

MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS THIS MONTH

Elders Meeting

Monday – December 2 @ 6 pm in Cataract

Advent Social

Sunday – December 8 @ 2 pm in Black River Falls

Vision Timeline Meeting

Tuesday—December 10 @ 6:30 p.m. in Black River Falls

Worship Planning

Wednesday – December 11 @ 9 am in Black River Falls

Ad Hoc Child Protection

Saturday—December 14 @ 9 a.m. in Black River Falls

Ladies Aid Potluck & Gift Exchange

Saturday—December 14 @ 12:30 p.m. in Cataract

FiSH Progressive Dinner Party

Saturday—December 14 @ 5 p.m. in Black River Falls

Church Council Meeting

Monday—December 16 @ 6 p.m. in Cataract

Youth Group & Christmas Caroling

Sunday—December 22 @ 2 p.m. in Black River Falls



N6598 County Highway A
Black River Falls, WI 54615
(mailing address)

N6774 Acorn Ave.
Sparta, WI 54656

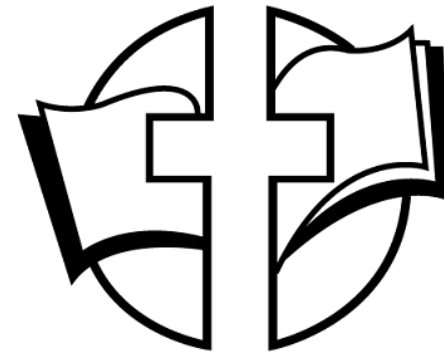
Phone: 715-284-0772
Pastor: Joel Neumann

We're on the Web!
www.faithwels.com

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church is a part of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod or WELS. The WELS is a church body with congregations in all fifty states and missionaries in 25 countries.

We are a Christ Preaching Church! We believe, teach and confess that Jesus is God's own Son, who came into the world to be the Savior of all people so that through his sufferings, death and resurrection, we might have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

We Are A Bible Teaching Church! We believe and teach that the Bible is the true and divinely inspired Word of God, the sole authority for Christian faith and life.



The Messenger

DECEMBER 2019

I Need More...JOY!

After hastily opening the wrapped package and making the obligatory thank yous, it certainly didn't take long to turn away from the thoughtful gift as something hum.

Just then five-year-old Eleanor came along and stopping by the discarded item and exclaimed, "Oh, my, what a beautiful gift! Is that yours? You must be so happy?" As she walked away I thought to myself, "Why don't I have the joy of that little girl?"

At times we have those feelings which cause us to cry out, "I need more joy in my life!" That is so often true at this time of year when for one reason or another we find ourselves lacking joy. There are indications everywhere that joy should fill our lives. Decorations are going up inside and outside. Christmas music surrounds us, and cards are arriving daily.

Some days the festive joy fills our hearts as we excitedly go about our holiday shopping



the life all of us are unable to live. Each and every evil thought, evil word, and evil deed we have done has been picked from us by our heavenly Father and placed on Jesus. On Calvary's cross, Jesus bowed his head in death declaring, "It is finished."

and schedule planning. Yet deep down we know that this joy will not last. Planning becomes overwhelming, schedules start falling apart, and decorating gets tiresome. Above all, we know from experience that there will be no joy when we find we don't have enough money to purchase the perfect gift or when credit card payments come due. All of this leads us to shout out, "I need more joy! I need joy that will last!"

Here's some great news. Christmas brings us joy that does last—the true joy found in Jesus.

With a love that we cannot comprehend, our heavenly Father gave his only Son, born to be our Savior. With perfect obedience Jesus lived

These words of Jesus bring us true joy. They mean that all is done and Easter's announcement "He Is Risen!" guarantees that God our Father has accepted Jesus' life and death as payment in full for all our sins. True joy is the forgiveness of sins that is ours through faith in Jesus.

While we are in the midst of the season when it seems hard to keep joy in our lives, focus on the true Joy Giver. Ponder again the words of the angels to the shepherds, "Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born. He is Christ the Lord." Come and worship the Babe born in Bethlehem and may God the Holy Spirit fill you with a joy that never ends.

The Messenger is published monthly for the congregation and friends of Faith Ev. Lutheran Church. Its purpose is to provide information regarding all areas of congregational news and to offer enlightening articles.

Anyone wishing to contribute articles, please contact Laura Mueller at the following email address: muellerlaura@hotmail.com. Newsletter deadline: The submission deadline is the next-to-the-last Sunday of each month.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes Summary
November 19, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting opened at 6:30 pm with Pastor Neumann leading us in a short devotion focusing on Engaging Members in Ministry.

Attendance: Pastor Neumann, Garrett Jessie, Dale Jessie, Jerry Kirchman, Dave Spaude, Grady Severson, Brad Rahmlow, Brad Markardt, Scott Templeton

ELDER'S REPORT

Received into membership

Cory Bue (Abigail, Kendall) by Adult Confirmation – 11-10-19

Mikah Hugget, by transfer from St. John's, Sparta – 11-18-19

Lloyd and Kimberly Harter (Eleanor), by transfer from St. John, Libertyville, IL

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor presented a statistical report for the month of October

Discussed 10 for 10 giving to the CMO fund from our congregational offerings. The church council felt there was value in giving an additional 10% over the pledged amount to the CMO fund, this amount would total \$1,038. Council moved and seconded a motion that had full consensus (MSC) to give the additional \$1,038 to the CMO fund.

Pastor will discuss the calling process briefly at the end of church services. Pastor will present the needs in both locations at the start of a bible class after Thanksgiving. This will be an open invitation for comments and questions for all of our members.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Brad presented a financial report showing a net gain of \$859.11 through the end of October. MSC to accept financial report for October, 2019

Brad and Scott will be performing an internal audit, which will be presented to council after the start of the new year

SPECIAL REPORTS

Council reviewed the Outreach Committee Report supplied by Brad Markhardt

The vision timeline will continue to be reviewed by the outreach committee and the church council on December 10th at 6:30 in BRF

OLD BUSINESS

Pastor's Health Insurance: The congregation will fund WELS-VEBA plan #4. The congregation will be responsible for any differences in the coverage between plan #4 and plan #2. Under this agreement the congregation will also fund 5% of plan #2's total out of pocket because of the different percentage of the co-insurance between the two plans. This action will be reviewed annually.

Pastor showed the council a 5 minute video on the Equipping Christian Witnesses campaign from Martin Luther College

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm with Pastor leading us in the Lord's Prayer.

The next Council Meeting will be held in CAT, December 16 at 6 pm.

Recorded by Garrett Jessie

SPECIAL SERVICES THIS MONTH

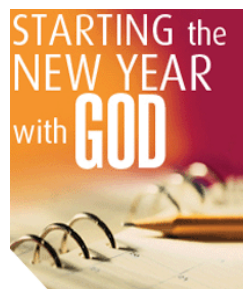


Tuesday, December 24 – Children's Christmas Eve Service: Our children will lead us in worship. **See What Great Love** – contemplating God's love in sending us our Savior will be the focus of our 4 p.m. worship in Black River Falls.

Tuesday, December 24 – We will have a **candlelight Christmas Eve service** in Cataract @ 7 p.m. Love's Pure Light will be our theme.



Wednesday, December 25 - Christmas Day: We will worship at 8 a.m. in Black River Falls and 9:45 a.m. in Cataract. This service will give us the incredible opportunity to consider the account of Jesus' birth from the gospel of Luke with this thought in mind – **Now Sing We, Now Rejoice, Now Raise To Heaven Our Voice!**



Tuesday, December 31 - New Year's Eve: We will worship and celebrate Holy Communion at 6:30 p.m. in Cataract as we close out 2019. As we do, we will gather around the theme: **"Let Watchfulness Characterize Your New Year."**

December Birthdays

Garrett Spaude	12/1
Annette Markhardt	12/4
Jerry Eggen	12/11
Aron Bue	12/11
Toni Anderson	12/14
Bill Yahnke	12/18
Noelle Kiesow	12/20
Lisa Treptow	12/21
Sharalyn Hartley	12/22
Elaine Fatla	12/24
Nicole Kiesow	12/28
Justin Goetzka	12/29
Avah Reetz	12/30
Jeremiah Spaude	12/31
Richard Sitarz	12/31

December Anniversaries

Jack + Sherry Bue	12/3
Joe + Alisha Southwood	12/19

10for10 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

November 3rd was the first Sunday we collected commitment cards in connection with our 10for10 Stewardship Emphasis. Since then we have received 26 cards. That means we have received cards from 45% of those who received 10for10 information. Thank you for your participation. *It is not too late to participate if you haven't decided to yet. You can put your Commitment Card into the offering plate at any time.*

In addition, each year our congregation makes a commitment to give (as an offering) to our synod a certain percentage of our congregational budget. This offering is called the Congregation Mission Offering (CMO). In 2019, our CMO was set at \$10,382. As part of our 10for10 Stewardship emphasis the church council decided that it would be appropriate, as well as an opportunity to lead by example, to not only ask members of our congregation to participate in this 10for10 emphasis, but for our congregation as a whole to participate as well. For this reason, at the council meeting this past week they approved to send an additional 10% of our commitment of \$10,382 (\$1,038) to the synod as part of our CMO for this year.



LADIES AID

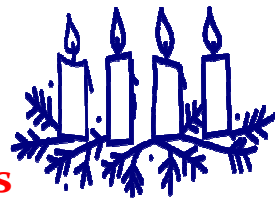
The Ladies Aid will have their annual Christmas potluck and gift exchange on Saturday, **December 14 at 12:30 p.m.** at our Cataract location. If you are able to participate, bring a dish to pass and a gift to exchange. We try to keep the gift between \$5-\$7.



Advent Social

Ladies, you are invited!

December 8 – 2 pm in Black River Falls



Advent Social is an opportunity for women of all ages to set aside the hustle and bustle of holiday preparation and focus their minds and hearts on the birth of Christ. It is a beautiful time filled with Scripture readings, narration, prayer, songs of praise and Christian fellowship.

Advent is a time for us to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming. We want our focus to be on Jesus throughout this season, but all too often it gets caught up with the preparations in our homes, churches or communities.

This is our 7th year of Advent Social at Faith Lutheran Church. You are invited! Feel free to invite a friend or relative, acquaintance or neighbor. Set aside the date and time, Sunday, December 8, 2:00 p.m. at our Black River Falls location.

After the devotion, those interested may participate in a homemade cookie / candy etc. exchange. If you choose to participate in the exchange please bring 5 dozen homemade treats to share, the recipe, and a container to take your treats home in! We will make copies of all the recipes at church. Please note that if you do not wish to be part of the treat exchange, you are still welcome to come and enjoy the devotion, fellowship and cookie samples!

HERITAGE TREE



This December, you will notice a Christmas tree adorned with decorations standing in the gathering area in Black River Falls. This is a Heritage Tree. The idea behind the Heritage Tree is that each family in the congregation is invited and encouraged to provide an ornament for the tree. This ornament should have the names of the family members displayed on it and will be stored at church so that it can be set up year after year. What a wonderful way for us to express our unity and see how God blesses our congregation through the many changes that happen over the year. Please consider participating by simply placing your ornament on the tree.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING

Both our Black River Falls and Cataract locations will get decorated for Christmas this month. Everyone is invited to help. Here are the details:

Black River Falls—Saturday, December 7 @ 9 a.m.

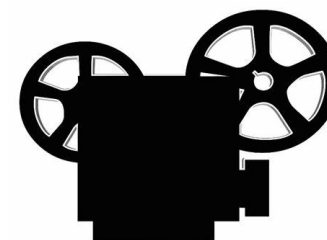
In Cataract—After Bible Class on Sunday, Dec. 1

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE PRACTICE



Starting Sunday, December 1 and going through Sunday, December 22, the children in Black River Falls will be practicing for the Christmas Eve service during the regular Sunday School/Bible Class hour. There will be no Bible Study during this time.

LIBRARY CORNER



As Christmas approaches, check out the DVD, *My Son, My Savior*, from our church library located in the fellowship hall at our BRF location (2 copies). This DVD centers on Mary, the mother of Jesus, as she experiences the miracle of Jesus' coming and grows in understanding that her son is also her Savior - and ours.

To checkout, write the date, your name, and the name of the book/DVD/CD in the notebook on the shelf.



CENTRAL AFRICA MEDICAL MISSION
LUTHERAN MOBILE MEDICAL CLINIC - MALAWI



Among the many people we have met since coming to Malawi are Dr. John Podgore and his wife Ione. John is a retired U.S. army physician who now teaches at the University of North Texas. Every year, typically between January and April, the Podgores stay in Malawi and bring over groups of medical students to gain practical experience at a local teaching hospital where John also instructs. John and Ione also sponsor one or two Malawian college students. One of those students is a young man by the name is Sydney Kambaliken, who is earning a degree in Public Health. One evening John and Ione asked us if we could offer Sydney an internship over the 3-month summer break.

The advantage of mobile clinics such as ours is that they take health care directly to the villages where help is needed. The disadvantage is that because visits are weekly, we do not receive consistent feedback regarding the effectiveness of our services. An intern would provide the opportunity to reach out to our stakeholders and ask a series of questions regarding attitudes towards our clinics. Additionally, if a Malawian is asking the questions it is more likely that we would get honest responses than if an American were to be conducting the study.

After designing a questionnaire, Sydney organized meetings and eventually met with 255 people including patients, village headmen and government health workers. Some of the background statistics were interesting – 75% of patients were under 45 years old – not surprising as we focus on mothers and children. 60% of our patients were women. 88% of the interviewees had family incomes of less than 45,000 kwacha (\$62) a month, and the average patient walks a little over 3 kilometers (about 2 miles) to clinic- that distance could be greater as Sydney did not have time to visit some of the more remote villages we serve.

Of the people interviewed 75% said they were always satisfied with our health services. From the report – “Community members are happy and appreciate the health service provided by Lutheran Mobile Clinic (LMC). From the group discussion, respondents reported that the service that LMC provides meet their health needs. Drugs are always available at LMC. Patients are triaged. The health workers are always available and attending to the sick people. The referral system helps very ill patients in the community get to a hospital and the cost of services does not take into account severity of sickness.” ***“The health workers are committed to our children and women. They attend to us all and others from neighboring villages until the last patient has treatment.”***

Government health workers are also appreciative of LMC’s work. The service that LMC provides to the community helps reduce the workload at local health centers and the patient population in those health centers. One health center staffer reported that the LMC referral system helps a lot by transporting the very ill patients to the health center.

There are some issues. Many of the same people who are happy and appreciate our services also feel that we should stay longer and visit more often. ***“The mobile clinic is saving our women and children from disease and death but we only have access to it once a week. We are forced to use traditional herbs and such the remaining 6 days of the week. We want them to be coming twice a week.”*** Lack of privacy during consultations was another concern that was raised. We heard the same comment during our discussions with Village elders when planning the remodeling of our Msambo and Mwalaulomwe clinics. We subsequently included private consultation rooms into the plans. ***“...because of the lack of space in the clinic, we end up receiving our medication when everyone is watching and as a result it becomes easy for everyone to see what our health problem is.”***

As a result of the comments we received, LMC will take up these recommendations from the report:

Setup community health committees in the four clinic sites to help improve the effectiveness of the clinic by pro-actively engaging community members. This would help bridge the gap that exists between communities and the clinic. It would also breed a sense of ownership among community members, as well as act as a feedback mechanism for gauging community needs, perceptions and attitudes towards the clinic

LMC will review its schedule for each clinic site and use the community health committees as a forum to discuss this issue with the communities.

LMC will continue restructuring its clinic buildings at Msambo, Suzi and Thunga - like we have at Mwalaulomwe - to allow private consultations between the health workers and patient

In summary the report states that “it is pivotal that any public health intervention is continuously assessed so as to improve its effectiveness to potential clients. This study has revealed that LMC plays a critical role in providing health care in rural areas. Indeed, LMC is the main entry point to health care in such remote settings. While LMC provides a limited range of services, people in all the clinic sites appreciate its services and want it to continue operations.”

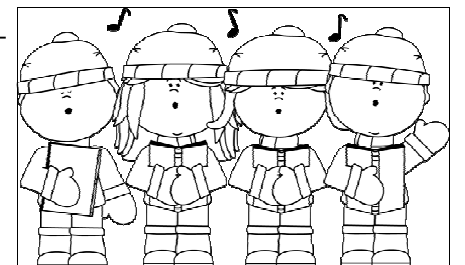
My conclusion is a little different. The people in our villages are very appreciative and thankful for all the Medical mission does for them. For almost 50 years, CAMM, the field staff, and all of our supporters have shown Gods love by providing physical and spiritual care to people half a world away and He has blessed our efforts. *“May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us: establish the work of our hands for us – yes establish the work of our hands” Psalm 90.* The Lord also blessed us by sending us Sydney. He is an extraordinary young man of faith, and I am sure God has big plans for him.

Gary Evans – Clinic Administrator

YOUTH GROUP OUTING & SERVICE PROJECT

On **Saturday, December 7**, the youth group will head to Eau Claire to have some fun at an escape room. Please meet **at 10:45 a.m. sharp** at the Black River Falls parking lot. They will find a place to eat first (the cost of the meal will be covered by the church council) and then head to the escape room. The cost of the escape room will be \$20 a person.

On **Sunday, December 22**, the youth group will put their God-given gifts and abilities to use for others. On that day we will gather at church in Black River Falls and then go out and do some Christmas caroling. We will meet at 2 pm, begin with devotion, and then head out. We will plan to be back to church no later than 4 pm.



2020 CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

As the Property Committee Chairman, I would like to thank all the members who helped with the cleaning of our church in BRF this last year. Your service is appreciated as we continue to have a clean and orderly church. I will soon be working on the schedule for 2020. If the availability of any of you has changed, please let me know. If the months I had you scheduled for last year do not work for you this coming year, I can make changes to accommodate you. Also, if you were not on a crew this year, and would like to be included on the 2020 schedule, please contact me.

Thank you for your service,

Scott Templeton

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dscotttempleton@gmail.com

