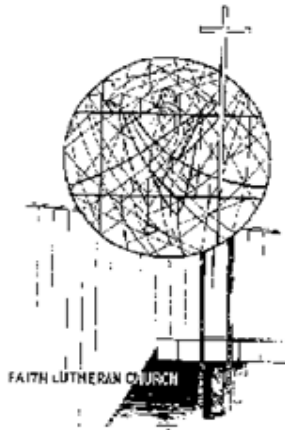


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
50 LEVERSEE ROAD  
TROY, NEW YORK 12182



# ***Following Faith***

***February 2017***

# Following Faith



**Dear Church**



How do we find the words to pray?

As 21<sup>st</sup> century people, living in a confusing and conflicting world with little regard for the holy, how can we possibly know how to connect with God in prayer?

One great answer to those questions might start with some 500-year-old advice from Martin Luther, who along with being a Reformer of the Church and a towering Theologian, was also “Pastor Martin,” concerned that his people know how to connect with God in prayer. He taught them from his own experience and struggles with prayer:

*I do not bind myself to such words or syllables, but say my prayers in one fashion today, in another tomorrow, depending upon my mood and feeling. I stay however, as nearly as I can to the same general thoughts and ideas. It may happen occasionally that I may get lost among so many ideas in one petition (of the Lord's Prayer) that I forego the other six. If such an abundance of good thoughts comes to us we ought to disregard the other petitions, make room for such thoughts, listen in silence, and under no circumstance obstruct them. The Holy Spirit himself preaches here, and one word of his sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers.*

That guidance from *Luther's Works* is one of the nuggets of very old teaching that can be utilized in life-giving ways today. Like Luther's church members so long ago, do we not struggle to find words and form for our prayers? Do we not hope to find the place in prayer when our voice becomes still and the Holy Spirit enters in?

**Faith Lutheran Church  
50 Leversee Road  
Troy, New York 12182  
(518) 237- 4641**

[www.faithlutherantroy.com](http://www.faithlutherantroy.com)

**Sunday morning worship: 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday School: during worship**

**The Rev. Jennifer Wegter McNelly,  
Pastor**

**Church Council Officers:**

**Donna VanZandt (President)  
Sara Martin (Vice President)  
Barbara Boord (Treasurer)  
Diana Rieker (Secretary)  
Fred Howard (Financial Secretary)**

**Council Members  
Errol Bull (Property)  
Evelyn Jarosz (Worship)  
Elizabeth King (In Reach/Out Reach)  
Sara Martin (Education)  
Michael Moroskey (Property)  
Carol Perrott (Missions)  
Pam Perras (Stewardship)  
Ben Wagar (Property)**

I am enthusiastic about sharing an invitation with you from the Council and me for the season of Lent. Together as a whole congregation, we are being invited to use a book of daily devotions, *40-Day Journey with Martin Luther* edited by Gracia M. Gindal.

There is an article elsewhere in the newsletter describing the book and our plan in more detail, but the main idea is this:

- ❖ We will each be praying and reflecting each day of Lent – in different places and moments of the day – on the same questions and ideas, connecting us in a spiritual journey together.
- ❖ Our Lenten prayers, with the guidance of this little book of devotions, will connect us to wisdom from the Bible and church history to guide us toward being more deeply connected to the Living God in our lives today.

Pastor Martin Luther also wrote, “I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I! Amen.”

His advice about prayer begins with a disclaimer about his own struggle to pray. He confides “when I feel that I have become cool or joyless in prayer because of other tasks or thought...” and he shares his approach.

Luther’s honesty is an antidote to any sentimental idea we may have that prayer would be easier if we lived in a simpler time in the past, or if we were like one of the great spiritual leaders of the church.

Prayer is always a challenge; always something we need to take time to learn and practice; and always a powerful way of connecting to the insight, healing power, joy, and peace that God eagerly waits to share with us when we turn our attention toward God.

You are in my prayers, as I hope I am in yours. I pray that we will find a way to be God’s people as a congregation, as a nation, and as individuals in these challenging times so full of need and of possibilities.

*Peace in Christ*  
*Pastor Jennifer*

## **SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE TIME CHANGE TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 12<sup>TH</sup>**

After lengthy discussion the Council has decided to change the Sunday morning worship time to 11:00am beginning on February 12, 2017. The Council decided unanimously after long thought and discussion over many months.

The news was first shared with the congregation at the Annual Meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. More information follows, especially for those of you who could not be at the meeting last week. While some people were excited about the positive impact the time change will have, other members were upset or sad about it.

**History:** When Pastor Steve Cordes began serving both Faith Lutheran Church and Evangelical Church, both congregations were worshipping at 10:30am on Sundays. Evangelical changed its worship time to 9:00am; Faith gave up its 8:30am service. In subsequent years, Pastors Cordes, Hempel, and Wegter-McNelly each noted the problems with this schedule and strongly recommended a change.

### **Good things about this change:**

- ❖ Both congregations will be starting in time frames that are within the desirable range of 9am – 11am.
- ❖ Faith can start on-time on a regular basis so that regular members can better plan their mornings.
- ❖ Faith can make a good impression on visitors and newcomers by starting at the scheduling time and sharing a well-prepared service.
- ❖ Worship leaders can check-in and be ready (choir warmed-up, sound system checked, liturgist and pastor checked in, Baptism families welcomed.)
- ❖ Special activities (e.g. a Bible study or special event) might be planned prior to the service.

- ❖ Starting in February allows time to communicate the change in a variety of forms to all members, change signage, and update website, while also establishing the new routine in time to have a positive impact on Lent and Easter.

**Process:** Some members asked good questions and some expressed frustration during the Annual Meeting that this decision was made by the Council rather than by a vote of the congregation. I want to share why I recommended that the Council make this decision rather than debate and vote on it at the Annual Meeting:

- ❖ According to the Faith Lutheran Church bylaws, it is the responsibility of the Council to set worship service dates and times. So technically, it was the right process under the bylaws.
- ❖ Following a congregation's bylaws doesn't necessarily mean that a process is the best choice for the health and unity of the church. By this more important standard, I also feel that it was the best choice, though definitely not a perfect one. The congregation has struggled with the worship time since Faith began sharing a pastor without ever being able to come to agreement on a solution. Within the constraint of sharing a pastor, there are few workable scheduling options.
- ❖ Learning about Faith's bylaws and the past conflict and irresolution around this issue, I began a series of discussions last summer with the Council members about the significant pros and cons to either changing to 11:00am or remaining at 10:30am. There was a lot of concern for how difficult change is at Faith and recognition that this change would be very emotional or objectionable for some. We also talked about the original process years back to share a pastor with Evangelical Lutheran Church, and how that process had not been as transparent and participatory as hindsight tells us it should have been. The worship time conflict is an issue created by the much bigger change that happened – in a less than perfect way – in the past.
- ❖ The Council was torn because on the one hand, it was not a good thing to consistently start the worship service late. On the other

hand, it was going to be contentious and emotional to make a change. The Council eventually reached consensus. If they had recommended the change for a congregational vote rather than taking responsibility for the change, I was concerned that the debate at the Annual Meeting would have been even more painful and likely divisive as people took sides. Whichever way a congregational vote went, because of the limited time we have at a congregational meeting we surely would not have reached consensus in the way that a small group working over a long period of time was able to do. There was the potential for hurt either way, but perhaps a greater chance of taking sides and damaging relationships if the process had been for the whole congregation debate.

There was no perfect choice for resolving this question and I am very sorry for the pain that the process and the plan causes' some of you. I have tried here to offer you a full explanation, but I don't expect this information to instantly make everyone feel better or agree with the process or the plan. I am definitely willing to keep talking about it with any of you. Just let me know and we'll take time to talk.

***Pastor Jennifer***

## **COUNCIL SUMMARY**

The Council continued preparation for the annual congregational meeting scheduled on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Another draft of the proposed 2017 budget was distributed and reviewed by Council members. After much discussion and questions and answers, several adjustments were made to the proposed budget. The Nominating committee will be meeting to identify candidates to replace outgoing Council members.

The Council discussed formation of a Committee for Memorials. The purpose of committee would be to encourage memorials and provide consistency in how we 'thank' and 'celebrate' people. More information will be available at the annual congregational meeting and in the weekly bulletin.

For any concerns or problems, please advise us. We will discuss and address issues at our next meeting on Monday February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7pm.

***Diana Rieker, Secretary***



I always feel like the February newsletter is the one newsletter of the year that I don't have much to write about. We started off the new year with the kids starting back to Sunday School and are looking forward to the rest of the 2017 Sunday School year.

Currently, we are in the process of planning the training and implementation of acolytes. The older boys and girls (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade) are eligible to participate. We also are starting to think about our annual Easter fundraiser. We are thinking of some kind of "animal" theme where we collect money in order to purchase a farm animal for a family in need.

Another activity that has been going on with the Sunday School kids is "Kid's Council". This is an informal group the kids developed themselves that meets during coffee hour and plans activities and fundraising. They want to give money to the church and to charities. In December they made ornaments and cards to give to the shut-ins when we went caroling. Some of the representatives spoke at the Annual Meeting about their endeavours.

Enjoy the winter!

***Sara Martin, Education Director***

## **CHOIR REHERSAL**

Choir rehearsals are generally held every Thursday at 7:00 PM for about an hour. Anyone interested in joining is welcome to come and enjoy singing our praises to the Lord.

## **FLOWERS for FEBRUARY**

- Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>** In Honor of Rebecca's Birthday  
Given by the Truland Family
- Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>** In Memory of Jack Keating  
Given by Larry and Barbara Boord
- Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>** To the Glory of God
- Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>** To the Glory of God

## **OUR FAITH at WORK**

Our mission for the month of February will be in support of the important work of Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes as Wycliffe Bible Translators.

The D'Jernes have been working in Papua New Guinea for many years and count on the support they receive from congregations like ours to continue their work.

Among other things, Jeff and Sissie work to translate the Bible into the language used by the Arop-Lokep people of Papua New Guinea.

Jeff and Sissie are also a voice to the Arop-Lokep people on issues of AIDS awareness, linguistic vitality, physical environment, education, matters of faith, and other topics crucial to better preparing them for the encroaching western world and global influences.

Quarterly journals from Jeff and Sissie can be found on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

***Carol Perrott, Missions***

## SERVING FAITH in FEBRUARY

Feb. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Altar	Karen Cordes and Janet Walsh
	Lay Assistant Ushers	Rich Anderson Diana Rieker and Jim Peters
	Counters	Michele and Fred Howard
	Coffee Hour	Kathy Adameck
Feb. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Altar	Joyce Duncan and Donna St. John
	Lay Assistant Ushers	Errol Bull Mike Moroskey and Bill Speanburg
	Counters	Donna Gibson and Linda Hulihan
	Coffee Hour	Carolyn Rouse and Donna Gibson
Feb. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Altar	Joyce Duncan and Donna St. John
	Lay Assistant Ushers	Aaron Cordes Donna and Dave Truland
	Counters	Evelyn and Bill Jarosz
	Coffee Hour	Gene and Donna St. John
Feb. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Altar	LouAnn Behrens and Stephanie Wagar
	Lay Assistant Ushers Counters	Donna Gibson Errol and Ryan Bull Diane and Rich Anderson
	Coffee Hour	Rikki Franklin

If you are unable to serve on your assigned Sunday, please arrange to trade dates with another assistant. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

*Donna Van Zandt, Worship Chairperson.  
Schedule for Altar Guild by Pam Perras  
Schedule for Coffee Hour by Heather Bull*

## INVITATION TO A HOLY LENT: DAILY DEVOTIONAL BOOK AND SMALL GROUPS

This year, the season of Lent will begin on March 1<sup>st</sup> as we observe Ash Wednesday. Many Christians through the ages have celebrated this season as a time of special focus on the life and ministry of Jesus and as a way for journeying toward Holy Week and Easter. In worship and in our individual lives, we may mark the season with special rituals, study, or spiritual practices.

For Lent this year, the Council and I are inviting everyone to participate in a spiritual practice together using a daily devotional book: *40-Day Journey with Martin Luther* edited by Gracia M. Grindal. Each day during the forty days of Lent has a theme, a brief passage from Luther, Bible passages, a brief prayer, and suggestions including questions to ponder and journal reflections. Each lesson can be done in 5 minutes or slowly over an hour depending on your schedule and interest.

These are some reasons we are excited about this:

- ❖ It's the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of Rev. Martin Luther! This will connect some of his writings to our own spiritual practices.
- ❖ This book is good for all experience levels – whether you are a beginner or an old hand at daily devotions.
- ❖ This is flexible for people who are local, homebound, or traveling, and whose schedules vary.
- ❖ We will be connected a spiritual practice – even as we are reading and praying in different places at different moments of the day.

Next steps: sample copies and a sign-up list to reserve a book will be available at church in the coming weeks. We want everyone who would like a book to have one. If you are able to make a

monetary gift to defray the cost, the suggested donation is \$14.

**Small Groups:** During February, everyone will be invited to join a small group to meet once a week during Lent to share questions, discuss the book and enjoy time together. Daytime, weeknight, and a Sunday afternoon groups will be offered so that we hope everyone who would like to join a group can find one to fit your schedule.

**Pastor Jennifer**



St. Paul's Center was most grateful for the hats and mittens which were delivered in December. All are in use keeping the children warm and protected from the elements.

We will be packing cookies for the shut-ins on Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup> following worship. All contributions of cookies and help packing and delivering are appreciated for this project.

Again this year we will collect soap (bath size in original wrapper) for Lutheran World Relief. We will provide Saturday or Sunday lunch and dinner for the guests of Joseph House in May. Stay tuned for the exact date.

Mark your calendar: Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> we are planning a sewing day at church. We will be making quilts with an easy strip pattern. Plan to join us beginning at 10:00 AM and running until mid-afternoon. Come when you can and stay as long as you can. We will have several machines available. Even if you aren't a quilter, come and help out that day. We need people to press fabric, cut fabric, layer the fabrics for the quilts, sew the strips, and tie the quilts. So there's plenty of work for everyone. Stay tuned for more details.

Hope you'll be able to join us for a time that day.



## **DINNER CLUB**

Dinner Club's first dinner of 2017 was as potluck supper Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>. Everyone enjoyed a large selection of delicious entrees. Keeping with the season there was a snowman building contest. Imaginations ran wild resulting in quite a selection of snowmen and great deal of laughter.

February 11<sup>th</sup> Dinner Club will hold its annual banquet here at church. It will be a catered event giving the "chef teams" an evening off. The new officers announced in January will begin their term. The officers for 2017 are: Evelyn & Bill Jarosz – Co-Presidents, LouAnn Behrens & Donna Gibson – Co-Secretaries, and Joyce Duncan & Stephanie Wagar Co-Treasurers.

Everyone is cordially invited to the dinner February 11<sup>th</sup>. You can do so by making a reservation with any of the officers.

## **NEWSLETTER EDITOR/COORDINATOR**

Barbara Boord is coordinating the Newsletter efforts. Hard copies of the Newsletter are available at church for pick up when you are present.

You may go to the church web site at: [www.faithlutheranchurchtroy.com](http://www.faithlutheranchurchtroy.com) any time and view the newsletter.

We will email you a copy if you send your email address directly to Barbara at her email address shown below.

At your request, we will be happy to send you a copy via the USPS.

## **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

The March newsletter deadline is Monday February 20<sup>th</sup>. Please email your articles to: [barbboord@hotmail.com](mailto:barbboord@hotmail.com).

# February 2017



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <i>Choir 7:00 PM</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
				Home Bureau 2:00 to 4:00 PM		
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <b>Council Meeting</b> 7:00 PM	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <i>Choir 7:00 PM</i>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
			Speigle Elders 10:30AM-2:30PM			<b>Dinner Club</b> 6:00 PM
<b>12</b> 11:00 Service Begins Cookies for Shut-ins	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <i>Happy Valentine's Day</i>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <i>Choir 7:00 PM</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
				Home Bureau 2:00 to 4:00 PM		
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Newsletter Articles Due</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> <i>Choir 7:00 PM</i>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
			Speigle Elders 10:30AM-2:30PM			
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>				

