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We're on the Web!
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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.

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.

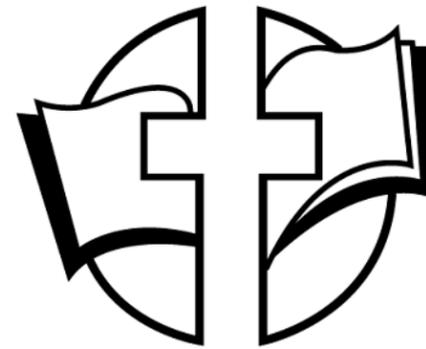
The idea behind the Heritage Tree is that each family in the congregation is invited and encouraged to provide an ornament for the tree. This ornament should have the names of the family members displayed on it and will be stored at church so that it can be set up year after year.

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.



The Messenger

*Rooted in Christ.
Reaching Out With The Word.*

December 2017

Paradise Perspective

And so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:17,18; EHV)

In the Bible the word *therefore* usually indicates that we are to apply some teaching that the Lord has given to us in his word to the way we live. That holds true in the words from 1 Thessalonians above. Paul concludes his explanation of what is going to happen on judgment day (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) with the triumphant words "And so we will always be with the Lord."

What a way to end! But he's not finished. He doesn't leave us in the heavenly heights to gaze into eternity. No, he brings us back down to the nitty-gritty of daily living and says, "Encourage one another with these words."

How we Christians need to be encouraged by the sure hope of heav-

en! All too often we attend our worship services on Sunday but don't let what we hear encourage us during the rest of the week. We regularly hear how Christ has changed both our earthly and eternal lives. We boldly proclaim, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," but the power of that statement too often seems to remain behind in the church building after we leave.

"We will always be with the Lord." How can that assurance not make a difference in our lives? That one statement alone tells us that regardless of which of life's storms we're passing through, Jesus is going to get those who believe in him as Savior to the other side. For as idealistic and simplistic as it sounds, Paul's words announce the incredible truth that serves as the rock-solid foundation of our earthly lives: For the believer, in the end things are going to work out! We're going

to be in heaven!

Maybe the reason we Christians often lose our spiritual strength is that we have let go of the encouragement of eternal life. Maybe we've been fooled into thinking that living for eternity means giving up life today. But that isn't true! The truth is that we are not prepared to live until we are prepared to die.

When our outlook on daily life is filtered through the hope of heaven, we know what is important here in our daily lives. We can live each joyful moment without fear. We can live each sad and difficult moment knowing it is only temporary and will give way to eternal joy. The result of living with a paradise perspective is to live life the way Jesus meant when he said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10; EHV).

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Special points of interest:

- * Please note that our Children's Christmas Eve Worship (BRF) will be at 10 a.m. on Dec. 24
- * A new Bible Study will start in December

Council Meeting Summary

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes Summary
November 20, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting opened at 6:00p.m. with Pastor Neumann leading us in a short devotion. The lesson was part of a series of devotions based on different terms of the Bible that are rich in meaning, heard often, and often not fully explained. Today's Term was FELLOWSHIP.

ELDER'S REPORT

Transfer In: Steve Kirsch from St. Johns, Lewiston, MN

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor reviewed a statistical report for the month of October.
Stewardship Recap-62 members attended (60 time and talent sheets filled out).
A new Bible Class titled "The Five Solas of the Reformation" will be starting in December.
Christmas Crafts for Kids-25 kids attended with 14 non-members.
Mark Mueller continues to go out to a group home for Jesus Cares Ministry
Mission Festival-Pastor asked if we want to have a specific mission in mind when we have Mission Festival services where we don't bring in an outside preacher/presenter
Christmas Eve Children's service will be held at 10:00am at BRF.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Scott presented Cody's financial report showing a net loss of \$4,830.65 through the end of October.
We received a reimbursement of \$338 from the Western Wisconsin District towards the bus for the trip to Madison for the Reformation Service.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Outreach

Dave K reviewed Faith's Vision Timeline for the next 10 years. This will be presented for approval at the January Congregation

Continued on page 3

BIRTHDAYS

Garrett Spaude	12/01	Noelle Kiesow	12/20
Annette Markhardt	12/04	Elaine Fatla	12/24
Jerry Eggen	12/11	Nicole Kiesow	12/28
Aron Bue	12/11	Avah Reetz	12/30
Toni Anderson-Granahan	12/14	Jeremiah Spaude	12/31
Bill Yanke	12/18		



Bible Study Opportunity

We will continue our celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation with a new Bible Study that takes a look at the 5 "Solas" of the Reformation.

No, that isn't a misprint! We will look at 5 of them. Come learn what Sola

Scriptura; Sola Fide; and Sola Gratia mean...and come find out which other two are included.

This Bible Class will begin on Wednesday, December 13 at 7 p.m. in Black River Falls and Sunday, December 10 at 11 a.m. in Cataract.



Children's Christmas Eve Service Practice

Practice for the Children's Christmas Eve Service will start Sunday, November 26, and continue on December 3, 10, and 17.

The children practice during the regular Sunday school and Bible Class

hour.

On these Sunday's there will be no adult Bible Study in Black River Falls.

There will be no Sunday morning Bible Class in Black River Falls on the Sunday's the children are practicing.

Time and Talents

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." The truth of that passage from Romans 12 was made evident in the Time & Talents sheets that were filled out at the Stewardship Bible Class this past month. We rejoice at all the willing hearts and hands.



The sheets are already being put to use, and we plan to continue to use them in the future.

Lutheran Mobile Clinic (CMM)

Lilongwe, Malawi November, 2017



“Do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

Halloween might conjure up images of scary things like vampires or haunted houses or fun things like carving pumpkins, costumes and candy. Although Malawi does not celebrate Halloween, vampires are on everyone's mind.

Rumors, originating from Mozambique, about blood sucking and the existence of vampires began circulating in the southern region of Malawi in September. Since then fears have risen and people lashed out. There have been many instances of angry mobs carrying out vigilante justice via stoning and burning of those suspected of being or harboring bloodsuckers. Due to the tense state of things in the southern region, many international organizations such as Peace Corps, US Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations, and the World Food Programme have pulled their employees and suspended their programs. At this time, the central region of Malawi, where Lutheran Mobile Clinic operates its four clinic sites has not been affected, but we remain on high alert.

Belief in witchcraft is widespread throughout Malawi and is deeply intertwined within their culture. While a majority of Malawians would call themselves Christians, they may still hold onto these beliefs of witchcraft and local traditions. The Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA) has 136 churches, which seek to share the message of the gospel and our salvation through Jesus Christ. What a special time for us to be celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation throughout Malawi in the LCCA churches!

Clinic Administrator, Amanda Artz, and I, went to Mtima Woyera (Clean Heart) church at our Msambo clinic site that hosted the 500th celebration in the central region. Congregations throughout the central region all came together to join in worship and fellowship. We heard many choirs, both children and adults, raise their songs of praise. It was a very different experience than going to church in town. The service was outside; many people were sitting on the ground; those who lived in the surrounding area pumped water from the borehole nearby. Some passersby stopped to listen to the choirs. After pumping water, some even sat to continue listening to the church service. What an amazing opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those coming for their daily water. I pray in the southern regions where the fear of blood sucking and vampires is high, that the other churches had the same opportunity to witness to their communities, to help dispel the rumors, and to lift each other up in Christ.

Your Sister in Christ,
Amanda Oswalt
Nurse In Charge
Lutheran Mobile Clinic
Lilongwe, Malawi

“Belief in witchcraft is widespread throughout Malawi...”

Meeting. The Council offered their support for the Faith Vision Timeline as presented. The Outreach Committee believes it would be a good idea to hold a Healthy Marriage Seminar in La Crosse. Cost of seminar and hotel to be covered for all attendees by a grant donated by a WELS group. It will be held March 9th-11th in 2018.

OLD BUSINESS

Church computer - Pastor will continue looking for a computer to replace the current one.

The council discussed potential candidates for the two council positions that will need to be filled

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. with Pastor leading us in the Lord's Prayer. The next Church Council meeting will be at Cataract at 6:00 p.m. on December 18th. The next Congregational meeting will be at BRF on January 28th 1:00pm.

Recorded by Brad Rahmlow

“A Healthy Marriage Seminar”
March 9-11, 2018

Christmas & New Year's Eve Worship Times

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – Children's Christmas Eve Service: Our children will lead us in worship. A “Sola” Christmas – focusing on the “Solos” of the Reformation will be the focus of our 10 a.m. worship in Black River Falls.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24 – Christmas Eve Service: At 7 p.m. we will have a **candlelight Christmas Eve service** in Cataract. We will use the well-known hymn “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” to help us ponder the joy and significance of Christmas.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 - Christmas Day: We will worship at 8 a.m. in Black River Falls and 9:45 a.m. in Cataract. We will answer the question – “**What Is The Story Of Christmas?**”

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31 - New Year's Eve: We will worship and celebrate Holy Communion at 6:30 p.m. in Cataract as we close out 2017. As we do, we will also begin the New Year with the prayer: “**Father, Let Me Dedicate This Year To You.**”

Children's
Christmas Eve
Service
10 a.m.

Ladies of Faith Advent Social

All ladies are invited to attend the Advent Social and homemade treat exchange on Sunday, December 3, at 2:00 p.m. in Black River Falls.

After the devotion, those interested may participate in a homemade cookie/candy 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!



Ladies Aid Potluck & Gift Exchange

The Ladies Aid will have their annual potluck and gift exchange on Saturday, December 16 at 12 p.m. in 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.



WHITE ELEPHANT CHRISTMAS PARTY

Faith's Social Harbor, also known as FiSH, is a social group sponsored by our congregation. It organizes activities for adults - single or married - looking for an opportunity to have fun and build friendships with other adults in our congregation.

FiSH invites you to a White Elephant Christmas Party on Thursday, December 7th starting at 6:00 pm at Faith in Black River Falls.

Please bring an appetizer to share and a wrapped white elephant gift to exchange. Punch and dessert will be provided

What is a white elephant gift?

A white elephant gift is 'something unusual; you purchased, or were given, that has value to someone, somewhere. You've never used this item but can't throw it away. White elephant gifts could include dime store perfumes,

last years calendar, diapers when you don't have kids, lotions/body sprays that you don't like, unused wedding gifts, etc. The more creative



you are the more interesting the gift exchange will be.

We look forward to seeing you at the FiSH Christmas party; and feel free to invite a friend.

YOUTH GROUP MEETING

The Youth Group meets next on Sunday, December 17, 2 p.m. at our Black River Falls location.



FROM THE LIBRARY

Look in our church library located in the Fellowship Hall at the BRF location for these Advent/Christmas devotion books.

- Celebrate Jesus at Christmas
- Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus
- Celebrate While We Wait
- Martin Luther's Christmas Book

In the Bible Story and Children Activity sections of the library, you will find these Advent/Christmas books for children.

- The First Christmas Night
- Christmas Stories for Bed-time
- A King Is Born
- Keeping Christ in Christmas
- The Jesus Tree
- Make a Christmas Memory
- Before and After Christmas
- A Time for Christmas

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

To return, put the book/DVD/CD into the basket on the shelf and cross out your entry in the notebook.



Christmas Decorating

Black River Falls—Saturday, December 2 @ 9 a.m.

In Cataract—Sunday after service on December 3

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



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 Pastor Neumann either in person or at the following email address: pastorjoelneumann@gmail.com. In January, a new individual will take over the organization and publication of the newsletter. Please keep an eye on the announcements in the bulletin.

Newsletter deadline: The submission deadline is the next-to-the-last Sunday of each month. December 23 is the deadline for the January, 2018 newsletter.