave them in the car so you don't forget to bring them to church. Place donations in the barrel in fellowship hall. Thanks!

Year-to-Date Giving Reports Will Be Available in Early January

Calendar year-to-date giving reports will be available during the first week of January 2024. The reports will be:

- Emailed to those with a valid opted-in email address on file on or before Jan. 5.
- Sent via U.S. Mail to the address on file for those without email addresses or those who have opted out of using email communication.

Paper copies will be provided on request.



Giving reports are based on the calendar year for tax records and reporting. But please be aware that Faith Lutheran's fiscal year is March 1-February. As a result, your records show:

- January and February giving in the fund year 2023.
- March through December giving in the fund year 2024.

If you have questions, need your record sooner, or if your contact information has changed, please contact the church office, 941-924-4664 or officeadmin@faithlutheransrq.com; or Patty McKee, 941-921-3709 or financialsecretary@faithlutheransrq.com.

Helpful Tips Provide Guidance as You Contemplate Year-End Contributions to Faith

As we prayerfully and joyfully await the coming of our Savior, the calendar year and the tax year are drawing to a close, so it's time to prepare. Here's helpful information:

- You will receive year-end giving statements from Faith by Jan. 6 (see story on previous page).
- To check the status of your 2023 pledge or to request an early copy of your giving statement, contact Financial Secretary Patty McKee, 941-921-3709 or financialsecretary@faithlutheransrq.com.



Thank offerings to Faith that are made before year-end qualify for an income tax deduction. If you are contemplating a year-end gift, you can:

- **Write a check or give electronically via the Online Giving page on the Faith website, faithlutheransrq.com/onlinegiving.** Donations of record qualify if you itemize.
- **Donate appreciated securities** that you have owned for more than one year, thus eliminating tax on the appreciation. Consult with your tax advisor, and keep in mind that the gift date is the date on which the securities enter Faith's account.
- **Open a Donor Advised Fund (DAF) or contribute through your existing DAF.** You can request a grant from your DAF to support Faith or any of Faith's mission funds.
- **Make a gift from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA).** If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can transfer funds directly to Faith to eliminate taxes on any gift up to \$100,000. If you must make required minimum distributions, this is a great way to meet all or part of that obligation.

NOTE: 2024 giving envelopes are scheduled for delivery before the end of December. They will be available in the narthex as soon as they arrive.



Safety Committee Seeks Volunteers

Members of the safety committee review Faith's building and grounds for hazards that could cause tripping or slipping -- raised sidewalks, rugs that don't lay flat, wet floors, parking-lot bumpers with rebar that should be pounded back to ground level, etc. They report concerns to the property committee. Interested in joining the committee? Please contact the church office.

S.U.R.E. Team Advocates for Care, Funding to Help End Homelessness



Pastor Marianne, Pastor Eric and other members of the Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (S.U.R.E.) affordable housing committee recently met to plan a presentation to the Sarasota County Commission in support of funding for the Community Services Information System, which helps ensure a continuum of care and federal funding to aid in the

fight to end homelessness.

S.U.R.E., a faith-based community organizing entity of which Faith is a covenant member, is focused on **affordable and accessible housing**, an issue with which neighbors who visit the Faith Food Pantry regularly struggle. While this problem might not affect every member of our parish, we are compelled by the gospel of Jesus Christ to care deeply about our neighbors' needs.

Interested in getting involved? Contact Pastor Eric. Visit suresarasota.org to learn more.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund Helps Needy

Pastor Eric often speaks with people about aid they might require. The Pastor's Discretionary fund allows him to assist financially, when appropriate. If you are able, please consider a donation to the fund so those in need can receive assistance.

A graphic with the text 'Helping Those in Need' in a bold, sans-serif font. The background of the graphic is a grayscale image of a person's face, partially obscured by the text.



December Stewardship Message

We should ask God to give us wisdom to comprehend the brevity of life.

A prayer of Moses:

For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

(Psalm 90:4, 12, 14)



From Your Stewardship Ministry Team: Merry Christmas

No season of the year is quite like Christmas. Most of us have wonderful memories of happy family gatherings, the smell of fresh-baked cookies, the Christmas tree, the church decorated with evergreens and poinsettias, and wonderful music of the season. As a

contemporary musical proclaims, "It's the most wonderful time of the year!" That's especially true for those of us who call ourselves "Christians."

We get our name from the Savior born in Bethlehem. Believers in that Savior were first called "Christians" or "Christ's Ones" at Antioch. Through faith in Jesus Christ, we are "Christ's Ones." We belong to him for time and for eternity. We are "Christ's Ones" because the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14).

That's why we give gifts at Christmas. When we give gifts, we commemorate the greatest gift of all, the gift of Jesus Christ to be our Savior. And that's also why we give gifts to the Lord. Not because "poor God" needs our help to pay the bills. Not because it is Jesus' birthday, so we should give the guest of honor a present. None of that is what motivates us in our giving. We give out of hearts of gratitude for the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. We give out of hearts of love because Christ has redeemed us and given us a new name, that of Christians. We give in response to God's love for us, knowing all that we have belongs to God.

As the calendar year draws to a close, the needs here at Faith Lutheran are great, but as we join together in a sacrifice of praise to God through a special Christmas offering, the needs can be met — and more. Thanks for prayerfully considering your response to God's love for you, and for giving as God enables and leads in your life. May the joy of the Christ Child who became our Savior be yours.

Consider Donating Altar Flowers



Please consider donating altar flowers in honor of a special occasion, in memory of a loved one or to glorify God. The cost is \$30 for one vase or \$60 for two. Make checks payable to Faith Lutheran Church with "altar flowers" in the memo line. Check the altar flowers donation board in fellowship hall to see if your desired date is available. If not, please choose an alternate date. **The next open date is Sunday, Jan. 28.**

When you purchase altar flowers, your name and dedication will be published in the bulletin on your selected Sunday. To make a dedication:

- At church, complete an Altar Flowers envelope with your payment, and place it in the offering plate. Indicate your wish to keep or donate the flowers on the donation board in fellowship hall.
- By mail, send payment with a note indicating your desired date and dedication, and if you want to keep the flowers or donate them.
- By email or phone, contact the church office with your desired date and dedication, and whether you want to keep or donate the flowers. Pay through the Altar Flowers option on the Online Giving page of the Faith website, www.faithlutheransrq.com.

If you have specific requests about who or what facility should receive your donated flowers, contact Judi Melander, judimelander629@gmail.com or 941-927-2502.

About Faith Lutheran

Gathered faithfully to love and serve God and all others.

Our Vision

To be an ELCA congregation that displays the true, unending love of Christ. To promote peace, social justice and grace in all we do.



The ELCA

Faith Lutheran Church is part of the greater Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). We are ecumenical, saved by grace and love Jesus.

Subscribe to Receive the Latest News and Updates

Would you like to receive the latest news and updates from Faith Lutheran? Subscribe to our weekly Friday Update at www.faithlutheransrq.com or email us at communications@faithlutheransrq.com.



Prayer List

Please remember in your prayers this week:



Marsha Anderson, sister of Gail Murphy
Tim Anderson, son-in-law of Dick and Jetty Zarfes
Anna Bancroft, 6-year-old
friend of Alyene Weaver
Chuck Banta
Sean Brett, son of Alyene Weaver
Sandra Brinker
Charles Budreau
Jason Byrne, friend of Anita Wooton
Elise Carmona
Evelyn Conlon
Jordan Demers, cousin of Hannah Boyd
Eloise Dettmer
Philomena Dimichelle, friend of Conrad Zabor
Ken Dixon
Ryan and Valerie Donahue
Elizabeth Farmer
Judy & Robert Ferguson
Carolyn & Marty Friedman,
friends of Marlene Radesk
John Gallo, friend of April Shettler
Andrea Gamboa
Amanda Gerber,
daughter of Sandy Gerber
Elaine Graham
Paula Haas, friend of Eloise Dettmer
Jon Hale
Alyssa Hansen, cousin of Lisa Olsen
Jeff Hansen, nephew of Joan Searles
Patricia Head, mother of Wayne Head
Michael Helpin, friend of Marlene Radesk
Christiana Holmes
Kevin Hooks, son-in-law of
Anita and Jon Wooton
Jesus & Rita Jimenez
Alf Kirkeeng

Lillian Lapenckas
Jacqueline Laurent,
friend of Margaret Borrows
Lois Light
Shirley Manning, friend of Margaret Borrows
Paul & Debby Maresch
Vincenzo Mariani, friend of Conrad Zabor
Alexis Martincek, 13-year-old
friend of Heather Stuebe
Kathleen McBride
Judi Melander
Jeremy & Yvonne Mullins
Beverly Novak, cousin of Patty McKee
Judy Osborn, sister of Peggy Ragan
James & Virginia Pease
Fran Perkins
Wally Pina
Kristen Pizan
Marlene Radesk
Fritz Rappold
Gabriel Rockwell
Ted and Carol Rodi
Floyd Ryder
Phillip Schlueter
Rev. John Spittal
Dianne Stoll, friend of Dorothy Gustavson
Cathy Stubenvoll
John Stuemke, brother of Terry Copper
Ron and Leigh Tarrantino
Werner Thomsen
Colette Thornbloom
David Turnbull
Aylene Weaver
Nancy Wilborn
Jon Wooton

- **Contact officeadmin@faithlutheransrq.com** if you or someone you know would appreciate a **communion visit, hospital or home visit, to be contacted or to receive a card in the mail.**
- **Contact communications@faithlutheransrq.com** if you have an **addition to the Prayer List.** Please send updates when prayers are answered.

Worship and Service Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 17

Online views	62
8 a.m. in person	29
10:15 a.m. in person	115

Today, Christmas Eve

4:45 & 7 p.m. Services

First Reading

Isaiah 9:2-7

Light shines: A child is born for us

Second Reading

Titus 1:11-14

The grace of God has appeared

Gospel

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

God with us

Next Sunday, Dec. 31

No 8 a.m. service

10:15 a.m. Service

First Reading

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Clothed in garments of salvation

Psalmody

Psalm 148

The Lord is over earth and heaven (*Ps. 148:13*)

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

Children and heirs of God

Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

The presentation of the child

This Week at Faith

Monday, Dec. 25

Merry Christmas! Church Office Closed

Tuesday, Dec. 26

8:30 a.m.	Men of Faith Prayer Breakfast, Skillet's, 8535 S. Tamiami Trail
6 p.m.	Diversity Voices of Sarasota, sanctuary

Wednesday, Dec. 27

10:30 a.m.	Prayer Group, chapel
1 p.m.	Bereavement Group, chapel

Thursday, Dec. 28

9 a.m.	Receive and Prep Food Delivery, food pantry
1 p.m.	Stitch 'n' Chatter, room 212
4:30 p.m.	Food Pantry Prep
5 p.m.	Food Pantry Open
6 p.m.	Jazzercise, gym
7 p.m.	Confirmation, Zoom

Friday, Dec. 29

8:30 a.m.	Jazzercise, gym
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Saturday, Dec. 30

8:30 a.m.	Jazzercise, gym
9 a.m.	Diakonia, conference room

Sunday, Dec. 31

10:25 a.m.	Sunday School, classroom
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PLEASE RECYCLE THIS BOOKLET OR TAKE IT HOME FOR REFERENCE.