

Faith Lutheran Church

FAITHLINES

FROM PASTOR CODY

Cody Blust, Pastor
 Pat Hoar, Secretary
 Shelley Grubb, Director Choir
 and Bell Choir
 Pete Lawhon, Organist
 Steve Conrad, Gardens
 Will Melick, Grounds
 Randy Peck, Custodian

*God loves each
 of us as if there
 were only one of
 us.*

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Is there anything better in the Fall than a crisp night with leaves falling gently as you sit by a bonfire with a warm cup of apple cider? Fall is my favorite season of all for many reasons, and nights like I described previously are among the top reasons. As my wife and I sit around the fire pit, I often consider the purpose of having bonfires. Fires once were a necessity for survival as it did everything from lighting our way to warming us, and of course being used to cookout. Fire once played a larger role in human life than it does now, but we still have uses for it. In modern times bonfires have taken on a role in

bringing community together, not for survival but to socialize. Bonfires today have moved from a necessity to a gathering place where we can cook snacks like s'mores, tell stories or just talk about life in general. Bonfires are places of gathering with one another where we can be together. As I think about the place of bonfires in our lives, I realize that God is the spiritual bonfire of our lives. God not only provides a place for us to be spiritually fed, but also a place where we gather and tell stories of what God has done and discuss our experiences in life with each other. As we gather around the spiritual bonfire in our lives, we find a place where we are not only warmed from the cold of the world, but we find community around the fire. We are drawn together to share with each other the blessings that God has given. This Fall I hope we can all gather together around the spiritual bonfire that is our God and take time to give thanks for the blessings that we received. The season of Fall is a time of reflection and for giving thanks. I hope we can all take time, whether at a bonfire or in the front room of a friends house to sit together in community and reflect on what God has done and dream of what God still has in store.

Corn on the cob and ripe tomatoes.

TO KNOW AND SHARE GOD'S LOVE

“If You Build It They Will Come“

Great line from a great movie, Field Of Dreams . Life is NOT a movie. Life is reality, the good, the bad and the ugly. We have just restored and remodeled our sanctuary and narthex. What a beautiful thing it is. People are thrilled to attend the service in those beautiful surroundings. “ WE “ are thrilled. We also must remember that this beautiful sanctuary is not JUST for our pleasure. We must make an effort to bring in new members. You may be tired of hearing me ask for you to invite new people, BUT if we are not growing as a congregation, we are dying as a congregation. Nothing stays the same. Just think of all the businesses that were there when you were younger. Where are they? They didn't grow with the times. I plead with you to help our church grow. Invite a friend, a neighbor or even an enemy to YOUR church....Art Schad

DAILY DEVOTIONS

The October through December daily devotional books Portals of Prayer and Christ in Our Home are available in the rack by the entrance door.

EUCHRE

We will be having Euchre on October 16th at 6:00 pm at the Eastern Star facility, Iris Section. Come join us. Please bring a snack to share.

JESUS CALLING

On Monday, October 5, we will meet at 11:00 am in the Library room. We will review pages 27-43 (Joy-Transformation) in “The Gift of Years” by Joan Chittister. Polly Norberg will be our leader. Bring your lunch for the fellowship time following the study. Should you wish to join us, but don't have a book, please contact Cheryl Johnson.

DIRECTORY ADDRESS CHANGE

I spoke with Julie, Ann's daughter, and she confirmed that this is Ann's address. Ann needed skilled care and moved within the city of St. Clairsville, but will return to the Senior Suites. Please update your directory for Ann Jurkowitz as follows: Ann Jurkowitz, Senior Suites, 101 Dorothy Place, Room 206B, St. Clairsville, Ohio 43950.

PRESCHOOL NEWS

The Preschool Staff and Board would like to **Thank** the church congregation for their generous gift of school supplies from Red Wagon Sunday. We are beyond grateful for the generous financial donation from the congregation. We are truly blessed by the generosity and your willingness to invest in the lives of our young learners. Your kindness and support mean so much to the staff and the families we serve.

We are excited to announce a special fundraiser at Round Hill Dairy benefiting our preschool. Thursday, October 1, 3:30p-9p. Bring your family and friends and join us for a delicious night out while supporting the preschool. We hope to see you there!

Lastly, we still have a few remaining spots in our Classes. If you know of anyone looking or have a child age 3 to 5 years old, please invite them to give us a call we would love to talk to them about the importance of early Education. 740-397-5701.

Thank you for partnering with us in this ministry and for helping us continue the work God has called us to do!

COMPOSER'S CRAFT

The Composer's Craft *Hymns From "The Saints of Old"*

In this space we have considered the writers of hymns and composers of the music to which it is set from a variety of sources, most from the 18th century to the present day from various Christian traditions from Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Negro spiritual, and other sources. But there are far older texts that regularly appear in the hymnody of the service book we use, and many others, past and present. I would like to touch on three from the early church, who lived and wrote and preached during the late, or "high" middle ages: **Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)**, **St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226)**, and **Thomas a' Kempis (138-1471)**. There are significant differences in the lives and emphasis of nuances in theology between them, and not all were declared "saints" by the Church of the time or later, but there are also significant similarities in their message. One is the emphasis on Christ in the hymns that appear in our cranberry service book, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Bernard of Clairvaux

Bernard was one of two of the three whose life overlapped the time of the Christian Crusades to the Holy Land. Bernard's mother died when he was young and he was educated by priests who no doubt influenced his early interest in joining their vocation. In 1113 he committed to going to a monastery. He joined an order of reformed Benedictines and eventually was appointed as abbot. Which may have been a foreshadowing of use of his verse in hymns, Bernard forewent the rational approach used by academics by preaching poetically. Bernard was also a master of prayer, emphasizing a very personal and experiential relationship with Christ. As we witness in the Roman Catholic Church today, Bernard was also known for his Mariology - veneration of the Virgin Mary, making note of her humility and making her a central point of emphasis in his Christianity. Bernard was very involved in contacts and events surrounding the higher clergy of the church, as well as secular political leaders, injecting himself into healing a schism and also having conflict with fellow cleric Peter Abelard. In 1146 Bernard preached to the Second Crusade. Bernard helped found 163 monasteries and is Dante Alighieri's guide in that author's magnum opus *Divine Comedy*. *Bernard's hymns in Evangelical Lutheran Worship are #658, Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts and #754, Jesus, the Very Thought of You.*

St. Francis of Assisi

Like several of the saints of the medieval period, Francis was born to a wealthy family. As was the intended emphasis of a recent Pope named for Francis, he was dedicated to a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. His father was a wealthy Italian silk merchant, and his mother, of which little is known, was from a French noble family. Francis started his ministry as a beggar, literally living a life of poverty by choice. Early in his ministry, he traveled to Egypt to attempt to convert the sultan there during the Fifth Crusade. He came to religious commitment after a military experience, but as a youth, though privileged, he demonstrated early charity for others. Francis is known by most today as a lover of animals, at one time found preaching to birds. Considered in his sainthood was reported presence of "stigmata" -- wounds mimicking those of Christ on the Cross. The hymn verses attributed to Francis in *ELW* are in **#835, All Creatures Worship God Most High.**

Thomas a Kempis

Thomas a Kempis is most known for his work *The Imitation of Christ*. Born in the Holy Roman Empire, he was educated at a Latin school and as a priest was in an Augustinian order. He was involved in training others during his ministry and our service book contains his work sung in **#322, Oh Love, How Deep.....DK**

Worshipping in the new sanctuary.

BIRTHDAYS

10/06 David Ingrassia
 10/08 Pat Ferenbaugh, Holly Pauley,
 Christine Hoffman-Ulmer
 10/13 Dave Hoar, Tom Wilford
 10/15 Greg Maxwell
 10/17 Pete Lawhon
 10/23 Phyllis Bigler
 10/24 Elaine Matulich
 10/27 Susan Boss
 10/29 Molly Ulery
 10/31 Dan Myers



ANNIVERSARIES

10/01 Steve & Polly Norberg,
 Eric & Patsy Weiler
 10/05 Joe & Michelle Ingrassia
 10/22 Robert & Linda Van Horn
 10/26 Scott & Susan Miglin
 10/31 Daryl & Rachel Cammuse



PRESIDENT'S PONDERINGS



Happy Fall to everyone. We are settling back into our church routine of Sunday School classes and music from our choirs. As the vocal choir rehearsed the first anthem of the fall, Amen Is Where We Begin, I was reminded of something I had written in this post a few months ago. I compared our time together in classes and worship services to the training and practice of a sports team. Our work to know and share God's love begins as we say "Thanks Be to God" at the end of the worship service and leave the church building.

This faithful work has many forms. It includes inviting someone to worship with us, being generous in our offerings and contributions to support organizations, visiting friends who are ill or facing difficulties. It also includes speaking kindly, or at least refraining from speaking in anger, when someone is rude or lashing out. In other words, the work is with us in every aspect of our lives. It's important to remember that we are not alone in this work. The Holy Spirit is with us in all those situations as well as ready to assist us in sharing God's love.

In Christ's Love,
 Sally Berger
 Council President

Happy Fall to everyone. We are settling back into our church routine of Sunday School classes and music from our choirs. As the vocal choir rehearsed the first anthem of the

Beauty of our national parks.

SOUTHERN OHIO SYNOD NEWS

From the Conclusion of the Leadership Blog, July, 2026:

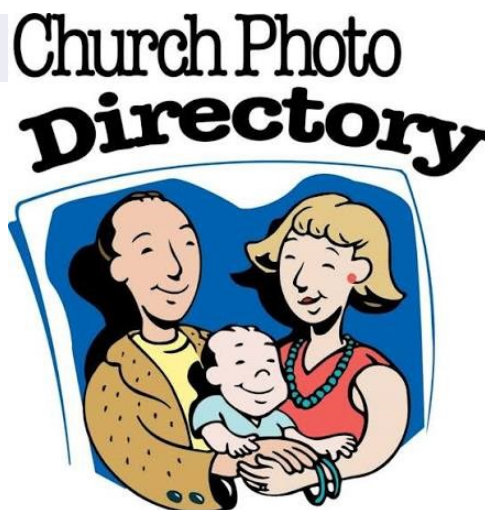
"When you become a leader," says Simon Sinek, "you should transition from being responsible for a job to being responsible for the people who do the job." I often said to the lay leaders of the parish I served prior to joining synod staff, "My job as Lead Pastor is not to make all the decisions, but it is to make sure a good decision-making process is in place." Part of that good decision-making process is to strive for psychological safety. When that happens, then a congregation moves toward being a change ready community of faith.

I am interested in hearing from you. Are there other factors that you think contribute to a congregation being change ready? If so, what are they? Please email your responses at tmentzer@southernohiosynod.org.

PICTURE DIRECTORY

Friends at Faith Lutheran:

We have begun scheduling and taking family photos for our next Church Photo Directory. Dan Werner and Jessica Howard will be taking the photos and there is a table display with what dates have been scheduled and what dates are still available. Our present thoughts will be that the directory will look much like our present directory but with photos added. We will consider security issues with technology and plan not to put the information on any social network. Wouldn't it be nice for a 10:30 person to meet an 8:00 person and be able to greet them by name! Sign up today! Any question call Corrine Lund, 740-501-7241



THANK YOU

Dear Faith Family,

There are too few words to say thank you for the retirement event on Sunday. The reception was so lovely, thank you ladies, and it was a joy to see so many and share stories and remembrances.

Your generosity of cards and gifts was overwhelming. I enjoyed reading about all of your thoughts in the cards and letters and I thank you for the beautiful plaque that was presented. I look forward to seeing the other names that will be added in the years to come.

I am grateful to God for allowing me to serve Him in music, and I thank each and every one of you for your support of this ministry.

May God continue to bless Faith Lutheran Church.

Once again, thank you.

Becky Keck

2027 ANNUAL MEETING & ESTIMATE OF SPENDING

The fall annual meeting of the congregation will be held on Sunday November 8 (between the services in the Fellowship Hall, at 9:15). The agenda will include elections and action on the proposed 2027 Estimate of Spending for Mission and Ministry. The proposed Estimate of Spending is included in this issue.

BOOK CORNER

Mansfield, Stephen, *Lincoln's Battle With God: A President's Struggle with Faith and What It Means for America*, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 2012, 240 pp.*

**

Stephen Mansfield, in this work, has done the nearly impossible. He has taken on the most difficult and subjective theme of Abraham Lincoln's life, made it appealing and relevant to serious students of history as well as the casual reader, stated the premise clearly, supported it with solid research, and done so in a very readable style, efficiently in a book the size of which would do no damage if dropped on one's foot. This well-written book is at once honest and responsible in describing Lincoln's faith journey and comes as close as any to date in giving a clear understanding of Lincoln's transformation.

One of the most argued aspects of Lincoln's life is the nature of his faith and his religious thoughts. From those who believed that he never changed from his younger days as an "infidel," to those who claim that Lincoln went through a transformation toward being a devoted Christian, there have always been those who were at each extreme, and all those in between, issuing certain positions, dating back to those that lived with him in that world, that nothing could change. Mansfield states clearly his main thesis from the outset, and writes a brilliant epilogue in restating it, bringing together all the main points from this most recent fine edition to the growing bounty of Lincoln literature. That thesis is that Abraham Lincoln, in terms of Christian faith, was not the same person in giving his second inaugural address as he was as a young man in New Salem, Illinois. His faith journey was, similar to his journey about slavery and race, an evolving one, clearly indicated not only by what he said and wrote, but by what he did.

The author makes significant points in favor of the influence of the many losses throughout Lincoln's life that not only fed his bouts of melancholy and depression, but also gradually transformed his views about God. These include the death of his infant brother Thomas, his mother when Lincoln was nine years old, his friend or fiancée, depending on the source, Anne Rutledge, and his sons, during his life, Edward and Willie, who died before reaching adulthood. Throughout his adult life, Lincoln was also strongly influenced by clergy on the topic of faith and the Bible: first by his local pastor in Springfield, and over time from contacts with gifted pastors from which he wanted to learn. And most Lincoln biographers offer that Lincoln's aversion to Christianity was related to his resentment of his father and the faith that came with him. When his father died, he declined to attend the funeral. Lincoln's biographers share that Lincoln went from outright lying about his faith at the time during his 1846 successful campaign for a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives to delivering what could pass for a sermon in his second inaugural address that gives testimony to a God that gives the Civil War as penance to both sides for hundreds of years of slavery.

Even though the sum total, not all at one time, of Lincoln's formal education was about one year, not only did he learn to read and write, but as an adult he was so well read in history, legal matters, and literature in general, but also the Bible, most likely in the latter by influence of his birth mother and his stepmother. This was so much the case that it is clear that Lincoln could site Biblical references more accurately, efficiently, and at the moment than most ordained ministers.

This author leaves room for disagreement, but generally agrees with other authors on the subject, such as Michael Lind's *What Lincoln Believed* and, reviewed in this space, William Barton's *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln*, that Lincoln could be described as "Christian" in many aspects at the end of his life, even as some key components of Christianity were absent. This is an excellent read.

*excerpted from Reading Lincoln, by Tom Peet and David Keck, pp. 141-143,

Becky and the music she has shared with us over the years.

IT'S ALMOST FINISHED

It began with an idea. Could the platform of the chancel be made bigger? Then as long as that might happen, what about the discolored mortar on the brick behind the altar? The whiteboard trim around the brick? The carpet? The ceiling? The stairs? Pews or chairs?

Here we are today and it's been a long time coming. A committee was formed to see if this was a possibility. The group: Shelley Grubb, Becky Keck our music leaders, Pastor Mark Wildermuth (before he retired), Cheryl Johnson, Stephen Volz, Ken Fischer, Frank O'Hare, Tim Williams then Pastor Cody. The initial exploration started late in 2019, then COVID brought everything to a halt. Not only that, but between Pastor Mark and Pastor Cody, we had time with interim Pastor Clarence Hensel.

I found myself in charge of something that I did not know where to begin. But we were lucky to have members to help out. Kevin Mishey knows sound and he was able to update our mics and sound system. Frank O'Hare went to work and found the McNight Group which specialized in church renovation and construction. Tom Noblit donated time and materials to paint the walls, and many other spaces in the church. Stephen Volz painted the mortar joint of the brick, stained and installed the woodwork around the brick, built the altar and the pulpit and partnered with Jamie Turner of the McNight group to make the new communion rails. The altar, pulpit and communion rails were made from wood reclaimed from Stephen's garage which had been demolished by the May windstorm when he was in Botswana. This wood was around 100 years old and the communion rails were from Jamie Turner's stash of reclaimed barn wood.

So, today, we have a whole new setup: Comfortable chairs than can be moved to accommodate special occasions. Carpeting that allows for easier walking and movement for equipment like wheelchairs and walkers. A ramp for allowing easy access to the platform for all. A clean, smooth ceiling and entry stairs that are clean looking with a steady, smooth railing. The communion rails are removable when more room on the platform may be needed. The altar and pulpit are also movable for times a different space needs to be accommodated.

First, we give thanks and praise to God for blessing us with this worship area for giving him the glory. Secondly, we thank the people who have given their time, talents and gifts for planning and accomplishing this project. Lastly, we thank all of you, the congregation, and the church council who made this financially possible and as of today, with just a few more bills to pay, all is and will be paid for with no outstanding debt.

Thank you to all who have given their time, brawn, talents and the generous financial donations to this project. Thank you to all who helped move things in and out. Jordan and Willow Barnard, Art & Shelley, Will Melick and Tom Noblit for unscrewing the pews. Peg and Ben Snow, Caroline Pletcher and Ken Fischer for finding people who could use the pews. Tom Noblit and Nick Myrda for taking pews. Sally Berger, Shelley Grubb, Stan and Jill Park for moving Bibles and hymnals to storage with Kaitlyn and Pastor for covering the organ with the protective moving pads. On a Saturday morning, chairs were moved into the Sanctuary with heavy lifting shown by Scott Baker and Will Melick aided by Pastor, Polly Norberg, Karen Greever, Dianne Williams, Tom Wilford, and Sally Berger. Easter Sunday the Ballengee family moved ALL of the chairs and other furnishings downstairs.

Thank you to all who helped with the move Monday, August 24th. We have talents and gifts of strength and endurance perhaps never seen before. A few highlights, Tim and Dianne are expert measurers spacing the rows. Larry Hamon displayed "kneepower" in connecting the thickly padded chairs. Carrying chairs up the stairs 3 at a time, Scott Baker. Moving the chairs to the stairs staging area, Tom Wilford. Finding a place of storage for the extra carpet squares, master closet organizer, Art Schad. Visualizing and spacing the chairs, Sally Berger and Tim. Carting the hymnals and putting them in the racks, Shelley Grubb, Sally Berger and Bette Mishey (who also gave a dust up as needed) Sound man Kevin Mishey lent his expertise. Will Melick, Jim Harder, and Amy Giampaolo (Jenny Grinstead's sister here because Jenny was on the injured reserve list)

Continued on the next page.

Not as good as finding a lost sheep, but very happy to have found a lost hearing aid.

were the team members who did anything that was needed, our all around utility people. Last but not least, Pastor Cody on the step ladder hanging the banner and doing his part in all the moving activities that needed to be done. The Faith Family working together is a blessing.

Of course, a big thank you to our church Secretary/Treasurer, Pat Hoar, who managed to keep up with changes for the services printing bulletins in various formats, as well as writing the checks to the McNight group for their work.

Sunday, September 13th, the Sanctuary was rededicated with words asking for God's blessing and scripture verse, Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Reverend Tim Mentzer, assistant to Bishop Suzanne Dillahunt of the Southern Ohio Synod, joined us on this special day.

God is good! He has been good to us.

It is a great day to be a Lutheran, a Lutheran of Faith Lutheran Church.

(BTW Almost finished refers to the last item of completion. There are adjustments needed for the communion rail and McNight hopes to have this final work completed in a couple of months due to the fabricator's schedule) Submitted by Marilyn Wilford

ELCA NEWS

July 28, 2026

Choosing Reconciliation Over Division in a Multifaith America

Dear Church,

From its earliest days, the United States has been shaped by religious diversity. Indigenous peoples sustained diverse spiritual and religious traditions long before the nation's founding, and successive waves of settlers, including Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and others, brought a variety of beliefs that helped define the nation's unique and vital religious landscape.

Throughout the church today, many are struggling with debates regarding the religious identity of our nation. While religious diversity did not begin with the Constitution, the Constitution's framers recognized an important truth: the future of our nation could not be tied to a single religious identity. By rejecting religious tests for public office, the Founders created space for people of any or no faith tradition to participate in public life together. That commitment continues to be foundational to our nation's vitality, especially at a time when people are tempted to identify love of the nation, or the government itself, with a single religion. No one faith tradition should rule the United States, just as the framers desired.

As the apostle Paul writes, God has given us "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18). Reconciliation involves living in God's future - including through renewed interreligious relationships.

Religious diversity is the reality of the world we live in. Recognizing this, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment," which affirms that mutual understanding with other faith traditions can deepen our own faith. Through encountering neighbors and working side by side in shared commitments to love and compassion and community, our own Christian faith is strengthened. This conviction means that through my call as presiding bishop of the ELCA, our church develops and maintains relationships with Jewish, Muslim and many other faith communities. Like personal friendships we hold, these relationships do not require us to set aside Christian faith. Rather they reaffirm that in a nation as diverse as ours, being a good neighbor across religious differences is not optional. It's a part of the shared American experience. It is an experience we can support as everyday Lutherans in God's call to reconciliation.

The ministry of reconciliation is both local and national. God invites us to love one another across differences. Trusting in God's grace, we boldly form relationships with neighbors of all faiths who share a commitment to justice, peace and the flourishing of all creation. I encourage you to engage in this essential ministry, which offers a powerful opportunity to heal divisions, deepen respect across differences and strengthen the bonds of our common life.

In Christ,

Rev. Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop

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We're on the Web!
FLCMTV.org

Our Mission Is To Know and Share God's Love



Worship Sunday 8 & 10:30 am
Sunday School 9:15

TRUNK OR TREAT

There is a chill in the air and that can only mean one thing-IT'S TRUNK OR TREAT TIME! We will be hosting our 3rd annual Trunk or Treat on Sunday October 18th from 2 PM-4 PM. While we hope for good weather to be outside, should the weather be unfavorable we will relocate to the church basement. Keep an eye out for more information including a sign-up sheet for those who wish to volunteers their car trunk and information on donating candy!

GIVING UPDATE

Antic. Need to date 08/31: \$ 173,523.51
Receipts to date 08/31: \$ 129,501.09
Spent in Mission
 and Ministry 08/31: \$ 162,939.29

I want to thank each of you for your generous response to our request for additional funds to meet the needs of the church. Meeting our monthly expenses continues to be a challenge so please continue your stewardship and prayers in this regard.

In Christ's love,
Sally Berger,
Council President.