

FAITH NEWSLETTER

December 2018 / January 2019



Dear Friends in Christ,

I hate construction. There's nothing worse than driving down a road, seeing the orange barrels, flashing lights and the brake lights of the cars in front of you, and know that you're going to be late. Sometimes it seems like construction is never ending. As soon as one section of road is repaired, they are back at it again.

On the other hand, I enjoy driving on a newly paved road, without any of the potholes. It's especially nice when new lanes are added and the traffic flows much more smoothly. But none of this can happen without construction.

The season of Advent is like one long construction project. John the Baptist echoes the call of the prophet Isaiah, "Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight." Isaiah talks about raising every valley and lowering every hill to make a level road for the Lord to come.

Isaiah was not talking about a physical construction project, but a spiritual one. The road on which the Lord comes is not on a map, but in your heart. In Advent we prepare for the Lord's coming with a construction project of the heart. The low places, where we have neglected God's Word and have failed to serve Him, need to be filled in and raised up. The high places, where we have added our own excess and pride, need to be torn down. In a word, we are called to repent.

Just like other construction projects, repentance is neither easy nor enjoyable. Sometimes it seems to go on forever. The good news is the reason for the repentance, the reason for the preparation of Advent: Jesus is coming! He's coming to you, bringing His gifts of life and salvation. When we realize the reason for the repentance, the reason for all the preparation is that Jesus is coming, it gives us great joy. Jesus is not coming to condemn you, but to save you, to rescue you, and to bring you into His kingdom.

So join with me this Advent as we prepare together for our Lord's coming by hearing His word, joining in prayer, and repenting, that we may receive His forgiveness and life.

God's Blessings

Pastor Birkholz

In and Around Faith Church

Ladies Aid

We would like to thank everyone who made our Bazaar a huge success. A special thanks to our helpers and our donors: The Chicago Bears, The Chicago Wolves, The Chicago White Sox and our bakers, and the basket makers and to everyone who came.

We invite all ladies to our Christmas pot luck supper on Dec. 6th at 6:30. There will be a \$5.00 grab bag and chicken will be provided. Please contact Marilyn Diehl if you are attending.

There is no meeting in January.

Blessings of Christmas and the New Year.

Christmas Decorating

We will be decorating the church for the Christmas season after Bible Class and Sunday School on December 9 at 11:15a. Any help would be appreciated. Decorations will be taken down at 11:15a on January 13.

Sunday School Christmas Service

The Sunday School students will be assisting with the service on Sunday, December 23. The theme of the services will be the Advent Wreath. The four candles represent Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace: four gifts that Jesus comes to bring.

To All my Christian Brothers and Sisters

With this new Church Year, we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. As the Advent season begins, come worship Jesus with me and our Church Family. Enjoy the Christmas and New Year season here at Faith. Hear God's Word and receive the body and blood of Jesus in this joyous season.

May God bless you through Jesus Christ.

Bob Green, Elder

Advent Midweek Services

This year's Advent services will be on Dec 5, 12, and 19. Each service will be preceded by a soup supper starting at 6:00p. Volunteers are needed to help provide and serve these refreshments. Evening Prayer will be at 7:00p, and we will be making blankets for the Southside Pregnancy Center afterwards.

Our theme this Advent, Christmas and Epiphany will focus on God's gift of light. For these Advent services we will hear of three prophecies of light:

Dec. 5 – The Star of Jacob (Numbers 24:17)

Dec. 12 – Light in the Darkness (Isaiah 9:2)

Dec. 19 – The Sun of Righteousness
(Malachi 4:2)

Christmas Cards

Please feel free to share a Christmas Card with the congregation by placing it on the special bulletin board at church.

Missions of the Month

December - Southside Pregnancy Center

The SPC provides support for parents and their children from pregnancy through birth, including clothing, supplies, counseling, and educational courses. We will be making blankets for them to distribute, and will be taking a door offering on Dec 23 to support their work.

January - Homebound Members

During the month of January, we will be making Valentines to distribute to Faith's homebound members. Join us after the 7:00p Wednesday prayer services to help decorate the Valentines.

Installation of Officers and Servants of the Congregation

On January 13 we will install our elected congregational officers, as well as the officers of our congregational auxiliaries. We also recognize and thank all outgoing officers. Following the service, we will have our January Voters Meeting.

Schedule of Dec. 2018 / Jan. 2019 Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Dec. Event</u>
1	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
2	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class
5	7:00 PM	Advent Worship
9	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class
12	7:00 PM	Advent Worship
15	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
16	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class
19	7:00 PM	Advent Worship
23	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	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	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class

December Hymn of the Month

Advent –

“Prepare the Royal Highway” (#343)

This hymn was written by Swedish pastor Frans Mikael Franzen, and translated into English by August Nelson, a Lutheran pastor from rural Minnesota. It combines the call of Isaiah and John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord, with the prophecy of the coming King of Glory from Psalm 24, which Jesus fulfilled on Palm Sunday. The unusual tune is Swedish as well, and is over 100 years older than the text of this hymn.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Jan. Event</u>
5	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
6	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class
13	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class
19	9:00 AM	Food Pantry Distribution
20	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class
27	9:00 AM	Worship / Communion
	10:15 AM	Sunday School
	10:30 AM	Bible Class

Weekly Meetings

Bible Study	Fri. - 10:00 AM
AA Groups	Mon. & Fri. - 6:00 PM Wed. & Thur. - 7:00 PM Sat. - 8:00 AM
Alanon	Tue. - 7:00 PM

January Hymn of the Month

Epiphany –

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” (#411)

This newer hymn is a favorite of many of the young people of our congregation. It builds on images from the book of Revelation. The text and tune were written by Kathleen Thomerson, music director at Mt. Olive Lutheran (LCMS) in Austin, Texas. She was born in Tennessee and grew up in Mississippi, California, and Texas. College music study was at the Universities of Colorado and Texas, the Flemish Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, and privately in Paris. Before retirement in Austin, she lived in Collinsville, Illinois, when her husband was a biology professor at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.

Dec. 2018 / Jan. 2019 Elders, Ushers & Lay Readers

Dec. Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Dec. 2	Ed Neaves Mark Trojanowski Mary Slepski Ray Bennett
Dec. 9	Mike Kampenga Richard Clark Kenilynn Breitbarth Marilyn Diehl
Dec. 16	Ed Neaves Mark Trojanowski Katie Kampenga Ray Bennett
Dec. 23	Mike Kampenga Richard Clark Sarah Kampenga Rachel Kampenga
Dec. 30	Gene Osmanski Richard Clark Cheyenne Breitbarth Mark Trojanowski

Advent 7:00 PM

Dec. 5	Mike Kampenga Richard Clark
Dec. 12	Ed Neaves Gene Osmanski
Dec. 19	Mike Kampenga Richard Clark
Dec. 24	Mike Kampenga Richard Clark Mark Trojanowski Katie Kampenga

Christmas Day 9:00 AM

Dec. 25	Ed Neaves Gene Osmanski Rachel Kampenga Marilyn Diehl
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Jan. Worship 9:00 AM Sunday

Jan. 6	Ed Neaves Mike Kampenga Ray Bennett Mary Slepski
Jan. 13	Gene Osmanski Richard Clark Ray Bennett Dora Haynes
Jan. 20	Gene Osmanski Mike Kampenga Marilyn Diehl Katie Kampenga
Jan. 27	Richard Clark Ed Neaves Ray Bennett Mark Trojanowski

Lay Readers 9:00 AM Sunday

Dec. 2	Kenilynn Breitbarth
Dec. 9	Mike Kampenga
Dec. 16	Katie Kampenga
Dec. 23	Children's Service
Dec. 30	Mark Trojanowski
Jan. 6	Angela Schillaci
Jan. 13	Dora Haynes
Jan. 20	Ray Bennett
Jan. 27	Gene Osmanski

House Blessings

In Christian tradition, homes are blessed during the season of Epiphany to commemorate the visit of the Magi to Jesus' home in Bethlehem. This service involves readings and prayers in each room of the house, as we remember Jesus' promise to be with us and work through us in our homes. This year Epiphany lasts from January 6 through March 5. If you would like to schedule a home blessing, please contact Pastor Birkholz.