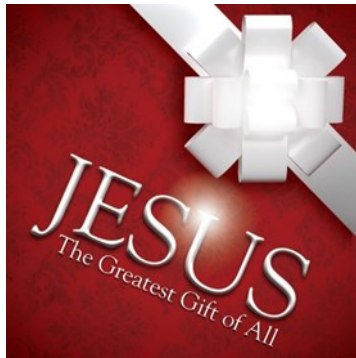


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
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VALPARAISO, IN 46383

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



The Greatest Gift of All

Luke 2:10-19 ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

For all of you fans of the Christmas carol, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" you may be interested to know that several different people have apparently decided to try and calculate the cost of the gifts in the song. In fact the PNC financial group has apparently taken up the task of creating the PNC Christmas Price Index, which tracks not only the current market value of your favorite gifts in this song, but also their change in value over last year (all in good fun of course). Prices range from a few hundred dollars for French hens or a partridge and a pear tree to several thousand dollars for the cost of dancers and various musicians (at union rate). Swans-a-swimming top out the list at \$13,125. The grand total comes to \$39,094.93, unless you plan to pay for each time the gifts are repeated in the song in which case you are on the hook for about \$170,609.46. That may be a little bit outside most of our Christmas budgets.

Fortunately, the most valuable gift we receive at Christmas is not found on any long or expensive shopping list. Instead, it is the message of the incredible gift that God has given to each of us, the gift of Jesus Christ our Savior. God's love and forgiveness found in Jesus are something that we could never hope to deserve or afford. Yet, this precious gift in humble wrappings opens our eyes to the kind of sacrifice and price that God is willing to pay for us and the way in which He loves us.

Even if we could, most of us are not about to give a \$170,609.46 gift to a co-worker or someone walking down the street. We probably would not even expect such a lavish gift from our true love, but God shows his incredible love for us in that while we were still sinners, (enemies of God) Jesus came into this world to be born, die, and rise for us (Rom 5:8). Now that is costly love on his part. That is true love. That is love to be celebrated together.

So this Christmas remember. It isn't about the shopping lists or a costly stack of gifts under your tree. One day, all of those things will be gone. Life is about what happens beyond the grave. Life is about knowing the God who made you and who gave you the greatest gift you will ever receive. With this in mind, I hope all of you will join with me in sharing and celebrating the greatest gift my true love ever gave to me and you with others throughout this Holiday Season. **I invite you, and encourage you to invite others to gather with us as we worship and give thanks to God for the gift of our Savior.**

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoech

Pastor Eric Schoech



Faith's VCA Commitment

Over twenty years ago, I was asked to be on the building committee for the new wing here at Faith. I found out that there was a thought that maybe we could use the space not only for more Sunday school rooms but for a future preschool. I was able to use my experience as a preschool teacher and a Sunday school superintendent and teacher to help design that kind of building. It was a great experience, yet a scary one. We built it and filled it! We just burned the mortgage a few months ago. We pulled together and accomplished something really great!

Yet one dream for the space had gone unfulfilled. At one point we did have a preschool that was interested in our building, but it did not work out at that time. We also realized it would cost too much to start one on our own. We always kept our hopes up and prayed that one day an already established group would find us.

Well that happened this spring with VCA. A lot of time and effort was put into preliminary negotiations. Representatives of Faith visited their facility, they visited ours, and many late meetings were held to check every aspect of this undertaking. It was decided that we would never know if it would work, if we did not commit. So we now have VCA in our building. It was not an easy transition, but with many more meetings and help from property and planning, we have gotten the building up to where we are now, waiting on the State to come in and make sure VCA is up to code.

Since moving in, the VCA had most of the summer to iron the kinks out. They marched in the Popcorn parade and have done other things to begin reaching out to people in this new location. We had another meeting before Sunday School started in September to iron out any questions on what VCA needed to move or what storage Sunday School needed. Remarkably things are going quite well.

Change is never easy, but I am so proud of the work Faith has done and the willingness that VCA has shown in accommodating things that need to be done so our Sunday School can function. Being part of a different preschool housed in a church, which is why I am on the preschool board, I ask that this congregation pray for and encourage the success of this endeavor. New endeavors always come with challenges and risks, but these are what lead to success, and I believe great things are possible if we step out in Faith.

There are so many ways that we can participate, which are not limited to putting in the fence, or installing a few more sinks. Great job on the fundraising by the way! We have retired teachers that could read a book to a child, or group of children. Maybe there is a subject you like and would like to share with the VCA kids. For example I love the space program and I would love to share pictures and a video on space. Pastor is also leading chapel with the kids. These are only a few of the ways that we can help nurture this new venture and let them know we care. Maybe we could also help purchase snacks or contribute to a book for each family about God. We as a church have invited the families to come the day we have the children's Christmas Service and stay and help with the greening of the church, maybe we could help the VCA teachers decorate their classrooms. A family fun night for the preschool is in the works also. There may also be some additional chances soon to help them make their overall program even that much better.

Most of us may not be at church during the week, when the children are here, but there are so many ways that we can support the VCA. I hope and pray that our church family can reach out in a way that is comfortable for each of you to Welcome and let Valparaiso Christian Academy know we love having them in our building and that they are part of our outreach into the community. So if you know someone who needs childcare let them know we have just what they need here at Faith!

Sincerely,
Dorothy Kehe

Christmas Caroling at Avalon Springs

Thurs. Dec. 13, at 6:00pm

2400 Silhavy Rd, Valparaiso

The confirmation class and Sunday school invite the members of Faith Lutheran to join us as we Christmas carol at Avalon Springs.

Connie Piltz, one of our members, is at this location.

We may also visit an additional location as time allows.

Those wishing to carpool will meet and leave from Faith by 5:30pm. Otherwise please be at Avalon prior to 6:00 pm.



BIRTHDAYS

Linda Berner	December 1
David Chambers	December 7
Christian Nicholson	December 8
Evelyn Bradshaw	December 9
Joseph Price	December 10
Cecil Leffert	December 10
Barb Prange	December 17
Liam West	December 20
Jesus	December 25



This year Faith's "Angel Tree" will provide assistance to the **Family and Youth Services Bureau's Tot Shop**. The Tot Shop provides incentives for families to engage in well-baby practices by providing essential baby items for those who participate. Parents earn coupons they can use to purchase all types of baby supplies by joining activities. A suggested list of items needed will be near the tree, and monetary donations are welcomed. Examples from the list are diapers, kid's toothpaste, rattles, digital thermometers, Desitin and Baby Magic. When you donate, please hang an angel on the tree.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

The family of long time Faith member Evelyn Bradshaw cordially invites you to join in a 99th Birthday Party Open House on Sunday, December 9 from 12-4. It will be held downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

"Advent . . ."

My Advent wreath is sitting on the island in my kitchen. It was purchased from the Terra Sancta Guild over thirty years ago. The wreath is polished bronze, with four candle holders on the circle and one in the center for the Christ candle. I happen to like the switch in liturgical colors from purple for Advent to blue, so four candles are blue, and the center candle is white.

As I look at the wreath, I have been remembering an Advent devotion that I heard many years ago. The Advent wreath has its origins hundreds of years in the past. When the Fall harvests were completed, the ground frozen and covered with snow, people would take one wheel from a wagon and bring it inside their homes. Wagons couldn't be used in deep snow, so a missing wheel wasn't a problem. The wheel was covered with pine boughs and candles were inserted.

The decorated wheel was a reminder that winter was a time to slow down, do simpler chores, and rest. But the wheel was also a promise that Spring would come again. The pine boughs were from trees that always remained green, and the candles brought the promise of the Spring Equinox and the brilliant sunshine to come.

What would happen if we took a wheel from our cars and set it inside our homes? Just let your imagination play with how different our lives would be! How would it affect us during this holiday season with all our regular duties and the extra preparations for Christmas?

Could the Advent wreath be a reminder of what really needs to happen in our lives? Could it be a way of encouraging us to slow down, simplify the chores we do, rest more, and spend more time with families and friends? Could that Christ candle in the center remind us that the baby in the manger needs to be the center of all that we are and all that we do?

If you have an Advent wreath, light it. If you don't, find a candle and light it. Use the light to remind you of what is important in this season and throughout our entire lives.

Blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!

children's
program



**PLEASE JOIN US
ON SUNDAY, DE-
CEMBER 9 AT
9:00AM FOR OUR
CHILDREN'S
CHRISTMAS SER-
VICE, FOLLOWED
BY GREENING OF
THE CHURCH FOR
THIS SEASON OF
ADVENT.**

EVENING PRAYER AND ADVENT SUPPERS

Supper will be at
6:00pm followed by
**Evening Prayer at
7:00** on the follow-
ing **Wednesdays** in
Advent:

- **December 5**
- **December 12**
- **December 19**



THE NCD TEAM invites you to keep a daily celebration journal to record evidence of God working in your life. It can be as basic as "God granted me another day" to an answer to prayer or an unexpected joy. On Sunday morning, we invite you to exchange a celebration from the week with 3 or 4 people during the greeting time

CHOIR SCHEDULE—DECEMBER

December 2: rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
December 5: rehearsal, 7:45pm, right after Evening Prayer (Wed.)
December 12: rehearsal, 7:45pm, right after Evening Prayer (Wed.)
December 16: rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
December 19: rehearsal, 7:45pm, right after Evening Prayer (Wed.)
December 23: rehearsal, 11:35am-12:05pm (Sunday)
December 24: sing, Christmas Eve, 7:00pm
December 25: sing, Christmas Day, 9:30am



WOMEN WANTING WISDOM—will meet January 16 in the church parlor at 6:30 to continue our study from the 5 People You Meet in Heaven. Our next chapter is "The Third Person Eddie Meets".

**Faith Lutheran
Church**

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Email:
office@faithmemorial.net



ADVENT WREATH

We have a brand new Advent Wreath this year which was given in loving memory of Donna J. Marton by Arpad, Fran and Donna's son Peyton.



FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The First Sunday in Advent, December 2, 9:00am Holy Communion
The First Wednesday in Advent, December 5, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Second Sunday in Advent, December 9, 9:00am Morning Prayer
The Second Wednesday in Advent, December 12, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Third Sunday in Advent, December 16, 9:00am Holy Communion
The Third Wednesday in Advent, December 19, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
The Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 23, 9:00am Morning Prayer
The Eve of the Nativity of Our Lord, Monday, December 24, 7:00pm Service of Lessons and Carols
The Nativity of Our Lord, Tuesday, December 25, 9:30am Holy Communion
The First Sunday after Christmas, December 30, 9:00am Holy Communion

