

FAITH at WORK

April 2022

Council Update

Is there a path forward for our church?

Beginning last April, church leaders and the pastor began a conversation around the long-term financial viability of Faith Lutheran, given that many faithful long-time members had died and COVID-19 made worship an ongoing challenge.

In retrospect, it was fortunate that a small well-organized volunteer team applied, qualified and received two federal grants on behalf of FLC specifically to pay for staff during the pandemic. Also, through the generous bequest of Nona Sabatka, some tech savvy members including Pastor Mark, our worship went online more professionally. We are now capably reaching home-bound members and others.

The hardworking TOMS, under the direction of Jon Aaberg and the property committee, keep the building and our campus safe and well-groomed. We were fortunate to have a gifted secretary see us through the last five years, and her sister has stepped into her shoes with grace.

But yet, there is a growing awareness of our situation as we face the realities of a decline in church attendance and support .

To give us all more time for reflection and a chance to reverse the downward trend, the congregation came to an agreement last December to decrease staffing in two areas:



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eliminate the nursery attendant and reduce the pastor to three-quarter time. A lengthy budget and successful personnel processes were made possible by our treasurer Janice Lee Virnig and her committee, and past council president Charles Bonville.

Unfortunately, the council is condensed because two committees stopped functioning without volunteers (education/youth and stewardship), a key leader is currently experiencing significant health issues and a fourth councilor is unable to attend the monthly meetings.

The 'future' of FLC was debated in a fragmented way in 2021 as well as in the early months of this year. But under the direction of Terry Virnig the council could put it off no longer; the group invested the majority of its March meeting to more specific goals for the remainder of 2022.

[Councilors responded to 20 difficult questions, posed by the ELCA before moving forward in thinking broadly about the opportunities for Faith Lutheran Church. You are encouraged to respond to those same questions yourself as they are listed on page 7]

Without much fanfare the council agreed that our overarching ambition is:
to connect to Jesus, one another, and the world.

Now to the tougher, less lofty goals and objectives

The council voted to pursue "Transformation" and "Partnership" scenarios in 2022. The final choice, the "Resurrection" scenario, is described as a recognition that the existing situation is not sustainable and would require us to celebrate the past, grieve the current and close entirely, knowing that God will have a "new thing" for us as scattered individuals. But there was no appetite for this direction by the council.

Transformation

Pastor Mark will coordinate devotional materials for all – not just councilors – for reflection on our future, emphasizing our collective contribution toward new vitality as the body of Christ in this place at this time.

In order to rediscover God's purpose for us, we need to actively seek His will and direction and try very hard to listen. You need to be engaged in this activity. Transformation requires us to focus on one or two areas where we feel God is calling us in this community. It is the desire of the council for our people to encircle specific issues that "break our hearts" and call us to action. This also requires us to rethink all that we do so that overburdened volunteers can focus on what matters most.

The exact emphasis has not been established and will be decided upon us by all with information organized and presented by the council. John Berg and Kim Sass agreed to collect

ideas for your review from folks like the Boy Scouts; Love, Inc.; United Way of Linn County, etc. The new 'mutual ministry' committee, led by Gordy Gamet, will also lend a hand for ideas and suggestions to help move us forward.

In the coming year we will also refresh our worship and music. It was the consensus that our format has become stale and can be confusing to newcomers. By 'trying on' different styles we hope to appeal to a wider audience.

Partnership with other faith communities

You probably 'caught wind' of this scheme after last summer's discussion by the council. It's not going away.

The idea here is to engage in a shared ministry with like-minded worshipping Christians. What form it will take has not been decided. Rather, there are several ways FLC could head depending on which group(s) also have an interest in this – and in us. Pastor Mark has completed the behind the scenes work locally and with the Synod. The council is handing leadership of this directive to Mary Sabatka Gamet for more serious discussions and planning.

The council wants to set the stage and this is a broad overview of the lengthy discussion of the council on March 9:

FLC will pursue other church relationships
FLC will pursue transformation

We need your input, your involvement, your prayers. You are encouraged to talk to council members (listed in this newsletter) with your ideas and community passion preferences. We all desire JOY to return to our congregation. When JOY is mixed with thankfulness, we have a recipe to make a noticeable impact in our community. And we want to invite others to join us so that together we can become JOYFUL subjects of the Kingdom, and the King whom we so dearly love.

Stay tuned.

A Prayer for God's Power

The times we're in right now feel so uncertain. We're battling fear and worry at every turn. We don't know what the future holds, but we believe you're holding us and won't let go. We humble ourselves before you, aware of our need for you and believing in your great power. No matter what we face, we know you are greater still. We praise you and give thanks that you've set us free from the grasp of sin and death. Forgive us God, for the times we've missed the mark. Help us to live strong and walk wisely, filled by the power of your Spirit within us. Amen.



Faith Lutheran Church		2022
Staff		
Pastor	Mark Bringman	
Office Manager	Carol Armstrong	
Organist/Pianist	Cheryl Blum	
Custodian	Terry Bushnell	
Church Council		
President	Terry Virnig	
Vice President	Kim Sass	
Secretary	Alice Weber	
Treasurer	Janice Virnig	
Financial Secretary	John Berg	
Education/Youth	Vacant	
Evangelism & Mission	Dick Olsen	
Fellowship & Social	Peggy Preston	
Property Management	Jon Aaberg	
Stewardship & Resources	Vacant	
Worship & Music	Vacant	
Mission Endowment	Carol Olufson	

Worship With Us
This Easter



Financial Update

Financial Report as of 3/22/2022:

Undesignated Income: \$5,123.00

Budgeted Undesignated Income: \$7,916.00

Net Undesignated Income: **(\$2,793.00)**

Total Expenses: \$7,555.63

Total Net Income: **(\$1,102.37)**

Church Announcements and Events

Monday Study Group—1:00pm

April 4, 11 & 25

AD: The Bible Continues

We are using a television series titled *AD: The Bible Continues* as the guide for our weekly study. This series is the sequel to 2013's *The Bible* and focuses on the Resurrection and what follows it. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall or on zoom at 1:00pm via the link below:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84235999614?pwd=Rj>

Lenten Worship—Wednesdays @ 11:30am & 7:00pm

March 30 & April 6

Growing Into the Tree of Life

This worship series will be short, less than half hour. Services will be based around the theme of the tree of life. We hope that you will join us.

Save the Date! Spring Cleaning Event on April 9th!

The Annual Spring Cleaning Event is scheduled for April 9th beginning at 9am. Many hands are needed to make “light work” of this endeavor! All are encouraged to participate.

Sunday Matinee in the Sanctuary—2:00pm-4:00pm

April 30th

The Chosen (Video Series)

This video series continues with the last two episodes of season one on April 30th. These episodes come to us from the gospel of John. Jesus encounters Nicodemus at night in Jerusalem and the Samaritan woman at the well. The depictions of these events, by contrast, illustrate that God’s kingdom is for everyone. This is an easy series to jump into – even if you didn’t watch the first few episodes, we would love to have you join us.

Plan to Attend Easter Breakfast!

April 17th from 9:00-10:15am

We are excited to bring back this Easter tradition. Join us in the Fellowship Hall for a delicious breakfast before worship service.



Palm Sunday April 10th at 10:30 am
Maundy Thursday April 14th at 7 pm
Good Friday April 15th at 7 pm
Easter Sunday April 17th at 10:30 am

We invite you to join us for the holiest services of the year, when we journey with Jesus to Jerusalem for his triumphal entry, to confrontations in the temple, to a last Passover meal shared with his disciples, to his arrest, and to his crucifixion. It is called the passion because it reminds us of God’s love and enduring passion for his creation. Jesus, the only, and beloved, incarnate son of God has such a passion for creation that he undergoes everything for us: arrest, beating, humiliation, and ultimately, death on a cross as an enemy of the Roman State.

Join us for worship during this season in remembrance of the great depth of God’s love for us.

And join us for Easter, when God’s passion, love and mercy overcome death. Because Jesus lives, we shall live forever. Easter is the triumph, the hinge point of history, it is the defeat of all the powers of sin and death. Alleluia, Christ is raised!

These services will also be livestreamed; Links will be available on the Faith Lutheran Church Website.



Our Cluster is currently without a Representative for Synod Council. If you are interested in completing this unfinished term (Extends through August 2023) please let Pastor Mark know.

The makeup of the Synod Council requires a combination of genders and classification as rostered or lay. To stay within the requirements, the person filling this position needs to be either a woman or a person that is gender fluid, and can be either a lay or rostered classification. Rostered classification includes pastors and deacons.

Individuals that are interested in doing this important work of the church, should have the time and energy to engage, and have talents that will benefit the synod.

Theology Pub

Pastor Mark is looking to start a group that meets monthly at the Barn for a theology pub discussion. He has a number of one page discussion sheets on topics such as Hell, Creation, Faith & Money, Sexuality, etc. Basically it would work like this:

Looking ahead at the weather, he would pick an evening when the weather was looking nice. This will not have a set night, instead it's going to be based on who is available and weather – on a Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday night (the barn is closed on Mondays). He will message the church and send texts to those who have expressed an interest.

Let him know if you are interested.

Pastor Mark's Monthly Week Off—April 18th through 23rd

Pastor Mark's weekoff begins Monday, April 18th through Saturday, April 23rd. While he WILL be available for pastoral emergencies during this week, he will NOT be in the office or doing church related activities. He WILL be leading Worship Services for all Sundays in April.

April Worship Schedule



April 3:	10:30am	Worship & Streaming
April 6:	11:30am & 7:00pm	Lenten Services & Streaming
April 10:	10:30am	Worship & Streaming
April 14:	7:00pm	Maundy Thursday Service & Streaming
April 15:	7:00pm	Good Friday Service & Streaming
April 17:	10:30am	Easter Service & Streaming
April 24:	10:30am	Worship & Streaming

KEY QUESTIONS from ELCA "Holy Conversation": Using attendance figures for the previous 10 years, chart your congregation's average attendance. Then use the following questions as a springboard for further discussion, answering each with a simple YES or NO.

1. Do we have a pattern of growth in attendance?
2. Will our trend of growth, plateau or decline allow us to thrive and develop ministry for the future in this place?
3. Can we maintain our own existence as a congregation and provide ministry in the community, synod, and across the ELCA?
4. Can we survive without some form of life support from bequests, special gifts?
5. Do we have sufficient numbers of people to volunteer for ministry within the congregation and outreach into the community?
6. Are new efforts in evangelism and Christian education feasible?
7. Are there sufficient funds and interested membership to do ministry within the congregation as well as outreach and evangelism into the community and world?
8. Are we experiencing the presence of first-time visitors on a regular basis?
9. Do they return for a second or a third visit?
10. Do 20-25% of our first-time visitors eventually join the congregation?
11. Is the congregation's main focus on outreach/evangelism?
12. Is the congregation striving to do more than trying to survive/keep the doors open?
13. Has the congregation grown in the last five years?
14. Do we have enough members to do ministry well?
15. Does giving in the congregation enable "Great Commission" work, or does most of the giving go towards maintenance and survival?
16. Are there young families active in the church?
17. Has the congregation maintained a good level of stewardship including several families (10-12) who tithe faithfully to the congregation?
18. Is the congregation willing/able to adapt its ministry and lifestyle in order to develop the ministries that will meet the needs of a changing community?
19. Is the present facility physically adaptable for use?
20. Can the congregation afford the repairs that are needed to use these facilities for ministry?

If you marked five or more answers No, we suggest you contact the Director for Evangelical Mission to discuss the trends that are revealed. If you marked eight or more answers No, this may suggest a serious condition of decline for your congregation. It is time to look courageously and honestly at your situation, and consider what options you have as a

Quilting and TOMs

Wednesdays at 9 AM



Wednesday mornings are a busy time at Faith Lutheran Church. We have quilters working to create comforting quilts that are donated to bring people warmth, privacy and shelter. If you are interested in joining them, there is always plenty to do.

The TOMS (stands for The Old Men, though age and gender are not requirements for the group) are busy working to keep our church property maintained and our grounds clean. If you have able hands and a willing heart, the TOMs will always welcome some help.



Mary Martha Circle

This is a Bible Study for women. We will be meeting on Second Tuesday of Each Month @ 1 PM in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like more information, please call Karen Glenn at 541-928-4729 or Shirley Karstens at 541-967-8309.

Prayer Chain: We are asking anyone in the prayer chain to lift up the concerns of Faith Lutheran Church weekly (which could be as little as taking a few seconds and asking God to be with all of those listed, lifting them up by name) and to pray for other concerns as they are shared. Peggy Preston will be heading up the prayer chain. If you are interested in being on the prayer chain, send her an email: pegpreston@aol.com



***A new Prayer Chain Coordinator is needed. If you are interested in serving in this vital role, please email Peggy Preston at: pegpreston@aol.com.**

American Red Cross Blood Drive

March 31, 2022 from 10am—4pm

Faith Lutheran Church is hosting a Blood Drive on Thursday, March 31, 2022 in the Fellowship Hall. To schedule an appointment, call 800-733-2767 OR sign up online at: redcrossblood.org using Sponsor code: faithlutheranalbany

Blood Drive



American
Red Cross

Church Office Hours 10:00am-2:00pm

Mondays — Wednesdays — Fridays



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 9:00 AM String Therapy	2
3 10:30 AM Indoor Worship & livestreaming	4 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	5 6:00 PM Cub Scouts	6 9:00 AM Quilters & TOMs 11:30 AM Lenten Service 7:30 PM Lenten Service	7	8 9:00 AM String Therapy 10:00 AM Reports to Council Due	9 9:00 AM SPRING CLEANING EVENT!
10 Passion/Palm Sunday 10:30 AM Indoor Worship & livestreaming	11 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	12 1:00 PM Mary Martha Circle 6:00 PM Cub Scouts	13 9:00 AM Quilters & TOMs 7:00 PM Council Meeting	14 7:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service	15 9:00 AM String Therapy 1:00 PM - 20th Century Book Club 7:00 PM Good Friday Service	16 9:00 AM Circle of Friends (Peggy's Gazebo)
17 Easter Sunday 9:00 AM Easter Breakfast 10:30 AM Indoor Worship & livestreaming	18 7:00 PM Boy Scouts Pastor Mark is Off	19 6:00 PM Cub Scouts Pastor Mark is Off	20 9:00 AM Quilters & TOMs Pastor Mark is Off	21 Pastor Mark is Off	22 9:00 AM String Therapy Pastor Mark is Off	23 Pastor Mark is off
24 10:30 AM Indoor Worship & livestreaming 11:15 AM Fellowship Meeting	25 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	26 6:00 PM Cub Scouts	27 9:00 AM Quilters & TOMs 3:30 PM Worship & Music Committee	28	29 9:00 AM String Therapy	30

For the most up-to-date version,
[visit our online calendar](#)

Worship Leader Team 2022				
April	3	10	17	24
Assisting Ministers	Carol O.	Gordy	Shirley	Jeff
Altar Prep	Pam	Nance	Elaine	Jeff
Ushers/Greeter	Dick	Jon	Nance	Kim
	Elaine	Kim	Wally	Dick
Sound Technician	Jon	Terry	Gordy	John

Prayer for Spring

By Rober Frost

Oh, give us pleasure in the flowers to-day;
 And give us not to think so far away
 As the uncertain harvest; keep us here
 All simply in the springing of the year.

Oh, give us pleasure in the orchard white,
 Like nothing else by day, like ghosts by night;
 And make us happy in the happy bees,
 The swarm dilating round the perfect trees.

And make us happy in the darting bird
 That suddenly above the bees is heard,
 The meteor that thrusts in with needle bill,
 And off a blossom in mid air stands still.

For this is love and nothing else is love,
 The which it is reserved for God above
 To sanctify to what far ends He will,
 But which it only needs that we fulfill.



Prayer List



***PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER THOSE
NEEDING STRENGTH, GUIDANCE AND HEALING:***

Tim B	Gigi Douglas	Heather
Brenda Carroll	Ron Wold	Julie Shaw
Sandy Hina	Chiera Family	John & Margarite Fusaro
Robert Jon	Cindy Harms	Lee Horst
Daniel Sullivan	Izzy Covalt	Kerry Casner
Linda Gail Voet	Oliver	Margaret Rowland
Melba Wright	Garrett Baarsch	Allison
Brandon Crawford	Stephanie Bauthman	Olivia Hunter
Noah Holman	Carl Wogomon	Shelley
Jerry Sheffield	John Busher	Jackye Brown
Pat Norby	Gene Hebert	Peggy Preston

REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND:

Ruth Irwin, Connie Griffis, Izzy Covalt, Cindy Harms, Margaret Rowland, Melba Wright, Sangsau Tran

OUR SYMPATHY & PRAYERS TO THOSE WHO MOURN THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES:

Friends and Family of Reverend Anton Johnson

Updated Pandemic Guidelines for Faith Lutheran Church

- Masks wearing is no longer required, but remains optional for those desiring to continue.
- Hymns will be sung—Masks Optional
- Contact tracing activities are discontinued
- Coffee Hour will Resume
- Seating Restrictions are Removed (Two Pews at the back of the Sanctuary will be set aside for those who wish to continue with social distancing.)



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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