



Beacon of Faith

Worship God. Grow in faith. Offer hope.

Faith Lutheran Church and Preschool

January 2026



Welcome Statement

In response to God's unconditional love and grace, the people of Faith Lutheran Church seek to follow Jesus' commandment to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We express that love in our commitment to racial equity, and in our welcome of people of all ages, races, economic status, intellectual and physical abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, along with their families and friends, to join with us as we worship God, grow in faith, and offer hope.



Altar Flowers

Please be sure to sign up early for altar flowers to ensure you get the Sunday of your choice. Cost is \$60 payable to the church. Payment may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church office. Contact Nancy in the church office with any questions.

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The Christmas Season Draws to a Close on Epiphany

January 4

The Epiphany of Our Lord

Worship schedule, as usual

9 a.m. in the sanctuary

10:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

We remember the arrival of the Magi,
who were led by a star to Jesus!

Classes for children and youth in-between
the services resume on January 4.

January 11

The Baptism of Our Lord

and

9 a.m. worship, Affirmation of Baptism (Confirmation)

Special Kinship Café honoring the youth
who are being confirmed.

10:30 a.m. worship, Remembrance of Baptism

January 25

Pastor Jean's final Sunday as Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church

Worship at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., as usual

We will welcome Bishop Laura Barbins at both services.

Note: While the Kinship Café will be held, as usual, there will be no special reception on January 25 due to the short amount of time between the services. Please plan to attend the Retirement Open House for Pastor Jean from **2-4 p.m. on January 24 in the Fellowship Hall.**

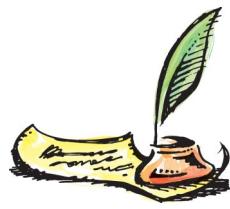
February 1

Pastor Nathan Krause

Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop
for Congregational Vitality in the Northeastern Ohio Synod
will lead both worship services at 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.



Pastor's Pondering **Pastor Jean M. Hansen**



My dear Faith family ... members and staff,

This is my final "Pondering" as your pastor. I have been so blessed by the years I have served at Faith Lutheran Church, and I feel privileged to be a part of the ministry of Jesus that has gone forth from this congregation due to the initiative, creativity, commitment, faithfulness and sacrificial giving of the followers of Jesus who are this congregation. My retirement is "on time", so to speak, but is also challenging because the connections I have made among you are deep and profound. You have invited me into your lives during sad and joyful times, and that makes saying good-bye particularly difficult. It's true that there's grieving on both sides – yours and mine – at this ending of my pastoral relationship with you.

It is because I want Faith Lutheran Church to continue to thrive, and because I want the next pastor(s) to experience the same positive relationships that I have, that there must be a clear ending to my role as your pastor.

Quoting from materials provided by the Northeastern Ohio Synod, a pastor in our synod explained it this way to his congregation as he was preparing to retire:

"Back at Northwestern Lutheran Seminary (LCA before the ELCA merger), Prof. Hulme taught students about empathic identification. Pastors are not to enmesh in the lives of parishioners but are to feel parishioners' experiences alongside of them. So, pastors feel pain at funerals and joy at weddings. Pastors feel the excitement of learning and the commitment for social welfare.

"It is because of the deep and profound nature of the human person that retiring pastors should go away. That way the interim pastor can prepare the congregation to form those new relationships with the new pastor. Perhaps no other "job" links people together the way being a pastor does. That is why the departure of one pastor is felt so deeply and why it takes time to form the next bond with the next pastor. But it does work. It does happen. It will happen here."

And it will happen at Faith Lutheran Church.

Later in January, the Council and I will review and sign the "Covenant for Departing Pastors" which spells out the expectations of the ELCA for a pastor who is leaving a congregation. It will be shared with the congregation.

To summarize it here, I am committing myself to not to do or say anything that undermines the development of the relationship between the congregation and their new pastor, whether as an interim or called pastor. That means I will not attend worship services or events at Faith Lutheran Church and will refuse requests for pastoral services by members, including baptisms, weddings, funerals, praying at anniversaries, visiting the sick and homebound and counseling. I will not offer an opinion or advice on congregational matters. Any participation at the congregation is subject to the invitation of the current pastor, which he or she must initiate, and even then, must be carefully considered.

My friends, please do not put me in the position of having to say “no”, which will be painful for you and for me, by asking me to do any of that which is listed in the previous paragraph. This will be especially important in the first few years of my departure and will at first require limiting communication on even a casual basis.

I will, of course, be praying for you, will gladly greet you when our paths cross in the community (after all, I'll still be living less than two miles from the church), willingly answer questions about when things happened at the church, or where something might be located, that no one else remembers (but...I may not remember either) and be excited for you when an interim and called pastor arrive. I ask you to pray for me and be excited as I begin this new phase of my life.

Change and transition are never easy, but the Holy Spirit will guide us, and all will be well ... in time. For that, and for all of you, I give thanks!



Business - Call Process Update

This is my final monthly update of “Phase 1: Saying Farewell” of our transition process. Beginning February 1 we will be entering “Phase 2: Congregational Health & Identity.” I will provide more details on that phase with the next monthly update and via mailed letter to the congregation.

Pastor Jean provided a formal letter of resignation in December which Council voted to accept. At the Council retreat in January, we will be conducting an exit interview to obtain helpful insights and perspective from Pastor Jean as we look towards the future of Faith. At that time, she will also be signing a “Covenant for Departing Pastors.” This is an important document that helps clarify for the pastor and congregation the end of the pastoral relationship. Additional details will be provided with the next monthly update and mailed letter in February.

The search for a full-time interim pastor continues. We are awaiting candidates to be identified by the Office of the Bishop. The hope is to have a full-time interim pastor to guide us until the call process is complete. Once identified, the potential interim pastor will be interviewed; a final candidate will be chosen by Council, then presented to the congregation.

The official Transition Team has been finalized. This group will be under the guidance of Pastor Nathan Krause (Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Vitality) and the interim pastor (once chosen) to make a clear and honest assessment of the congregation, clarify our mission and goals, and determine the appropriate staffing to lead us towards those goals. The Transition Team will be meeting with Pastor Krause in late February to begin their vital work for Faith. Given his important role in our transition process, Pastor Krause has been invited to provide the sermon on Sunday, February 1, as an introduction to the congregation.

The retirement celebration for Pastor Jean will be an open house format on **Saturday, January 24, from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall**. The following day Sunday, January 25, Pastor Jean will be presenting her final sermons as lead pastor at Faith Lutheran Church. She plans to preside over both the Traditional and Informal Worship Services that day. Please plan to attend and thank Pastor Jean for her many years of spiritual care and leadership at Faith.

If you have been considering volunteering to serve in any capacity at Faith, I encourage you to do so. If you have accounting experience or if you have business or organizational budgeting experience and are willing to serve, please contact me to be considered for the role of Treasurer. It is critical that we have our complete lay leadership team in place before Pastor Jean’s retirement.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or any other Council member.

Darryl P. Anderson
President, FLC Congregation Council

Outreach



David Simpson
Community Outreach Coordinator
Outreach@faithlutheranchurch.org
330-836-8811

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

OUTREACH QUIZ ANSWERS



Here are the answers to the acronym quiz from last month

AAIC	Akron Area Interfaith Council
ACF	Akron Community Foundation
APS	Akron Public Schools
ASIA	Asian Services in Akron
DLM	Dare to Love More and founder Debra L. Manteghi - her Obit link
ELCA	Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
LoF	Loads of Faith
IJA	Interfaith Justice Alliance
PROJECT R.I.S.E.	Realizing Individual Strength through Education
OASIS	OASIS Outreach Opportunity, Inc. <u>O</u> pen to all <u>A</u> ccepting of all <u>S</u> afe Haven and shelter <u>I</u> nstruction in the word and grace of Jesus Christ <u>S</u> urrender to Christ
OPEN M	Opportunity Parish Ecumenical Neighborhood Ministry
SJSP	St. John/St. Paul

BUSY FINGERS

Busy Fingers is seeking donations of clean sheets, to be used as liners in the quilts that they make and donate to OPEN M. Please place your donation in the basket labeled Busy Fingers, located on the shelf in the Fellowship Hall hallway, across from the restrooms.

DLM

The DLM Christmas program on December 13 was an enormous success! It was attended by almost **250 guests** of which over 200 were children, many Faith volunteers, and Santa as well. This event featured a wonderful complete breakfast for everyone, goodies for children, crafts of various sorts and a wide array of cookies and pastries and much conviviality. Although the many volunteers made the program magnificent, it would not have been possible without the **planning and preparatory work provided by DEB GOTTAS and GARRY STEINER**, as well as the kitchen crew, who coordinated the cooking and food serving. Please enjoy the photos on the next pages.

Outreach



Outreach



LOADS OF FAITH (LoF)

The Akron Community Foundation has informed us that our grant in support of LoF has been renewed for \$1,500 for its second year, which is the same level as this past year. Additionally, we have also been informed that through the foundation, an additional anonymous donation of \$750 will be added to the distribution.

LoF volunteer opportunities are available at either of our two locations, Laundromat City, 1713 W. Exchange St., Akron, and Laundry Time Laundromat at 970 N. Main Street. Contact David Simpson, Dana Singer or David Johnson to volunteer, or if you wish to observe first, to learn more about this ministry.

In addition to our laundry ministry and other church sponsored laundry ministries, the City of Akron periodically offers free laundry events. The 8th and most recent of its events titled, Tumble Together was at Super Clean Laundromat (1739 Britain Rd) for a four hour period on December 2.

SALVATION ARMY ANGEL TREE - A message from the Salvation Army

Thank you for your generous gifts that will bring joy to local children this holiday season. We are deeply grateful for your partnership in helping ensure children have gifts to open on Christmas morning through our Angel Tree and Share a Christmas programs. We appreciate your incredible support. Wishing you and your organization a very Merry Christmas!

Elizabeth Kargbo, Director of Development



Outreach

INTERFAITH JUSTICE ALLIANCE 2026 SERIES OVERVIEW

THEME: THE GROCERY GAP: FOOD DESERTS IN AKRON

Session I – February 25 at New Hope Baptist Church

Understanding Local Food Deserts

Moderator: Pastor David Nelson

Speaker - Tawney Beans and family members impacted by food deserts

Session II – March 4 at Temple Israel

The Human Cost of Food Deserts (Health impacts)

Moderator: Rabbi Joshua Brown

Presenters: Sharon van Nostran, physician

Autumn Reynolds - United Way Family Resource Center

LaMonica Davis, principal of Helen Arnold School

Session III – March 11 at St. Hilary

Why Food Deserts Exist: Systems & Challenges

Moderator: Fr. Steve Brunovsky

Presenters: Grocery Store Panel

Session IV - March 18 at Prince of Peace Baptist Church, in partnership with Faith Lutheran Church

Advocacy: What Is Required to Bring Change?

Moderator - Pastor Jack Streeter

Presenter: Ebony Yeboah-Amankwah (Summit Fresh Food Truck)

VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VAP) HONORS REV. SANDY SELBY

On October 28, at the Victim's Assistance Program's annual Gather for Good Friends Breakfast, the **Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby** was honored as the first recipient of the Extended Family Award which will in the future bear her name as the **Rev. Dr. Sandy Selby Extended Family Award**. This award will honor individuals and organizations who go above and beyond, to support VAP clients and staff with deep compassion, and a sense of shared responsibility for our mission—those who step in, like family, when needed most.

From the event program: "Dr. Selby has been an unwavering supporter and friend to Victim's Assistance Program since 1985. She has served with extraordinary compassion as an educator, mentor, and advocate for those who care for others. Her legacy of empathy, resilience, and leadership continues to inspire our entire extended family. For many years she has been serving on several boards, including the Board of Furnace Street Mission, the organization that founded VAP. Through her *Tough Work Outreach* ministry, Sandy has served as a consultant and trainer on compassion fatigue and resilience to numerous health and human service organizations in addition to VAP."



Sandy Selby & Rebecca Cool, Executive Director of VAP.

Outreach

SUMMIT COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE (SCCoC)

The SCCoC Annual Holiday Dinner for the homeless has been an Akron tradition for several years. It is an opportunity to provide a warm meal, gifts, coats, health screenings, and community for those experiencing homelessness. This year's event was held at Quaker Square University Catering on Saturday, December 6. Nancy and Jim Tobar are Faith volunteers who assisted with the program.



AKRON AREA INTERFAITH COUNCIL (AAIC)



During the spring of 2024, Women's Interfaith Spiritual Heritage (WISH) and the Akron Area Interfaith Council (AAIC) joined forces as *The Interweaving Sacred Prayers Collaborative* to host a series of events where over 100 interfaith participants wrote their prayers, wishes, dreams or hopes on strips of personally significant fabric, which were then interwoven into a beautiful Tapestry of Unity. The Tapestry is now complete, and it is available for exhibiting throughout the community at faith institutions and other organizations and has already been on display at **Trinity Lutheran Church of Kent**. We will apply to have the tapestry displayed here sometime in late winter or early spring. An explanation will be provided in the Beacon of Faith prior to its arrival. Thanks to Bob Radl for bringing this to our attention.

Also, AAIC will be hosting a prayer vigil on gun violence on Jan. 29 at Prince of Peace Baptist Church. Details will be posted on the Prince of Peace website: <https://www.popbc844.org>

MITZVAH DAY 2026



Planning has begun for the June 6th and 7th event. Temple Israel's goal is to expand the number of projects from 19 to 30. Please contact David Simpson if you have an idea for a project that Faith Lutheran Church could sponsor. And, look for projects that may interest you when the entire list becomes available in early March.

Outreach

ELCA DAY OF SERVICE FOR 2026



This is a repeat message for our September 13th Day of Service. It is not too early to consider projects for this special day. Please share any suggestions you may have with David Simpson for both projects in the community as well as here within our walls.

ELCA YOUTUBE VIDEO

"Intersections: Justice Ministry with ELCA Partners" is a short documentary presented by ELCA World Hunger. "Intersections" explores stories from ELCA companion ministries in Cambodia, Mexico, and Milwaukee, Wis., as they respond to the overlapping root causes of hunger in the United States and around the world. Here is a link to their video about the project <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL86D4914EF787269F>.

MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM OASIS

"Dear Friends at Faith,

For over twenty years, Oasis has reached out to urban youth and young adults! Thank you for your continued support of this important inner-city ministry to the youth of Akron and Northeast Ohio.

This fall, 122 students were enrolled in the free "After School Oasis" at The Elms which provides a safe and happy place for students in Grade K-6. Help with homework, healthy snacks and games keep the students occupied. Character building, relationship building with each other and with God, games, art and video are part of the program. Many are reluctant to leave when their parents come to pick them up. For the working parents, it is a great relief to know their child is in a safe place.

Summer Camp was held July 5– 25 with 58 youth attending at the Elms. Weekly themes were Animal Week, Cooking Week and Makers and Bakers taught by Certified teachers and high school volunteers. At the Healing House Cuyahoga Falls, various retreats and overnights were also held."

This is the sixteenth year that Faith has supported the "Embrace a Youth" program. We hope you will continue to monetarily support this vital ministry that started at St. John/St. Paul in 2005 when urban youth congregated in our church because they "felt safe" and had a place to do their laundry. A check may be made payable to Faith Lutheran Church with OASIS on the memo line and placed in the offering plate on Sunday morning or mailed to the church.

*Sincerely,
Carol Whidden*

MESSAGE FROM FAMILY PROMISE

As 2025 is on the fast lane to close up and 2026 is looking very good for Family Promise, I wanted to offer my deep appreciation to each of you for making Family Promise the high performing and well respected organization it has become. I am absolutely convinced we would not have attracted \$1.8M this year from Progressive, ODOD, and the Moock Family Foundation had we not had the dedication of the staff, the leadership of the Board, the steadfast support of the coordinators, and the volunteers lending us their time and talents. In addition to \$1.8M in capital funding, we have gone from an asset poor organization to holding \$1.5M in real property assets.

In recent years we have renovated two buildings and are now serving 17 families at one time which translates to nearly 100 families per year.

I hope it warms your heart to know that this very Thanksgiving, we had five families who gathered in their own homes, not a shelter, to give thanks and enjoy their families! That's a home run! I want to wish each of you a wonderful, happy, and peace filled Thanksgiving!

From Jeffrey E. Wilhite, Executive Director and James W. Strang, Board Chair

Outreach

JUST FYI

U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS ISSUE A “SPECIAL MESSAGE” ON IMMIGRATION



Excerpt from the full text:

"As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity."

The entire message is at <https://www.usccb.org/news/2025/us-bishops-issue-special-message-immigration-plenary-assembly-baltimore>

AKRON EMERGENCY OVERNIGHT WARMING CENTER (AEOWC)

The Emergency Overnight Warming Center was open for several days in December. It hosted guests from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. and provided food, clothing and shelter. Volunteers and donations are welcome. Here is the link for volunteering information: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44A4A72DA4FCC52-53819516-akron>
And the phone number is: **(330)472-524**. Their website is <https://www.akronemergencyshelter.org>

MESSAGE FROM THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

Dear Faith Lutheran Church,

This letter of invitation is twofold regarding

1) the invitation to the MLK annual Celebration Day and

2) to encourage members to join the Deliverance Choir. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Day Coalition warmly invites you and your congregation to the annual faith-based City of Akron commemoration of Dr. King's life and legacy.

Please join us on Sunday, January 18, 2026, at 4 p.m. at First Congregational Church of Akron, 292 East Market Street, Akron.

Minister Peggy Holmes, Coordinator 330.322.6933

Donell Phipps, Deliverance Choir 330.328.8801

BUSINESS VOLUNTEERS UNLIMITED (BVU)



BVU Volunteer Opportunity website lists many volunteer opportunities in Summit County and surrounding areas. Check out this web site for information <https://volunteerconnect.bvuvolunteers.org/search>
Thanks to Nancy Tobar for bringing this to our attention.

Outreach

THE WAY OUT



The Way Out Prison Ministry (TWO) is a non-denominational Christian ministry serving various types of correctional facilities in Northeast Ohio and is committed to proclaiming Christ by providing for the spiritual growth of men, women and youth in partnership with local churches at no cost to the community. By partnering with local churches, we provide opportunities for ministry to those called by God to minister to inmates so that Christ will be exalted, relationships will be grown and redeemed souls would attend church.

UPCOMING EVENTS

INTERFAITH JUSTICE ALLIANCE – see page 8 of this newsletter.

LOADS OF FAITH DATES FOR 2026

January 28	July 29
February 25	August 26
March 25	September 30
April 29	October 28
May 27	November 18
June 24	December 30

DLM SCHEDULE FOR 2025

There is no event in January.

The next service day will be February 14.

Tentative dates for 2026 are the 2nd Saturday of each month.

Key Dates



Undecorate the church! We need your help on **Sunday, January 4**. This will be done in-between the services so that members from both services may assist. Many hands make light work!

The **Worship Team** will meet at 11:30 a.m. on **January 11** in the Youth Room to plan for the Lent and Easter seasons.

The **Congregation Council** will gather for its annual retreat from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on **January 17** at the Northeastern Ohio Synod Office. The regular Council meeting will not be held on January 19.



Attention Team Leaders: Your annual reports are due in the church office by **January 11**, please email them to nancy@faithlutheranchurch.org.

Acme Receipts = Cash for our youth programs - Collect and turn in your receipts **dated 8/1/25- 2/15/26**, to benefit our youth programs! Drop off your receipts in the collection boxes in the Welcome Center, Narthex, or the counter outside of the Fellowship Hall.

Growth & Learning

FAITHKIDS & JR YOUTH GROUP



What a year it's been! 2025 has been my first full year as the Coordinator of Children's Ministries. This year we have:

- Celebrated Epiphany by distributing chalk for families to "chalk the door" and celebrate the three magi coming to see Jesus.
- Hosted a "Fat Ash Wednesday" Program celebrating pancakes and play before receiving ashes and entering (physically, mentally, and spiritually) into Lent.
- Explored Celtic Christianity and labyrinths on St. Patrick's Day.
- Focused on prayer during Lent in the FaithKids and Junior Youth classes.
- Hosted a "Fruits of the Spirit" program on Good Friday.
- Held our "True North" Vacation Bible School.
- Hosted a Family S'mores and Campfire Night.
- Hosted an "All Creatures Great and Small: A Night in the Manger" Advent Family Night that included live bunnies, a service project helping to feed the animals of those seeking food assistance, and more.
- Created Advent Manger Kits for each family unit to display in their homes.
- "Buried" the Alleluia during Lent and witnessed the transformation of it on Easter morning.
- Organized Advent candle readers to reflect the diverse family structures in our congregation. By including single adults, older adults, couples without children, families with young children, divorced members, LGBTQ+ families, and intergenerational households, we affirmed that all are seen, welcomed, and fully belong. This visible inclusion reinforced that participation in the life of the church does not require conformity to a traditional family model. We truly lived out our belief that ALL are welcome and fully included in this church family of God.
- Supported the creation of the Children's Christmas Choir.
- Held children's activities and games during the Church Picnic
- Made bird feeders with the children to care for God's creation and birds.
- Participated in the StewardSHIP campaign and did activities around the ocean/mermaids/giving themes.
- With the leadership of Andrew Courtney and Dineen Dowling, the Jr. Youth designed their own service project to cut flowers in the garden and sell bouquets with profits supporting DLM in purchasing Christmas presents this year.
- Held First Communion Class.

AND MORE!

We had so much fun and look forward to what this new year brings! We loved seeing the children light up and grow in their knowledge, hope, trust and joy in their faith!

Thank you for a wonderful year full of special memories for not only myself but also my family.

Blessings,
Pastor Sarah

Photos on the next page.

Growth & Learning



Growth & Learning



2026-2027 Registration Opens SOON!

Faith Preschool offers morning classes for **2 year olds and a caregiver** You pick which day: Mon, Wed, or Fri
3 year olds Two options: 2-day Tues/Thurs OR 3-day Mon/Wed/Fri
4 & 5 year olds Two options: 4-day M-Th OR 5-day M-Fr (includes all-day option)
Extended Care is available before or after class, as needed.
Church families register on Sunday, January 18.
Current preschool families register on Tuesday, January 20.
And the public is invited to register on Monday, January 26.
So... register before the public to secure your spot! Forms are available in the preschool office. Even if you are on the fence with Kindergarten, register at Faith to hold a spot. IF you decide to go to Kindergarten and tell Dineen by May, she will refund your Registration Fee.

Birthday in a Bag Collection

Faith Preschool invites you to participate in our Winter Service Project: Birthday in a Bag! Here's how to play: take a birthday themed gift bag from the Welcome Center table and purchase the items on the paper stapled to the bag. Return bag to the table by Sunday, Jan. 25. All bags will be donated to our ministry partners OPEN M and DLM, two organizations who work to help lift families out of poverty (and whose clients enjoy our birthday bags!).



Faith Preschool Gives Thanks for Pastor Jean upon her Retirement

Faith Preschool gives thanks for Pastor Jean, who participated in the weekly Religion Class offered to the students. They got to know her, and she them, every other week when the classes visited the Sanctuary for a little lesson. (Dineen led Religion in the classrooms on the opposite weeks.) Pastor Jean's time with the children included teaching them a church cheer, highlighting special days in the liturgical year (famously recreating Palm Sunday with kids waving palms and a cardboard donkey parade), discussions on prayer (using an old rotary phone), singing This Little Light of Mine with candles, and so much more! The children learned that the name of the big church" is "Sanctuary", which means "safe place". We are ever so grateful that she took time out of her work weeks to impart God's care and love onto the students at Faith Preschool. You will be missed, Pastor Jean!



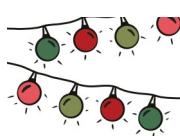
Faith Preschool Director, Dineen Dowling
preschool@faithlutheranchurch.org
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Growth & Learning

flcyouth



Eric & Abby Jezewski
Youth Leader & Co-leader
330-836-8811/
faithlcyouth@gmail.com



Thank you to all of our youth and family members who helped decorate the church for Christmas. With all of your help we were able to accomplish so much in a very short amount of time. **WE will also help 'undecorate' the church on January 4**, in between the services. As we look at next year's decorating, we will be connecting with the set-up crew to be able to help get everything up from the basement and set-up earlier before Sunday decorating.

We hope that all of our families had a Merry Christmas and that 2026 is off to a great start for everyone! Don't forget that FACE Time resumes mid-January.

Just a reminder that the second **Learning Saturday Retreat for Confirmation Youth** in grades 6-8 is **Saturday, January 10, from 9-11:30 a.m.** in the Youth Room! If you have questions on how many retreats your youth has attended, please don't hesitate to reach out!



Please join us in congratulating **Treader Anderson, Cyrus Jezewski, Adam Schafer and Celia Shiban** on their confirmation! We are all incredibly proud of you all and your engagement throughout 6-8th grade, and hope that you will continue building on your faith and fun at FLC with us!

Our first **FLCYouth Game Show** for all youth and friends in grades 6-12, will take place on **Sunday, January 18!** This event will incorporate games from some of your favorite (or at least well known) televised game shows! All youth are invited to bring their A-Game and friends to help their team come out on top! RSVP's are mandatory so that we can plan out games and lunch accordingly. We look forward to having a great time with you all!

ACME RECEIPTS = CASH FOR OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS

It's that time of the year again; the **Acme Community Cashback** program is now in full swing (**receipts dated 8/1/25- 2/15/26**). Please save your Acme receipts to benefit our youth programs! Drop off your receipts in the collection boxes in the Welcome Center, Narthex, or the counter outside of the Fellowship Hall.



Growth & Learning

**Third Thursday
Womens' Bible Study
Thursday, January 15
10 a.m.
Youth Room**

In January the Third Thursday Bible Study will delve into Ephesians 4 with discussion on the topic of Unity in Diversity, a theme within the chapter. A video created by the authors of the book, *Ephesians*, will be shown initially. All women are invited to attend on Thursday, January 15 at 10 a.m. in the Youth Room at Faith. For more information, contact Bonnie at 330.606.3230.

**Men of Faith
Bible Study and Discussion Group
9 a.m. - Jan. 17
Youth Room**

Men of Faith, a Bible study and discussion group meets the third Saturday of each month in the Youth Room. For more information contact Geoff Whidden, geoffrey.whidden@gmail.com or Karl Demuth, karldemuth@hotmail.com.



**Faith Book Club's January Pick
The Summons
By John Grisham**

Tues., January 20 at 2 p.m.

A pillar of the community who towered over local law and politics for forty years, Judge Atlee is now a shadow of his former self--a sick, lonely old man who has withdrawn to his sprawling ancestral home in Clanton, Mississippi. Knowing that the end is near, Judge Atlee has issued a summons for his two sons to return to Clanton to discuss his estate. Ray Atlee is the elder, a Virginia law professor, newly single, still enduring the aftershocks of a surprise divorce. Forrest is Ray's younger brother, the family's black sheep. The summons is typed by the Judge himself, on his handsome old stationery, and gives the date and time for Ray and Forrest to appear in his study. Ray reluctantly heads south to his hometown, to the place he now prefers to avoid. But the family meeting does not take place. The Judge dies too soon, and in doing so leaves behind a shocking secret known only to Ray . . . and perhaps to someone else. "The Washington Post"

Grisham once again explores the legal world in this novel, though with a significant departure into family dynamics and mystery. Why is Ray keeping the secret to himself and who else knows about it? Come and explore the ins and outs of the story in what is sure to be an interesting discussion on **January 20 at 2 p.m. in the Youth Room at Faith**. We hope to see you there. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Thompson, st53024@yahoo.com or Marilyn Wilson, marsiewilson7@gmail.com.

In Our Prayers:



Health Concerns:

Faith member Ann Chastven
Faith member Pastor Rick Gordon
Tommy Gorman
Faith member Pastor Tim Keeler
Faith member Linda Lewis
Faith member Chuck Lyon
Faith member Ken Messick
Faith member Terry Vernon

For Faith members Marian, Liane, Shirley, JoAnn, Ann, Don, Heather, Dottie and Vee who are in assisted living facilities, or receiving nursing care.

In Times of Loss:

For the victims of mass shootings in Rhode Island and Australia recently, especially those whose loved ones died, and those who are recovering from injuries, that they may be strengthened and comforted.

For the family of Faith members Adam and Lori Ashenfelter as they grieve the death of Adam's sister Earlene's husband, that they may be comforted.

Special Prayers

For the safe return home of representatives of the Northeastern Ohio Synod who are traveling to strengthen ties with the NEOS global companion, the Northern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, especially Faith member Lankika Mendis, Ron Jantz, Pastor Angela Freeman and Bishop Laura Barbins.

With Thanksgiving:

For people around the world as they gather to celebrate the birth of Jesus during the Christmas season, which begins on December 24, giving thanks for the arrival of Jesus into our broken world.

QR Code Prayer Requests:



January

Schedule to Serve

Date	Service	Altar	Communion	Flowers	Lay Reader	Ushers	Youth
4	9 a.m.	Dana Singer	John Weisend - SE Corie Miller - SE Debbie Gottas - SP Dana Singer - B		Dana Singer	Ben Woods Nathan Woods	Acolyte: Treader Anderson Assistant: Matthew Bauer
	10:30 a.m.	Deb Allen	Deb Allen			Geoff Whidden	
11	9 a.m.	Dana Singer	Debbie Gottas - SE Dana Singer - SE John Weisend - SP Corie Miller - B		Corie Miller	Darryl Kleinhenz John Knops	Acolyte: Assistant:
	10:30 a.m.	Nancy Hooper	Nancy Hooper			Alice Gilmore Becky Kuhar	
18	9 a.m.	Dana Singer			Carole Lintner	Ben Woods Nathan Woods	
	10:30 a.m.	Chris Fritzen	Chris Fritzen			Karin Allen	
25	9 a.m.	Dana Singer	Debbie Gottas - SE Sandy Selby - SE Kit Scheetz - SP Dana Singer - SP Judy Harrison - B	Debbie Gottas	Sarah Kaufman	Darryl Kleinhenz John Knops	Acolyte: Assistant:
	10:30 a.m.	Deb Allen	Deb Allen			Paula & Bob Lundell	

SE - Server
SP - Supplier
B - Bread



January

Calendar of Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 	2	3
4 9 Traditional Svc. 9:50 Christian Education 10 Kinship Café 10:30 Informal Service 11:30 Bound 7:30 AA	5 6 p.m. Girl Scouts 8 p.m. AA	6 9:30 a.m. Busy Fingers Yoga 7 p.m. Scouts Al-Anon	7 4:30 p.m. AA	8 10 a.m. Prayer Shawl 12:15 p.m. FFF Team Meeting 6:30 p.m. Cub Scouts	9	10 9 a.m. Confirmation Learning Retreat
11 9 Traditional Svc. 9:50 Christian Education 10 Kinship Café 10:30 Informal Service 11:30 Bound Worship Team Meeting 7:30 AA	12 11:45 a.m. Preschool Staff 6 p.m. Preschool Bd. 8 p.m. AA	13 9:30 a.m. Busy Fingers Yoga 7 p.m. Scouts Al-Anon	14 4:30 p.m. AA 5 p.m. RIC Meeting	15 10 a.m. Prayer Shawl 3rd Thursday Women's Bible Study	16	17 8:30 a.m. Council Retreat 9 a.m. Men of Faith
18 Newsletter Deadline 9 Traditional Svc. 9:50 Christian Education 10 Kinship Café 10:30 Informal Service 11:30 Bound Youth Meal & More 7:30 AA	19 Office Closed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 10 a.m. St. Cecelia 8 p.m. AA	20 9:30 a.m. Busy Fingers Yoga 2 p.m. Faith Book Club 7 p.m. Scouts Al-Anon	21 4:30 p.m. AA	22 10 a.m. Prayer Shawl 6:30 p.m. Cub Scouts	23	24 2 p.m. Retirement Open House for Pastor Jean
25 9 Traditional Svc. 9:50 Christian Education 10 Kinship Café 10:30 Informal Service 11:30 Bound 7:30 AA	26 8 p.m. AA	27 9:30 a.m. Busy Fingers Yoga 7 p.m. Scouts Al-Anon	28 4:30 p.m. AA	29	30 6 p.m. Preschool PJ Party	31



Please visit our website.

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Worship God. Grow in faith. Offer hope.