

January 2023



# Faith Life Together

Volume 7 | Issue 1

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Paul Behrens

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Facebook: Faith  
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## Happy New Year, 2023!

The changing of calendars and stepping into the new year is a symbolic representation of having a clean slate and receiving a fresh start. Isn't it wonderful to know that God offers a fresh start not just once a year, but every morning? As it says in Lamentations 3, God's mercies are "new every morning" – how wonderfully faithful our God is to us! As you step into the new year, may God's mercies be abundantly available to you no matter the circumstances life brings.

Here at Faith, we are looking forward to what is to come in the new year, including the start of a new fiscal year. We will be having a **congregational forum on January 8th** to prepare for the **annual congregational meeting on January 21**. Both gatherings will be held right after worship at around 10:15 a.m. **The Annual Report will be available on Sunday, Jan. 8**, for you to look through the year-end reports from your council members and church staff, and for you to look through proposed budgets and agendas for the next year. Be sure to pick a report up so that you are informed for the congregational forum and subsequent meeting. Congregational input is important to a thriving church – thank you for taking the time to be involved with the happenings at Faith!

**Council** will meet on **Wednesday, Jan. 11, at 7:00 pm**. This will be the last council meeting before the annual meeting, and is also the last time that some of our council members will be on council. With the annual meeting, we will elect new members to council positions. The council will continue to meet monthly, and the newly elected council members will join starting in February. Be sure to thank both past and present council members for how they serve our congregation!

For kids and adults of all ages, **Sunday School will resume on January 29**. We encourage everyone to attend and learn from the lessons presented each Sunday!

As we continue to grow closer to our Lord and each other in our Faith family, may God bless each of you into this new year and all the time to come. You are each a blessing to us!



## ***Let's Be Conservative, Liberal and Progressive***

What do you want to see in 2023? I look for Faith Lutheran Church to be *conservative, liberal and progressive* ... as long we understand these terms together.

Let's be *conservative*. To conserve is "to save, to preserve, to protect" that which is vital. King David warned about those who fight God's righteousness, "When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). He urges us to be *conservative* in regard to God's standards. Our congregation is committed to the Bible as "the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life." We may not agree about everything, but we begin and end with the Bible as our authority.

Sometimes people act conservatively in ways that the Bible does not support. *Conservative* is also defined as "disposed to preserve existing conditions ... to limit change." Throughout history, people have expressed opinions, conservative in this sense of the word, that appeared silly later on. "If God had intended for men to fly, he would have created them with wings." Sometimes Christians are conservative with ill will; the Christian school movement surged in the South in 1960s and 1970s as white Christians established schools to avoid having their children attend school with Black students.

Let's be *conservative* by preserving what is vital. Let's not blindly preserve existing conditions.

Let's be *liberal* – marked by generosity. In fact, James describes God as liberal, in the New King James Version: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5). Many translations use "generous" here. You have worked with stingy – and perhaps even greedy – people. That is how some people think of churches. May that never be true of our congregation!

Unfortunately, *liberal* can also mean "lacking moral restraint ... not bound by ... orthodoxy (the Bible)" We will not allow Faith to slip into this rut.

Let's be *liberal* in the sense of generous.

Let's be *progressive* – "making use of or interested in new ideas, findings, or opportunities." One hundred years ago, churches used the technology of a physical sign to help people find their church. Then they added an entry in the yellow pages. As society shifted from the yellow pages to the internet, so did we. And now, we have adopted new technology in our sign facing the highway. We are committed to "inviting all people to faith." We will be progressive to accomplish that.

We will not jump on the progressive bandwagon when it steps away from the Bible – "favorable to progress or reform in ... religious affairs." Pouring poison into a pop bottle does not make it less dangerous. If anything, the situation becomes more dangerous. The label *progressive* can be attached to almost anything – even unbiblical notions.

We will measure everything by the Bible. We will discuss, we will pray, and we will make decisions together. We will aim at healthy *progress*.

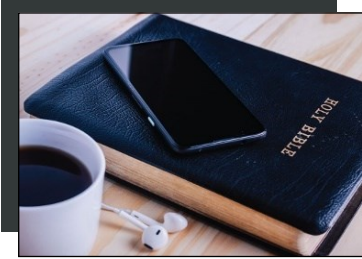
In 2023, I look for Faith Lutheran Church to be *conservative, liberal and progressive*.

(Dictionaries quoted here are: m-w.com, dictionary.com, dictionary.cambridge.org, and websters1913.com.)

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# Women's Bible Study: A Study of Luke

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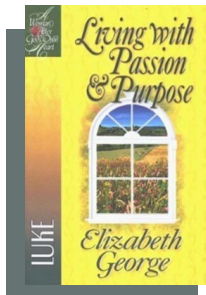
## ***Bible Study:*** ***“Living with Passion & Purpose”***

***Tuesday, Jan. 10***

***1:30 p.m. | SON Room***

This month we discuss Luke 2. The Christmas story – a familiar one. Have you thought about the people involved besides Mary, Joseph and Jesus. What part of God's plan for the salvation of mankind did the shepherds, Simeon and Anna play? What were their responses to learning about the birth of Jesus – the Good News? Are we excited about knowing Jesus? Does it show in our lives?

***All are welcome!***



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## January Birthdays and Anniversaries

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### *Happy Birthday Blessings to ...*

Jan. 1 Darold Jamtgaard  
Dennis DeWitt

Jan. 4 Gil Scribner

Jan. 5 Dick Allen

Jan. 6 Wyatt Vanderberg

Jan. 7 Kristine Christianson  
Emma Hines

Jan. 8 Katie Eilts

Jan. 9 Levi Simington

Jan. 10 Jada Piercy  
Josh Kruger  
Kinnick Friedrich

Jan. 12 Joy Kelsch

Jan. 13 Connor Tigges  
Bob Erdman

Jan. 14 Brad Krei

Jan. 17 Julie Fisher

Jan. 18 Lisa Becker

Jan. 19 Courtney Thompson  
Debbie Zitterich

Jan. 20 Pam Hanson  
Norm Nielsen

Jan. 21 Colton Doran  
Zach Kooker  
Paizlee Friedrich

Jan. 22 Amy Freeman

Jan. 23 Jerry Hanson

Jan. 24 Mark Hopkins  
Patty Ellsworth

Jan. 26 Becky Simons

Jan. 27 Nickie Hansen  
Jim Unrau

Jan. 29 Lita Butler

Jan. 31 Abe Ortiz

### *Happy Anniversary Wishes to ...*

Jan. 19 Paul & Kris Behrens





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## Meet Your Missions: Atlas of Spencer

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*"Here to be a friend and walk with you  
through the tough times."*

The Atlas Group was founded in Sioux Center in 2004 and has since planted over a dozen independent Atlas organizations across the nation.

Started in 2011, Atlas of Spencer serves clients in Spencer and the Lakes Area. The purpose of Atlas is to help those in need by providing advocacy through mentoring while walking alongside those seeking help.

David Lyons serves as the Spencer group's executive director.

Atlas of Spencer promotes expanding community ministry that provides relational, emotional, physical, financial, and/or spiritual support and guidance to anyone seeking help with any of life's trials. Atlas mentors provide loving assistance in the process while demonstrating the unconditional love of God, encouraging salvation through acceptance of His Son Jesus Christ, and promoting a relationship to the Body of Christ, the Church.

Atlas tries to get people past looking for a handout. Rather, they help individuals take ownership of their situations and their lives. When they need help from others, they seek a hand-up, not the hand-out.

Are you able to be that neighbor who can be support for someone in the community? Are you available to meet with someone and listen to and pray for them? Would you be willing to pray for Atlas and those they serve or give a monthly or one-time donation?

Atlas is always looking for volunteers and mentors to help individuals and families through the tough times of their lives. To volunteer, phone 712-580-3277.

Director: David Lyons | Atlas office: 816 South Grand, Spencer  
Email: [atlasofspencer@gmail.com](mailto:atlasofspencer@gmail.com)



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Lutheran World Relief 

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***Hands-On Mission Day | Wednesday, Jan. 4  
9:00 a.m. to Noon***

**Item of the Month ~  
Bath-sized Bars of Soap**

The item of the month for Lutheran World Relief is bath-sized bars of soap. The soap is used in both the personal care kits and the baby care kits.



Donated items for both Lutheran World Relief and Upper Des Moines Opportunity can be put in the yellow Missions box near the front doors.



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# Mission Emphasis: Mental Health Conditions

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## Starting Anew

As 2023 begins, we realize that once again, we are allowed to renew our strength. With the anticipation of what the next year will bring, comes the promise from Isaiah 40:31, *"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint."*

Weariness can take many forms. Combined with the winter weather that tends to isolate many of us, this season tends to challenge our emotional well-being. Depression and anxiety tend to displace strength with feelings of despair, helplessness, and hopelessness. This weariness can be abated to some extent by maintaining a routine (i.e., getting plenty of rest, exercise, eating healthily, going to bed and getting up at the same time etc.) to combat the lethargy of this time of year.

More significant mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia, bipolar illness, and some forms of major depression disorder, can result in an increase of cyclical symptoms because of seasonal changes. With these illnesses, the mind tries to "make sense" of stressors through responses that are not always in touch with the reality of their circumstances.

The use of a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) plan can help identify early intervention strategies to give individuals and their families tools to manage these situations safely and possibly avert a behavioral health crisis. You can learn more about WRAP plans at [www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com](http://www.wellnessrecoveryactionplan.com).

We, as Christians, can thankfully say we have access to an eternal wellness plan. As Ecclesiastes 3:11 reminds us, *"He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end."* Let us begin this new year with the expectancy and hope filled with more beautiful moments and a lasting peace.

To God be the Glory!



### TEAM Restoration Ministries

TEAM Restoration Ministries has a God-driven commitment and passion for facilitating the healing and strengthening of marriages, families and individuals through the blood of Jesus and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

TEAM Restoration Ministries offers many different types of mental health counseling for children, adolescents and adults.

Erika Adolph, a counselor with TEAM Restoration Ministries, is working out of Faith.

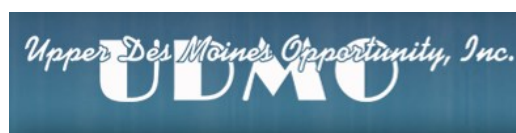
**For more information about TEAM Restoration Ministries or to schedule an appointment, please call 515-238-9010 or [www.team-restoration.org](http://www.team-restoration.org)**



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## Upper Des Moines Opportunity

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Upper Des Moines Opportunity Food Pantry is in need of the following items for our community:

**Tuna, Tuna Helper, Canned Fruit**



## GLORIA MCKENNEY WORSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

*"I'm so forgetful, but you always remind me / You're the only one who brings me peace.  
So I come; Lord I come / To tell You I love You / To tell You I need You  
To tell you there's no other place for me / Than in Your arms."  
~ Running in Circles by United Pursuit*

The new year is a natural time when many people reflect on the past year, while looking forward to what is to come. Some people also choose to create New Year's resolutions for themselves, pinpointing one or a few areas in which they want to change or grow. Some want to have a healthier lifestyle; others feel the need to spend less and save more, or perhaps they resolve to hold better boundaries going forward. Even if you're not one to set resolutions on New Year's, as Christians we are continually called to allow our lives to be molded by God's grace into the people God has made us to be.

Inevitably, however, we fall short. Perhaps we laid an old habit on the altar, only to take it back up again. Perhaps we are determined to pray daily, only to discover that a week has gone by and our prayer life is left wanting. Of course, this is part of being human. Even the Apostle Paul talked about his struggle in doing what he didn't want to do – and not doing what he wanted to do – in the book of Romans. What should our response be when we find ourselves in such a position?

As followers of God, we turn back to the One who makes change possible – and Who is doing the very molding of our hearts. The song I quoted above describes this dance perfectly. It is easy for us to forget or ignore the voice of God – yet God never forgets us or leaves our side. Though we are unfaithful, Christ remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). No matter our flaws or failures, we are cradled in God's arms, and it is there that we receive God's perfect, lasting peace. Once we are fully aware that we remain surrounded by God's love, we realize we never needed to *do* anything. We simply need Jesus.

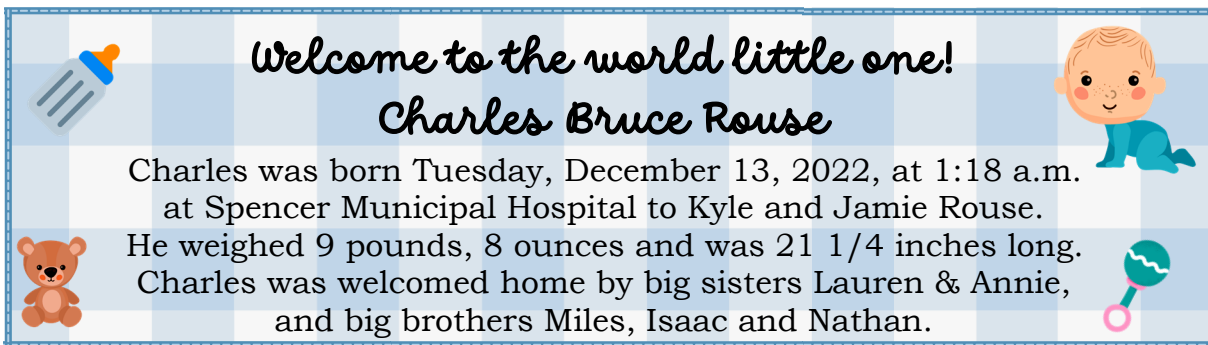
Rest in God's arms, even if only for a moment. Don't worry about what needs doing, past failures, or other distractions. Simply rest, feel God's presence, and let God remind you of what truly matters: that God loves you, and you love God; that you need God in your life, and God will provide everything you need. In this new year, come back to this reassurance, and know that you are loved.

PRAY  
PRAY  
**HOW CAN WE PRAY**  
*for you?*  
PRAY  
PRAY

If you have a prayer request for the **Prayer Chain**,  
please direct it to the Prayer Team Leaders  
Linda and Dave Susie at [djslrs74@yahoo.com](mailto:djslrs74@yahoo.com) or  
Doreen Scribner at [doreenscribner@outlook.com](mailto:doreenscribner@outlook.com)

If you would like to be included on **Sunday's Prayers of the Church**,  
please contact the church office at 712-580-4316 or  
[office@faithlutheranspencer.com](mailto:office@faithlutheranspencer.com)





Thank you!

For your  
kindness ...

Faith Lutheran,  
  
I can't thank you all enough for  
your prayers. Your help was needed  
and appreciated. My prayer is that the  
Lord will bless you for your kindness.  
  
Tracy Bengtson

Faith Lutheran,  
  
I can't thank you all enough for your  
prayers. Your help was needed and  
appreciated. My prayer is that the  
Lord will bless you for your  
kindness.

~ Tracy Bengtson

For your  
thoughtfulness ...

We would like to say "Thank you!" to the Christmas  
carolers. We really enjoyed them and your thoughtfulness  
is much appreciated!

God Bless you all,  
Wayne & Barbara Burnham



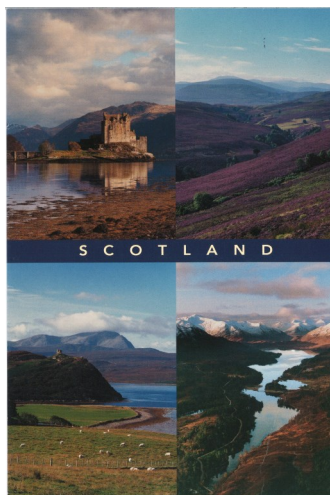
For your  
support ...  
(see Marlee's card  
on the bulletin  
board by the  
Welcome Center)

95842 Portraits of Scotland Composite (2)  
Eilean Donan Castle Cairngorms National Park  
Kyle of Tongue, Sutherland Glen Affric, Highlands  
© Colin Baxter

Greetings from Scotland, Faith!  
Thank you so much for your  
generous financial + prayer  
support of the missions work  
God has called me to over here!  
I feel so very blessed to be  
partnered with such an amazing  
Church community. You are a  
blessing to God's Kingdom!  
Blessings,  
Marlee  
Nicholson

SCOTLAND

5 029315



Greetings from Scotland,  
Faith!

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You are a blessing to God's  
Kingdom!

Blessings, Marlee Nicholson

## Cherish Center's Baby Bottle Campaign

Cherish  
center

Dear Faith Lutheran Church,

Your church collected \$401.48! Thank you! We hope that as  
you put in your coins for Cherish House you also received a blessing knowing that  
your gift will help young moms be loved and nurtured at Cherish House.

Sincerely,  
Karen Kosse, Baby Bottle Campaign Coordinator

For your  
generosity ...

## *December's Highlights by Radina Jansen*

Happy New Year! The LifeKids Board has been busy! They are in the process of looking for a replacement for the director's position. A winter fundraiser is in the planning stages. We're thinking about a spaghetti supper with games for children to play in March. More information to come.

A big LifeKids, "Thank you!" goes out to Lori Krei for the use of her Thrivent Action Team card to help with the cost of a storage cabinet for supplies.

A big LifeKids, "Thank you!" goes out to Jodene Jongma for the use of her Thrivent Action Team card to purchase games, 2 basketballs, magnetic building tiles, Perler beads, Perler pegboards, and metal looms and loops for making potholders.

We were fortunate that the December weather cooperated so that we could have our full day of programming. We kept very busy. We played games, made Christmas cards, decorated and ate Christmas cookies, created ornaments and cards at Arts on Grand, and watched a holiday movie.



Playing dodge ball.



Playing gaga ball.



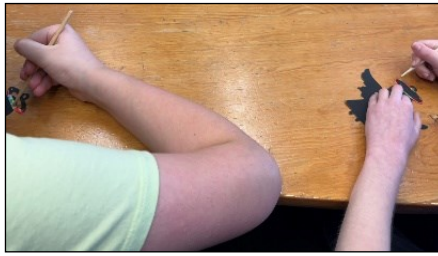
Making Christmas cards.



Decorating Christmas cookies.







Creating rainbow colored scratch art Christmas ornaments at Arts on Grand.



Painting and making Christmas cards at Arts on Grand.



Grand Avenue Community Outreach December baking project:  
Reading the Monster Cookie recipe, measuring and mixing ingredients, baking, and cleaning up.

Psalm 127:3 ~ *Children are the Lord's reward and gift.*

My days are brightened seeing the smiles of the children, hearing their laughter, and experiencing their excitement when they learn about stories in the Bible.

The LifeKids and I wish you a Happy 2023!

## LifeKids Fundraiser ~ RADA Cutlery!

By using this link - [radafundraising.com?rfsn=6267721.0f6242](https://radafundraising.com?rfsn=6267721.0f6242) - when you shop, you'll be purchasing high-quality, made in USA products, while helping our group raise money to defray the cost of monthly expenses, field trips, and bus expenses, such as fuel. For more information or for assistance please contact Radina Jansen at 712-580-4316. ***Your support is appreciated!***





# LCMC's 11th Annual 3 Days of Prayer

By Mike Bradley - LCMC - September 23, 2022

There are times the Holy Spirit takes what some people have been ignoring or only engaging in by rote, breathes fresh life into it, and uses it to pull us into the current of God's plans for our lives. An illustration of this is the ancient prayer and practice of The Lord's Prayer.

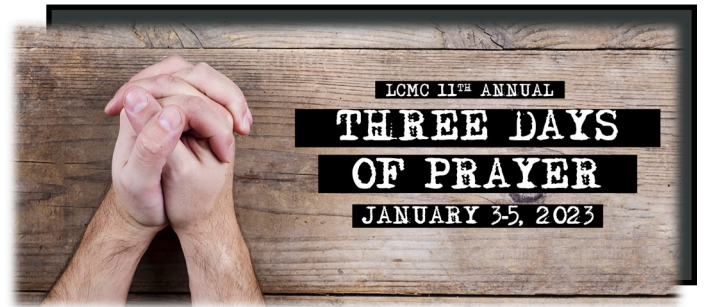
This year, we're going to take that ancient prayer and practice of the Church and put it to use in LCMC's Three Days of Prayer. As we pray together as individuals, congregations, and as one international association, I believe the Lord is going to use what we pray in this ancient prayer to pull us into the current of the plans and purposes He has for us in the present and in the future.

LCMC's Three Days of Prayer will be on January 3-5. Each congregation or person can structure these days of prayer however seems best. In the past, some congregations put together a prayer vigil – a person signing up to pray in 30-minute intervals – perhaps for all three days or a few hours each day. Others have offered a prayer service at a set hour on each of the three days. Some have encouraged their people simply to pray at work, home, or school, wherever they are, and whatever they are doing.

This year, I am encouraging us all to use the Lord's Prayer as an outline to pray for our congregations and leaders, for those who don't yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and for our international partners. Praying the Lord's prayer as an outline can give form to our prayers and provide space for us to pray according to each petition for the churches or people we are focused on that day.

Pray each petition one at a time, then pause and pay attention to what comes to mind. Then pray out of those thoughts or impressions. For instance, pray "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name," and pause. Then pray words and thoughts of thanks to God for being your Father, for His love, and for His goodness toward you. Glorify His name in prayer.

Then pray the second petition, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and pause. Think of how you would love to see God's Kingdom life break in on those you are praying for, and then pray for them. Pray for



relationships, emotions, or bodies to be healed. Pray for someone to become aware of God's love for them. Pray for peace in someone's life or in a region. And so on. Continue to pray each petition one at a time, pausing to listen to thoughts, scriptures, and impressions that come to mind, and then pray for that church, that person.

No matter how you structure this time of prayer, let's come together as an association of congregations across the U.S. and around the world to pray. Check out our Three Days of Prayer Resources page ([www.lcmc.net/3dop-resources/538](http://www.lcmc.net/3dop-resources/538)) page to download a sample guide.

## **Day One: For Our Congregations and Leaders**

*"Lord, we pray that You bless our congregations and leaders with Your favor and with Your provision and power to carry out the ministry and mission You have in store for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."*

What can God do through almost 1,000 congregations in the United States and overseas? How many people can He impact with His love and His power through the tens of thousands of members in the churches of LCMC? Wouldn't it be wonderful if our testimony in the years to come is that God was at work in and through our association, drawing millions of people to faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord? Discipling millions of people to live as followers of Jesus? Filling millions of people with the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit? Healing millions of people physically, emotionally, and relationally as well as setting others free from whatever held them captive?

As I have said before, this is not hyperbole. This is in fact what God can do in and through our association in the coming years. It is what can happen as the Holy Spirit empowers us to live lives of witness (Acts 1:8), serve as ambassadors for the kingdom of God who have a message of life to proclaim (2 Corinthians 5:20) and God-

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# LCMC's 11th Annual 3 Days of Prayer

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stories to share (1 Peter 3:15). With that in mind, let us pray for God's provision and empowerment upon the members, leaders, and churches of Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ.

Let us pray for new congregations in LCMC to be welcomed and connected in relationships with other congregations and leaders in the association and in their regions of the country. Let us pray for provision: provision of people. Provision of just the right relationships in our communities at just the right time. Provision of finances for ministry and mission. Provision of favor with community leaders and with those who do not yet know Jesus as Savior and Lord. Provision of training resources to equip God's people for what the Lord wants to do in us and through us. Provision of spiritual gifts that can help us impact others with God's love and God's power. Provision of the joy and boldness to share our God stories that come through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit being stirred within us.

## **Day Two: For Those Who Don't Yet Know Jesus as Savior and Lord, and For the Prodigals**

*"Lord, give us Your heart for those who don't yet know you as Savior and Lord, and for the prodigals. Create in us a boldness to love them and serve them and to share our God-stories with them as opportunities arise. Open our eyes to be aware of everyday encounters in which we can minister Your love and Your power to those in need. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."*

We know that our Lord Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10, ESV). And we know that our Heavenly Father is a father who joyfully welcomes home the prodigals. Today, let's pray that God will bring us together as one across our

association in praying that millions might be drawn to a relationship of love for and faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Let's also pray that the Lord might bring home the prodigals who have walked away from a life of faith in Him. Lord, bring home our spouses, bring home our sons

and daughters and grandchildren. Lord, bring home our friends and neighbors. Let's pray that

God might set them free from any woundedness or deception that has driven them away from their relationship with Him. Let's pray that they might experience God's love and acceptance and affirmation as His beloved daughters and sons.

## **Day Three: For Our International Partners**

*"Thank You, Lord, that You have bound us together with these sister churches and leaders and partner networks. We pray that You will give them protection and provision. We pray that You will show us how we can come alongside them, encourage them, and serve with them. Lord, grant our brothers and sisters Your favor in their cities, communities, and countries. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."*

We are blessed as an association to not only have sister churches here in the United States but also sister churches and partner networks in fifteen other countries around the world. Together we are involved in the mission of the gospel that God has called us to and equips us for through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus says: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." It is with and through our international partners that we are being empowered by God to live out this reality of being witnesses of what God has done in and through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ. It is with and through our international partners we are enabled by God to live these lives of witness locally, regionally, and throughout entire countries.

Let us pray for God's protection and provision for our sisters and brothers in other nations. Let us pray for God's leading in how He would have us reach out to them and partner with them in the coming year. Let us pray for God's provision of food, medicine, clean water, and safety where these are needed. Let us pray for the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit to fill our sisters and brothers afresh and grant them God's favor as they give witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in their cities, communities, and countries.



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# Via de Cristo ... What is that?

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"By grace, with the Holy Spirit, we challenge leaders to discover and achieve their personal calling, assisting them to influence their environments with the Gospel."

## **What is Via de Cristo?**

Via de Cristo is a Spanish phrase meaning "Way of Christ." Via de Cristo is a highly structured three day weekend designed to strengthen and renew the faith of Christian people and bring them to a new awareness of living in God's grace. It is a combined effort of lay people and clergy toward renewal of the church.

## **History of Via de Cristo**

The movement originated as "Cursillo" in the late 1940's in the Spanish Catholic church and moved to the United States in the late 1950's. It began in the Lutheran church when lay people and clergy attended a Catholic Cursillo in 1971, both in Iowa and Florida. The first Lutheran sponsored weekends were held in 1972 in Iowa and Florida and have now been held in over 25 states and some foreign countries. Via de Cristo is the Lutheran expression of this method which is currently being used in many denominations including: Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

## **Purpose of Via de Cristo**

Via de Cristo is based on the fundamentals of Christianity, concentrating on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ. The focus is not on Via de Cristo itself, but on the environment of the community of believers. The objective of the movement is to inspire, challenge and equip people for Christian action in their homes, churches and communities.

## **What happens on a Via de Cristo weekend?**

A Via de Cristo weekend is three days in length, beginning on Thursday evening and ending the following Sunday evening. The participants live, study, worship and commune together daily. Fourteen talks are given, nine by lay people and five by clergy. Following each talk, small round table discussions focus on the main points of the talk and a poster is done.

## **Who should attend a Via de Cristo weekend?**

Via de Cristo is intended for lay people from every walk of life, for pastors, for people who live strong and active lives in Christ, and also for those who seek to be renewed and strengthened in their relationship with Christ and the people around them. Via de Cristo is open to married couples, and single men and women.

## **Summary**

Keep an open mind and heart in making your decision to attend Via de Cristo. Many of those who have attended also wondered whether they should go. Now that they have attended, they want to share this wonderful gift from God. Please understand that their experience attending Via de Cristo was unique, and all the conversations in the world will not become a substitute for your weekend. You need to experience a weekend yourself to obtain it's full and life enriching value.

**2023 Men's Via de Cristo – January 12 @ 7:00 p.m. to January 15 @ 4:00 p.m.**

**2023 Women's Via de Cristo – January 19 @ 7:00 p.m. to January 22 @ 4:00 p.m.**

## **Pilgrim Application**

Please send Pilgrim Applications to: Cryss Quanbeck, 2404 Lakeside Ave., Milford, IA 51351  
[cryssq@yahoo.com](mailto:cryssq@yahoo.com) | 612/570-0518 | [2023 Via de Cristo Pilgrim Application.pdf](#)

For more information on Via de Cristo, please visit [www.iowavdc.com/home](http://www.iowavdc.com/home)



## Children's Ministry News of the Month

Whew, the Christmas program is over and it was a success. It amazes me how things come together on that day. I don't know why I'm surprised because Scripture tells us, "all things work together for our good," right?? Gloria is so amazing with the children and we are blessed to have her! I thank everyone who assisted in this effort for our annual Children's Christmas program: Emily Hoppe, Sarah Ruhs, Kirby Fueston, Rachel Simington, Heidi Skadeland, Ann Lear, Emily Quanbeck, Ellie Spieker, Jared Hansen, Diane Van Kleek, Joe & Levi Simington and Ashley & Emerie Cooke. I feel the kids were happy with their performance and the congregation was entertained. I received many positive comments and was feeling very happy for the kids. These kids were awesome that day and I could see something special in their eyes throughout this process coming to life on stage.

As far as Sunday School, we are now on a break and will start back up again on Sunday, January 29. We are waiting until after Via de Cristo is over. Classes will begin right after service and should be wrapped up by 11:00 to 11:15, depending on when we get started. We will continue with learning the books of the Bible to get a foundation and dig in where we can.

Blessings to all. Our church is amazing and I love that it is so Bible based. Let's keep up the good work for the Kingdom of our Lord by investing in our children.

Respectfully submitted, Patty Ellsworth



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## Stewardship ... Steward of the Month: Jim and Lisa Carpenter

Happy New Year everyone! We would like to kick off 2023 with a beautiful and committed couple, Jim and Lisa Carpenter.

These two members are most recently seen in the kitchen, organizing donuts and placing them on display for hungry tummies to come through for a satisfying sweet treat to add to fellowship. Jim and Lisa, no matter what they are doing around the church, are always early so you know they are taking their duty seriously. They always serve with smiles on their faces and a genuine greeting to make all feel welcome.

Maybe this comes from their entrepreneurial passions from which they have started their own business, Customized Firefighter Training. Jim, Fire Chief for Milford's Fire & Rescue, trains firefighters across the region which keeps him on the road quite a bit. Lisa is human resources for Piccadilly Pizza's parent company. She also works with Jim for their business. That all goes to show how passionate they are about helping others, along with their dedication to the job at hand.



In the past Lisa has also been one of our worship leaders, and is currently on the Caring Ministries Team, which also shows how this couple loves to reach out to others through Faith and beyond. It could also be a legacy passed down from Jim's dad, who just turned 100 years old. Let's hope those genetics stick and Faith will be blessed by the Carpenters for years to come! And thankfully, not just Faith, but both Lisa and Jim are very committed to Via de Cristo and dedicated to that ministry's success as well, which is a huge blessing to the teams of people that ministry takes to encourage and train those that go through Via de Cristo.

Jim and Lisa, well done good and faithful servants. Thanks for all you do, the ministries you are part of and the people you touch, especially through the kitchen windows that feel your love and encouragement through your stewardship. Be blessed this new year and always!

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## New Year's Resolutions to Steward Your Life by Rev. Robert Blezard

Have any resolutions for 2023? (It's not too late to make them!) New Year's resolutions are a great way to boost the stewardship of your life. After all, resolutions are just goals for enriching our lives.

Here are some areas to consider:

**Spirituality:** Grow in faith by engaging spiritual practices. Resolve to pray and read scripture daily, attend worship, give generously, cultivate spiritual relationships, serve church and community.

**Health:** Gain vitality by resolving to lose weight, eat healthfully, exercise regularly, learn about health and nutrition and get checkups at your doctor and dentist.

**Intellect:** Keep your mind active by resolving to read books, check out educational programs and podcasts, take a class to learn a new language or skill.

**Relationships:** Resolve to make new friendships and deepen existing ones. Work on family relationships to strengthen bonds and bring people closer to you and other family members.

**Leisure:** Include resolutions to help you enjoy life! Vacations, hobbies, activities, getaways, and day trips.



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# New Year's Resolutions to Steward Your Life - Continued

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**Financial:** Get your financial house in order. Resolve to make and keep a budget, reduce debt, increase income, save more and become more learned in money matters.

We are stewards of the life that God has given us. For 2023, pray for God's guidance and make a few resolutions that address your priority issues. Then pray for God's help in keeping them.

Blessings for 2023!



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## Prayer and Praise Corner

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### ***Lift Up in Prayer ...***

- As we begin a new year, let us rededicate ourselves to loving Christ and our neighbor.
- Pray for our Nominating Team as they talk to God, to each other, and to church members about serving here at Faith.
- Pray for new staff members as they continue to master their work.
- Pray for discernment in joining a Small Group.
- Pray for wisdom for new legislators who are being installed.
- Pray for safety for those who struggle with housing.
- Pray for those who are participating in Via de Cristo this month.
- Pray for Pastor Ben as he teaches at Canadian Luther Bible Institute, Jan. 9-13.
- Healing for Steve Quattlebaum, Norma Johnson, Darrel Heckathorn, Peggy Olson, Carolyn Christofferson, Jim Spieker, Robert Wassom, Jaya Fever, Jalyce's father, Jim Rusk, Sara DeWitt's brother, Tom, Drew Stuhrenberg, Mark Cameron, and all those we name in our hearts.

### ***Reasons for Praise!***

- Thanks for safety through our Christmas week blizzard.
- Thanks for fellow members who have volunteered to serve with a ministry team in 2023.
- Thanks for generous givers who helped us through 2022.
- Thanks for a decline of the COVID-19 virus.

## ***Amazon Shoppers ... Consider Supporting Faith!***

Faith Lutheran takes pride in our community and want to support our businesses! Still, there are times when we look to online vendors like Amazon for particular items. If you are an Amazon shopper, please consider supporting Faith Lutheran.

- ♦ Log on to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) using your current login information.
- ♦ Choose a charity to support – Faith Lutheran Spencer
- ♦ Shop as normal.

Up to 0.5% of each qualified purchase is sent to Faith!



### **GENERAL OFFERING**

January 1 through December 18, 2022

2022 Budget: \$389,684.00

Year to Date: \$369,549.15

Thank you for generously giving  
in 2022!

### **Next Council Meeting is**

**February 8 | 7:00 p.m.**

**In person and Zoom**

**Council Members:** Please submit your team reports to the office by Monday, February 6, at 12:00 p.m. (noon).

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# Faith Lutheran Council Meeting Minutes

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The meeting was called to order by President Paul Behrens at 7:15 PM.

Members present were: Heidi Skadeland (via Zoom), Mark Speidel (via Zoom), Eric Tigges, Pastor Ben Unseth, Becky Simons, Kay Iversen, Randy Enge, Joe Simington, Patty Ellsworth, Laura Heikens, Greg Lear and Brett Eilts.

Devotions were given by Randy Enge. The meeting was opened with prayer by Paul Behrens.

Minutes from last month's meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve made by Heidi. Patty seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**TREASURER'S REPORT (Becky Simons)** – General giving increased the past month. Expenses are shifting in admin due to staffing but should even out now. Team expenses look good. The new sign is 100% paid for! Our net assets have increased since last year. Eric motioned to approve the financials. Patty seconded. Motion carried.

**PASTOR BEN'S REPORT** – Pastor recorded a 2 minute devotional that will be played on Y100 during the Christmas season. He went to the IA LCMC district meeting and was elected to the board of directors. The John Miller funeral brought in 40 drivers and a UPS truck served as the hearse. The widow informed Pastor that she and her family would love to join our church.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Paul Behrens)** – Nothing additional to add.

## COUNCIL REPORTS

**\*Evangelism (Eric Tigges)** – Pastor & Eric had an idea to invite the Iowa Lakes Community College soccer kids to watch some of the World Cup soccer and they had 15-20 boys here to watch the game. Pizza from Casey's was served to them and they enjoyed the event.

**\*Missions (Pam Harris)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Worship (Andrea Crew)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Stewardship (Skadeland's)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Discipleship (Randy Enge)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Children's Ministry (Patty Ellsworth)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Youth Ministry (Brittany Spieker)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Caring Ministries (Laura Heikens)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Fellowship (Godfredsen's)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Music & Creative Arts (Eilts')** – Nothing to add.

**\*Properties (Mark Speidel)** – Nothing to add.

**\*Technology (Kay Iversen)** – Nothing to add.

## OLD BUSINESS

- a. New team leader positions for 2023 – we are struggling to fill some of these positions. Please keep your eyes and ears open and let Lavonne know if you have someone in mind for Discipleship, Music/Creative Arts, & Youth.
- b. Church cleaning task team or semi-annual congregational cleaning – going to get with Rich to determine exactly what needs done & then try to organize a couple of times/year to do a deep cleaning.

December 14,  
2022

Council  
Meeting  
Minutes

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# Council Minutes - November 9, continued

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## NEW BUSINESS

- a. 2023 Budget (action item) – salaries, increase of 5%. Discussion about having LifeKids transition to doing their own financials. Motion made by Randy to approve the budget. Eric seconded. Motion carried. Discussion of having Jacob another day each week and increasing his budgeted wage by another \$6,000/year in order to train someone to do the technology since we don't know how long he will be with us. Amended motion to add \$3,000 for the first 6 months as this what we are anticipating, made by Patty and seconded by Becky. Motion carried.
- b. Church Administration position – still looking for someone. Paul has a few in mind to ask.
- c. Office changes – move Radina's office to the North office by the steps, move Nicki to Radina's office and the new admin person in front office where Nicki currently is. Will wait until we have the Church Administrator position filled.
- d. Team for church policy on facility use/rental – It was decided that Properties & Fellowship should work together to put a policy in place. Discussion of a deposit being collected as well as a rental fee. Deposit would be refunded after the event if all criteria are met. Discussion also was about different fees for members, non-members, nonprofit organizations, etc.
- e. Worship Team Leader Andrea Crew, stepped down. Andrea is also helping with Youth. Pete will be replacing her. Eric made the motion to accept Andrea's resignation and appoint Pete in her place. Becky seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- f. Christmas Day coffee – agreed that there won't be any coffee/donuts Christmas Day since HyVee will be closed and families wanting to get home.
- g. Lenten service meals – decided that we would do these this year. There are 5 services in Lent.
- h. Pastor Ben Unseth & Eric Patten housing allowances – for tax savings, Ben & Eric are able to have funds taken out pre-tax for housing. Brett motioned to approve & Patty seconded. Motion carried.
- i. Annual Congregational Meeting & Vote scheduled for January 22 which is also the women's Via de Cristo weekend.
- j. Each Council member needs to do a 2022 Year in Review report. This needs to be in by Friday, December 23 at 12:00 pm (noon) to be in the 2022 Annual report that will go out to the congregation on January 8. According to the Constitution, the 2022 Financial statements need to be in the Annual report.
- k. Valet service for the elderly at church – Have gotten a couple of volunteers to bring the elderly to church but Laura also has the idea to offer a valet service for people also to help people get out of their cars and get them inside. Is there a liability issue? RIDES bus an option?

## Concerns and/or Celebrations

Input on what is put on the new sign was discussed. Pastor would love suggestions as to what we should have on there. Gloria has been taking care of what is put on the sign.

**Closing Prayer** was given by Pastor Ben.

**Adjournment** – Brett made the motion to adjourn. Britt seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jolene K. Hansen, Church Council Secretary



## ***Through the Bible in 2023 – One Chapter a Day***

Month	Date	Day	Book Title	Ch	Ch Summary
<b>January</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>The Earth Is the Lord's</b>
January	2	Monday	Genesis	1	Creation
January	3	Tuesday	Genesis	2	Adam and Eve
January	4	Wednesday	Genesis	3	Adam and Eve Sinned
January	5	Thursday	Genesis	4	Cain Murders Abel
January	6	Friday	Genesis	6	God Tells Noah to Build an Ark
January	7	Saturday	Genesis	7	God Sent the Flood
<b>January</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>2 Peter</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>The Lord Rescues the Godly</b>
January	9	Monday	Genesis	8	The Flood Ends
January	10	Tuesday	Genesis	9	God Makes a Covenant with Noah
January	11	Wednesday	Genesis	12	God Calls Abraham
January	12	Thursday	Genesis	15	God Makes a Covenant with Abraham
January	13	Friday	Genesis	16	Abraham Has a Son with Hagar
January	14	Saturday	Genesis	17	God Renews His Covenant with Abraham
<b>January</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Romans</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Abraham's Faith Is Credited As Righteousness</b>
January	16	Monday	Genesis	18	Abraham Pleads for Sodom
January	17	Tuesday	Genesis	19	God Destroys Sodom and Gomorrah
January	18	Wednesday	Genesis	20	Abraham Lies about Sarah
January	19	Thursday	Genesis	21	Abraham Has a Son with Sarah
January	20	Friday	Genesis	22	God Tests Abraham
January	21	Saturday	Genesis	24	Isaac and Rebekah Wed
<b>January</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>2 Thessalonians</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Avoid Idle Believers</b>
January	23	Monday	Genesis	25	Jacob and Esau are Born
January	24	Tuesday	Genesis	26	Isaac Lies About Rebekah
January	25	Wednesday	Genesis	27	Jacob Tricks Isaac
January	26	Thursday	Genesis	28	Jacob Builds an Altar
January	27	Friday	Genesis	29	Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel
January	28	Saturday	Genesis	30	Jacob's Family and Wealth Grow
<b>January</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>James</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Come to God and He Will Come to You</b>
January	30	Monday	Genesis	31	Jacob Escapes Laban
January	31	Tuesday	Genesis	33	Jacob Meets Esau

# The Project Tree

While these named projects need support, please know that other teams may appreciate support as well. Check out the Project Tree and let God inspire you to support in a way that works for you.

## Properties Team

- Finish top moulding office: \$400
- Sheetrock back of Worship wall: \$3,000 - \$3,500
- Resurface North/South exterior walls to match front: \$37,000 per side or \$75,000 for both
- Repaint & sandblast North/South exterior walls: \$18,250
  - Repaint & sandblast East exterior wall: \$11,200
- Floor covering (hard surface or carpet): in the Worship area: Estimate \$55,000 - \$60,000 (\$550 received)
  - Paint remaining duct work in Worship area: \$3,000
- Shelves in storage area: \$500 - \$700

- Repair duct work to Pastor Ben and Eric's offices and General Maintenance - \$5,000

## Technology Team

- New projectors and system in worship area - \$150,000 (\$3,900 received)

## Youth Ministry

- Gift Cards for meals (like Taco Bell, McDonalds, Burger King, any pizza establishment) - Typically the youth are coming from sporting or school activities and have not eaten.
- Money for snacks for Confirmation youth
  - Cabin cost at IOLBC for a youth weekend trip
  - Paint ball costs at IOLBC

### Outreach Night

#### Sunday, Jan. 29: Winter Games

Who: 6th - 12th grades | When: 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Cost: \$5  
RSVP to Rachel Simington by noon on Thursday, Jan. 26

#### February 3-5: Winter Crafting Retreat

#### February 10-12: Okoboji Marriage Retreat "More to This Life"

Guest speakers Pastors Jonathan and Jana Swenson

Please see the brochures on the Welcome Center or the posters on the bulletin board for more details.

Pre-registration may be required for some events. Please check the IOLBC website:

[www.okoboji.org](http://www.okoboji.org)

or call

1-800-656-2654 (Okoboji Camp) or  
712-867-4170 (Ingham Camp).

Ingham  
Okoboji  
Lutheran Bible Camps

*Information and happenings  
with Faith Lutheran Youth  
can be found at ...*



♦ Instagram Youth Page:  
[spencerfaithlutheranyouth](https://www.instagram.com/spencerfaithlutheranyouth)

♦ Facebook Youth Page:  
[Faith Lutheran Church Youth](https://www.facebook.com/FaithLutheranChurchYouth)

## Faith Lutheran Church

2912 Highway Blvd.

P.O. Box 1322

Spencer, IA 51301

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## Faith Lutheran Church - December, 2022

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**Baptisms:** Dec. 18 - Sophia Ruhs, daughter of Michael and Sarah Ruhs

**Births:** Dec. 13 - Charles Bruce Rouse, son of Kyle and Jamie Rouse

**Confirmed | Deaths | Marriages | New Members**

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## Faith Lutheran Church - Staff

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**Pastor: Ben Unseth**

**[pastor@faithlutheranspencer.com](mailto:pastor@faithlutheranspencer.com)**

Stephen Ministry and Visitation Director

Lay Pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, Ruthven:

Eric Patten - [eric@faithlutheranspencer.com](mailto:eric@faithlutheranspencer.com)

Worship & Communications Director: Gloria McKenney

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Custodian: Rich Stueven

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Technology Coordinator: Jacob Weeks

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LifeKids Director: Radina Jansen

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Church Administrator & Finance Coordinator:

Nicki Lange

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Find us online at:

[www.faithlutheranspencer.com](http://www.faithlutheranspencer.com)

Like us on Facebook:

Faith Lutheran Church LCMC

Follow us on Instagram:

[@flcspencer](https://www.instagram.com/flcspencer)

Watch us on SMU:

Monday @ 8:30 p.m. | Tuesday @ 11:00 a.m.