

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

(219) 462-7684

WWW.FAITHVALPO.ORG

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



Bound To Christ - Never Alone!

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:9-14)

Feelings of isolation are not good. Anyone who has felt the despair of being alone, or who has spent some time feeling all by themselves in crowded room, or who has tried to do more than one person's work all by themselves, can tell you that. We were not made to be by ourselves. Even in the Garden of Eden, the LORD God said, *"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."* (Gen 2:18) So God did.

Eventually, those two individuals became many, and although sin put a divide between people, and between man and God, still God's plan was not for man to be alone. After all, In our fallen state, we need companionship and help more than ever. Ecclesiastes expresses this clearly:

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him-- a threefold cord is not quickly broken. (Ecc 4:9-12)

I wonder, for how many of you, your cords are feeling pretty frayed? Our interactions these days just are not normal. Holiday plans and chances to reconnect with loved ones are being cancelled, modified, or done at a distance. For many there are less gatherings with friends, less special events, less hugs and Christmas cheer. I see people trying to make the best of it, but I also see and feel the emotional strain. I particularly see this in youth, single people, and those whose close support and emotional connections are outside their home. Extroverts, and those who are used to being active in the community have less outlets. Interactions of love like visiting at the nursing home or other ways to reach out or to be reached when in need, are a lot harder to come by. Add in those who have experienced the death of a loved one this year, or who already often feel isolated during the holidays and, well, you get my point. It is rough time for a lot of people.

Yet as frayed, or isolated as some of us may feel right now, it is important to remember that we are not alone. For at the heart of our relationships with each other is a third strand that cannot be broken. God's Word promises. ⁸ *It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed." (Deut. 31:8 ESV)*

In few places could the fulfillment of this promise be much clearer than at the manger, where, *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14 ESV)* Taking on our humanity, the Lord connected us further to himself. Later, this same Lord loved us enough to go to the cross, binding our sin to Himself. In his death, He defeated our sin and death. Then rising again, our Lord bound us to Himself once again in eternal life and holiness. Even now, while Christ has gone to prepare a place for us in eternity, we are still not alone, for our Lord, not limited by time and space, has promised each of us that, *behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matt. 28:20 ESV)*

Brothers and sisters, if you are feeling alone right now, I urge you to look to the manger and know that you are not alone. Your life is bound to Christ. HE is indeed with you. He wants you to be near to Him. He loves you, and so do I. If you are feeling frayed right now, need to feel Christ's love right now, or think you might know someone who does, reach out. I am here for you, your brothers and sisters in Christ are here for you, and most of all, even when others fall short or the world gets in the way, Christ is here for you. May His love and companionship flow over you and through you, now and forever. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Pastor Eric Schreck

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES.

Assuming the Covid situation is similar to what is happening now, we are trying to plan for the Christmas worship services. Therefore, we need a count of how many people plan/hope to attend inside worship on the 24th and 25th.

Based on these numbers, an additional service may be added to ensure social distancing. If conditions worsen, we may need to cancel some services or do all worship online.

Please respond to this survey to the church office by email (office@faithmemorial.net) or phone (462-7684).

Please respond no later than December 4.

Number of people (including guests) for Christmas Eve, 7:00pm.

Name: _____ Number: _____

Number of people (including guests) for Christmas Day, 9:30am.

Name: _____ Number: _____

A decision is still being made regarding Christmas Eve and Christmas Day church services.

If you have not done so, please take a moment to complete and return this survey in order to help us determine the best path. You may email your answers to office@faithmemorial.net or call the church office and leave a message (219) 462-7684.

CHILDRENS' CHRISTMAS PROGRAM AND GREENING OF THE CHURCH



Our Children's Christmas Program will be held on the third Sunday in Advent (December 13) during 9:00 church services. *The Greening of the Church* will follow at 10:15am.

If you are comfortable attending on this day, masks and social distancing will be in place. If you would rather not attend, the services will be streamed online as usual.



Linda Berner	December 1
Eric Berner	December 6
David Chambers	December 7
Christian Nicholson	December 8
Evelyn Bradshaw	December 9
Joseph Price	December 10
Kathi Busch	December 15
Barb Prange	December 17
Liam West	December 20
Margeaux Berner	December 20
Karl Berner	December 25

Happy Birthday to Faith members celebrating in December! If we have left out your birthday please call the office at 462-7684.

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER

Advent Evening Worship Services will be streamed on the 3 Wednesdays in Advent (December 2, 9 and 16). Advent Community Suppers have been cancelled this year. Be sure and check your Sunday bulletin for up-to-date announcements. Questions? Email the office at:

office@faithmemorial.net or call (219) 462-7684. Due to the covid crisis, office hours are a bit irregular, so if you do not get a person when you call please leave a message!



THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

*"We are an Ambassador for Christ."
2 Corinthians 5:20*

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, 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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." *Luke 2:8-17*

Shepherds, lowly shepherds, the first ambassadors for Christ. This Christmas, may we join the shepherds as they hear the angels' song; follow them to Bethlehem; gaze in awe and wonder at a baby in a manger; and share the good news of a Savior with all we meet.

Merry Christmas!

"So we are ambassadors for Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:20

VOTER'S MEETING 2020

Our annual voter's meeting was held on November 15, 2020 after church services.

The 2021 budget was presented and approved by the members in attendance, and the Board of Directors updated the congregation on upcoming services and events during this Covid crisis.

CONTINUE TO CHECK YOUR EMAIL

In this highly uncertain time, things can change rapidly. The most efficient, easiest way for the church to let you know of a change is through email. Using the addresses you have furnished, we have compiled an email list to let you know of any unforeseen or sudden changes. If you do not use email please call the office and leave your phone number and we will give you a call.

Holiday celebrations can make us acutely aware of our loved one's absence. Grief Share's "Surviving the Holidays" offers a way for those who are mourning the death of a loved one to plan for the holidays so that they can cope and celebrate. Built around a video and the discussion of key ideas, Cindy Boese will lead this 1 1/2 hour program on Sunday afternoon, December 6 from 2-4 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Valparaiso. Please contact the church office at 219-462-8207 ext. 210 or email churchoffice@immanuelvalpo.org if you plan to attend.



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Know someone who needs care?

Caring for others may look different these days, but it certainly hasn't stopped, nor has the need.

- If you know someone in need of pastoral care, including yourself, let pastor know.
- Continue to contact the prayer chain and ask for prayers from the church prayer team.
- Get creative....

1. Look for ways to help neighbors
2. Support families dealing with school challenges
3. Get a few people to sing outside a shut-in's window or
4. Visit them from a distance on a front or back porch while the weather is good.



FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

During the current covid 19 crisis, all services are held both in the church and in the parking lot. For parking lot services tune your radio to FM99.1. Wednesday Advent Services will be streamed on December 2, 9 and 16.

The First Wednesday in Advent, December 2, 7:00pm Evening Prayer (streamed)

The Second Sunday in Advent, December 6, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Second Wednesday in Advent, December 9, 7:00pm Evening Prayer (streamed)

The Third Sunday in Advent, December 13, 9:00am Children's Service

The Third Wednesday in Advent, December 16, 7:00pm Evening Prayer (streamed)

The Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 20, 9:00am Holy Communion

Christmas Eve (Service and times to be determined)

The Nativity of Our Lord (Service and times to be determined)

The First Sunday after Christmas, December 27, 9:00am Morning Prayer

