



# FAITH LIFE TOGETHER

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH // VOLUME 9 // ISSUE 4



## April 2025 Newsletter

April is a busy month at Faith, and with good reason: in April we remember Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection - there is much to celebrate! Whether you celebrate with your family, friends, coworkers, or of course here with your church family, may this Easter season find us pondering in new ways the weight of Christ's sacrifice, and the joy we share in His resurrection.

Holy Week kicks off with our **Palm Sunday Service** at our normal 9:00am time. There is no Lenten potluck or service on Wednesday, but do come hungry for our **Maundy Thursday Dinner & Worship** at 6:30pm on April 17th! (RSVP at [bit.ly/FLC-MaundyThursday](https://bit.ly/FLC-MaundyThursday) so we have enough food and seating planned.) We meet again the next night on April 18th at 6:30pm for our **Good Friday Service** as we remember Christ's crucifixion and death.

As we know, death wasn't the final word for Jesus, and won't be for us either! Join us in our resurrection celebration on April 20, complete with a delicious Easter Breakfast, **Easter Worship**, and activities for kids.

To round out April, we will celebrate with this year's confirmands as they publicly declare their faith in Jesus on **April 27, Confirmation Sunday**. Praise God that His Word never returns void, and we are all able to receive salvation through the gift Jesus offered on the cross! Easter blessings!

## SAVE THE DATE

June 15

**Guest Speaker**  
**Pastor Lee Laaveg**  
9:00am

June 22

**Flood Anniversary**  
**Celebration**  
5:30pm

June 23-26

**VBS Day Camp**  
12:30-5:00pm

## Upcoming EVENTS

### April 13

9:00am Palm Sunday

### April 17

6:30pm Maundy  
Thursday Dinner &  
Worship

### April 18

6:30pm Good Friday  
Worship Service

### April 20

7:45-8:45am Easter  
Breakfast  
9:00 Easter Worship  
Service

### April 23

6:30pm Confirmation  
Banquet

### April 27

9:00am Confirmation  
Sunday, display of  
LWR items

### May 4

9:00am New Member  
Sunday

# *Good Friday is un-American*

BY PASTOR BEN UNSETH

As Americans we want the world to think well of us. We have sent food, the Peace Corps and the Marine Corps to help villages and regions in distress and danger.

It's amazing how good Iowans are. According to a study released last month by WalletHub, Iowa is one of the least sinful states in our nation. Iowa came in 42 out of 50! The least sinful region was the upper Midwest. And Iowans are determined to be less sinful than each of our neighbors: Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin.

WalletHub's study examined six general categories of vice or sin: Anger & Hatred, Jealousy, Excesses & Vices, Greed, Lust, Vanity, Laziness. Eight states ranked better than Iowa overall, but we did better than every one of them in at least one of these categories.

How did the survey measure Vanity? One factor is Beauty Salons per capita. New York is #1. Alaska is #50. New York has ten times as many beauty salons per person as Alaska! Other factors for measuring a state's vanity? Researchers looked at total internet searches for things like liposuction and breast augmentation. Iowa ranked way down the list at #40 for Vanity.

The most sinful state: Nevada. Nevada has the second-lowest volunteer rate in the country. Which state was #1 in each of the six categories? Anger & Hatred: Arkansas. Jealousy: Nevada. Greed: Nevada again. Excesses & Vices: Louisiana. Lust: Texas. Laziness: Mississippi. Vanity: New York.

Iowa's best category? In Jealousy, we are way down at #47. What is our worst category? In Excesses & Vices, we are #20; one subcategory of this is Excessive Drinking, and Iowans are #3! That is definitely not something to brag about.

When we look in the mirror honestly, each of us has failed in each of these categories.

Good Friday does not remind us of how good we are. On Good Friday we remember Jesus of Nazareth, innocent of any crime, hanging by nails on a wooden cross.

Our perfect Savior, Jesus bore the guilt of my lies, my unfaithfulness—and yours too. He offers complete forgiveness, reconciliation with your Heavenly Father and a brand-new life today. Easter is the perfect time to call on Jesus and connect with his family in church. Come join us!



# HOLY WEEK

We Believe



Lent is a time of reflection, repentance, and renewal. The season of Lent culminates with what we call **Holy Week**, which includes **Maundy Thursday** on April 17, **Good Friday** on April 18, and **Easter Sunday** on April 20. We have special elements planned for each service. This is a special time as we remember Jesus's last few days on Earth, and then rejoice in His resurrection.

**Maundy Thursday, April 17th**, we will celebrate Jesus's Last Supper by sharing a meal together in our **Dinner & Worship Service**, which begins at **6:30pm**. To help plan food and seating, please **RSVP** at [bit.ly/FLC-MaundyThursday](http://bit.ly/FLC-MaundyThursday).

**Good Friday Service** will begin at **6:30pm on April 18th**. This evening we will remember the dark day Jesus faced during his trial and crucifixion. Skits and other creative elements will be incorporated into the service.

Our **Easter Sunday Celebration** will kick off with a delicious **Easter Breakfast from 7:45-8:45am**, and activities will be available for kids as well. Join us as we rejoice together during our **9:00am Easter Worship Service** that Christ is risen - He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!



Mark your calendars for VBS, coming June 23-26 from 12:30-5:00pm each day! Day Campers will have a fantastic, mountain-climbing adventure as they learn to recognize God's presence and be captivated by it! The week will include crafts, games, snacks, worship, Bible study, and more - all while hanging out with awesome counselors from Ingham Okoboji! Register today at [bit.ly/flc-VBS](http://bit.ly/flc-VBS)

## Nametags

Has your old nametag gone missing, you're not sure if you ever had a nametag, or you just need a new one? Contact Becky Fear-Hatting by **April 14** and she will get one ordered for you. Email her at [admin@flcspnecer.org](mailto:admin@flcspnecer.org) or call 712-580-4316 Monday - Wednesday from 9am-1pm.



Your Name **HERE!**

# Tell Yourself the Gospel

BY WORSHIP DIRECTOR  
GLORIA MCKENNEY

Some of my favorite songs to do here at Faith (and that pair especially well with Noisy Band) are by the Irish band Rend Collective. We frequently sing *Build Your Kingdom Here*, *Joy of the Lord*, and *My Lighthouse*. There are others you may have heard on the radio that are equally fun and encouraging, such as *Rescuer* and *Hallelujah Anyway*. One I hadn't heard before, but instantly became a favorite when I discovered it while researching a song to do for this article, is *Nailed to the Cross*.

The first verse drew me in: "When I stand accused by my regrets, and the devil roars his empty threats, I will preach the gospel to myself - that I am not a man condemned for Jesus Christ is my defense." As none of us reading this live in heaven currently, Satan is constantly trying to whisper in our ears and tell us convincing lies. I have anxiety, which means that those lies are louder than normal, and my brain both comes up with its own lies and tries to amplify Satan's lies. Even for those of you who don't struggle with anxiety, the reality of being human is that we all live in a world tainted by Satan's lies who is trying to convince us that we will never be good enough.

But here's the truth: We will never be good enough. But as we have Jesus as our defense, we are declared perfect. The chorus rings out: "My sin is nailed to the cross. My soul is healed by the scars." Isn't that a funny sentence - healed by scars? We've heard of scars that are healed, but on earth there's no such thing as a scar that can do the healing. But in this singular case, it is true: our souls are healed by the scars Jesus acquired from his time on the cross - not because the scars have any significance, but because Jesus holds the healing power.

Coming back to that first verse now, I want to focus on the middle line: "I will preach the gospel to myself." Because here is another truth: we need Jesus just as much as the person next to us. And while many people can tell you (and perhaps many people have told you) that you are forgiven, redeemed, and set free, sometimes we need to tell ourselves those very same words in order to believe them.

So here's my challenge for you: this Easter, whenever Pastor Ben or anyone else says "our sins are forgiven" or "you are saved" - internally edit the words to say, "Gloria{Insert your name here}, my sins are forgiven, and I am saved. Jesus's blood pleads my innocence." And if you want an extra challenge, insert the name of someone you struggle to love. Because Jesus came to forgive the world - not just the deserving, or those who try to be nice - everyone. Even you. Even me. And sometimes we need to preach the gospel to ourselves.



## Office Hours

Monday

9am-1pm

Tuesday

9am-1pm

Wednesday

9am-5pm

Thursday

Closed

Friday

9am-1pm



# *Easter - Overcoming the World*

BY KIM WILSON

Have you ever had a time in life when your struggles seemed so strong and debilitating that you felt you would not get through it? In times like these, it is hard to be physically and emotionally resilient enough to overcome the obstacles to our JOY and happiness, isn't it?

We humans find ourselves dealing with all kinds of uncertainty, disappointment, pain, and heartbreak in our daily lives. Lent has been designed to point our energies toward reflection, repentance, and reconciliation so we can achieve the renewal of ourselves. We emerge from this season, having taken an inventory of who we are, whose we are, what we need, how we manage, and what it will take to move forward according to God's promises.

When we experience circumstances that humble us, are our thoughts and reactions overwhelming us with doubt and fear? Does it even make us pause and question our faith in God's deliverance? In times like these, the words of Exodus 14:14 tell us, "The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

God has given us His word, the Bible, as an ever-present resource to learn how we and others before us took time to ponder and overcome the world's influence. Through its pages, we see how sinners like us from all walks of life overcame their challenges by "being still" and seeking God for wisdom and strength.

Jesus made time to "be still" during His ministry. He stepped away briefly from others to regroup. He relied on scripture to bring himself closer to God the Father, who restores our souls (Psalms 23:3), too. He showed us by example that our transformation is guaranteed (Philippians 1:6) when we trust in God. His victory through His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:57) gives us mercy and hope to overcome.

Do we have a quiet space to retreat to when we feel stressed? Are there tools we have learned to help us "be still"? Perhaps practicing some deep breathing to relax, going outside in the fresh air and being active, or listening to music can help us recharge.

"Being still" through journaling is also a great way to calm our minds and help us regroup. It's an effective way to relieve us of troublesome thoughts. By physically writing them on a piece of paper, we transfer these ideas and emotions out of our minds to take away their mental burden. Surprisingly, this process can give us a profoundly different perspective when dealing with difficult circumstances. Taking these concerns on to Jesus can help us further remedy our problems through His mercy and love.

When we are led through introspection, prayer, and reading His Word, we can meet life's challenges with much more confidence and resolve. We are reminded our God is stronger than anything this world sends our way and are blessed to know His grace is sufficient. (2 Corinthians 12:9) Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are overcomers. To God be the Glory!



**Women's Bible study will meet on April 8 at 1:30 p.m. in the SON Room.**

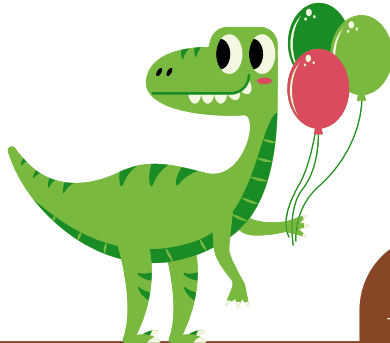
We will begin studying Ephesians. This is a letter from Paul (while in prison) to the church he started in Ephesus. In the first chapter we find an important prayer we can pray for ourselves and one another. Come as we discuss God's plan for the world and our place in that plan. ***All are welcome.***

# March Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Happy Birthday to...



- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4.1 Hannah Campbell       | 4.17 Sue Peterson        |
| 4.1 LaVonne Clark         |                          |
|                           | 4.18 Brett Eilts         |
| 4.3 Sara Franker          | 4.18 Ruby Nitzel         |
| 4.3 Heidi Skadeland       |                          |
|                           | 4.19 Lois Christman      |
| 4.4 Kevin Swancutt        | 4.19 Kolton Yungbluth    |
|                           | 4.20 Whitney Smith       |
| 4.5 Sara DeWitt           |                          |
|                           | 4.21 Larson Vulk         |
| 4.6 Lucy Simington        | 4.21 Tim Brinkley        |
|                           |                          |
| 4.7 Beth Brockshus        | 4.24 Riley Simcox        |
| 4.7 Nancy Taylor          | 4.24 Hayes Vanderberg    |
|                           |                          |
| 4.9 Steve Doran           | 4.26 Alice Nielsen       |
|                           |                          |
| 4.10 Eldon Larsen         | 4.29 Annabelle Simington |
| 4.10 Dawn Willey          | 4.29 Dorothy Schmidt     |
| 4.10 Wyatt Griffin        | 4.29 Tatum Stykel        |
|                           |                          |
| 4.13 Lindsay Neiderheiser | 4.30 Otto Maaland        |
| 4.13 Annie Rouse          |                          |
|                           |                          |
| 4.14 Mike Wilson          |                          |
|                           |                          |
| 4.15 Paul Behrens         |                          |
| 4.15 Austin Crew          |                          |



## Happy Anniversary to...

- 4.3 Steve & Theone Quattlebaum
- 4.3 Neal & Cindy Drefke
- 4.5 Nathan & Kaleigh McKenney
- 4.15 Kent & Carol Heazlett
- 4.20 Carl & Becky Simons
- 4.21 Garold & Lisa Becker
- 4.29 Roger & Vickie Godfredsen

## Upper Des Moines Opportunity

Faith is excited to begin collecting items for Upper Des Moines Opportunity (UDMO) again! UDMO is in need of **white cake mix, boxed potatoes, and Suddenly Salad**. Find the boxes by the front entrance to receive your donations!



## Hands-On Mission Day

This month we are collecting **bath size towels** (20" x 40" to 27" x 52") for the personal care kits. When families find their homes destroyed or must flee for their safety, soap and a towel rarely make the cut for what they can carry. Arriving in a place of safety, they are scared and dirty. We can share God's love with them by providing a way for them to wash up and be refreshed.



Next Hands-On Mission Day is **May 6th from 1-4 p.m.** at the church.



# *Mission Minutes*

BY KIM WILSON

The Faith Lutheran Mission Team's role is to determine recipients of the congregation's 12% of available monthly giving to missions and distribute their allocations quarterly. Each year, sixty percent of Mission funds are provided to Priority Partners while 20% are contributed to those identified for Designated Gifts. Twenty percent of budgeted funds remains in reserves to ensure adequate resources are available if an economic downturn occurs that could adversely affect our budgeted commitments to our partners.

The Team's selection process, which includes the completion of a funding application, reviews the funding requests of local, national, and international providers. The Team places special emphasis on those who are actively sharing the Gospel through their work sites and activities.

Priority Partners for 2025 are: ATLAS of Spencer, Falls Community Church, Ingham Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp, International Messengers (Josh and Whitney Smith), Lutheran Asian Ministries, World Mission Prayer League, and YWAM (Marlee Nicholson Ingale)

2025 Designated Gift recipients are: Friends of Madagascar Missions, Jacob Weeks, LCMC National, LCMC Iowa District, and locally planned and executed Mission trips by our church teams.

The Mission Team has currently identified two other missions to bless at this time through 2024 budget surplus funds: the Multi Church Community Assistance Fund and Operation Serve International. The Team has also earmarked some of these funds for Disaster Relief to extend a hand to churches impacted by natural disasters to bless them as we have been blessed.

The 2025 Lenten offering for Missions will be given to Jacob Weeks, a current member of Faith Lutheran, who is training locally to be a pilot and aircraft mechanic. These funds can be used to cover some of his incurred instruction costs now as he works toward his goal to do remote mission work.

The Mission Team also participates in our church's annual in-kind, voluntary mission projects. Currently, these include the Hat and Mitten Tree for needy individuals and families, the Cherish Center Baby Bottles fund-raiser, the covering of Lutheran World Relief shipping costs when needed, and the Reverse Advent Calendar and monthly food pantry donations box benefitting Upper Des Moines Opportunity.

The Mission Team, consisting of Donna Johnson, Brittany Spieker, Julie Williams, and Kim Wilson, can always use some help with this effort. Please contact us at [missions@flcspencer.org](mailto:missions@flcspencer.org) or through the Church office if you have questions about the Mission Team and if you are interested in serving with us. The Team is thankful to God for His faithfulness and for the generous contributions made by our congregation to spread the Good News of God's salvation, love, and care to His people.

# *Faith Lutheran Church Council meeting minutes - March 12, 2025*

The meeting was called to order by Justin at 7:17 PM.

Members present were: Dave Susie, Lisa Carpenter, Ross & Beth Brockshus, Isaiah Gray, Emily Hoppe, Logan Treybal, Leah Kreutner, Heidi Skadeland, Ann Lear, Nancy Ketcham, Pastor Ben & Jolene Hansen.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Logan. Devotions were given by Heidi.

**Prior months minutes were reviewed.** Motion to approve made by Nancy. Beth seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Prior months financial statement** – Motion to approve made by Heidi. Logan seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**TREASURER'S REPORT** – Some of the admin supplies might be moved to flood (approx. \$1,000). Lisa is going to have Carolyn check into this expense. February expenses were a bit more than our giving but we are still positive YTD because January was a good month. Undesignated flood money in the bank is almost \$66,000.

**PASTOR BEN'S REPORT** – Pastor asked for our prayers for our Lenten service speakers as well as the children in First Communion (7 children).

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Justin Spieker)** – Nothing to add to the report in the packet.

## **COUNCIL REPORTS**

- **Evangelism (Chad Johnson 1/2028)** –
- **Missions ( 1/2027)** –
- **Worship (Leah Kreutner 1/2028)** –
- **Stewardship (Emily Hoppe 1/2027)** –
- **Discipleship (Ann Lear 1/2028)**
- **Children's Ministry (Heidi Skadeland 1/2028)** –
- **Youth Ministry (Matt & Steph Essick 1/2026)** -
- **Caring Ministries (Ross & Beth Brockshus 1/2027)** –
- **Fellowship (Lee & Nancy Ketcham 1/2027)** –
- **Music & Creative Arts (Logan Treybal 1/2026)** –
- **Properties (Isaiah Grey 1/2026)** – An OSHA compliant threshold will be made for the platform.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Tech update** – RDI is coming to do some troubleshooting to figure out what needs to be replaced. Lance has ran some new wiring so they can do some testing. A congregational meeting (vote) is scheduled for April 6 to bring this to the congregation. This will not come out of the flood funds. More to come after RDI has been here to look at it.
- **Building update** – We are waiting to hear back from the Fire Department regarding what doors are needed to meet code. Doors (none fireproof) would run approximately \$17,200. Kitchen cabinets are being built and in 2 weeks we should have an installation date. We could use some additional folding chairs for the fellowship area. Lance has ordered a part for the dishwasher and that should be functional as soon as the part is in.



Faith Lutheran Church Council meeting minutes - February 19, 2025 (cont'd)

OLD BUSINESS - cont'd

- **Staff/Council retreat 3/29 9:45-2:00 PM** – Invite your team members!!
- **Janitorial update** – Kevin Swancutt – we have hired Kevin and he has started in the past week. He will be working 5-6 hours/week but with additional services/events, he may have more.
- **June celebration** – we do have a grill and help set up for this and will focus more on this after Lent.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Clean up Saturdays beginning April 12, 8:30-11:00ish** – windows clean, move chairs, run the scrubber, dusting, washing the dishes from the kitchen, etc.
- **Congregational meeting – April 6, 2025 for Tech Projector Repairs** (if needed)

Concerns and/or Celebrations

**Closing Prayer** was given by Isaish.

**Adjournment** – Nancy made the motion to adjourn. Heidi seconded. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Jolene K. Hansen, Church Council Secretary

**Faith at a Glance**  
**(March 2025)**

Baptisms  
Births  
Confirmed  
Deaths  
Marriages  
New Members

2025 Giving and Flood Relief Report		
2025 BUDGET: \$369,450.00		
	March	Year to Date
General Giving	\$28,095.00	\$89,032.72
	Total Flood Giving	Total Flood Expenses**
Flood Recovery Fund	\$296,574.11	\$237,635.90
**includes only bills paid. Much work is billed upon completion, so work in progress may not be included in this total.		