

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

(219) 462-7684

WWW.FAITHMEMORIAL.NET



Prepare the Way of the Lord!

Mark 1:2-8 ² As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, ³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ⁴ John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

From the time of Adam and Eve's fall into sin and no doubt long before, God was already preparing the way for Jesus to enter into this world to redeem, renew, and restore His wayward children to Himself. Throughout the Old Testament, we see God laying the ground work for the coming of Jesus. God's covenant with Abraham, God's promises to His people, God's Word spoken through the prophets, and God's will carried out even through people and nations who did not know Him or opposed him: all these things prepared the way for the coming of Christ and the salvation He would bring in His hands, words, and footsteps. It is the Lord Himself who prepared the way and continues to prepare the way.

This does not mean however that God does not call us to certain preparations of our own. John the Baptist's calling the people to repentance is one of God's clear calls of preparation to us. Baptism itself is another preparation, washing us of our sin and bringing us into God's family. Also, as we await Christ's return, God continues to prepare the hearts of believers, through the power of the Holy Spirit, both to receive Jesus and to become more and more like Him.

Martin Luther once observed that there were three "ingredients" that turned a man into a good theologian. These three ingredients are summarized in three Latin words:

meditatio (meditation, or study of God's Word)

oratio (prayer)

tentatio (testing, or trials)

What is true of theologians is true of all Christians. God uses these three things—meditation, prayer, and testing—to draw us closer to Him as we wait for the day of Christ's return.

Since we have just celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, our midweek Evening prayer series for this Advent season will help us *Prepare the Way for the Lord* by considering how God prepares our hearts for his Son's advent through the three ingredients Luther observed: meditation, prayer, and testing. As we listen to the Advent story in Luke 1 during these services, we will also ponder three different sections of Psalm 119 that highlight the themes of meditation, prayer, and testing. Join us for worship as the Holy Spirit prepares our hearts to celebrate Jesus' first advent and to anticipate his second advent.

December 6 | Psalm 119:9-16 | Prepare the Way for the Lord – in Meditation

December 13 | Psalm 119:145-154 | Prepare the Way for the Lord – with Prayer

December 20 | Psalm 119:65-77 | Prepare the Way for the Lord – through Testing

I hope you will join us for these midweek worship opportunities, and I also pray you will engage in these three areas and consider closely how God may be using them to prepare your heart and prepare you for things to come. God Bless you this Advent and Christmas.

In Christ,

Pastor Eric Schoech

Pastor Eric Schoech



A Trip to Remember!

(the following was submitted by Bruce and Linda Berner)

From October 24 to November 6, 108 pilgrims visited the places in Germany connected to Martin Luther and J.S. Bach. We were fortunate to be part of that journey. We stayed in Berlin, Erfurt, Rothenburg, and Leipzig. We also visited Wittenberg (where Luther nailed the 95 theses to the church door at Castle Church), Eisleben (where Luther was born and died), Eisenach (where the Luthers lived for many years), Wartburg Castle (where Luther was hidden away from enemies), Dresden, Weimar, Coburg, the concentration camp at Buchenwald, and St. Thomas church in Leipzig where J.S. Bach lived and worked for many years. We stood in church chancels next to the graves of Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and J.S. Bach. We saw the Valparaiso University Chorale perform for the Reformation Day services and Sunday services at churches in Wittenberg and Leipzig. In the words of our leader Matthew Becker, we had a guten fahrt ("good trip").

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

PLEASE JOIN US! Faith Memorial's *Ladies' Christmas Lunch* will be held on Wednesday, December 6 at Martini's Restaurant, Valparaiso at 11:30am. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex or call the office to reserve a seat—462-7684. Seating is limited to 20 people, so if you sign up and are unable to make it please let the office know so someone else may go.



PLEASE JOIN US ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10 AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY—for the Childrens' Christmas Service, followed by the Church Greening—a time of fellowship, snacks and decorating the church to prepare for the Christmas Season.



FMLC Choir schedule for Advent is on the back page of this newsletter.



WARM A HOME

The Care Committee is again working with First Contact to arrange a way to help families with financial needs during the month of December. First Contact will place a tree in the narthex, decorated with houses and envelopes. Members are invited to take an envelope, make a donation to First Contact and put the envelope in the offering plate. These contribution will help families in our area with basic necessities this Christmas season. Please consider making a donation (please make checks payable to First Contact).



THOUGHTS FROM THE DEACONESS

“What do we know about God?”

Death is not an easy topic unless one is referring to killing roaches as in the Raid commercials. While death will come to all of us, we are hesitant and even, at times, unwilling to discuss this event. In the GriefShare groups, death is confronted head on. The only reason people come to a group is because there has been a death. Most often, the person who died is a spouse or relative. As we work through the feelings of loss, we also talk about the practical aspects that the death brings to daily life.

GriefShare refers to the practical aspects as secondary losses. When the person who died was living, they took care of the trash or the snow removal or the dry cleaning or . . . Now, on top of the grief over the death, the remaining family has to cover other tasks. And even more difficult than those tasks are the financial concerns, especially with the estate. Many families were not prepared for a death by having a will or trust established. Beneficiaries were not current on life insurance policies or the deed to the house. Because no one wants to talk about death, people seldom plan for those who will remain after they die.

*“For in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ, there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, **heirs** according to the promise.” Galatians 3:26-29*

And so what do we know about God? God is not, never was, and never will be afraid to talk about death. And why – because God had planned, long before creation, that death would not be the final word in life. God had already changed the beneficiaries on the life insurance policy. God had already written the will and established the trust. God had already decided that we would be in the will because of a baby in a manger.

Merry Christmas fellow heirs!!

Best Wishes to Our Members with December Birthdays!

Linda Berner	December 1
Christian Nicholson	December 8
Evelyn Bradshaw	December 9
Joseph Price	December 10
Barb Prange	December 17
Liam West	December 20



We don't want to forget anyone's Birthday! If we have omitted or have an incorrect date, please call the office at 462-7684. Or sign up on the calendar in the Narthex.

A BLOOD DRIVE WILL BE HELD HERE
AT FAITH ON **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17**
FROM 10:00AM TO 2:30PM.

There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex.
The need is great — please give if you are able.



ADVENT SUPPERS

December 6 6:00pm
December 13 6:00pm
December 20 6:00pm



We will again be having light pot-luck meals in the church basement prior to our Advent services (meal at 6pm, service at 7 pm). Each will be sponsored by an individual Small Group, who will provide the main dish. Brew Crew has the first date and Works in Progress the second. Looking for another group to take the third. Sides and desserts by others are most welcome. Hope to see you there for a nice time of fellowship.

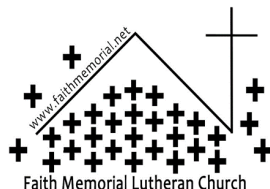


Becky Graef will lead a new 13-week GriefShare Group beginning January 16 at 10:00am and continuing each subsequent week at the same time. If you know someone who might benefit from this ministry email Becky at music@faithmemorial.net or call the office 462-7684.

**Faith Memorial
Lutheran Church**

753 N. Calumet Ave.
Valparaiso, IN 46383

Email:
office@faithmemorial.net



CHOIR SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 3
11: 35am

Sunday, December 17
11: 35am

Sunday, December 24
11: 35 am

Wednesdays (after
Evening Prayer Ser-
vices)

December 6
8: 00pm

December 13
8: 00pm

December 20
8: 00pm



FAITH MEMORIAL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

The First Sunday in Advent, Sunday, December 3, 9:00am Holy Communion

The First Wednesday in Advent, Wednesday, December 6, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Second Sunday in Advent, Sunday, December 10, 9:00am Childrens' Service

The Second Wednesday in Advent, Wednesday, December 13, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

The Third Sunday in Advent, Sunday, December 17, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Third Wednesday in Advent, Wednesday, December 20, 7:00pm Evening Prayer

Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, 9:00am Morning Prayer and
7:00pm Service of Lessons and Carols

The Nativity of Our Lord, Monday, December 25, 9:30am Holy Communion

The First Sunday after Christmas, Sunday, December 31, 9:00am Holy Communion

The Baptism of Our Lord, Sunday, 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

