FAITH LUTHERAN

September

take up the shield of faith Ephesians 6:16

September 2021 Newsletter

Faith's Core Values:
Discipleship, Hospitality, Prayer, Service, Stewardship, Worship, and Unity

From Pastor Nate . . . .

One cannot help but notice that there are plenty of employment opportunities available today. It seems that nearly every business has "help wanted" signs posted. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in July Minnesota had an 8:9% unemployment rate. This includes those who have stopped looking for work and those who are involuntarily only working part-time. The reasons for the current unemployment rate include fear of Covid, waiting for the right job, and enhanced unemployment benefits among other things.

We may not always be grateful for work, but we should understand that being created in the image of God entails that we will work. From the beginning in Genesis we read about God working in creation. Jesus worked as a carpenter and also sought to accomplish the work of God. After God created Adam, He put Adam to work in the garden.

Theologian Orville Dewey claimed that, "Labor is man's great function. He is nothing, he can do nothing, he can achieve nothing, fulfill nothing, without working. If you are poor—work. If you are rich—continue working. If you are burdened with seemingly unfair responsibilities—work. If you are happy, keep right on working. Idleness gives room for doubt and fears. If disappointments come—work. If your health is threatened—work. When faith falters—work. When dreams are shattered and hope seems dead—work. Work as if your life were in peril. It really is. No matter what ails you—work. Work faithfully—work with faith."

Luther taught us to view our work as vocation, or God's calling in our lives. To paraphrase Martin Luther , "God gives us our daily bread through the vocations of the farmer, the miller, and the baker. Our labors or vocations should be viewed as gifts from God. Just as God is working through the vocation of others to bless us, He is working through us to bless others. God doesn't need our good works, but our neighbor does."

Even as Christians, we still have a tendency to want to divide our lives into sacred and secular realms. We tend to see our labor, whether it is our job, mowing the lawn, or changing a diaper, as secular tasks. But as Christians, Paul makes it clear that, "Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart, as working for the Lord… It is the Lord Christ that you are serving." (Colossians 3:23-24) Remember Jesus' words, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40) For Christians, there is no secular realm, everything has spiritual significance. What appears to be ordinary becomes extraordinary when done to the glory of God.

Hopefully we are ready to take up the work of the church as we begin our fall programming. We have a need for all types of volunteers, including people to help out in several areas with our Sunday morning worship. We are also hopeful to start several Bible Study opportunities this year and will be looking for leaders. Where is God calling you to work?

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Together in Faith,
Pr. Nate Bjorge

President's Message

Greetings Family of Faith,

This hot dry summer shows signs of letting up a little. September is closing in and the end of the growing season is in sight. As I travel the back roads and look at the crops I marvel that anything survived with so little rain. But eventually there will be a harvest. By the looks of the produce on the Share the Bounty table every Sunday, people's vegetable gardens obviously did well. (Did you see the record size heads of cabbage that Daven Hanson brought in?) All this brings to mind that God's hand in life is always evident. Praise God in all things and for all things.

September 19 is the Fall Ministry Kickoff (our traditional start of a new Sunday School year). That day brings lots of food – hamburgers, hot dogs, and potluck dishes too numerous to mention. Plus, games for young and old. It's always a fun event so please join us. Hopefully the weather will be more comfortable than the end of Sunday School picnic we held last Spring.

September 26 is the actual start date of Sunday School. Thank you to the teachers who have volunteered to mentor our children of Faith. Thank you as well to the parents for your support of these important steps in bringing young people to the faith that will sustain them through life. I believe the best steps parents can provide in bringing that faith to their children, however, starts right at home – in how we live, act, and demonstrate in daily life our love of God and Jesus Christ. Once again, praise God in all things and for all things.

You have all seen the big rock by the church garage. That rock was found by Brad and Peg Bellamy several years ago and we have pretty much forgotten about it since it was moved to our property. With the coordinated effort of a number of congregation members, the rock is now in place. The Bellamys will engrave the rock with a beautiful design that will be a tribute to the glory of God. That engraving should be completed within the next few weeks. The talents and abilities of the people of Faith are astounding. The willingness to step forward and do the work necessary to complete projects honors God and is a joy to witness. While several people helped with this effort, I especially thank Justin Juelke and Mark Pugh for all they did to get the rock into position to be engraved. One final time for this letter – praise God in all things and for all things.

In love and thankfulness for all of you,
Howie Larsen

Finance & Management Team

The Finance & Management team met at 6:30 P.M. on Aug 12, 2021 Members present were Chairman Bob Riitters, Chris Scholl, Justin Juelke, Tom Lippert, and Jim Nelson via conference call. A motion was made by Tom Lippert and seconded by Justin Juelke to approve the April meeting minutes. Motion carried. Jim Nelson presented the July financial reports and answered questions asked by committee members. Year to date revenues are above budget and ahead of last year, and expenses are below budget but $17,000 above last year. We are truly a blessed congregation! Motion by Chris Scholl seconded by Justin Juelke to approve financial report as presented. Motion carried. Old business was discussed. We will decide if Lenten Supper proceeds will be used for mortgage payments or direct principle pay down at the October meeting depending on how 3rd quarter financials are looking. Justin Juelke reported that the speaker system is hooked up and paid for. He is doing some fine tuning. There are now ceiling speakers in the worship area, kitchen, nursery, & library. New business was discussed. Payment options for the sign software update ($795.00) were discussed. A motion by Chris Scholl seconded by Justin Juelke was made to use the $314 remaining in the garage sale fund along with $481 from the John Albaugh memorial to pay this bill. Motion carried. Justin reported that Mark Pugh had moved the rock into place and Bellamys are ready to etch as soon as the council approves an image. Amber Rausch has been contacted to prepare some image options. Tom Lippert reported that the council has decided not to buy a plow and instead has contracted with Seward & Sons Construction to do the winter 2021-2022 season snow removal @ $200 per event. (2" snowfall = event) Chairman Riitters adjourned the meeting and the team closed it by reciting the Lord's Prayer together.
For His team,
Tom Lippert

Mission Statement

As Children of God, we are called to love, glorify and submit to the Living Christ, ministering to others by the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to **stand** your ground, and after you have done everything, **to stand**. **Stand** firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the **shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God**. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
Ephesians 6:16

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Youth & Family

"I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. Men shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness. They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness." Psalm 145:5-7

God has wowed us with his goodness to us this summer! In the weekly encounters with our students through deep dives, bonfires, softball games, etc. and also in the big summer trips to Benton Harbor, Colorado, and the North Shore, God has been abundant in his goodness! And as these verses from the Psalms encourage us to do, I will declare the memories of his goodness displayed to us. Some examples of God's goodness toward us include:

- Providing the right leaders who served selflessly and connected so well with our youth
- Showing his love for us through the hospitality of the Busch family in at the host church in Burwell, NE
- Holding off the rain storm, allowing us to spend "solitude time" with Him before leaving Buena Vista, CO
- Leading us to an "easy" solution to getting the keys out of the locked rental van (oops!)
- Displaying his majesty in the breathtaking panoramic mountain views, refreshing Lake Michigan waters, brilliance of the stars in the North Shore, and the power of the crashing waves of Lake Superior.
- Allowing us the opportunity to partner with Jerry, a passionate community leader, in Benton Harbor that we learned so much from
- Transforming student and leaders' hearts, breaking down walls, calling them deeper into relationship with Him
- Creating community around us to walk through the hard moments of life with

I am thankful for the opportunity to switch things up in the summer. But as the school year starts, we will launch Wednesday nights with Romans and Christians on 9/8 at 7-9pm. A pizza dinner will be served at 7pm and the game will follow. 6-12th grade youth are encouraged to invite their friends to this event especially. Regular Wednesday youth nights will begin on September 15th. There will also be a Family Meeting on Sunday, September 12th after worship. Youth and parents should plan to attend to hear youth ministry highlights for the school year.

Congregational Life

Congregational Life team met in August.

It was good to sit around the table and discuss past and upcoming events, after taking a short break from our monthly meetings.

Adult/Teen Challenge group came to Faith on August 8th. We always look forward to their participation in our worship service with their heartfelt testimonies and their praise to God in song. Please keep these men and their families in prayer.

We served a breakfast after the worship service. This gave members of our congregation an opportunity to visit one on one with the members of this organization. Pictures of our "kitchen crew" can be found on the bulletin board!

There is a fun event coming up on Sunday, September 19th! The "Fall Ministry Kickoff". Food, fun, games, fellowship! More information coming in our church bulletin and Sunday announcements.

Remember the "suggestion box" on the table in the narthex or contact any of our team: Noel Guerard, Julie Shelstad, Jody Cox, Gregg Rutten, Jackie Rutten, Bev Larsen, and council reps, Karen Underhill and Howie Larsen.

For the team, Bev Larsen

August Council Minutes

Faith Lutheran Church Council Meeting, August 19th, 2021, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Joel Hanson, Justin Juelke, Howie Larsen, Tom Lippert, Denny Myers, Cheryl Rioux, George Sandy and Renae Stueber
Absent: Judy Berger, Kennard Fellbaum, Jim Nelson, Karen Underhill and Pastor Nate
The meeting was called to order by Howie Larsen and opening prayer led by Tom Lippert.

Secretary's Report: George Sandy moved and Cheryl Rioux seconded to accept the July Council Minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Year-to-date revenues are up and expenses are higher than last year but still remain below budget. George Sandy moved and Howie Larsen seconded to accept the July Treasurer's Report. Motion carried. The Finance Team recommended the remaining Garage Sale funds and funds from the Albaugh memorial fund, which was approved by Janette Albaugh, cover the sign upgrade costs. The council agreed.

Youth Director's Report: Sara's report shared information about the Senior Camping trip and water games. As well as information about the upcoming fall plans. There will also be a Youth Family meeting on Sunday, September 12th following worship. The Youth team will also be working with the Congregational Life Team and Children's Team on the Fall Ministry Kick-off on Sunday, September 19th.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Nate will be gone again this coming Sunday, August 22nd. Greg Hyatt will preach again.

Old Business:

Ministry Team Reports:

Children's Team: The first day of Sunday School will be Sept. 26th with the Fall Ministry kick-off on Sept. 19th.

Congregational Life Team: The team is mostly working on planning for the Fall Ministry kick-off.

Finance & Management Team: Sara requested that the volleyball court be sprayed for weeds. Justin will take care of it as he will also spray the newly planted grass by the rock.

Mission & Outreach Team: The mission team will be doing a sponsorship for the Terebinth Refuge breakfast coming up in September. The freewill offering for MN Adult & Teen Challenge was $1,118.

Worship & Prayer Team: The team has recognized some items to be added to the budget for next year. No other issues have come up at this time.

Photo Directory: We are approximately 1/3 done with this project and will pick up again in September to hopefully finish it yet this fall.

Volunteer Issue: This time of year, so many people are on vacation but overall this has improved, especially as we get contact information updated.

Speakers Update: Justin has had the speakers already installed in the ceiling connected to the sound board. The maintenance room holds the controls and he has them up and running now. The speakers are designed as a PA system so will mostly help with speaking during worship and not as much with music.

New Business:
Rock Etching: Justin has the rock placed and ready to go. The Bellamys have submitted a design for the rock to be etched onto it. Joel Hanson moved and Denny Myers seconded to approve the design and move forward with the etching. Motion carried.

Fall Ministry Kick-off: The Fall Ministry Kick-off is scheduled for September 19th, following worship. This year we will be doing the traditional grilling and potluck. There will also be games and activities.

Pass Through Accounts: We have some people donating to us but designating to other places. We would like to eliminate the need to pay these funds out to the other places. Justin or Howie will make an announcement.

Irrigation System Issue: A sign was pushing into the ground, rupturing the sprinkler system hose. Tom Lippert had it repaired but recommends we be more cautious where signs are placed in the future.

Wednesday Night Meals/Bible Study: Sara Stanton has proposed adding to the Wednesday night activities. In order to make it easier for families with children in Confirmation or Youth Group she would like to have Wednesday night meals for the families and an Adult Bible Study. The council feels this would be a great program but more information is needed and more people would need to step up to help put it in motion.

The meeting closed with prayer.

The next meeting will take place September 16th at 6:30 p.m.
Submitted by Sarah Kalkbrenner, Faith Lutheran Church Secretary

Attendance & Offering

August	1: 172	$ 7,122
August	8: 171	$ 3,715
August	15: 118	$ 2,642
August	22: 134	$ 5,376
August	29: 166	$ 10,278