

January 2025 Newsletter

Faith Lutheran Church

714 N Grand Avenue

Pierre, SD 57501

Over two thousand years ago, the world received its greatest gift. That is when God gave His Son to be born in a manger to fulfill the plan for our salvation. God's gift was planned centuries before it was given. God didn't give His leftovers. What is the greatest, best gift He could give? Himself! And so He did in the Person of His Son, Jesus. He gave His Son Who gave His life. What gift could be more appropriate? Christ is exactly what we need! What He wants from us is our hearts.



"I'd like to get saved. There's just one problem—
I'm terrified of getting baptized."

Giving Is Healthy

A leading psychiatrist once said, "Generous people are rarely emotionally or mentally ill." Giving to God and to others allows us to forget about ourselves and focus on others. Peyton Conway March said, "There is a wonderful law of nature that the three things we crave most in life—happiness, freedom, and peace of mind—are always attained by giving them to someone else." Giving is not just a minor influence on good health, but the key to physical and mental well-being.

Let's Go!

New Year, New You

I suppose you could expect an article about New Year's resolutions. If you have guessed what I am writing about, then you likely have given the idea of resolutions some thought. While I do encourage you to assess this past year and consider some ways in which you may want to change, this article will talk about the goal instead of the process. Change is, by nature, a putting off of one thing and a putting on of another. The individual who tries to increase their athleticism will likely run or shoot free throws or lift weights. The goal is, for example, to build up their body for the health benefits derived from a better-functioning self, or for the enjoyment and continued participation of some certain sport.

While I think athleticism important, I have much less to say about it than I do about your spirituality. I want you to identify some ways in which you could make changes to your spiritual practices. I will leave the particulars to you (although I might have some suggestions if you speak to me privately). Instead, I want to point you in the direction of the goal. Why should we seek changes and improvements in our spiritual practices? The words of St. Paul are helpful when he says, "We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Eph 4:15). Our lives are a continual growing up into Christ.

If you would read the whole of Ephesians chapter 4 (which would take you some 5-10 minutes depending on your reading speed), you would get a more complete picture of the type of change that St. Paul, and God, is advocating. We are to become more and more like Christ. Our process of change involves putting off the sinful, flesh-y activities and instilling in us the godly, spiritual activities. St. Paul gives some specific examples in the later part of the chapter. They are well worth considering. If we see ourselves rightly, clearly, then we each have some work to do in all of the ways he lists.

The process is similar to a child imitating an adult (in fact St. Paul will use language like this). Children play house because they see their parents managing the affairs of the house. They might not understand balancing checkbooks or multiplying recipes or creating schedules. This will come in time. We, as God's children, imitate Christ. We act like Christ. We might not know why at the beginning. We pray because we see Christ praying. We suffer because we see Christ suffering. Our goal is to participate more in those activities which Christ does and less in those which he rejects.

With the goal of imitating or copying Christ, what changes would you like to make? What bad habits can you give extra attention to breaking? What good habits can you plan to begin or to strengthen? The act of assessing your self and planning for change is a continual part of our lives as Christians. While you may not have the best track record with New Year's resolutions in general (I fall into that camp), this is one area where God promises his support and guidance. May this year be another in which we dedicate ourselves to being more fully God's beloved and redeemed people.

Pastor Sam

Let's Go!

FOLLOWING THE STAR

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." Matthew 2:1&2

Twelve days after Christmas, January 6th, the Christian church will celebrate the feast of Epiphany. It is a season of light which emphasizes that God has revealed himself to us through the God-man Christ Jesus; recognized has both True God and True Man. Epiphany focuses on how God imparts his love, light and hope through Jesus.

The other day I was flipping through one of my favorite books of poetry by Susan Palo Cherven and came across the following:

We follow the star
from Christmas into Epiphany.
From the season of birth
into the season of making known,
we follow the star,
the light,
the Sun.
But we should be cautioned:
to follow the star
is to follow it
to Herod the child-killer
to Bethlehem the stable
to Egypt the exile
to Jordan the drenching
to Wilderness the void
to Jerusalem the death.
The glorious Sun
guides us,
the morning star leads us,
but more likely to treachery than homage
more likely to humility than embrace
more likely to drowning than anointing
more likely to emptiness than satisfaction
more likely to dying than glory.

The morning star follows Jesus -- being chased and pursued by a paranoid potentate, and who starts life as a political refugee. He is baptized in the Jordan and experiences the emptiness of the wilderness. He is rejected by his own. Ultimately, he is the long-awaited one who has come to die for the sins of the world and be raised again in glory. Continued on page 4

Happy New Year ♡ *Happy New Year* ♡ *Happy New Year*

Let's Go!

FOLLOWING THE STAR continued

Growing up, I don't recall a whole lot about Epiphany, other than I knew it followed Christmas and we sang some related hymns. Maybe everyone was too worn out from all the Christmas services and celebrations to give much thought to following the star. My deceased husband's parish made a fairly big deal over Epiphanytide -- lots of singing, serving Epiphany cake and chalking their doors. On the top of the door frame, one might see: 20C+M+B25 -- the CMB represented the three wisemen (traditionally named Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar), flanked by the year -- in this case, 2025. It was all kind of fascinating to me.

The three major events in the season of Epiphany are 1) the arrival of the Magi, 2) the baptism of Jesus, and 3) the Transfiguration, where we glimpse our Lord in divine splendor.

Here is my favorite Epiphany hymn, one that I remember singing back at Immanuel, my home church:

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid.

Are you ready to shine your light in dark places and celebrate the good news of God's saving grace?

Karen Lindbloom



Let's Go!

Daycare News

December was a busy but blessed month. The children always love to learn and do activities on the true meaning of Christmas. The teachers and Pastor do a great job on expanding lessons when the children are wanting to learn more. Please feel free to walk the halls upstairs and check out the artwork the children do. They work hard and are proud to show it off.

As you know, daycare children participated in this year's Christmas Program. Our classrooms sang the following songs, Toddlers- Happy Birthday Jesus and One Little Two Little Three Little Wisemen, Preschool- Joy to the World and Jingle Bells the Jesus version. As always everyone sang Silent Night and Away In The Manger.

We're looking forward to all the great things to come in 2025. Happy New Year! We hope you all have had a blessed holiday season.

God Bless,

Mandy Vogel/Kim Jensen

daycare@faithluth.com



Happy New Year Happy New Year Happy New Year

Preschool News

A Blessed New Year from Faith Lutheran Preschool! We had a great time in December learning about the birth of Jesus and having a birthday party for him here at school. I love being able to share the birth of Jesus with the students. We also had our Christmas program that was a great turn out and the kids did so wonderful.

The month of January we will be working on the letters S, I, M, and P, along with the numbers 12, 13, 14, and 15. We will also be emphasizing on the color blue and the shape of a rectangle. The kids will also be doing a show and tell, it's always fun to see what they bring and like to share about it with the class.

Our Bible lessons this month will be talking about the New Testament, and about Jesus teaching and healing. I always enjoy getting to teach the children about Jesus healing people.

Gods Blessings,

Mrs. Kampfe

Preschool Director/Teacher Preschool@faithluth.com



Let's Go!

Jesus Accepts and Perfects our Gifts

As sinful people, we are incapable of giving God what He deserves from us. However, we can be confident that our gifts are acceptable to God through Jesus. To illustrate this point, a story is told about a wood-carver who early in his life was a renowned carver. He passed on his craft to his son. Later in his life, the old man's eyes began to dim, and his hands began to tremble. He could no longer carve

the perfect figures of his youth. He would mar the figure, and imperfections blighted his work. His fading eyes could no longer see the flaws.

During the night, as the father was sleeping, the son would sneak down and correct his father's flaws in the newly carved wood. When the figures passed through the hands of the son, they were made perfect again.

In the same way, we may bring our imperfect gifts with the confidence that, as they pass through the hands of Jesus, they will all be placed before the Father in absolute perfection.



Official Acts

Baptisms

Knox Daniel Pease 11/10/24
Elsie Tate Nafziger 12/22/24

Endowment Fund

It has been requested that we give an explanation of the Endowment Fund and the options within that fund.

The Endowment Fund is truly about leaving a legacy. A donation to any part of the endowment would insure that you could support the ministry of this church well after you have passed on or left the church. The different accounts within the endowment were created to help a giver to have the opportunity to be specific about the areas where their investment is directed. Additionally, the giver is not limited to these specific accounts. Other fund accounts may be added (example: Scholarships for the daycare or preschool). The Board of Endowment wants this to be flexible and accommodating to the givers desires for their donation.

Blessings in Faith is the **original Fund** and is where any **undesignated** gifts to the Endowment fund go. The earnings are disbursed as follows: the first 15% to Missions (District/Synod), the second 15% to Seminary student aid, the rest goes to numerous projects within the congregation as requests are received and the Board designates.

Generations in Faith gifts go into the **Endowment General Fund**. The earnings here are used for general operations of the church. Just as if you were designating your offering for the general fund.

Foundations in Faith gifts go toward the **Endowment Building Fund**. Earnings from this fund go for building and maintenance projects.

Future in Faith gifts go toward **Education**. Earnings here are used for the support of Christian education within the church.



Our February newsletter will be the Annual Report. All entities within the church are to submit their report to the office by **January 19**. I know some of you are new to this process so if you need an example of previous submissions let me know and I will print one for you.

These are usually a summary of events or other actions taken by the entity reporting. Thanks in advance for submitting your reports in a timely manner. Helen



Let's Go!

YOUTH NEWS

Sunday School Classes

Our Sunday School Classes will resume January 5, 2025.

Midweek

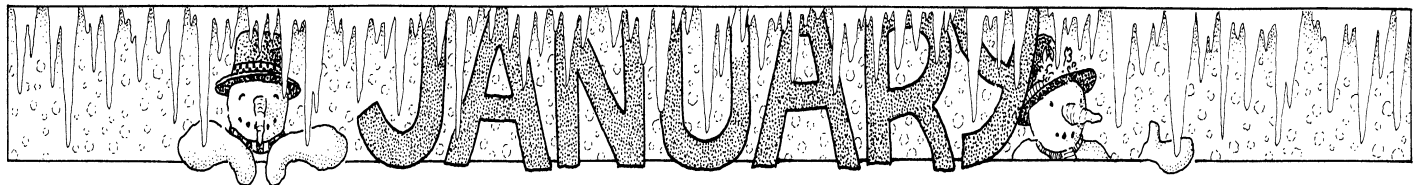
Catechism Classes

Our Midweek classes will resume on January 8, 2025.

an opportunity to learn more about Jesus Christ, the Christian faith and their Lutheran identity. During the five-days of the Gathering youth spend time together in worship, God’s Word, prayer, song and service. This event is organized by LCMS Youth Ministry in Saint Louis, Missouri.



It’s time once again to start thinking about the LCMS Youth Gathering! The LCMS Youth Gathering will be July 19-23, 2025, in New Orleans, Louisiana. LCMS youth and adult leaders will visit the city under the theme Endure based on Hebrews 12:1-3. Held every three years, LCMS Youth Gatherings provide young people



Let's Go!