

MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS THIS MONTH

Ladies Aid

Thursday—January 7 @ 12:30 p.m. at Linda Jessie's

Elders Meeting

Thursday – January 7 @ 6 pm in Black River Falls

Ad Hoc Child Protection

Saturday—January 9 @ 9 a.m. in Black River Falls

Ladies of Faith

Tuesday—January 12 @ 6 p.m. in Black River Falls

Vision Timeline Meeting

Thursday—January 14 @ 6 p.m. in Black River Falls

Church Council Meeting

Thursday—January 14 @ 6 p.m. in Black River Falls

Youth Group

Sunday—January 17 @ 2 p.m. in Black River Falls

Faith Teachers Meeting

Sunday – January 24 @ 6 pm in Black River Falls

Congregational Meeting

Sunday – January 31 @ 12 pm in Cataract



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

N6774 Acorn Ave.
Sparta, WI 54656

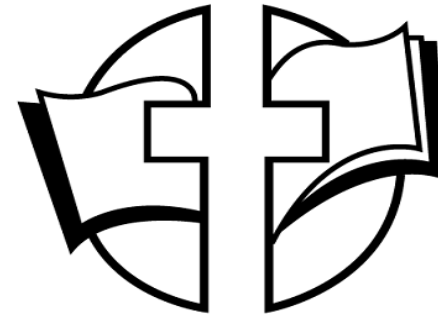
Phone: 715-284-0772
Pastor: Joel Neumann

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

JANUARY 2021

Everything that exists has attributes or characteristics. They are what help to define something. God has attributes as well. This year in our newsletter articles we are going to take a look at some of the attributes of God. As we consider his attributes, we will be considering God's own essence. As we consider his attributes, we must admit that many times we are confronted by mysteries beyond our full comprehension. Yet with that said, we listen to his Word, marvel at his attributes, and believe.

OUR GOD IS...INFINITE

"You are!"

"No, you are!"

"Yeah? Well, you are times a gazillion!"

Katie knew that gazillion was going to be tough to beat, but thinking hard she finally proclaimed: "Oh yeah? Well, you are ... to infinity!"

His jaw dropped because Joey knew his sister had him beat. How could he compete with infinity?

Simply put, infinity means stretching on and on, without any end. When something is infinite it has no boundaries. It is unlimited and immeasurably great. The Bible helps us understand the concept as it describes God. "Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the LORD. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:24). There is only One who is everywhere, who always has been, who always will be, who had no beginning, and who will have no end. That is God. God wants us to feel good about



him being infinite.

As we begin a new year, it can be great to know that God is always with us. Wherever the year takes us, God will be there too. The comfort of God's unending presence is ours through faith in his Son, Jesus. As the Apostle Paul says: "In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence" (Ephesians 3:12).

God knows everything we think, everything we do, and most importantly, he knows everything we need. In fact, God already took care of our greatest need. He sent his infinite Son to be our Savior! Trust him.

Joey and Katie challenged each other with the concept of infinity. This year, make the resolution to learn more about the only one who can truly change your life so you have comfort that will last...to infinity!

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.

JANUARY WORSHIP NEWS

- ✦ Monday evening worship services WILL continue. They are at 6:30 pm in Black River Falls. (Please note: if you have concerns about getting together in large gatherings, this would be an excellent opportunity for you to still gather around God's Word and receive Holy Communion in a much smaller gathering)
- ✦ Facebook Live continues. It is live during the Black River Falls service each morning. That means **8 a.m.** It is uploaded to our YouTube channel later on Sunday.

January Anniversary

Chris + Dawn Manske 1/24

January Birthdays

- Kelly Rahmlow 1/1
- Candy Janke 1/1
- Cheyenne Bue 1/11
- Dale Timm 1/13
- Jerry Haas 1/14
- Jesody Heller 1/19
- Avery Rahmlow 1/21
- Joe Southwood 1/24
- Charlene Fisher 1/25
- Laura Mueller 1/26
- Ella Rahmlow 1/28
- Cayson Fatla 1/30
- Cathy Morgan 1/30

Library Corner

Little Visits at Bedtime by Dr. Mary Manz Simon is in the Bible Story section of our church library located in the fellowship hall at our BRF location. It's collection of 105 devotions could easily fit into a bedtime routine. They work well for children ages 3 to 7. Each devotion contains a Bible verse, an everyday situation story, a prayer and questions.

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



This We Believe: Questions and Answers*

Q: Since there are so many religions and different gods in each religion, how can we be confident that our God is the true God?

A: As you study the teachings of world "religions," it soon becomes evident that Christianity is unique. All other religions are based on man's best guesses with the guidance of only nature and conscience. In one way or another those religions put the burden on us to earn our own salvation with God. For example, the Muslim worshiper strives to give Allah obedience (Islam means "submission" or "obedience"). The Buddhist monk seeks to rise above this world's evils by his devotion to meditation. All other world religions ask sinners to make themselves right with God by their own efforts.

On the other hand, Christianity alone offers a completely different solution. Only Christianity teaches that being right with God is God's gift to us, not man's gift to God. Only Christianity teaches that God became man, not to teach us how to rise to him but to lift us up by his grace to himself. Christianity is not just one selection among many similar entrees on the world's religious smorgasbord. Its unique message testifies to its unique origin—a miraculous revelation by the true God. God has revealed the one saving truth that "no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived...but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit" (1Corinthians 2:9,10).

Finally, the Holy Spirit himself works through the Word to convince us that the God who inspired Scripture is the one true God. Because this God gives us forgiveness and eternal life, we trust that his words are reliable and true.

Q: Are we unloving or intolerant when we proclaim that everyone who does not worship the triune God is actually worshipping a false god or a god who does not exist?

A: James tells us, "Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins" (5:20). We do not label a parent as unloving who points out danger to children. To point out an error in belief that could eventually condemn someone to an eternity apart from God is neither unloving nor intolerant. In fact, it can save someone from eternal death.

On the Last Day, every person who has ever lived or is living is going to bow before Jesus of Nazareth and confess him to be the true God and Lord (Philippians 2:10,11). Those who have believed in him will do this with joy and delight. Those who have not known him or have rejected him will do this with terror and sadness. How important it is that we share the simple truth that Jesus spoke in John 17: "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (verse 3). On that Last Day, no one will label as unloving or intolerant the truth that there is no other God than the triune God. It will simply be clear to everyone as the truth that gives eternal life.

*The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, of which our congregation is a member, first printed a small booklet titled "This We Believe" in 1967. This booklet publicly summarizes the main teachings of our church body. In 2006, a "companion book" was written titled "This We Believe: Questions and Answers." This book takes each summarizing statement in "This We Believe" and breaks it down into a question and answer format, expanding on and explaining the truths of each statement. It is from this book—"This We Believe: Questions and Answers"—that the above information is taken.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Brad presented a financial report showing a net gain of \$12,790.56 through the end of November.

Brad also pointed out that without the PPP loan and other avoided costs due to shut downs, our balance through the year would be -\$17,000. MSC to accept financial report for November, 2020.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Brad Markhardt gave an oral report concerning the Outreach Committee's work. Of special note: he reminded us of the marriage moments that are available through the synod as well as the Christmas card recycle program.

Scott Templeton gave an oral report concerning the Property Committee's work. Of special note: members of the committee will be cleaning and sealing lights in the BRF location.

OLD BUSINESS

Scott reported that the entirety of the PPP loan has been officially forgiven.

Council reviewed equipment quotes that would allow for proper live streaming and projection at the BRF location. A final decision was tabled as installation would not be able to be done until partway through the new year.

Garrett Jessie and Tyler Jessie will be nominees for church council, 2 more prospects will be approached.

Council reviewed the vision timeline. Each council and outreach committee member will come to the next council meeting with 5 of their top picks from the visions of the church in 10 years from now to discuss. This vision timeline meeting is open to all of the members of the congregation. The meeting will take place at the beginning of the next council meeting on Thursday, January 14. The vision timeline portion will go from 6-7 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Church services will look mainly the same for January as well, continuing social distancing guidelines and Monday night services.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm with Pastor leading us in the Lord's Prayer.

The next Council Meeting will be held in BRF January 14th, at 6pm

Recorded by Garrett Jessie

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Do you exchange Christmas cards? Many of us do. What do you do after you have read them and the season of Christmas is over? Do you throw them out? If you do, this year we would love to take them off of your hands. Lisa Treptow is thinking ahead and would like to make use of old Christmas cards for a craft idea next year. So, if you would be willing to bring old ones to church (if you don't want us to read the message just bring the front of the card). There will be a box at both of our locations for you to drop them into. Thank you.



LUTHER A TEACHER AND DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY

In 1508 Luther was sent by Dr. Staupitz to Wittenberg to be one of the teachers at the new university in that town. From now on to the end of his life, Wittenberg was his home. Luther made the university at Wittenberg famous. The people soon saw that he was an able teacher. The students came to his classes in large numbers, because they discovered that he could explain the Word of God better than anyone else. Luther took great pains to acquaint his pupils with the teachings of the Bible. By studying and teaching the Scriptures, he came to understand them better each day.

One day he was told to go into the pulpit of the church and preach a sermon. He was afraid to do this, but he had to obey. The people were astonished when they heard him preach the Word of God. Their other priests had not been doing this, but instead had only been telling them stories about the saints and talking about the good works they were to do to be saved. Soon the people came in such numbers to hear Luther that he had to be given the biggest church in Wittenberg. This was the Castle Church.

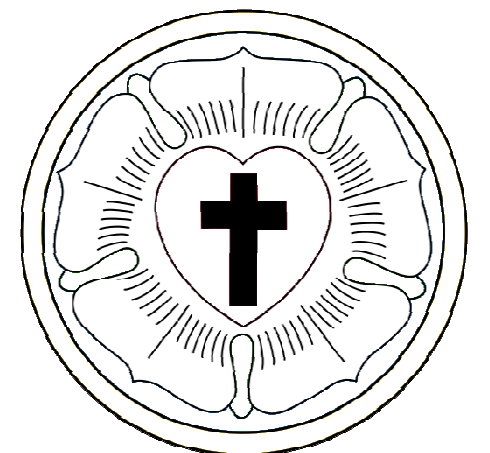
In 1510 Luther had to go on foot to far-away Rome to take care of some important matters at the Pope's court for the order of the monks to which he belonged. He was eager to see the "Holy City," as all Catholics call Rome. But he was deeply shocked by what he saw there. The Pope and the priests were very ungodly. Luther was still a good Catho-

lic, and he hoped that his visit to Rome would shorten his punishment in what the Catholic Church called purgatory (a false teaching that the Bible does not teach). But the more he tried to earn salvation, for instance, by visiting

the so-called "holy places" in Rome, the more the words of the Bible kept ringing in his ears, "The just shall live by faith." In the summer of 1511 he returned to Wittenberg a much wiser man. In later years he was glad that he had been in Rome and has seen with his own eyes that Rome was a very wicked city.

By this time Luther had become widely known and honored for his learning. In the fall of 1512, at a special celebration held at the uni-

versity, Luther was given the degree of Doctor of Divinity. On this occasion he had to promise that he would always teach the Scriptures faithfully and defend them against all false doctrine. Five years later this promise forced him to step forth and show the world that the teachings of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church were contrary to the Bible.





THE HANDIWORK

Introduction

Ephesian 2: 10 (NIV) For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Zambia is blessed because it has proclaimed Jesus Christ publicly by declaring the country to be a Christian Nation. It is the unmerited favor of God toward man that today we can speak of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ came and did all the work for us to be redeemed from the power of Satan, sin, and eternal death. Indeed, we are justified by faith alone. The work of salvation was completed on the cross by Jesus Christ. He then reminds us that, as children of God, we are his handiwork, created for Himself to spread the gospel. The Lutheran Mission Rural Health Centre is one such platform where Christians can demonstrate Christ's love through acts of faith—this is done by the clinic staff, Pastors and others in United States of America under the leadership of the Central Africa Medical Mission Committee. God demonstrated his love to all the people of the earth through the life and work of his son Jesus. He desires that we show our faith in him with works of love.

Therefore, besides the good news of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are able to bring a lot of smiles because of the good works done around the Lutheran Mission clinic. Mwembeshi has been in the midst of the hardship that came with Covid 19. Gifts like clothes, pens, pencils, pill bottles, baby blankets, and operational funds have helped us care for people. Imagine a baby born at the clinic without clothes from the parents who cannot afford them, but, being helped by someone that took the time to make a dress or buy clothes for these babies. Indeed, we are a team that will strive to support the gospel ministry in the Lutheran Church. It is the good will from so many people who have supported the work of God. Glory and honor be to God for the favor given to us.

In conclusion

We need to stand firm in this troubled world and witness the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We can do this from our homes all the way to our working environments. Sometimes it may appear to be a challenge. But God grant us the spiritual wisdom to take a deep reflection of our calling in whatever area God has placed us, be it a husband, wife, medical staff, or position of leadership.

As Lutheran Mwembeshi Rural Health Centre we wish you a Happy Advent & Christmas.

Blessings to you.

Alisad Banda

Clinic Administrator- Zambia

**Article edited by Pastor Neumann*

FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES SUMMARY

December 15, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting opened at 6:00 pm with Pastor Neumann leading us in a devotion focused on Simeon from Luke 2:25. He asked the question – How would you want God to describe you?

Attendance: Pastor Neumann, Garrett Jessie, Dale Jessie, Dave Spaude, Kirk Goetzka, Rick Trep-tow (by speaker phone), Scott Templeton, Brad Markhardt, Brad Rahmlow

Overview of the agenda accepted and adopted with one change – to move discussion on the vision timeline to Old Business

ELDER'S REPORT

A recommendation from council to the voters to ratify the transfer **into** Faith of Eric and Julia Smith from our WELS congregation in Hastings, Nebraska was made. Moved. Seconded. Con-firmed. (MSC)

A recommendation from council to the voters to ratify the removal of the Bedell family Jennifer, Chris, McKenzie and Jaden (Ethan) from membership was made. We have made every attempt to contact them and we are no longer able to serve them. MSC

Lord willing, and as long as COVID concerns have died down, the elders plan to use the Synod's Welcome Home material in the fall of 2021.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Pastor presented a statistical report for the month of November. The average worship attendance in November was 63 compared to 74 in October.

Pastor reviewed the gospel specific ministries that are taking place at Faith: Bible Studies; Youth Ministry; Prison Ministry; and upcoming special services

There will be a pulpit exchange between Pastor Neumann and Pastor Van Kampen (from St. Paul, Tomah) on Sunday, December 27th. Because of this there will be no service on Monday, Decem-ber 28th.

Council briefly discussed whether or not the normal Lenten rotation should take place this year be-cause of COVID concerns. The discussion was tabled until next month, including a discussion on whether we should have the simple suppers before and after services.

Faith's Church Council reviewed the current financial position of the Church at the recent meeting compared to last year. At the end of the 3rd quarter 2019 we had a shortfall of -\$640 compared to 2020 3rd quarter where we show +\$13,067. Keep in mind that we did receive a PPP loan of \$20,272, which is included in our income this year. Additionally we had a reduction in budgeted expenditures due to COVID cancellations. Without these changes in 2020, we would have had a shortfall of -\$17,000 for the year.

We thank God for the blessings we have received in this challenging year. Please prayerful-ly consider the comments above as you plan your offerings at the end of this year and into 2021.