

# FAITH NEWSLETTER

December 2012 / January 2013

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Dear Friends in Christ,

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”  
Ephesians 5:15-16

One day when I was working in the library over my last sabbatical, I saw the shelves upon shelves of dissertations and theses written by other students. When I thought about how much time I had spent writing my paper, compared with the sheer number of volumes at the library, the amount of total time represented by just one shelf of books was staggering. If the time spent writing all the books in the library was totaled, it would probably number in the millions, if not billions of hours.

In the course of a year, you have 8,760 hours to spend (add 24 for leap years). There's no way to get any more. At first it seems like a lot, but when you get busy with work and travel, appointments and obligations, not to mention little things like eating and sleeping, the time can pass very quickly.

As Christians, all of our time should be spent in service of God. This doesn't mean we need to spend every waking moment in church. What it means is that everything you do, whether it's taking care of your needs or the needs of others is a way to serve God.

God has entrusted you with people to care for. This is not only your kids and grandkids, but your friends, neighbors and coworkers, your clients, your patients, and people you see every day. As you care for them, you are doing it out of love for God. This could be as simple as being faithful in your job, kind and generous to those in need, or praying for the people in your life. Even when you are caring for your own needs, you are caring for the body and soul that God has given you.

This all comes together every week in the Divine Service. God gathers us as his people to serve us, and prepare us to go out and serve others. He fills us with His love and forgiveness, unites us with His Son in body and soul, and blesses us on our way.

As you look back upon 2012 and look forward to 2013, give thanks for the many ways that God has blessed you and used you in His service, and pray for Him to guide you in the year to come.

Your fellow servant,

**Pastor Birkholz**

# In and Around Faith Church

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## Ladies Aid

A big thank you to all who helped make our annual Christmas Bazaar a success. Without the help of the volunteers and your support, we could not do this alone.

We invite all the ladies of Faith to our Christmas Party on Thursday, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> in the Parish Hall. We will start our evening at 6:30 PM with a potluck dinner. The chicken will be provided but please bring a dish for everyone to share. If you plan on joining in on the grab bag please bring a wrapped \$5.00 gift.

Please contact Anna O'Neal (425-5647) if you are coming or if you need further information. Remember we do not have a Jan. meeting.

May you and your family have a Blessed Christmas and a New Year of good health and happiness.

Kathleen Nowak

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## Advent Open House

All members and friends of Faith Lutheran Church are invited to an Open House on Sunday, December 2 at the parsonage (9658 Melvina Avenue). Please come any time between 3:00p and 5:00p for some light refreshments and see the wonderful work done by the Trustees in the basement.

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## Advent Services

Our theme for Advent this year will be Martin Luther's hymn, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come." Pastor Birkholz has written a series of devotions based on the stanzas of the hymns, which is available at church or by request. Our midweek services will be at 7:00p on December 5, 12, and 19. Following the service, there will be a time for fellowship and refreshments. The following groups are kindly asked to provide refreshments on the dates below:

- December 5 – Elders
- December 12 – Ladies Aid
- December 19 – Confirmation Students

## Children's Christmas Program

Once again the children from our Evenings with Jesus will be enacting the story of Christmas for us. They will be leading the first portion of our regular Sunday service on December 23, and you are invited to a reception following the service hosted by the children and their parents

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## Christmas Decorating

If you have sense of style and like to decorate, please join us on Saturday, December 8 at 10:30a as we decorate the church for Christmas. A new Christmas tree has been generously donated for our sanctuary, and we will also set up the nativity scenes in the narthex. Come and help make our church beautiful for the holidays.

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## Christmas Caroling

Do you like to sing Christmas carols? Everyone is invited to join us on Sunday, December 9 as we bring the message of Jesus' birth to those in nursing homes. The times and places we will go are still being determined, but please keep the afternoon open, if you're interested.

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## Altar Guild Fundraiser

Our faithful altar guild works diligently behind the scenes to keep our sanctuary beautiful and prepared for each worship service. Every year at Christmas time they have a fundraiser to help defray the costs incurred during the year in doing this wonderful work. Look in the Narthex for their Christmas tree.

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## Christmas Buttons

Once again this year Joyce Stroh is providing free buttons that you can proudly wear this Christmas season to remind people that Jesus is the center of our celebrations. Any donations you would like to make for the buttons will be given to Faith Church.

# Other News & Happenings

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## House Blessings

The season of Epiphany is an appropriate time to have your house blessed, as we celebrate the visit of the Magi to worship Jesus at His home in Bethlehem. The rite of blessing is a service of prayer and the Word of God, so that our homes remain holy places where God continues to bless us each day. Epiphany begins on January 6 and continues through February 12. If you would like Pastor Birkholz to bless your home, please contact the church office.

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## Sabbatical Update

My last month of sabbatical was completed on November 18, and so I am back as your pastor now full time. Thank you to everyone for your prayers, cards, and words of support and encouragement. Special thanks to Pastor Dan Gensch for filling in for me, and to the leaders of the congregation for stepping up and helping out where needed. I apologize for any confusion or lapses that may have happened while I was gone. It was difficult for me to step away, even for a few weeks, but I'm glad to be back and very excited for all the opportunities of the New Year. My paper is in the final stages of revising and editing. If everything goes smoothly, I will be able to present and defend my dissertation early next year and hopefully graduate in May. Please continue to keep me and my family in your prayers as I work to bring this project to completion.

Pastor Mark Birkholz

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## Friday Bible Class

Our Friday morning class has finished our study of Lutheranism 101. We are currently studying selected Psalms. Beginning in January we will start reading through the book of Genesis together. If you are available on Friday mornings at 11:00a, please consider joining us.

## Food Pantry

After several years of faithful service, Bill and Ellen Weems are stepping down from their roles in serving at the Food Pantry. Al and Lou DeVries will continue to serve on the first Saturdays of each month. Additional volunteers are needed to cover the third Saturdays, from 9:00a-10:30a. All you need to do is help our guests fill out the paperwork or bag groceries. If you want to come and just visit with our guests, that would be great, too. If you can help, please sign up on the bulletin board or contact Lou DeVries or Pastor Birkholz.

### *Here's where we can also use your help:*

We're going to need help sorting and packing away the food given by several schools and churches the week before Thanksgiving. We will probably be working at the food pantry the early part of the week of Nov.26th.

I know that this is a busy time for everyone, especially with Thanksgiving coming up. If you can spare a few hours of your time, we can all work to make sure that all of our neighbors have food on their tables through the winter.

If you can help in any way, please let me know.

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## Confessions of St. Peter

In previous years, Faith has hosted our joint circuit service for Epiphany. This year Epiphany falls on a Sunday, so the pastors decided to choose a different festival to celebrate together. January 18 is the date set aside to give thanks for St. Peter's bold confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). We've chosen to transfer our celebration of the Confession of St. Peter to Wednesday, January 16. As in previous years, we will have a potluck dinner starting at 5:45p, and a mass choir rehearsal at 6:15p. The festival divine service will be celebrated at 7:00p. We will need help setting up, serving, and cleaning up, but the most important thing is to come and join your brothers and sisters in Christ to hear the Gospel and receive Jesus' Body and Blood.

# Installation of Officers & More

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All congregational officers and those within other leadership positions in the congregation will be installed on Sunday, January 6, during the 9:00a service. Following the service, there will be a congregational meeting, followed by a potluck dinner. At the dinner we will welcome the following members who joined our congregation in the past year:

Sheri Hendler  
Billy Kampenga  
Carol and Matt Piergies  
Roger and Lisa Prium  
Bob Schutzius  
Grace Tyrrell

We will also be recognizing the following anniversaries of congregational membership that will occur in 2013:

55 Years

Marilyn Diehl  
Gail Henson

45 Years

Ed Neaves  
Anna O'Neal

35 Years

Bob & Sue Stegmann

30 Years

Alden & Marge Ketchum  
Celeste & Frank Oslakovic

25 Years

Linda Machtan  
Lloyd Peterson

20 Years

Debbi Hochgesang  
Daniel Katula  
Renee Konrath

15 Years

Al & Louise DeVries  
Bryan Karaus  
Jaclyn Robbins

10 Years

Ken & Tracey Breibarth  
Ray Godbout  
Dan Konrath  
Alyssa Robbins  
Dory Solis  
Colleen Weems  
Pat Wiksten

5 Years

Mark & Amberleigh Birkholz  
Ruth Boye

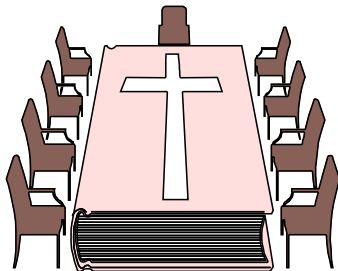
If you have any additions or corrections to the list, please contact the church office.

# Schedule of Dec. 2012 / Jan 2013 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>December Event</u>
1	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
2	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
5	7:00 PM	Advent Worship
9	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
12	7:00 PM	Advent Worship
15	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
16	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
19	7:00 PM	Advent Worship
23	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
24	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Worship / Communion
25	9:00 AM	Christmas Worship / Communion
30	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

## Weekly Meetings

Bible Study	Fri. - 11:00 AM
Confirmation Class	Thurs. - 3:30 PM
Evening w/Jesus	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs. - 6:00 PM
AA Groups	Mon. & Fri. - 6:00 PM
	Sat. - 8:00 AM
Adventure	1 <sup>st</sup> Sun. - 7:00 PM
ALANON	Tue. - 7:30 PM
Barnabas Christian Assembly	Sun. - 12:00 PM



<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>January Event</u>
5	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
6	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
13	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
16	7:00 PM	Confession of St. Peter Worship / Communion
19	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
20	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
27	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class

## Lenten Devotionals

It may seem odd to start thinking about Lent already, but Easter falls early this year (March 31). This means that Ash Wednesday is coming on February 13. This means that already in early January we will be looking for volunteers to write devotionals for our Lenten devotional booklet. This year will be looking at the Old Testament stories that point to Jesus and His resurrection. These same stories will be the basis for our Lenten midweek services and the Easter Vigil, which will be on at 7:00p on the Saturday before Easter. For those of you who have written devotionals in the past, we would love to have you write one again. If you have never written one, please prayerfully consider doing so.

## Bingo Night

Are you up for a night of fun and games with your friends at Faith? A special Bingo night is being planned for Friday, January 25. More details are yet to come, but save the date for this special night.

# Dec. / Jan. Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

## December Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

<b>Dec. 2</b>	Alden Ketchum Gene Osmanski Glen Werth Howard Johnson
<b>Dec. 9</b>	Frank Oslakovic Richard Clark Nick Trojanowski Mark Trojanowski
<b>Dec. 16</b>	Ed Neaves Bob Green A.J. Bray Ray Bennett
<b>Dec. 23</b>	Alden Ketchum Glen Werth Richard Clark Howard Johnson
<b>Dec. 30</b>	Frank Oslakovic Gene Osmanski Mary Slepski A.J.Bray

## Advent Worship 7:00 PM Wednesday

<b>Dec. 5</b>	Frank Oslakovic Gene Osmanski
<b>Dec. 12</b>	Richard Clark Howard Johnson
<b>Dec. 19</b>	Ed Neaves Bob Green

## Christmas Eve Worship 7:00 PM

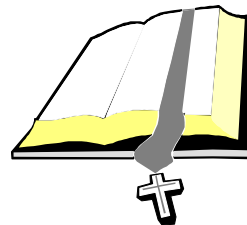
<b>Dec. 24</b>	Alden Ketchum Glen Werth Ed Neaves Ray Bennett
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## Christmas Worship 9:00 AM

<b>Dec. 25</b>	Frank Oslakovic Gene Osmanski Bob Green Howard Johnson
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## January Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

<b>Jan. 6</b>	Ed Neaves Bob Green Richard Clark Ray Bennett
<b>Jan. 13</b>	Alden Ketchum Richard Clark Mark Trojanowski Nick Trojanowski
<b>Jan. 20</b>	Frank Oslakovic Gene Osmanski Howard Johnson Glen Werth
<b>Jan. 27</b>	Bob Green Richard Clark A.J.Bray Ray Bennett



## Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

<b>Dec. 2</b>	Ed Neaves
<b>Dec. 9</b>	Mark Trojanowski
<b>Dec. 16</b>	Katie Kampenga
<b>Dec. 23</b>	Debbie Hochgesang
<b>Dec. 30</b>	
<b>Jan. 6</b>	Ray Bennett
<b>Jan. 13</b>	Nick Trojanowski
<b>Jan. 20</b>	Gene Osmanski
<b>Jan. 27</b>	Ray Bennett