

FAITH MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

753 N. CALUMET AVE.

VALPARAISO, IN 46383

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WWW.FAITHMEMORIAL.NET

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



## New Beginnings!

**Revelation 21:5-7** *And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

As we start the New Year, we often talk about change and new beginnings. Recently, I came across a quote by author Maria Robinson that said, "No one can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending." Her point seems to be that no one can change the past or start from a truly clean slate. However, they can determine and take steps to make the future a better one. This got me thinking about what makes for a successful beginning or ending? Who is involved? Who determines when a beginning or ending will take place or what will happen in those initial or final moments? We all want to get off on the right foot, whether it is meeting a new person, a new job, a new year, or life in general.

Unfortunately, from the time we start something to the time it comes to an end, there are often bumps in the road. Sometimes, our best intentions, like New Year's resolutions, fizzle out or go terribly wrong. Other times, much to our surprise, what begins in disaster ends with something good. We like to think we have control, but many of our beginnings and endings are largely out of our hands. Babies at their birth, many elderly people as they get older, and most of us at the time of our death, usually have little control in those moments. Make no mistake, there are plenty of great things we can work at and be part of between the time we are born and the time we die. Yet how often do we truly see or determine the big picture?

So who does? Thank God that He is present and in control from beginning to end. A to Z, Alpha through Omega, God is there. Consider creation. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and *"it was good"* (Gen 1-2)! At the end of time, God will also replace this first heaven and earth with a *"new heaven and a new earth"* (Rev 21:1), and it too will be good! Sadly in the in-between time, we know that humanity has certainly made a mess of things. Try as we might to repair what our sin and selfishness have broken, there is little we can accomplish on our own. However, here too God is present.

The story of God's part in creation and our lives is not just the bookends. *"Behold,"* God says, *"I am making all things new."* Beginning to end, from before time and on into eternity, God sees His plan and process through. He has accounted for everything: our sin, our needs, His desire to give us a place as His children, the love, grace, and help we need in order to face life's challenges and ultimately live a blessed, abundant, and eternal life in Him. God has prepared and continues to take action on it all. Two significant parts of this we celebrate, beginning with Christmas and ending with Easter, but God is in it all. Each new beginning, each joyous or tragic ending, and everything in between, God is present and working all things for good. He meets us where we are at, determines and takes the steps to make our future a better one. Though some of our pasts and beginnings haunt and affect us on a daily basis, God is at work both in us and through us to change our reality. And while we can't clean the slate, God can. In Christ, even as we struggle now, God has already prepared for us an ultimate new and restored beginning which will have no end.

So what then do we do with the here and now? Do we just wait for that ultimate new beginning? Certainly not. God's presence in the here and now means that there are plenty of other beginnings, endings, and the time in-betweens for which God has great plans. Through the study of His Word, worship, and Spirit led action, God continues to open our eyes to the places He is at work and to call us to be a part of the things He is accomplishing for the good of all creation. Therefore, as we begin this new year, may we not only rejoice in the God who is making all things new from beginning to end, but rejoice in His making us a part of it.

In Christ,

*Pastor Eric Schoech*

P.S. Starting **Thursday, January 18, 2018**, Faith Lutheran Church will be setting out on another new beginning with **Thursday Prayer and Praise**. Worship begins at 6:15. This will be preceded by a time of food and fellowship at 5:15. A brief bible study will be offered following the worship. Our topic for the next several months will be on various **"Beginnings"** found in the Gospel of John and how they apply to our life today. You can support this endeavor in several ways which include (but are not limited to): 1) Invite others. 2) Attend yourself. 3) Pray for all those involved. 4) Help supply food. 5) Assist with worship or bible study.

If you have questions about the service or how you might be able to help in these or other areas please contact the church office or Pastor Schoech.

## STEM CONCERT AT FAITH

Mark Sunday, January 28, 9:00am on your calendars for something special during and after worship. The STEM Ensemble (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), from Valparaiso University, will be performing. This group was formed in the fall of 2015 and includes students who are both involved in STEM and music. Their first Midwest tour was this past spring, with the goal of encouraging middle and high school students to continue with music while pursuing a career in the STEM fields. The tour was successful and another one is planned for the spring. Funds come from the students' own pockets, so they could use some financial support. They will provide music as part of Sunday worship and then share a short concert after worship. A free-will offering will be taken at the door to support this musical ensemble.



## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ALL WHO ARE CELEBRATING THIS MONTH!**

Dick Knutson	January 3
Karen Martinsen	January 3
Jon Dunlap	January 13
Shirley Knutson	January 13
Ken Kehe	January 15



We don't want to leave anyone out! If we miss your birthday call the office at 462-7684 or sign up on the birthday calendar in the Narthex.



A new GriefShare support group begins here at Faith on January 16, from 10am-noon. The group will meet on Tuesdays for thirteen weeks. If you are interested in attending, speak with Becky Graef. If you know of someone who would benefit from this ministry, please share this information with them or have them call 462-7684 and ask for Becky.

Immanuel Lutheran in Valparaiso will also begin offering a GriefShare group beginning on Thursday, January 11, 2018 at 6:30pm. This seminar will be led by Pastor Steve Driver. For more information call 219-462-8207 or check their website: [www.immanuelvalpo.org](http://www.immanuelvalpo.org).

## SMALL GROUP NEWS

Works in Progress is starting on January 9. The group will be working through the small and large catechism. For more information on this group please see Mary Dunlap.

Mark Makers meets on the 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 here at church. Questions? See Marilyn Lindner

Women Wanting Wisdom will resume on Wednesday, January 17. See Deb Porter for details.

Sewing Seeds of Love meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month, 9:00am, in the sewing room downstairs at church. Contact Donna Cawby for details.



**Thursday Prayer and Praise  
"Beginnings" series  
starting January 18th, 2018  
6:15pm**



**Faith**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

## THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"The Future"

So what do you have planned for this New Year? Maybe there is a long awaited vacation. Or maybe you are renovating part of your home. Maybe it is a job change. Maybe a new car because of an accident. Maybe six weeks of rehab because of a broken bone. Maybe a smaller budget because of a pay cut.

We plan and dream and hope for the good things in life, but seldom want to plan for the bad. In the back of our mind, we know that difficult things can and do happen. We may even think about the possibilities of a down turn in our investments or the death of a loved one. We may even wake up in the middle of the night and wonder where we will find the money to repair the garage door or the weird noise in the car. We may worry about the family member who has changed or the child who is failing at school. How wonderful if all of our thoughts for this year and the years to come would be only focused on the good. Sadly, our thoughts often drift to the difficulties that may happen.

As we think and plan and dream for the future, do we ever think about who is already in the future. When we are imagining the beautiful vacation or the damaged car, how often do we see that God is already present in that event. Our Lord and Savior is a God of the past, present, and future. God is both outside of time as we know it, but also inside because of Jesus Christ. So, as we imagine and worry about the events to come, we can rest in the knowledge that God has been at work in our future. *"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."* Jeremiah 29:11. God knows what is going to happen in our lives. God knows what the devil will be doing tomorrow and next month and five years from now to lure us away from God.

So the next time we wake up in those dark hours of the night or are sitting in the waiting room of the hospital, we need to remember that God is not only with us right now, God has been at work in this event – our – future before we were born.

*"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose."*  
Romans 8:28

### SPRING 2018 CHOIR SCHEDULE

January 14:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
January 21:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
January 28:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
	<b>February 4: Sing, Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, 9:00am</b>
February 11:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
February 18:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
February 25:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
	<b>March 4: Sing, Third Sunday of Lent, 9:00am</b>
March 11:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
March 14:	Rehearsal, (Wed.) 7:45pm, right after Evening Prayer
March 18:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
March 21:	Rehearsal, (Wed.), 7:45pm, right after Evening Prayer
March 25:	Rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
March 28:	Rehearsal, 7:00pm-8:00pm, (Wed.) no Evening Prayer
<b>OR</b>	
March 31:	Rehearsal, 9:00am-10:00am (Saturday)
	<b>April 1: Sing, Easter Sunday, 8:00am and 10:45am</b>

### CHURCH SERVICE CANCELLATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

As we know, winter in Northwest Indiana can be challenging at best! There are several ways to check if church services are cancelled due to severe weather. Linda Berner will send an email to all members and friends that are on the prayer chain. If you are not on the prayer chain and would like an email, send her your email address ([berner21@comcast.net](mailto:berner21@comcast.net)). Notification of closing will be on two radio stations: **Indiana 105-105.5fm**, and the **Z-107.1fm**. If you don't have a radio or a way to receive email, please give your phone number to Bruce Lindner and he will call you if there is a service cancellation. Questions? See Linda Berner or Bruce Linder.



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Lutheran Church

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**JANUARY DATES TO  
REMEMBER**

**January 7**  
**Voters' Assembly**  
**10:30am**  
**(after Bible Study)**

**January 18**  
**Thursday Prayer &  
Praise**  
**6:15pm**

**January 28**  
**STEM Concert**  
**What's Happening**  
**(after church services)**

**FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

The Baptism of Our Lord, January 7, 9:00am, Holy Communion  
The Second Sunday after the Epiphany, January 14, 9:00am Morning Prayer  
The Third Sunday after the Epiphany, January 21, 9:00am Holy Communion  
The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, January 28, 9:00am, Morning Prayer  
The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 4, 9:00am, Holy Communion  
The Transfiguration of Our Lord, February 11, 9:00am, Holy Communion  
Ash Wednesday, February 14, 7:00pm, Holy Communion  
The First Sunday in Lent, February 18, 9:00am, Holy Communion  
The First Wednesday in Lent, February 21, 7:00pm Evening Prayer  
The Second Sunday in Lent, February 25, 9:00am, Morning Prayer  
The Second Wednesday in Lent, February 28, 7:00pm, Evening Prayer

