

**HEALTH AND
HAPPINESS
Tanzania
ELCA.org/hunger**



Life has not been easy for Eunice, 27. As a divorced mother, she struggled to provide three meals a day for her twin children. She and her babies were also sick, which only added to their challenges. A neighbor in the Bunda District of Tanzania introduced Eunice to the Bunda Palliative Care Team from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. When screening revealed that Eunice and her twins were HIV positive, the Bunda Palliative Care Team provided them with the meds they needed. Eunice also received food and other basic necessities for her and her children, including a bigger home to better accommodate her family. Through the program, Eunice also learned how to use her skills to start a vegetable-selling business to earn an income. "I thank God that I met the Bunda PC team," said Eunice. "I am short of words because of how they have been supportive and love me unconditionally. The world has only a few people like them. They told me that they are helped by other people, and I am thanking them as well." Thanks to your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, Eunice is feeling healthier and happier. She has a brighter outlook on life and is currently seeking a nanny for her children so she can dedicate time to grow her business. Your generous donations make programs like the Bunda Palliative Care Team possible. In Bunda alone, your gifts are helping to reach nearly 2,000 people, like Eunice, each year.



Faith Lutheran Church

Faithfully Growing, Welcoming, and Caring through Christ
Sunday, December 18, 2016
Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ 9:30 am

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace.

C: **Amen.**

P: Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor. (A brief silence.) God of all time,

C: **We confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us. We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace. In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.**

P: Comfort, o comfort my people, says your God. In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news!

C: **Amen.**



~ OPENING HYMN ~

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

INTRODUCTION

P: Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday in Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

C: Amen



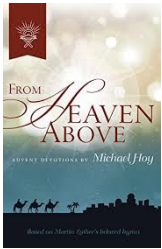
With this 4th Sunday in Advent we are truly entering the Christmas season. The Scripture lessons are preparing us for the arrival of the Christ Child, the Son of God, Emmanuel/Immanuel, "God-with-us." We look forward to our Christmas Eve Candlelight service this Saturday, December 24, at 5:00 PM, and ask you to use the accompanying red papers as invitations to your friends and neighbors. Also, because the 25th falls on a Sunday, we will host a Christmas service here. Some churches have cancelled, but we will hold worship on both holidays, including New Year's Day, at our regular time.

It seems redundant to produce a newsletter, when all your information is included in this bulletin. We've reduced our mailing list to those we know are still part of our worshiping congregation, though we can still send this announcement out to those who receive our email. You can help us transmit any other messages.

Finally, please let me take this occasion to wish the Faith family a very Merry Christmas and a most Happy New Year! I thank you for the privilege of continuing to receive me as your pastor. I don't even use the "interim" title any longer, even though it is technically accurate to do so. However, Helen and I still plan to take our sabbatical retreat during January, going south where it is warm! My friend, Pastor Karl Otto, will cover for me from Jan. 2-30. I'll be here on New Year's Day, and back in the office again on February 1. God's blessings to you!

Pastor Rick (and Helen) Meier





Please continue using your Advent devotional book, "From Heaven Above", by Michael Hoy. It is for you to read every day during Advent.

Happy Birthday To You!

DECEMBER

2 – Gail Krause
5 – Mary Ann Mueller
13 – Mike Murphy
16 – Rachel Schuller
18 – Sandy Johnson
24 – Nicole Blakeman
25 – Kathy Strasser

JANUARY

10 - Hannah Guffey
12 - Betty Bonner
20 - Viola Thostenson
23 - Amy McCormick
27 - Samantha Guffey
27 - Victor Lipinski
30 - Craig Miller



Sunday, Dec. 18 ~ 9:30am
Children's Christmas program during
Worship Service

Saturday, Dec. 24 ~ 5pm
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Sunday, Dec. 25 ~ 9:30am
Christmas Carols and Communion

Sunday, January 1, 2017
9:30am Worship



*Today's altar flowers are presented by:
Sue & George Brunson, in honor of
Sue's sister Nancy's 60th birthday*

Thank you to Anne and Rachel Strasser and Amanda Guffey for working with our children to prepare the delightful Christmas program seen at worship today.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
In your Son, Emmanuel, you have shown us your light and saved us from the power of sin. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Increase our longing for your presence, that at the celebration of your Son's birth his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst, for he is our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever.

C: Amen

ADVENT HYMN, LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH CANDLE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,

Refrain
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way.
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray. (A brief silence.)

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



**Welcome to our children's liturgy
for Christmas.**

**Today we celebrate the most
wonderful birthday of all -
the birth of our Lord,
Jesus Christ.**

Leader: Children bring unrestrained joy and excitement to the days of Christmas.

ALL: Thank you God for children.

Leader: Their eyes and hearts remind us that this is the birthday for celebration every day of our lives.

ALL: Thank you God for children.

Leader: Their simple faith renews and reaffirms our faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

ALL: Thank you God for children.

Leader: Their discovery is our discovery.

ALL: Thank you God for children.

Leader: Children were important to Jesus. They are important to us. They restore our joy and wonder. Let us be as children today and worship with fresh enthusiasm and joy without restraint.

Entry Hymn for all to sing: "O Come All Ye Faithful"

PROGRAM

"Baby Jesus Song"

Group Poem ~ "The Shepherd and the Lamb"

"O Come Little Children"

Recitation ~ "Come Animals Everywhere"

"Away in a Manger"



Today we pray for our friends and family here at Faith Lutheran Church. Thank you to those who pray for the people on our prayer list. Even if we don't recognize a name or know exactly their need, their friends and family truly appreciate it. We can pray for health, healing, and wholeness for each of them as well as their loved ones. Thank you for your faithfulness in prayer. We pray for: Aaron Hill, Audrey, Barb, Barbara, Barbara K., Bea, Ben, Bill, Bob Parisot Family, Boyd Miller, Brayton, Brett, Brian, Carl, Cindy, Conley, Connie, Debi, Denise, Dennis, Diane, Don, Donna, Donna H., Ed H., Emily, Ethel Strasser, Family of Bob Davis, Family of Dale Story, Florence, Fred, the Funk Family, Gary, George, Georgia, Harriet, Heidi, Helen and Pastor Rick, Howard, Ian, Irene, Irene A., Jackie, Jaleena, Janet, Janice, Janice E., Jessie, Jimmy, John, family of John Palmer, Joyce, Joyce Hatch, June, Kaci, Kamyia, Karsen, Kelli, Kelly, Larry, Linda, Linda G., Logan, Lucas, Marion, Mark B., Marjean, Mary, Mary B., Maureen M., Mary Lou, Mary Pat, Nash, Nicole, Nikko, Noah, Pat O., Patty, Patty A., Rich, Rick Dunaway, Ricky, Roger, Sara, Sarah, Scott Wright, Shalom, Shannon, Shirley, Shirley P., Steve, Sue, Ted, Teresa, Terri, Tim, Todd, Tom, Tony, Trisha, Tristan, Vance, Vicki, Zach, all service men and women, all homeless and unemployed, our shut-ins, our college students, and those in the military and their families, that God will keep them in his grace and care.



Can You Lend A Hand?
Until a custodian is hired in January, we are asking for volunteers to help clean our church at 5:15pm:

**Friday, December 23
Friday, December 30
Thank you very much!**

Worship

Welcome to Faith Lutheran Church. We are so happy to have you worship with us today! Please join us after worship in our Fellowship Room for beverages, snacks and conversation.

Communion is by intinction. Come forward as directed by the ushers, receive the bread with an open hand then dip it in the wine (dark) or juice (light). If you accidentally eat the bread before dipping or drop it, please ask for another piece. You do not have to be a member of Faith or be Lutheran to take Communion. Christ is the host of the meal and ALL baptized believers are welcome!

Offering ~ As always, if you are unable to attend worship, please make sure to catch up with your **offering** the next week. Or, if you'd like, please mail it to the church office and write "offering" on the envelope and it will be included in that week's offering and seen only by the designated counters for the day. Thank you for being faithful in giving generously to God's work here at Faith Lutheran!

Financials for Sunday, December 11, 2016 - Week 50

Attendance - 77

Weekly Offering Actual	\$1,540.00
Weekly Offering Budget	\$2,068.00
2016 YTD Actual Offering	\$100,085.00
2016 YTD Offering Needed	\$103,400.00
Offerings YTD Toward Roof Loan	\$5,544.50

Today's Worship Leaders

Altar Guild - Carol & Roger Frey

Computer Technician - Mike Banker

Offering Video - Helen Meier

Counters - Roger & Carol Frey

Fellowship - Pat Wicks

Greeters - Viola Thostenson, George & Sue Brunson

Musician - Betty Comins

Reader - Nicole Blakeman

Ushers - Doug Congdon and Craig Miller

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Richard J. Meier

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 7:10-16

A reading from Isaiah, the 7th chapter.

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

R: Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God!

Psalm 80 ~ A Responsive Reading ~

R: Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

C: In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.

R: Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

C: O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?

R: You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

C: You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.

P: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

C: Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.

P: And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.

C: Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 1:1-7

A reading from Romans, the 1st chapter.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

R: Word of God, Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

"ALLELUIA"



GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

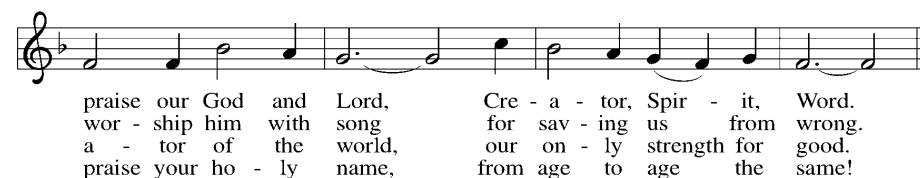
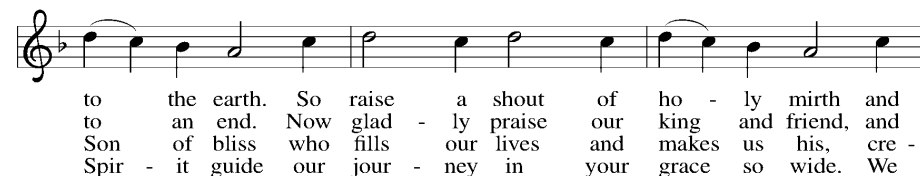
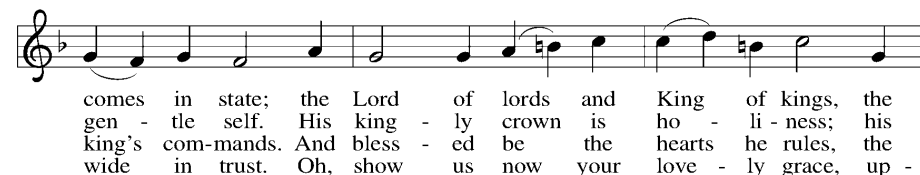
P: The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

CLOSING HYMN

Fling Wide the Door



Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943
Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

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DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Let us pray. Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

C: we give you thanks and praise.

DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks and praise to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

~ COMMUNION ~

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen

BLESSING

P: May Christ the Sun of righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

"When Angels Speak"

~ Hymn of the Day ~

In the Bleak Midwinter



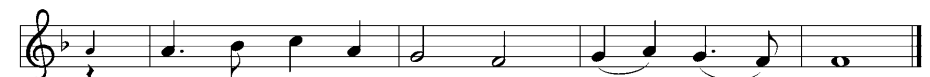
1 In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2 Heav - en can - not hold him, nor . . . earth sus - tain;
3 What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heav'n and earth shall flee a - way when he comes to reign;
If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;



snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
in the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed
if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
the Lord . . . God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: As we anticipate the fullness of the presence of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need. (A brief silence.) For the church universal and all servants of the gospel, for poets and artists, for musicians and preachers, and for theologians and teachers; that all proclaim that God is with us in Christ, let us pray.

C: **Have mercy, O God.**

P: For all plants and animals, seas and skies, snow and rain, and all of God's marvels; that all of creation grow and thrive as we bless, protect, and use with care what God has made, let us pray.

C: **Have mercy, O God.**

P: For the nations and those in authority, for peace and justice throughout the whole world, and for those who advocate on behalf of others; that all in positions of leadership choose what is good for the community, let us pray.

C: **Have mercy, O God.**

P: For the thirsty and hungry, the weak and fearful, those childbirth, those who mourn, and the sick (*especially*); that they know Christ the Anointed One who dries up every tear and comforts those who suffer, let us pray.

C: **Have mercy, O God.**

P: For those who travel near and far, for those who prepare our congregation for worship and celebration, and for those who gather around word and sacrament; that all experience welcome and refreshment, let us pray.

C: **Have mercy, O God.**

P: In thanksgiving for the saints who have died and are now at rest; that the witness of their faith point us to the promises of grace and resurrection in Christ, let us pray.

C: **Have mercy, O God.**

P: Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.

C: **Amen.**

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

**~ VIDEO DURING OFFERTORY ~
"Breath of Heaven" by Amy Grant**

OFFERTORY RESPONSE



1 We give thee but thine own, what - e'er the gift may be;
2 May we thy boun - ties thus as stew - ards true re - ceive,



and glad - ly, as thou bless - est us, to thee our first - fruits give.