

FAITH NEWSLETTER

Faith Lutheran Church
Ypsilanti, Michigan

December 2020

Pastor's Message



... She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. — Matthew 1.21

Merry Christmas, everyone! I cherish memories of Christmases past when I was able to enjoy gatherings with my extended family—parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins. This year we won't be traveling to be with family. We will stay home to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. But we will stay in touch via Zoom and by phone and social media.

Being together is important. Keeping each other safe from a dangerous pandemic is just as important. And we will trust that God will have mercy on us in the coming year, so that our scientists and medical specialists will develop a vaccine that will allow us to be safe when we travel to be in each other's presence, to hug each other and kiss each other again.

Shortly after Jesus was born, Matthew's account mentions Magi who traveled from the East who went to King Herod, whom they honestly thought would direct them to the "the one who has been born King of the Jews." Little did they know that Herod's ego and deception would result in the death of all the innocent children in the area of Bethlehem. All except for one.

The Gospels cannot but share the truth of the human condition alongside the amazing joy of the ancient story of our salvation. In that story we are confronted with the bitterness of human paranoia and power, hatred and violence, grief and loss, the death of so many innocents, as these attend the beautiful account of the birth of our Savior. It's a story we can all identify with, because we live in the same world our ancient ancestors lived in, a world where the uncertainties of human experience are directed by those who wield power for the sake of power instead of using their power to make life

better for the downtrodden and exploited, and we have little if anything to say about it.

We may live in the most difficult time of our generation, but the one certainty of it all is grounded in the promise of the Child. Cherish the precious memories of past Christmases and embrace today the joy of God's promise for you in Jesus, a new life forgiven and free ... to love God, to love your neighbor, and to love each other.

Pastor James

ADVENT

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are upon us. Advent yes, Christmas not quite yet, at least not until December 24th. During Advent we cultivate the gift of patience. We prepare ourselves spiritually as we patiently wait for the gift God gave us in the birth of Jesus.

We will continue to record all our services and post them online, including our Advent and Christmas services.

Advent Theme: "Someone's Coming ... and It's Wonderful!"

—Psalm 118.19–29

Advent 1 ... Dec. 2 ... Jer. 23.5-8 ... A Righteous Branch Comes

Advent 2 ... Dec. 9 ... Mal. 4.1-6 ... The Sun of Righteousness Comes

Advent 3 ... Dec. 16 ... Is. 40.1-11 ... The Lord GOD Comes

Advent 4 ... Dec. 23 ... Deut. 18.15-19 ... The Prophet Comes

PRAYERS OF FAITH

Please pray for all members of Faith.

“People are hungry” ... PLEASE GIVE TO FOOD GATHERERS

Dear Faith Members: People are hungry and many are out of work during this time. They look to their neighbors for assistance with food, etc. Please consider supplying the needs of others. Many of our members have been most generous in donating food over the past few years, and we want to continue helping those in need. Remember, no glass jars, refrigerated or expired foods. If you wish to make a personal monetary donation, send your check directly to Food Gatherers, 1 Carrot Way, Ann Arbor MI 48105. Thank you for your continuing kindness and generosity to your neighbors in need.

Jan Morrison, Faith's Care Team Leader

BEE FAITHFUL ...

A Few Words On Our Honey Bees

Around mid-November Eric and I covered our honey bee hives with tar paper to help our honey bees survive the winter. At the bee club meeting the experts on bees keep saying that it's not because of the cold that they don't survive the winter. Things like poor venation, lack of food, being weakened from vireo mites are the biggest problems.

Honeybees don't hibernate. They keep warm by snuggling together, and they move their wings around the queen to keep her a warm 75 degrees all winter. Snuggling is called a cluster, and the cluster will only move 5 or 6 inches during the winter.

In the winter when we have a thaw and the temps are in the 50's honeybees take cleansing flights, and they also take bees that have died out of the hive.

Please pray for our bees this winter. What they go through to provide us with their food. Honeybees are wild animals and they don't ask for much, only to do one thing “make honey.” Paul

COMMUNION AT FAITH

We will continue to observe the following schedule of small-group reception of communion at Faith on the first and third Sundays of each month.

PORTALS OF PRAYER

It's that time of year to update our Portals of Prayer subscriptions. If you desire to continue your Portals of Prayer subscription, please contact Marvin Graber before December 10.

Portals of Prayer is an excellent resource for daily devotion and prayer.

FROM THE MICHIGAN DISTRICT

Unity in Christ Affirmations – approved by Michigan District, LCMS Board of Directors – This document began as a request and outcome from the meeting on Racial Healing, which took place in Detroit at the end of June, 2020, among pastors and laity in Detroit and Michigan District officials.

You can read the document here ...

<https://michigandistrict.org/resources/unity-affirmations/>

Hard copies of this document will accompany hard copies of this edition of Faith's newsletter available in Faith's narthex.

Also from Pastor David Maier, District President of the Michigan District ...

12 November 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Please know that I am praying for you as you continue to navigate the COVID environment. It is for this reason that I address you. PLEASE pray for your brothers as they seek wisdom on how to lead their congregations. COVID is spreading. We have been informed that the health systems in some areas may soon be overwhelmed with COVID patients. The disease is real, people are being re-infected, doctors are talking more about complications that come later—after presumed healing—with patients of ALL ages. Brothers, we are not to be afraid of the disease, but we do need to demonstrate continued care, love, and respect for all people in our communities. Please keep all this in mind as you look ahead to worship this weekend and beyond.

"The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen" 1 Peter 4:7 (NIV).

May God bless you all with continued wisdom, love for our Lord, and love for His people.

Sincerely,

President Maier