



# *Pathways of Faith*

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Faith Lutheran Church

December 2023

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## *The Pastor's Space*

Grace, Peace and Love:

The month of December with its cooler temperatures and sacred holiday celebrations has arrived. We will begin closing and wrapping up another year of experiences that help us navigate a fresh new coming year. The many expressive gifts exchanged with holiday cheer all take a back seat to the celebrated gift sent from God. The birth of our Savior, come to redeem faithful humanity, is replicated only by our efforts to pass it on to others with clarity and understanding. Advent begins the journey as we prepare for the annual birthday celebration of Jesus, salvation, grace and hope for a transformed and changed humanity.

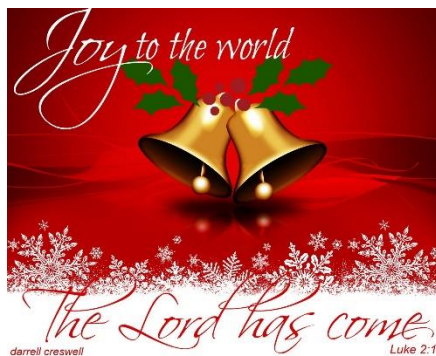
Advent, the beginning journey for something new to enter the life of those seeking spiritual renewal for a new and different direction for life forward. The “now and not yet” nature of the fulfillment of our hope in Jesus is never more rhetorically real than in the season of Advent

While Advent has often been understood as Christmas' Lenten counterpart, a season of preparation for a particular feast, scripture in this season serves a deeper liturgical purpose than simply helping us resist the commercialization of the holiday season and more reverently celebrate Christmas.

Advent is a season of anticipation, but also of revolution. Scripture in Advent prepares us to receive not only a new baby, but a new world, where God's justice and mercy reign.

Advent, Christmas, a new year, let it all lend itself to the new and renewed spirit that Jesus came to build, establish and deliver for a changed and renewed world. A world with one renewing purpose, unity far beyond anything that we know, expect and envision. That's the world that Jesus established his church to follow through on, that our world together will be.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**





## President's REPORT

### *Message from the President*

Christmas Angel Gifts are due back to church no later than Sunday, 12/17/23, and please make sure the angel is attached to your packages.

This year has been a productive one at Faith Lutheran. We have seen growth that we haven't seen in many years. Praise Jesus! Thanks to Pastor Keeley and our awesome congregation, we will continue on this path. We have faced many challenges and overcome multiple obstacles with the help of everyone. As your Council President, it has been a pleasure navigating all that this role entails and I couldn't do it without the rest of the Council Team. Please consider joining Council next year as we still have vacancies. If not a position on Council, please lend your time and talents to leading a Ministry such as Evangelism, Youth, Stewardship and many more.

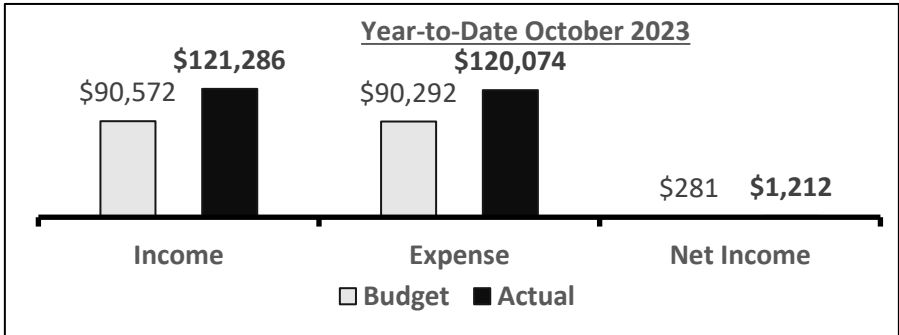
Advent is upon us. I pray that we all use this time to reflect and prepare our hearts and homes for Christ's birth.

In God's Service,

Laura Olson

386-846-1976

## ***Treasurers Report***



After the significant expenses incurred over the past two months, our net income through the end of October was \$1,212. These expenses eroded the income we had made through the end of August; however, we did not have to dip into our reserves to cover them.

◆ On the positive side

- Higher than expected weekly offering - \$17,136
- Recovery of stolen funds - \$5,061
- Interest income - \$2,411

◆ On the negative side

- Higher than budgeted insurance expense - \$8,960
- Fellowship Hall roof - \$15,548
- Flood cleanup expenses - \$5,483

Once again, I would like to thank those members who made donations to help defray the cost of the new roof and flood cleanup. Your generosity is truly appreciated.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

**Karen Otis, Treasurer 561-251-3594 klotis24@gmail.com**

## ***Property Report***

Hello from Property;

Inevitably, we have reached the end of a great but challenging year here at Faith. Our weather has come full circle from this extremely record-setting summer as far as heat. However, our property has stood the test of time and looks as it should...great. Many hands, both inside and out, have had an opportunity to keep our campus beautiful. I would like to thank all those who have helped us. November's Property Day was used to trim hedges, trim weeds and grass, and remove a metal fence in our old school yard. In addition, we would like to thank Rich and Wendy Eames for having cracks and chips in the stucco covering of our church and fellowship hall repaired by a family friend. Our December Property Day will be held on Saturday, December 2 at 8 AM. We will be decorating our church and fellowship hall for Advent/Christmas. Please join us if you can!

Thanksgiving Basket Brigade 2023--On Wednesday, November 15 @ 3:30PM, members of our church packed cartons which were delivered by the Volusia Basket Brigade Team to needy families in Volusia County. Our goal for this year was 70 cartons. Besides our church members who did a great job packing the cartons, I would especially like to thank Cathy Neuhardt, Lynne Meinhold and Pat Huntley for their extra hard work in putting the 2023 Basket Brigade together for Faith Lutheran. Our Boy Scout Troop 404 assembled and delivered 6 cartons. The grand total ended up being 85 boxes! Thank you all who donated food and cash to help make this year's effort a great success.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Bob Neuhardt

## ***Social Ministry***

What a year it has been for Faith Lutheran! Let us reminisce what Faith Lutheran has accomplished in 2023:

1. Delivered Mylar blankets to the Salvation Army to help the homeless in the cold temperatures.
2. Our Planning group provides mats for the homeless. The mats are blessed in a church service before sharing with the community. Members of the Planning group are: Barbara Neunfeldt, Marge Sykes, Elisa Amaro (mother of Nancy Sykes), Marge Cullen, Carol Webster, Ceil Masterson and Bat Masterson (Bat makes the best Plarn balls for the team). I also want to thank the people who make anonymous plarning balls for this ministry.
3. Spring Food Drive, Easter Dinner for four.
4. Birthday Cake Boxes for those in need provided to the Salvation Army Pantry.
5. Food donations to the Salvation Army Pantry. Thank you all for the food donations to the grocery basket. To date, 925 lbs. of food have been donated. And we still have six more weeks to make 1,000 lbs. for the year. **We can do it!**
6. Donations of 'gently used' clothes and blankets for the homeless community. Clothes are used for job interviews.
7. Pizza Day for the Boy Scouts of America affiliated with Faith Lutheran Church, thanking them for all of the tasks completed at Faith Lutheran Church.
8. Backpacks to include school supplies for the foster children in our area.

9. "God's Work Our Hands": Provided lunch for Ormond Beach police officers, blessing (thank-you) bags for the local police, and Teddy Bears for the officers to give out to children in need.
10. Stewardship: Stewardship is a practice of generosity that involves using all that God has entrusted to our care – our time, our talents, and our treasures – to love God and our neighbors, both inside and outside of the church walls and our homes.
11. Basket Brigade: This year 85 boxes of food were donated to provide Thanksgiving meals for families in Volusia County.
12. Angel Tree: Faith Lutheran will provide presents to foster children of families, Community Partnership for Children in Volusia, Flagler and Putnam counties. As winter is upon us, can we provide another set of Mylar blankets to the Salvation Army to help the homeless in the cold temperatures? Please contact me if you are interested in donating to this cause.  
In Faith - Julie Hoyle

## ***Fellowship Report***

We have spent a lot of time discussing the seasons the last few months; only they were the ones of weather. In our church seasons, we are now entering the special season of Advent. We are "awaiting" the coming of Jesus' birth during this first season of the liturgical year. Looking back on November, we celebrated Thanksgiving with our Faith family with a great dinner. Such good cooks. Thank you all! We will usher in Advent officially welcoming the 12 people we were fortunate enough to have become members during the last 14 months.

On December 17, we will have our annual Holiday Brunch along with a raffle and a guessing jar. These activities all lead us to the wonderful celebration of our Savior's Birth on Christmas.

Blessings of the Season,  
Lynne Meinhold & Cathy Neuhardt

### ***Altar Flowers***

We all know how expenses continue to climb. Every time you go into the grocery store, prices have gone up again! Unfortunately, altar flower arrangements are no exception. Earlier this year we began using a florist to create our Sunday arrangements. In order to cover this cost, beginning in January, we will be increasing the charge for sponsoring flowers to \$35 – the amount we pay the florist. Thank you for your understanding.

Karen Otis – Treasurer

### ***Council Meeting***

The next council meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend.

### ***Planning***

Our planning group makes beautiful mats for the homeless. The next meeting will be in January. There will be no planning in December.



## ***Game Night***

Game night is being suspended until January. I am sure we will all be busy over the next month. Enjoy the season and we will get back to fun and games in January!



## ***Faith Travelers***

The results of the Time and Talents surveys have been compiled and there has been an overwhelming number of members who have expressed an interest in the Faith Travelers Group. With that in mind, I will be scheduling an informal meeting after Sunday Service sometime in December to “get the wheels rolling”.

For those of you who are not familiar with Faith Travelers, it is a group of members who got together every so often to visit local points of interest and then share lunch at a nearby restaurant. Some Travelers met at the church to arrange carpooling for those who needed transportation.

In the past there have been trips to Blue Springs, The Casements, the Tea Factory in New Smyrna, and Dixie Crossroads in Titusville. The group disbanded when COVID interrupted our lives, but it appears that many of you want to see this program revived.

As with any program, it will require someone coordinating the decisions of the date and time and where the trip and lunch will be, etc. Sign-ups and reservations will have to be made.

The purpose of the December meeting will be to determine who is interested in joining the group and choosing someone to coordinate at least the first outing. After that, it may work best to rotate the responsibility.

Be on the lookout for the date of the meeting, which will be posted in the weekly bulletin announcements. In the meantime, if anyone has any suggestions for destinations, let me know and I will compile a list which can be handed out at the meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Blessings,

Karen





***Altar Flowers***

- 03 Jim & Marge Sykes – In celebration of our anniversary
- 10 Gisela Schafer – In memory of deceased sister  
Irmgard Spotorno's birthday
- 17 Charlie & Julie Hoyle – In celebration of our  
anniversary
- 24 Bob and Judy Culgin – In loving memory of our son  
Alan
- 31 Joan Olson – In honor of daughter Laura's birthday

***Bulletins***

- 03 Lynne Meinhold – In memory of my husband Bob  
on our wedding day anniversary
- 10 ----
- 17 Charlie & Julie Hoyle – In celebration of our  
anniversary
- 24 ----
- 31 ----

***Candles***

Bob & Cathy Neuhardt – In honor of Cathy's 70th  
birthday



December 01	Ken Huntley
December 14	Marge Cullen
December 20	Cathy Neuhardt
December 30	Laura Olson

HAPPY  
anniversary



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December 01	Jim & Marge Sykes-61 years
December 18	Charlie & Julie Hoyle-30 years