# FAITH LIFE TOGETHER

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH // VOLUME 10 // ISSUE 9

## *September 2026 Newsletter*

Ready or not, September is here! Students and teachers have been back at school for a couple weeks now, and while summer technically lasts until September 22nd, it starts to feel like fall about the same time that September arrives.

For everyone in Clay County, the highlight of September is, of course, the Clay County Fair. After the fair, events start up at Faith, starting with **Bible Presentation** and **Sunday School Kick-Off** on Sunday, September 27th. Make sure you register your kids for Sunday School at bit.ly/FLC-SS-register ! More details about Sunday School Kick-Off can be found on page 4 of this newsletter.

And to give you a peek into October, we will have **Discovery Class** for families and individuals interested in learning more about Faith and becoming a new member. This class will be held **October 4th and 11th at 10:30am.** If you or someone you know is interested in attending Discovery Class, talk to Pastor Ben for more information and to sign up. We will welcome new members during the **New Member Reception on October 25th.** Later that morning after worship, everyone is invited to the 2nd Annual Operation Christmas Child Packing Party - see page 5 for more information about this event!

### Faith at a Glance (August 2026)

**Baptisms:** Henry Cassill, August 23 | **Births Confirmed | Deaths:** Linda Conlon, August 11 **Marriages:** Titan Coleman & Ashlyn Nissan, August 26 | **New Members**

## Upcoming EVENTS

**September 12-20**
Clay County Fair

**September 27**
9:00 a.m. Bible Presentation

10:15 a.m. Sunday School Kick-Off

**October 4, 11**
10:30 a.m. Discovery Classes

**October 25**
9:00 a.m. New Member Reception

10:15 a.m. Operation Christmas Child Packing Party

# *Your Church's Secret Strength*

BY PASTOR BEN UNSETH

In August I celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the congregation that raised me—Mona Lutheran Church, in Mona, Iowa. Certainly, my parents raised me. Yet, what about my Sunday School Teachers, Vacation Bible School Teachers, Choir Directors, the Quilting Ladies who served me cookies?

My non-pastor brother preached on Sunday morning. After the service, we had a program where four pastors spoke, the current pastor, a former pastor, and two of us pastors whose fathers had served Mona. The pastors all spoke well, but the best words came from the non-pastors—my brother and a member of the congregation, Becky.

When I was a boy, I marveled at how Becky could whack home runs for the Mona Bombers. Let me share a bit of her reminiscence, "Our family came here in the 1940s, my Mom, Dad, and six of my siblings. Then five more children followed them. All eleven of us were confirmed here in Mona. The Johnsons had a drug problem on Sunday mornings—we were always drug to church. It didn't make any difference what you did on Saturday night, you were in church. If nothing else, if Dad had to, he'd get out the firecrackers and throw them up the steps. We never missed church. When we weren't home, we'd go to church. There would be a church service somewhere.

"When I think back of what Mona Church has done for us, my parents had a rocky road. My dad was an alcoholic for most of his life, but the support that the church gave my mother raising eleven children with not a lot of help at home, well, basically no help, **but the church filled in those gaps that my mom needed**."

Mona's pastor is my lifelong friend, Scott Meyer. We've discovered that as boys, sometimes I wanted his family to adopt me, and he wanted my family to adopt him. Every family has wrinkles, weak spots, dysfunction. This is one reason that our church is so important for your family and for our community. Our church's secret strength, often unnoticed, is how we can fill in the gaps for families.

## *Prayer & Praise Space*

**Lift Up in Prayer...**

- Pray for our sixteen students in Confirmation and even more in High School Youth Group.
- Pray for our Nominating Committee as they pray and recruit for our Church Council for next year.
- Pray about serving with a ministry team, such as helping with teaching or with food for Children's Sunday School, Confirmation or High School Youth Group!
- Pray for people considering our Discovery Class for new members, October 4 and 11.
- Healing for Tim Brinkley, Mike Trierweiler, Todd Kooker, Pat Swancutt, Leo Wigen, Dwight Lundeen, Deb Lemmons, Luke Ketcham, Dorothy Hamann, Deb Neiderheiser, David Hopkins, Becky Simons, Jolynne Eilts's sister Rachel, Hannah Dibble, and all those we name in our hearts.
- Pray for comfort for the families of Linda Conlon, Donna Frederick, Dick Allen, Del Church, Donna Johnson, Jim Vanderberg, Shirley Lowe; Roydal Woodford and Isaiah Gray; Cindy Tigges; Barb Solberg and Laura Yungbluth.

**Reasons for Praise!**

- Give thanks for Henry Cassill and his baptism.
- Give thanks Titan and Ashlyn (Nissen) Coleman and their wedding.
- Thank God for generous giving so that we can continue to fulfill our mission.
- Give thanks for Sunday School, Confirmation and Youth volunteers.

# *We've Got History Together*

BY WORSHIP DIRECTOR
GLORIA MCKENNEY

I saw a quote recently that caught my attention. It read, "*You have too much history with God to act like this chapter is where He suddenly stops being faithful.*" When I read it, I thought this would be a really good message to remind myself of when life gets hard. As I continued ruminating over this quote, I also realized the unspoken background behind being able to have such a response: you need to have history with God to be able to pull from and remember for the future. I don't know about you, but I tend to have the memory of a goldfish when it comes to things that didn't happen in the recent past. If I want something to be stored in my long-term memory, I'm much better off if I write it down, take a picture, or text a friend about it so I'll have something physical to look back on.

While the quote above might be intended for those who are currently struggling in their faith or experiencing challenges, I also took it as a reminder that I need to be like Mary in Luke 2, and treasure memories of God's faithfulness to me up in my heart. Others have used the analogy of sending our roots of faith down deep so that we will be able to withstand the storm when it comes.

How would you describe the chapter you are in with God right now? If you're in a season of trials and hard challenges, are you taking the time to remind yourself of God's faithfulness? Are you relying on your history with God to be the voice of reason instead of the storm around you? Or, if you are currently living in and experiencing God's many blessings, are you storing those moments in your heart so you can pull them out later when you need them?

The song "It Is Well" by Bethel Music (based on the hymn "It Is Well With My Soul" by Horatio Spafford) contains a great definition of faith in verse two: *"Far be it from me to not believe, even when my eyes can't see."* It echoes what the author of Hebrews says in Hebrews 11:1: "*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*" I especially love the part of the song right before they sing the chorus from the hymn "It Is Well With My Soul". As the song is building to that callback, it says, "*So let go my soul and trust in Him. The waves and wind still know His name.*" Isn't that exactly what we were just talking about with remembering who God is and how He's been faithful before? Even if you don't have personal memories to draw on, we can also draw on God's faithfulness as recorded in the Scriptures. Most notably, and as referenced in this song, the time Jesus stilled the wind and the waves is a perfect image of how easy it is to forget that God is Lord of the sea, wind, and us, and yet how He still holds power over all creation, and lovingly holds us in His hand. As you listen to this song, may your roots grow deep, and your memories be built up, so that when the storms swirl around you, you don't have to be afraid, because you know Who holds your past, present, and future, and will never let you go.

# *Women's Bible Study*

Women's Bible study will meet on **Tuesday, September 8th at 1:30 p.m.** in the SON room.

What do you know about Abigail? Her story is found in 1 Samuel 25. How do you act in times of crisis? Do you wonder if you should get involved? Abigail deals with a crisis; what can we learn from this woman of the Bible? We also see how Abigail prevented David from displeasing God. ***Come and join us! All are welcome!***

# *September Mission Focus: LCMC*

BY KIM WILSON

Our church's affiliation with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) is an association of like-minded congregations, rooted in Scripture and the Lutheran confession.The LCMC's purpose is to work together to fulfill Christ's great commission to go and make disciples of all nations. As God's people, we are free in Christ and accountable to one another as we work together for God's kingdom.

To date, there are over 900 congregations in countries across the world that are served by a full-time staff of six people. Their priorities pertain to strengthening current churches and planting new ones. This premise helps our association be mission-driven, encouraging LCMC churches to thrive in the communities to which they belong.

We, here at Faith, are blessed to have the support and collaboration with this strong force in service to our God and His work among us. Moving forward together with the LCMC builds our discipleship efforts that bring Jesus' salvation to all who will hear and believe.

# *Celebrating Grandparents Day September 13th*

BY KIM WILSON

Remembering and appreciating grandparents is a special event held each year on the first Sunday after Labor Day. It's an opportunity to celebrate the love and support families receive across generations.Grandparents are the source of family history and roots to build on the past with continuity and their identity as a family.

Research shows that when an involved grandparent positively supports grandchildren, anxiety is lowered and behavioral or emotional problems are reduced. Core values of patience, hard work, kindness, and respect can be consistently and lovingly taught, based on a grandparent's life experience and lessons learned.

Grandparents are often providers of support and childcare and serve as a calming influence when stressful moments occur in families. A faith-filled grandparent, sharing helpful advice, can offer a perspective that helps grandchildren accept change as a part of life.We thank Christian grandparents who, by God's grace, share their lives, energy, and legacy with their adult children and grandchildren to build God's kingdom here on earth and for the life to come in heaven with Him.

"But from everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness with their children's children." Psalm 103:17

# *Sunday School Kick-Off*

BY HEIDI SKADELAND

The Children's Ministry Team is excited and ready for another year! We will be handing out Bibles to our 4-year-olds and 2nd graders on Sunday, September 17th during worship. After worship, we will then kick off Sunday School:

Sunday, September 27th – we will gather together:

**10:15am – Music (in the Discipleship Room)**

**10:30am – Meet with Teachers**

**10:40am – Snack & Games**

**11:10am – Pick-up time**

This will be the time frame we will have the whole year as well. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Heidi Skadeland, head of Children's Ministry. Can't wait for another great year!

**Register for Sunday School:**

**bit.ly/FLC-SS-Register**

# 2nd Annual Packing Party

BY HEIDI SKADELAND

We are holding a packing party again this year for all ages working together to bless each other as we pack, and bless the kids we are packing boxes for. If you are unfamiliar with Operation Christmas Child, it's parent organization is Samaritan's Purse, and they take thousands of boxes around the world every year, loaded with Christmas gifts and the Word of God to kiddos ages 2-14.

How this works: we are hoping to pack 50 boxes this year for the boys and girls. Look for the Christmas Tree on the east wall, filled with ideas and suggestions of items we are looking for to fill the boxes we will pack. Each box will include a WOW item (like a Barbie, Lego set, soccer ball & pump, etc.) and then we will fill in every single nook & cranny with other fun things (like colored pencils & a coloring book, stuffed animal, card games, bouncy balls, fishing gear, tools, paper, stickers, etc).So for now we are gathering items and placing them in the totes by the Christmas tree. Then come Sunday, October 25th, we will gather together, all ages packing together, and older adults teaming with younger kids, mixing all our ages to work together and have fun. We will write letters to each kid receiving a box, and then rubber band them closed. We will also take pictures of each packer or each packing team. Most times, the most treasured item these kids receive is the personal letter that's included in the boxes. After we have them mostly ready, we will pray over them before they're sent off.

Put the date on your calendar to join us, and then grab a slip off the Christmas Tree the next time you're in church. Do some shopping, bring the items to church, and then we will be ready for a wonderful event, together – building relationships and serving Jesus side-by-side!

# Here to BLESS: Operation Christmas Child Volunteer Opportunity - October 25th after Worship

BY KIM WILSON

Calling all members of Faith Lutheran Church to volunteer through the "Here to BLESS (Bringing Love to Everyone in Saintly Service)" opportunity to come and help the Children's Ministry Team provide the Operation Christmas Child Mission Project here at Faith Lutheran Church (see the article above for more details).

"Many hands make for light work", so help us pack boxes after worship on October 25th for approximately an hour. We invite all older adults to gather to help. Prior to this activity, items to place in the boxes are needed. If you are so inclined to donate suggested contents for the boxes, a list of needed gifts is available in the church office. Assistance may also be needed to transport the boxes to the shipping site at a later date, so let Heidi Skadeland or Kim Wilson know if you can assist.

No formal BLESS application is needed to be a part of this thoughtful and fun event. Rather, please stick around after worship, and our Children's Ministry team will help BLESS volunteers identify areas where help is needed. Thanks in advance for considering serving and BLESSing others.

# *Discerning God's Truth*

BY KIM WILSON

Our culture lives on the messaging of "the next best thing". It may be a new product or gadget, a rising celebrity who has caught the eye of the public for better or worse, or the sensationalism extracted from exploits in sports, politics, or other news grabbers. It's easy to become wrapped up in the hype the media and other influences peddle.

That's where Christians have to put on their "discernment" hat to make sense of what we are seeing and hearing. Discernment relies on our conscience and gives us a "gut" reaction to judge people and situations to keep us healthy and safe.

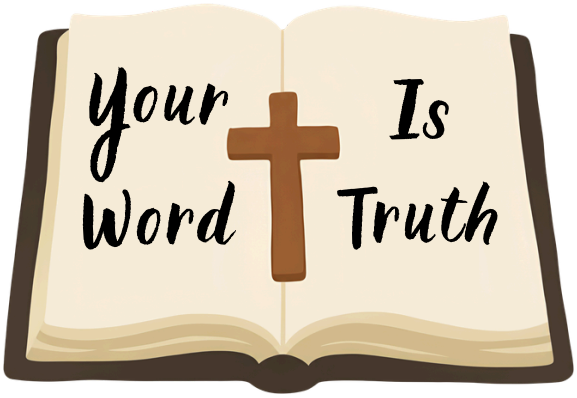
With the increasing presence of AI, we find discernment as a valuable tool to "know" what is real and what is not. As Christians, spiritual discernment, guided by the Holy Spirit, provides critical thinking skills to identify good and evil. Constant practice, obedience, and maturity in our faith make our ability to discern sharper and more insightful.

A recent trend reflects an increased interest in reading the Bible by Gen Zers, with even more young men connecting with Scripture. This "next best thing" is providing a resurgence in understanding biblical truths and promoting Judeo-Christian values. We currently see a variety of leaders expressing their faith and belief in our Triune God. These revelations attempt to positively impact us, as Christians, and our society.

You may ask, why is this trend important to our mental health? When we dive deeper, we see that trends affect our thoughts, fuel our feelings, and direct us to action. If we live in a society that is not led by the Word of the one true God, we find ourselves adrift and unable to cope. Negative messaging spawns helplessness, fear, victimhood, anger, and rage. To have more people reading, studying, and living according to God's Word, we support a common thread of Truth that guides us and permeates our thoughts, emotions, and behavior. This reduces chaos and steadies us to be less vulnerable to enticing and destructive impulses and choices.

This approach expects respect, dignity, adherence to family values, and fear of the Lord in our American communities to protect us and keep us close to God. When we stray from God's intentions for His people, we see the results in the confusion, violence, and mental health crisis that grips our nation. God's word gives us wisdom to balance us in truth, enhance our discernment, and lead us forward with renewed confidence to manage life, according to His will.

Jesus told his disciples and us, "to know the truth and it will set you free". (John 8:32) Paul guides us in Romans 12:9 to "hate what is evil; cling to what is good." In Ephesians 6:14, the Bible tells us to "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place." Reading and absorbing these words of wisdom helps us reach for Him. May we seek to always know God's truth! To God be the Glory!



# September Birthdays & Anniversaries

## Happy Birthday to...

9.02 Vicki Egland
9.02 Christine Piercy

9.04 Lauren Rouse

9.05 Emma Heikens

9.06 Amara Antoine
9.06 Cindy Drefke
9.06 Justin Lee

9.07 Jared Hansen
907 Betty Ricklefs

9.08 Dylan Harris

9.09 Jacob Heikens

9.10 Tracy Coleman Wigen
9.10 Marcia Klett

9.11 Andre Enge

9.12 Harper Stykel

9.13 Parker Gilley-Harrington

9.14 Sydney Schwartz
9.14 Diane Van Kleek

9.15 Lisa Blazek
9.15 Dean Vos

9.17 Barb Enge

9.18 Larry Clark

9.20 Rachel Simington

9.21 Bev Hummel

9.22 Sheryl Lee

9.24 Isaac Storley

9.26 Julie Williams
9.26 Brayden Yungbluth

9.27 Steve Johnson

9.30 Nancy Heckathorn
9.30 Ellie Spieker
9.30 Keith Van Kleek

## Happy Anniversary to...

9.05 Kent & Marci Sandven

9.10 Adam & Leah Kreutner

9.12 Chris & Carolyn Christofferson

9.16 Brad & Lori Krei

9.16 Eric & Sydnee Patten

9.17 Mark & Rhonda Vreeman

9.17 Brady & Megan Vanderberg

9.18 Shawn & Crystal Meislahn

9.19 Mark & Lauriann Heilman

9.19 Eric & Cindy Tigges

9.21 Eli & Sara Franker

9.21 Casey & Alexa Vanderberg

## Upper Des Moines Opportunity

Each month Faith collects items to help stock UDMO's pantry for those in need. This month, UDMO is in need of **cereal and soup**. There is a yellow box by the front entrance to receive donations.

## Hands-On Missions

Hands-On Mission Day will be **Tuesday, October 6 from 1pm to 4pm**.

This month we will collect bath size bars of soap for the personal care kits. When someone can "wash up", it refreshes them. This gives them encouragement to start anew and lets them know they are not forgotten. Being clean also helps prevent disease outbreaks in the camps and villages. Come and enjoy the fellowship as we share God's love and grace through the items we assemble.

# *Faith Lutheran Church Congregational Forum minutes - August 16, 2026*

President Cryss Quanbeck opened the meeting in prayer at 10:26 AM, thanking the Congregation for their support & involvement this year.

Troy Rosendahl spoke about the coming together of the Endowment Committee & its new members. Committee members include: Neal Drefke, Larry Wigen, Greg Egland, Gene Englin & Denny Baumann.

Cryss reminded the Congregation we are still looking for an Evangelism leader.

Upcoming important dates:

August 23 – Blessing of the Backpacks

August 26 – Confirmation/Youth group starts Leaders Brett & Jolynne Eilts are looking for members to share their Faith stories with the Youth.

September 27 – Sunday School kicks off!

Financial Update: Actual giving through 7/31 is $188,402.45; our budget is $218, 705.65. total budget for the year is $374,924.00. We are over 50% through the year which makes us about 8% under where we would like to be but with it being summer, that is expected. Our administrative & team expenses are down so that is helpful with our YTD budget.

Heidi is heading up the Operation Christmas Child again this year along with our Children's Christmas program.

Cryss opened it up for questions. There were no questions so Cryss closed the forum in prayer at 10:33 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jolene K. Hansen
Church Council Secretary

**2026 Giving Report**
**2026 BUDGET: $374,924.00**

| | August | Year to Date |
|---|---|---|
| **General Giving** | **$24,896.00** | **$213,545.31** |