

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
753 N. CALUMET AVE.  
VALPARAISO, IN 46383

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WWW.FAITHLUTHERAN.ORG

*Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community*



## ON THE WAY TO THE MANGER

**Micah 5:2-5a** But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. <sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.

Time. A lot of time passed from the time when mankind's sin first brought about the need for a Savior, to when our Savior arrived in the flesh. So what was happening during that time? Was God sitting idly by watching the whole thing unfold? Certainly not. Our study of *The Story* so far this year has once again been showing us that God has been moving and active in the world from beginning to end. Starting with His promise to Adam and Eve and to other faithful believers as well, step by step the "one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." has been at work and on his way to be our Savior. The time of waiting for this savior was not always easy. As we have learned in the first act of *The Story* and will learn further in act two, the nation of Israel and its people were often "given up" to feel some of the consequences of their sin. However, this did not mean that God had abandoned them. Instead He was pointing them to the need for the Savior who was to come.

Have you ever wondered what was it like for those who believed and tried to follow God during this time of waiting? What struggles, emotions, distractions, and spiritual mismessages swirled around them and in their own heads, as they waited for a Savior? What kept them on track or at least hoping in the Lord, as they lived their lives and looked to the future? Is what they experienced all that different from what we experience now, as we put our trust in the Lord in our daily lives and await His return?

During this Advent Season I hope you will take some time each week, as part of your devotional practice, to ponder what was it like for several of the people we often talk about this season. What was it like for Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, John the Baptist, the shepherds, and others on the way to the manger and to the Christ Child? Contemplate your own path to the manger and the Lord, who was, and is, and is to come. What has that path looked like and where is going? Or more importantly to whom is it leading? Then join us Wednesdays and at other worship services throughout this Advent and Christmas season, as we meditate on some of those same questions, think about the individuals and what they mean for us as believers, walking together on the way to the manger and what comes next.

**A Note of Thanks:** Christmas and the season leading up to it is a time for remembering the importance of constantly counting our blessings and giving thanks. Normally in my November newsletter article, I offer a note of thanks to all of you who serve the Lord so faithfully in this congregation. Since I did not have the opportunity to do that last month, I want to do it here. Thank you for all of your efforts, your service, your financial support, and for all that you do to be the hands and feet of God here in this place, this community, and in the world. So much of God's work is done in and through His people, and I am grateful every day that we walk, work, and support each other together in this place.

On a related note, thank you to all of you who have sent cards, offered prayers, and have ministered to me during some health challenges. Your care, compassion, and encouragement to do what I need to do in order to be the best I can be in and for God's kingdom are a powerful blessing. Thank you for all your continued encouragement, support, and prayer for myself, our staff, our leadership, and our congregation, as we live together in mission. May the Lord be our strength and peace this holiday season and always. Amen.

In Christ,

*Pastor Eric Schoech*

Pastor Eric Schoech



**If you are a Member who is 70 ½ or Older be aware:**

Donors who are 70 1/2 or older have a unique way to maximize some of your charitable giving. The IRS allows an otherwise taxable distribution from an IRA to be made directly to a qualifying charity like Faith Lutheran Church, with some benefit to the donor. The details:

- **Required Minimum Distributions** (RMDs) are Taxable income individuals must receive from an IRA once they reach the age of 70 ½
  - **Qualified Charitable Distributions** (QCDs) are distributions made directly from the IRA to a Charity. Making a gift in this way lowers the donor's income from RMDs, thus reducing their federal tax liability even if the donor does not itemize deductions.
- The Indiana Department of Revenue and the Internal Revenue Service have determined that

- A QCD **Does** count toward a donors annual RMDs, and
  - A gift made through a QCD **Is** eligible for the 50% tax credit
- If you would like further explanation or to take advantage of this opportunity, please talk to Ben Fryman.

**FAITH LADIES CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

**Please join us!**  
**Wednesday, December 4,**  
**11:30am at Dish Restaurant.**

**Sign up in the Narthex or call the office (462-7684)**



**Care Committee Project**

**During the month of December Faith's Care Committee will be sending cards to shut-ins in our congregation. We want to remember those in our church family who are not always able to worship with us.**

**If you would like to help with this project, there will be a Christmas tree in the Narthex with names and addresses of folks we want to remember with a "Thinking of You" or a Christmas card.**

**Questions? See Linda Berner or Nancy Kickbush.**



**Our Children's Christmas Service will be held on Sunday, December 8 at 9:00am followed with the Greening of the Church. Please join us!**

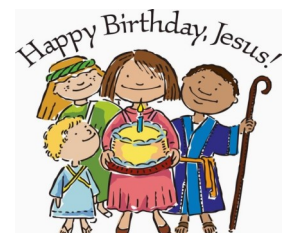


**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

<b>Linda Berner</b>	<b>Dec. 1</b>
<b>David Chambers</b>	<b>Dec. 7</b>
<b>Christian Nicholson</b>	<b>Dec. 8</b>
<b>Evelyn Bradshaw - (Happy 100!!!)</b>	<b>Dec. 9</b>
<b>Joseph Price</b>	<b>Dec. 10</b>
<b>Cecil Leffert</b>	<b>Dec. 10</b>
<b>Kathi Busch</b>	<b>Dec. 15</b>
<b>Barb Prange</b>	<b>Dec. 17</b>
<b>Liam West</b>	<b>Dec. 20</b>

**If we have left out your birthday please call the office at 462-7684.**

**In Sunday School News—We are rehearsing for our Children's Christmas Program on December 8. For our winter quarter service project we will be collecting for the Porter County Animal Shelter (November 17-March1). And family and friends are cordially invited to "Happy Birthday Jesus" on December 15.**



## THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

*"I Am the Bread of Life"*  
John 6:35

Do you ever have those times when you are hungry, but can't decide what you want? You stare into the frig or the freezer or the pantry and can't settle on any specific food. You take a nibble of some chips, but then feel guilty and try some grapes. Then you remember the cookies and try one of those. But the hunger remains, and you are again staring into the frig. Nothing seems to satisfy that food craving.

Do you ever have those times when your heart is hungry? You do know what it is hungry for but aren't sure where to find heart food. Maybe a trip to the mall with an overspent credit card. Maybe that will numb the ache. Maybe a night out, but the other side of the bed will still be empty when you come home. Maybe a Whopper with a large fry on the side. While that may satisfy the grumbling stomach, it won't fill the emptiness in your heart.

When Jesus said that he was the bread of life, he wasn't just talking about his care for our physical hunger. He also cares about emotional and spiritual hungers. He feeds thousands with fish and bread. He casts demons from a man trapped by mental illness. He meets at night with a man to tell him of the Spirit and being born again into the kingdom of God.

Jesus wants to be our bread. He seeks and finds our emptiness and loneliness. He brings a bread that satisfies our longings. The hunger of our lives is fulfilled when we know Christ and through him, know God.

But it doesn't stop with us being fed. For Jesus gives us more bread than we need. And we know what needs to be done with the extra.

The real 'bread (food) of God' is the baby in the manger. May we join with the shepherds to share that 'Bread' with everyone around us.

Merry Christmas!

*"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger."*

### DECEMBER CHOIR SCHEDULE

December 1; rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)

December 4; rehearsal, 7:45pm after Eve. Prayer (Wed.)

December 11; rehearsal, 7:45pm after Eve. Prayer (Wed.)

December 15; rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)

December 18; rehearsal, 7:45pm after Eve. Prayer (Wed.)

December 22; rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)

*December 24; sing, Christmas Eve 7:00pm*

*December 25; sing, Christmas Day 9:30am*



ADVENT EVENING PRAYER SERVICES ON  
WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 4, 11 and 18 at  
7:00pm will be followed by a time for fellow-  
ship and dessert.

For details see Fran Marton.

I bring you good tidings of great **joy**,  
which shall be to  
**all people**. For unto you  
is born this day  
in the city of David a **Saviour**,  
which is  
**Christ the Lord**.

⇒ Luke 2:10 & 11 ⇐

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Email:  
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**VCA CHILDREN'S  
CHRISTMAS  
PROGRAM**



All members, family  
and friends of Faith  
Lutheran are invited  
to VCA's Children's  
Christmas Program  
Friday, December 6,  
7:00 to 8:00pm.

**FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

The First Sunday in Advent, December 1, 9:00am Holy Communion  
The First Wednesday in Advent, December 4, 7:00pm Evening Prayer  
The Second Sunday in Advent, December 8, 9:00am Children's Service  
The Second Wednesday in Advent, December 11, 7:00pm Evening Prayer  
The Third Sunday in Advent, December 15, 9:00am Holy Communion  
The Third Wednesday in Advent, December 18, 7:00pm Evening Prayer  
The Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 22, 9:00am Morning Prayer  
The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord, December 24, 7:00pm Service of Lessons and Carols  
The Nativity of Our Lord, December 25, 9:30am Holy Communion  
The First Sunday after Christmas, December 29, 9:00am Holy Communion

*Unto Us  
a Child is Born*

