



Faith Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

FAITH'S FOUNDATIONS

December 2020

Working to spread the Gospel here and throughout the world.

6995 US 45 S · P.O. Box 436 · Three Lakes, WI 54562 · 715-546-2770

<http://faithlutheran-threelakes.org> · <https://facebook.com/faith3lakes> · office6995@gmail.com

Office Hours: Tuesday thru Thursday 9:00 am to 12:00 pm



NOTE FROM PASTOR JOHN



*“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.”
Hebrews 1: 1*

It was Saturday evening and I just arrived at Frederick Place to deliver the evening meal. Meeting me at the door was a six-year old girl who has been at the Homeless Shelter for a good couple of months with her mother. She recognized me immediately and announced to all in room: “Here comes the man who talks to God.” For her I do not have a name. She knows me only as the God-talker. The adults at the shelter think she is cute when she greets me like that. She came up with my identity a few months back when I talked to her older brother about prayer.

My thoughts are focused on the Homeless Shelter this Christmas time. I am thankful there is a place for those who are temporarily without a home of their own. I am impressed with the staff at Frederick Place which makes it like a home. The place will shortly be decorated for the holiday. In fact attention is paid to all holidays. Last October Frederick Place was home to six children and outside the place you saw pumpkins transformed into Jack-O-Lanterns with various designs from the hands of children. At Christmas there will certainly be a tree with presents underneath it—real presents to excite the kids.

Naturally when you think of homeless children at Christmas time your heart melts. A couple of years ago I inquired about presents not only for the kids present, but also the adults. I was told that they had so many donations of

toys it was decided to store some for other years. If the children received all the donated presents it was feared that would make for unrealistic expectations for other years. After all Christmas is about love and not loot.

Residents at the Homeless Shelter must be under stress. Each resident has to find many things including housing, work with a living wage, government assistance programs, and added to all of this may very well be some serious soul-searching over habits and lifestyle. The most unhelpful attitude for us is judgment which is often just another excuse to walk away from helping others. What would be better if we all become ones 'who talk to God.' We can pray for the residents of Frederick Place regarding their search for a better life in a place of their own. But very basically we can pray that residents know how deeply they are loved by God. God does not give them bad marks for being homeless. I don't want to sound like I am trivializing their struggles, but we can pray that they have a home with God. Psalm 91 begins "You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust." God is a fortress of faithfulness, never forsaking those in need and providing the inner strength needed to meet challenges. In the gospel of John Jesus said "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you." Jesus went on to say that all who keep his word, to abide in his love receive the promise that he will come and make his home with them. God is refuge, shelter, and home for all who trust him.

Scripture encourages us to talk to God in prayer. But Christmas is God talking to us. God has spoken to us, the world, with his Son, Jesus. In the gospel of John Jesus is called the eternal Word, the Word who became a human being. Just think of the power of the Christmas message: the eternal Son of God came from heaven to earth in the humblest of way. His first garments were 'swaddling clothes', simple coverings for the poor. He did not have a crib but only a manger, an animal feeding box. The gospel of Matthew records that the Holy Family—Mary, Joseph, and Jesus—became homeless for awhile to escape the murderous rage of a tyrant. Jesus, the Son of God, did not come to earth on an inspection tour or fact-finding mission. Matthew's gospel said it well that Jesus "bears all our grief, and all our infirmity." Indeed you have a Friend in Jesus, all our sins and grief to bear.

I stumbled across a quotation that intrigued me from Canadian theologian William Hordern: "Perhaps the greatest heresy of triumphalism is that it promises a joy and a peace that are fully understandable." Triumphalism is the idea of faith in God as something easy: just trust in God and you will be fine. In a time of persecution Jesus promised a joy that will not be taken away even if everything else is. The Scriptures promised a peace 'that surpasses all human understanding.' Could it be that Christmas promises a joy that is not understandable? We associate blessings from God in terms of wealth and health, and indeed they are. But what about the poor and homeless? What about those sick with the Covid-virus? What about those folks who have had loved ones contract

the virus and died? Some may say there will be no Christmas celebration for them this year; maybe it will be better next Christmas. But we do not think of 'next Christmas'. You may be homeless and plagued by worry, but Jesus' birth is his coming to make his home with you, worries and all. He comes to bear it all as Immanuel, God with you. This is not a 'Covid Christmas' with a virus at the center. The birth of Jesus does not mean a temporary, holiday peace. Jesus does not give a kind of peace the world gives. The peace of Jesus counters fear with his faithfulness, he will not abandon us in our trials, he will not abandon us, ever. Luther would write that there are many things about God we do not understand. It is fruitless to speculate

about what happens in life, the perpetual "why". To understand what we can listen to God speak through the coming of Jesus. Luther would say look to the manger and the cross: then you will understand how greatly you are loved, how completely you are forgiven, and how merciful is the presence of Jesus in the midst of all our trials.

In the midst of a pandemic which cancels many family and social gatherings, we may feel not too merry. It does not matter if the 'merry' part is missing. What matters 'Christmas' is not missing. Listen to God speaking through his Son; Jesus born for you, Jesus who is light in any darkness, Jesus who is faithful and makes his home with you.



Lifting Up to God in Prayer

- We pray for Rev. Tom Wickstrom, his wife Sue and their son, Lucas as they grieve the loss of daughter and sister, Michelle Brendalen.
- We pray for hunters and a safe harvest.
- We pray for a peaceful transition for newly elected officials.
- We pray for those who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder.
- We pray for all those impacted by and suffering from Covid.
- We pray for our congregations and their leadership.
- We pray for safe Thanksgiving gatherings and new ways of being connected.



Winter Class Registration Now Open!

Registration is now open for the winter schedule of Lifelong Faith Formation, a program of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. The classes provide fun and interesting opportunities for people to connect with each other online, via Zoom, during these challenging times. The following classes begin in January:

- **Introduction to Biblical Greek II**
- **Reflections on Bonhoeffer's *Life Together, While We are Apart***
- **The Doctrine of Discovery: From Myth to Reality**
- **Bias in Our Communities: Addressing Race in Rural America**
- **Walking Together: Companionship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania**
- **The Gospel of John**



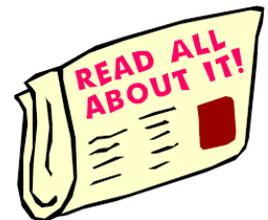
For more information, visit our [website](#) or contact Deacon-Elect Lori Ward at (615) 519-1969 or lori.ward@nglsynod.org.

ANNOUNCEMENT!

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2021 WILL BE ONLINE

On September 11, the Synod Council passed a motion to begin plans for an online assembly in May of 2021. Their reasons for doing so include the following:

- The timeline for the availability of a vaccine remains unclear. Large gatherings may still not be possible or advisable.
- Congregations are planning their budgets for 2021.
- Congregations can appoint/recruit voting members who will have time to prepare to be online participants.
- The planning team has time to make arrangements. Energy will be spent putting together a good online assembly rather than scrambling in a last-minute shift.
- Opportunities for in-person gatherings may be more possible in the Fall of 2021 for our Conference Walking Together events.



The online assembly agenda has yet to be decided. However, participants can plan on the assembly taking place over the course of May 13-15, 2021. Times and agenda will be available in March of 2021.

Included in our business meeting will be voting for Church-wide Assembly 2022 participants, members of the Consultation and Discipline committees, and on the Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

Thought of the Day

As the pandemic continues, consider the effects of chronic anxiety. Do you see the following in yourself? Your congregation? Our society?

"Features of chronic anxiety:

- Lessened learning abilities
- Differences in people are magnified
- Imagination capacity is constrained
- More demand for certainty
- More negative diagnosis of others
- More secrecy
- A push for immediate resolution or relief
- Strong tendency toward togetherness and like-mindedness"



~From a presentation by MaryAnn Schwabe drawn from Bowen Family Systems Theory

From the President...

Greetings,



We are continuing to have in person worship with a small number of people joining us, but many live-streaming or watching later online. We now have communion packets available during office hours for those that want to participate during the communion portion of the service.

We are hoping to have a Christmas Eve service at 6 pm. Pastor John will lead us. Reservations will be required to make sure that we can social distance.

There is no news on the call of a pastor.

We are donating \$500 of the rent money to Lutheran World Relief. There is a matching funds opportunity going on, so our \$500 will equal \$1000!

Our new computer is in place and MaryBeth is trying to work out any kinks that have arisen (thank you to Linda Swanson for assisting with this!).

Please be safe and follow healthy practices. Remember the real reason for the season!



Prayerfully,

Marge Anderson



"Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree."

~Attributed to Martin Luther

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

Have you ever seen a new tree planted that has two supports added? I'm thinking of a young tree that stands between two poles to which are attached a tether, each pulling the tree in the opposite direction. Not only do these supports help guard against windstorms, but they ensure that the young tree grows up straight and true between the opposing tensions of being pulled in opposite directions.

So too, I imagine, do the opposing pulls of the Democrat and Republican parties do the same for our country. Blue and red need each other; right and left, conservative and liberal. We need the dichotomy, the tension of opposing forces, the disagreement, so that we can grow, straight and true somewhere in the middle.

I can only imagine what the tree feels as it is being pulled in two opposite directions, but I would guess it is something like what our country is feeling now. When considering the election results, some feel relief and even elation, others feel disappointment and even anger. Never before have so many voted. Never before has the country offered such clear and disturbing statistics for how many are pulling in opposing directions. We are polarized, standing in support on opposite sides of the tree, pulling with all we've got, and yet, if one side has too much influence, the tree will bend. There is value in having each side pull, so that our country can grow straight and true somewhere in the middle.

What then does this mean for ministry?

It is curious to me how 100% of our congregation members can agree that Jesus Christ is Lord, but we do not agree on what that means, how that impacts our vote, and how we embody that conviction in our ministry efforts. But then again, the church is not known for its level of agreement *except* for the conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord.

When political convictions run deep, when we feel the tension of being pulled in opposing directions, when we are grieved by the lack of agreement and the swirl of emotions and the resentment towards those who are pulling the opposing tether, I urge you to extend some grace.

Forgive others for not voting as you did. Forgive others for not championing the same convictions that you hold dear. And turn your efforts, your attention, your energy to push and pull the growth toward and into the work of Christ.

We are not going to agree as a country, and not even as congregation, but we can agree that we are invited to participate in the breaking in of the kingdom of God. We are called to bear the light of Christ. And our efforts in ministry are strengthened when we work together towards some goal, some embodiment of the presence of Christ in the world. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Comfort the afflicted. There is blessing and life-giving growth as we concentrate on the nuts and bolts of our faith. Yes, there is still the pandemic which is no small challenge. But consider that it is an additional tether, another added tension. Don't let that get in the way of you and your congregation growing straight and true and keeping the thing, the thing. Jesus Christ is Lord. And more than that, Jesus Christ is your

Lord, your Lord and Savior. The rest is just...tension, albeit challenging, grieving, thick, and concerning tension, but through which we grow straight and true.

In the midst of this tension, God is at work. As we consider our own convictions with humility, and the convictions of our friends and neighbors with grace and forgiveness, we will find our way forward, as a country and as congregations called to serve the work of Christ.



And whether or not you believe the world is going to pieces, I am glad to remind you that the Northern Great Lakes Synod has indeed already planted an apple tree. In November of 2018, I was invited to participate in the retreat for newly elected leaders sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation. In observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, I planted an apple tree on behalf of our synod in Wittenberg, Germany. We are Tree #468, and if you are ever in Wittenberg, please feel free to find our tree and take a picture.



Because even if the world goes to pieces, Jesus Christ is Lord and you and I are invited, encouraged, indeed, we are called and equipped to be his presence in the world. And that, my dear friends, colleagues, and congregational members, is no small thing.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan.

“Dust and Gold”
by Greta Zwaan

I am but a tiny speck, a particle of dust;
I have no power of my own, it's in my God I trust.
He sees the frailty of my being, the weakness of my frame,
But even though I am minute, He calls me by my name.

My decisions that I make, be they bad or good
Are completely known by Him - known and understood.
He'll guide me if I let Him, but He will not use force,
He trusts me to rely on Him, to always stay on course.

But I am human and I'm frail, I want to stand alone,
So God backs off and lets me be, He lets me chose my own.
He stands aside yet stays nearby, in case I change my mind,
He lets me go my way alone but He's not far behind.

When I get weary and I stray along the unknown road,
I need but call upon His Name and He will bear my load.
Oh, foolish pride, let go! Let God! He's been this way before,
Give Him the reigns that guide your life, you need hold on no more.

He knows precisely what you need, He knows your very frame,
You'll find the peace you're looking for by calling on His name.
'Twas God who made you from the dust, you're precious in His sight,
All creation He called good, in you He takes delight.

Give praise! Give thanks! Rejoice always.
You're blessed because He cares,
For dust to Him is like pure gold,
And He owns all your shares.



More Valuable Than Gold

by Janet Dellaria, Ph.D. of Trinity Lutheran Church, Trout Creek, MI

A poem offered in response to her experience of ringing the church bells and remembering her own loved ones on All Saints' Day.

Tears in our Eyes
Heaviness in our Hearts
We Rang the Church Bells
Honoring ...
Honoring ...
Honoring those we Love
Our Dearly Beloveds
Who have Gone On ...
Leaving that hole in –
In Our Hearts
That Hole ...
That Hole which was created
When Their Physical Presence
Was Gone ...
Was Gone ..
.Was Gone ...
Love and only Love
Can fill that Emptiness –
Our Continuing to Love them
Our Rejoycing in having
All that Love and Happiness
In our Daily Lives
And Blessing those Memories ...
Memories ...
Memories ...
Like those Church Bells
Ringing ...
Ringing ...
Ringing ...
More Precious than Gold
To Love and Be Loved
And to Be Remembered
Remembered ...
Remembered ...
Remembered ...
With the Joyous Sound
Of the Church Bells –
More Precious than ALL
The Gold in this World!
Our Love Never Ends ...
Never Ends ...
Never Ends ...
Never Ends ...



Lifelong Faith Formation 2021
Bulletin and Newsletter Announcements

Lifelong Faith Formation: Synod Classes Continue Online in January
visit www.nglsynod.org/lifelongfaithformation for details

Registration is now open for the winter schedule of Lifelong Faith Formation, a program of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. The classes provide fun and interesting opportunities for people to connect with each other online, via Zoom, during these challenging times.

These classes begin in January:

- **The Gospel of John;**
- **Walking Together: Companionship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania;**
- **Reflection's on Bonhoeffer's Life Together, While We are Apart;**
- **Bias in our Communities: Addressing Race in Rural America**

- **The Doctrine of Discovery, From Myth to Reality** (a call to increase understanding and appreciation of the heritage and culture of Native American peoples); and
- **Introduction to Biblical Greek II.**

For more information, visit www.nglsynod.org/lifelong-faith-formation or contact Deacon-Elect Lori Ward at (615) 519-1969 or lori.ward@nglsynod.org.



Northern Great Lakes Synod
Online Classes Begin via Zoom in January 2021
The Gospel of John

Walking Together: Companionship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania

Reflections on Bonhoeffer's Life Together, While We are Apart

Bias in our Communities: Addressing Race in Rural America

The Doctrine of Discovery, From Myth to Reality (a call to increase understanding and appreciation of the heritage and culture of Native American peoples)

Introduction to Biblical Greek II.

Visit www.nglsynod.org/lifelong-faith-formation for more information and to register

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FACEBOOK

It's true! Faith Lutheran Church now has a Facebook page. "Like" us at <http://www.facebook.com/faith3lakes/> and watch the page for updates about what's happening in the life of our faith community.

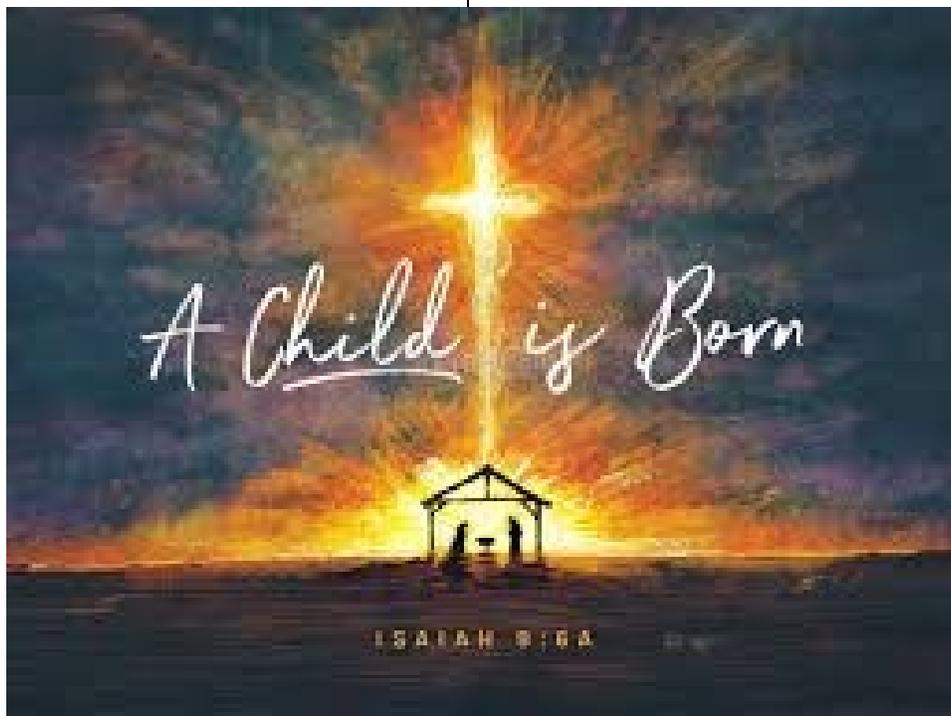


PRAYER SHAWLS

To give comfort and peace. There is a tote of prayer shawls under the shelf when you walk in. If you know someone who is lonely and would use one, feel free to take one. Once wrapped around their shoulders it feels like a hug from Jesus and their friends.

LIVE-STREAMING

Did you know that when you're away, you can watch Pastor's sermon as it's delivered LIVE on Sunday morning? You can! Simply go to our church's website (<https://www.faihlutheran-threelakes.org/>) and click "Click here to watch live streaming during worship (Sundays at 9:00 am)" right on the front page. Just put in a name and hit "Enter Live Service". Streaming will start at the reading of the Gospel, which usually happens between 9:10 and 9:15, give or take a few minutes, so if nothing is happening yet when you start watching, just wait a few minutes. You can also watch a recording of many of Pastor's sermons on our website. Simply go to our church website, and go to "Worship" --> "Pastor's Sermons" and click on any sermon in the Archive of Recorded Sermons. It's that easy!



BAPTISMS WE REMEMBER THIS MONTH



During December, we prepare to celebrate our Lord's birth. The gift of Christmas is just the start of the story of salvation through Jesus Christ.

In our baptism, we are joined to the death of Jesus. We also receive the promise that as Christ was raised from the dead, so too shall we have new life – a gift given by the grace of God.

Celebrate the gift of Jesus, and the gift of new life through our baptism into Jesus. As you

celebrate, rejoice with your brothers and sisters who remember this month their worn baptism!

- 4th Traeton Fogerty
- 10th Beth Schomisch
- 15th Marge Anderson
- 24th Paul Matthiae
- 25th Rob Peterson
- 26th Perry Anderson

Also remember: Tammy Sherry, Al Votis, Kristi Erikson, and Thor Wick.

MONTHLY OFFERING AND ATTENDANCE

Year: 2020
Month: October
Number of Sundays: 4
Average Attendance: 12

AUGUST '20	MONTH	YTD
Budget Income	\$ 6,938	\$ 66,483
Expenses	\$ 4,056	\$ 56,078
Net Income	\$ 5,276	\$ 35,034

*** This will be provided on a quarterly basis



IN OUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

THOSE STRUGGLING WITH ILLNESS, PAIN, LOSS OF HEALTH IN MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT: Kyle Smith, Paul Kragh, Monte James, Missy Wick, Sue Sorg, Rick Jacobson, Ollie DeMuth, Megan Schiller, Bob Beyer, Ann Woelfel, Colleen and Duane Bonack, John and Connie Lyons, Donna Weiss and family, Dave Lederhaus, Val Otto and the family of Brittain and Courtney Lorenz, the family of Dave Cyrtnus, Sonia and John Dionne, Rhonda Buss, the family of Barb Hanson, the family of Jim Kotarski, the family of Charlotte Jensen, and the family of Norm Frauenfelder.

Our armed forces including: David Bredesen, Kaley Ebann, Tyler Kaltenberg, Nick, Brandy and Nathan Lamal, Jamie Madl, Jared Malda, Jon Priem, Brandon Paulick, Charlie and Will Starke, Nicole Young, and Alex Brendemihl.

ALL THOSE WHO ARE ANXIOUS AND WORRIED ABOUT MANY THINGS

Our Church Ministries:

Congregational Care
Congregation Council
Board of Worship Life
Board of Outreach
Board of Trustees
Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center

Our partners in the gospel of Jesus Christ including:

St. Theresa's Roman Catholic Church
Three Lakes Evangelical Free Church
Union Congregational Church
Grace Lutheran Church

Our synod, the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA, and its congregations.

Our companion synod, the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, and its congregations.



STEWARDSHIP CALENDARS



November

	11/1/20	11/8/20	11/15/20	11/22/20	11/29/20
Assisting Minister	---	---	---	---	---
Lay Reader	Rob Peterson	Marge Anderson	Rob Peterson	Jan Harris	Rob Peterson
Altar Guild	---	---	---	---	---
Greeters	Andersons	Sue Sorg and Jan Harris	Sue Sorg and Jan Harris	Andersons	Sue Sorg and Jan Harris
Music	Rhonda Buss	Dawn Gonitzke	Dawn Gonitzke	Dawn Gonitzke	Dawn Gonitzke
Fellowship	---	---	---	---	
Video-streaming	---	---	---	---	

December

	12/6/20	12/13/20	12/20/20	12/24/20	12/27/20
Assisting Minister	---	---	---	---	---
Lay Reader	Marge Anderson	Jan Harris	Rob Peterson	Marge Anderson	Jan Harris
Altar Guild	---	---	---	---	---
Greeters	Andersons	Sue Sorg and Jan Harris	Andersons	Sue Sorg and Jan Harris	Andersons
Music	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss	Rhonda Buss
Fellowship	---	---	---	---	
Video-streaming	---	---	---	---	

** If you cannot serve on your assigned day, please find a replacement, then notify the church office. **

December 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 0:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	2	3	4	5
6 9:00 am Holy Communion	7 Office Closed	8 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours 1:00 pm Council Meeting	9	10	11	12
13 9:00 am Holy Communion	14 Office Closed	15 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	16	17	18	19
20 9:00 am Holy Communion	21 Office Open Due to Holiday	22 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	23	24 Christmas Eve 6:00 pm Worship Service	25 Christmas Day 	26
27 9:00 am Holy Communion	28 Office Closed	29 10:00 am – 12:00 pm Pastor John's Office Hours	30	31		

Faith Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 436
Three Lakes, WI 54562

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

A member of the Northern Great Lakes Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

P.O. Box 436
6995 U.S. Highway 45 South
Three Lakes, WI 54562

Church Office: 715-546-2770

Office Hours: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Tuesday – Thursday (closed Monday and Friday)

WEEKLY WORSHIP

Sunday Morning – 9:00 am
Holy Communion

STAFF

Office Administrator: MaryBeth Koslowski
office6995@gmail.com

Interim Pastor: Rev. John Kuziej
pllc@frontier.com

Custodian: Debbie Hock

Organist: Rhonda Buss

VISIT US ON THE WEB

<https://www.faithlutheran-threelakes.org>

VISIT US ON FACEBOOK

<https://www.facebook.com/faith3lakes>



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