

FAITH NEWSLETTER

December 2014 / January 2015



Dear Friends in Christ,

Another new year is upon us. As we look back on 2014, we give thanks to the Lord for all the new things that He has done among us in the past year. If you haven't been around in a while, here are some of the new things that you might notice at Faith.

As you drive up, you will see the new brick work on the bell tower and the new iron railings leading up to the church, to help make our church more safe and secure. As you enter the narthex and head into church, you'll see our two new chairlifts, ready to assist members in getting up to the sanctuary and down to the basement. When you get to the top of the stairs, if you turn around you'll see Faith's new piece of artwork, Jesus as the Author and Perfecter of our faith, leading us in our songs and service.

Once inside the church, you'll probably notice a few new faces in the pews (we've had about a dozen new members join this year). The church will seem a little fuller (we're now averaging over 60 people in worship for the first time in at least 8 years). You will also notice the increase of younger parishioners (last Sunday there were 13 people age 16 or younger in church).

After church you'll see the children and their parents and teachers stick around for Sunday School, something new again at Faith. If you head downstairs for Bible Class you'll see a new serving counter for refreshments and storage area for tables.

Also new at Faith this year is our new church constitution and a new youth group that's just been started in partnership with a few other Lutheran churches in the area.

There are also many new things that we cannot see with our eyes, the new life and strength that God continues to give to us through His Word and His Body and Blood.

All of these blessings are gifts from God, and not a result of our own efforts.

As we move forward into 2015, we look with anticipation and hope to see what the Lord will do here next. There will certainly be lots of new reasons to celebrate and rejoice. Come along and join us in receiving whatever He has planned for us in the year to come.

God's Blessings,

Pastor Birkholz

December In and Around Faith Church

Ladies Aid

The Fall Bazaar was a big success. Thank you to all who helped by setting up, baking, donating, cooking, selling, crafting and also attending. A special thank you goes to the Chicago White Sox, and the Chicago Wolves for donating to the raffle.

On Dec. 18th the Ladies will be going for dinner and a performance at Moraine Community College. All ladies are invited but tickets are limited. Please contact Mary Slepski if you are interested.

Advent Midweek Services

Angels are all around us at Christmas time. Angels are not just in pictures on cards or ornaments on trees, but real angels are around us all the time to protect us and join us in worship. This year's Advent services will focus on the real angels we read about in the Bible. Not cute, cuddly cherubs, but God's mighty servants. Join us on Wednesday evenings for a soup supper at 6:00p and Evening Prayer at 7:00p.

December 3: Soup Served by Ladies Aid
Theme – Guardian Angels

December 10: Soup Served by Elders & Trustees
Theme – Messenger Angels

December 17: Soup Served by Altar Guild & Choir
Theme – Singing Angels

Private Confession and Forgiveness

The angels promised that Jesus came to bring "peace on earth." Come to receive this peace as you confess your sins and receive forgiveness on Monday, December 22nd from 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM or on Tuesday, December 23rd from 10:00AM - 12:00PM. This is a great way to prepare for Christmas as we look for Jesus as the one who gives us His gift of peace with God and one another.

Pancake Breakfast

The junior and senior high youth at Faith, along with youth from other Lutheran churches, are having a pancake breakfast on Saturday, December 6th from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM. This will benefit the Food Pantries at Faith and St. Paul, as well as provide funds for future youth activities. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children age 4 - 12. For more information, contact Valerie Conrad.

Christmas Decorating

After the pancake breakfast we will be setting up the Christmas decorations inside and outside the church. So come for breakfast on December 6th, and then help decorate starting around 11:00 AM.

Children's Christmas Service

The Sunday School students will help lead the first portion of our regular Sunday service on December 21st. They will be presenting "Light a Candle", which traces the promises of a Savior through the Old Testament to Jesus' birth. Following the service, the Sunday School families will host a reception in the church basement.

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – December 24th

Once again, we will celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord on Christmas Eve with a candlelight service at 7:00 PM. Come to hear of the Savior, born for you in Bethlehem, who is Christ the Lord. This is a great opportunity to gather with family and friends and focus on the true reason for our celebrations.

Christmas Day Service – December 25th

Our celebration continues on Christmas morning at 9:00 AM with a Divine Service celebrating Jesus' incarnation. The holy, eternal God became flesh and blood, just like you! Don't miss this opportunity to receive His body and blood, born of Mary here on the altar for you.

Christmas Caroling

Share the message of Christmas hope in word, song, and deed with those in need to hear it the most. Join us on Sunday, December 7 to sing Christmas Carols at Renaissance Nursing Home (2940 W 87th St) where Walter Renn is a resident. We will meet at Faith at 2:30p and be there by 3:00p. Everyone is invited!



January In and Around Faith

House Blessings

Our Lord is with us in our homes as we speak His Word, pray together, and love one another as His baptized children. The rite for the blessing of a home reminds us of the way that the Lord continues to care for us and blesses us in our everyday life. It includes scripture readings, prayers, songs, and may conclude with the Lord's Supper. Homes are often blessed when you first move in, after a remodeling, following a traumatic event (theft, fire, storm damage, death in the home), or during the season of Epiphany. This year Epiphany lasts from January 6th through February 17th. If you would like your home blessed during this time, please contact Pastor Birkholz.

Bingo Night

Set aside January 24th for fun, food and bingo. Contact Mike Kampenga for more details.

Community Kids Choir

Do you know of any kids who like to sing? In January, Carl Lisius will be starting a new choir for the kids in our congregation and anyone in the community who would like to join. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact the church office at 1-708-424-1059 now, so that we can begin scheduling rehearsals.

Helpers and Recipients at the Food Pantry



Confession of St. Peter

When Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter responded, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." This statement of faith did not come from Peter, but from God's working in him. January 18th is the day the church has chosen to remember and give thanks for the confession of St. Peter, and to pray that the Lord give us strength to also make such a bold confession of faith.

Conversation of St. Paul

Paul began as a persecutor of the church, until Jesus appeared to him and called him to be a missionary to the Gentiles. On January 25th, the church gives thanks to God for the way that He changed Paul's life and for the way that He has called each of us to a life of service to Him.

Hymns of the Month/Season

Advent:

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You (# 780)

Paul Gerhardt was the most important hymn writer in the generation after Martin Luther. For Advent he wrote both "Savior of the Nations, Come" and hymn #780. The song asks the question of how we should meet the Lord when He comes. It recalls how the people of Jerusalem met Jesus on Palm Sunday, and reminds us that Jesus comes to give us freedom, honor, glory, and love. This means that when Jesus returns, we meet him not with fear and trembling but with joy and anticipation.

Christmas:

Of the Father's Love Begotten (# 384)

The Spanish poet Aurelius Prudentius wrote the words of this hymn around 400 years after the birth of Christ. It reflects on the ancient beginnings of Christ as the sole begotten Son of the Father from eternity as well as His birth here in time of the Virgin Mary. The hymn calls over and over again for all creation to join in praising our Triune God. The tune is based on a plainsong chant that is nearly 1000 years old, used in both Italy and Germany during the Middle Ages.

Installation of Officers & New Member/Member Anniversary Dinner – January 11th

Officers and Servants of the Congregation will be installed during the Divine Service on Sunday, January 11th. We will also recognize Nick Trojanowski for his years of service as Financial Secretary. Following the service we will have our January Voters' meeting, and then a dinner to celebrate significant anniversaries of membership at Faith and welcome those who have joined our congregation in the past year.

Anniversaries of Membership:

50 years - Bill & Marlis Lee
45 years- Judy Karaus
40 years - Nicole Cejka
Mary Slepski
35 years - Karen Robbins
25 years - Kristie Machtan
20 years - Betty Baker
Alex Lassandrello
15 years - DeAnn Fritz
10 years - Arlene Banks
John Peterson
Randy Peterson
Elise Trojanowski
5 Years - Frank & Judy Greenwood
Derrick Jimenez
Jim Kramer
Bob & Eleonore Lang
Max Radosevich
Franny Rheinwald
Laura Zilinsky

New Members:

Jennifer and Nick Bieniek
Justin Bray
The Conrad Family
Sheila Kush
Stan Mazalin
Max Wichmer

Schedule of Dec. 2014 / Jan. 2015 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dec. Event</u>
3	7:00 PM	Advent Service
6	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
7	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
10	7:00 PM	Advent Service
14	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
17	7:00 PM	Advent Service
20	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
21	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
24	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Worship
25	9:00 AM	Christmas Day Worship / Communion
28	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School

FHP Ministries

Pastor Birkholz is one of founders and a member of the Board of Directors of Faith Hope Peace (FHP) Ministries. This service organization now brings weekly church services to 13 residential care facilities in the area. We now total over 80 pastors, organists, helpers, and other volunteers from 29 area congregations! Each of the 5 weeks during the month of October 2014, an average of about 205 fellow Christians gathered together to hear our Lord's wonderful news!

We continue to look for volunteers to help us out. We are specifically looking for a volunteer to help manage our website. It is all set up, but needs some updating and additions. We are also looking for some help to make paraments for the altars at our weekly services. Can you help us out? If you would like to share your technical or sewing talents, please contact Craig Chidester, Executive Director, at 630-710-0396 or cdc33@att.net.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Jan. Event</u>
3	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
4	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
11	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Voter's Meeting
17	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
18	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
25	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Adult Bible Class
	10:15 AM	Sunday School

Weekly Meetings

Sunday School	Sunday - 10:15 AM
Bible Study	Fri. - 11:00 AM
Confirmation Class	Wed. - 3:30 PM
AA Groups	Mon. & Fri. - 6:00 PM
	Wed.-7:00 PM
	Sat. - 8:00 AM
Alanon	Tue. - 7:30 PM

January Hymn of the Month

Epiphany:

Light of Light, O Sole Begotten (#914)

This hymn first appeared in LSB, and was written by Stephen Starke, an LCMS pastor serving in Michigan. It uses the themes of creation as a call for the Lord to make us new at the beginning of each church service. The opening line is taken from the Nicene Creed, and much of the hymn is a reflection on the beginning of John's Gospel, which speaks of Jesus as the "Word made flesh." The tune is much older, written by English composer Henry Purcell in the 17th century.

Dec. / Jan. Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

Dec. Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Dec. 7	Alden Ketchum Ed Neaves Gail Henson Howard Johnson
Dec. 14	Frank Oslakovic Richard Clark Katie Kampenga Mike Kampenga
Dec. 21	Gene Osmanski Bob Green Richard Clark Eric Rosenbrock
Dec. 25	<u>Christmas Day</u> Gene Osmanski Frank Oslakovic Richard Clark Howard Johnson
Dec. 28	Alden Ketchum Ed Neaves Nick Trojanowski Mark Trojanowski

Advent Worship 7:00 PM

Dec. 3	Ed Neaves Alden Ketchum
Dec. 10	Frank Oslakovic Gene Osmanski
Dec. 17	Richard Clark Howard Johnson
Dec. 24	<u>Christmas Eve</u> Ed Neaves Alden Ketchum Ray Bennett Eric Rosenbrock

Jan. Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Jan. 4	Frank Oslakovic Richard Clark Ray Bennett Mary Slepki
Jan. 11	Richard Clark Ed Neaves Gail Henson Howard Johnson
Jan. 18	Frank Oslakovic Alden Ketchum Nick Trojanowski Mark Trojanowski
Jan. 25	Gene Osmanski Bob Green Katie Kampenga Mike Kampenga

Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

Dec. 7	Ed Neaves
Dec. 14	Mike Kampenga
Dec. 21	Gene Osmanski
Dec. 28	Mark Trojanowski
Jan. 4	Ray Bennett
Jan. 11	Debbie Hochgesang
Jan. 18	Nick Trojanowski
Jan. 25	Katie Kampenga

