

January 2018

Faith Lutheran Church

NEWSLETTER

1700 St. Andrews Way
Eldersburg, Md. 21784
TEL: (410) 795-8082
FAX: 410-552-5007

www.faithlutheraneldersburg.com
office@faithmd.org

Pastor: Rev. Christopher Natan Sperb

Glorifying God the Father and filled with the Holy Spirit, we celebrate our relationship with Jesus and invite others to join our celebration.

“God Said... And It Was So”

The prophet Micah prophesied one of the most precise prophecies and amazing fulfillments in Biblical history. Eight centuries before Jesus was born, Micah could see and speak clearly about what God would bring to pass. Micah wrote: *“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days”* (Micah 5:2).

St. Matthew recalled the words of Micah when Herod the king heard about the birth of Jesus. Because he was troubled by that news, he assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him exactly what Micah said (Matthew 2:3-6).

Where does God say His prophets would see ahead into history? Through the writer of Hebrews, God says these Old Testament prophets and leaders *“all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar”* (Hebrews 11:13). This is to say, God often enabled His prophets to see the fulfillment in a strikingly vivid way!

Why is this such good news for us? We can look back and clearly see past events in our own personal life. In a similar way, God gave the Old Testament prophets the ability to look, not only back, but even ahead, into history, and to speak clearly of events yet to come. Thus, we should not let Satan tempt us to see the many amazing Old Testament prophecies and New Testament fulfillments simply as “coincidences!” God ordained the prophets to see this.

As a New Year starts, look ahead with joy and certainty! The New Testament includes many future prophecies for us. Just as His Old Testament promises have been fulfilled, so also all New Testament prophecy will be fulfilled for us. Listen to Jesus’ prophetic words for us:

- ❖ *“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die”* (John 11:25-26).
- ❖ *“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also”* (John 14:3).
- ❖ *“I am with you always”* (Matthew 28:20).
- ❖ *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Hebrews 13:5).

As we struggle our way through the hardships of life not only during this New Year, the devil will tempt us to think that God’s promises do not apply to us. Along with the devil, our own doubts and fears will haunt us, tempting us to ask, “Where is the promise of His coming?” (2 Peter 3:4). During such dark times, think of the prophet Micah and his speaking about the future as if it had already taken place, as if he could see with his own eyes the long-awaited prophecies he had written. And think also as someone already participating in the joy and comforts of the Last Day (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 2:12).

We are comforted by speaking about God’s future promises as if they have already been fulfilled for us. That which our God so faithfully did for His prophets is that which He shall likewise never fail to do for us: *“God said... and it was so”* (Genesis 1:9, 11, 14-15, 24, 29-30).

In His Service,
Pastor Christopher Sperb

Director of Christian Education

LISTENING

Happy New Year!

Hope all youth, parents and families had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year with family and friends! I know I did. GAHU kicks off this month with our Annual BOOTCAMP theme! Our theme this year is **“Biblical Explosion!”** What does that mean? Come and find out! **You will need to bring a HARD COPY Bible, wear camo, bring a friend and be ready for an Adventure! We will be using our Bible every night and may permanently put things in it. So bring a Bible that you don't mind doing that to.** You don't want to miss out on any of the weeks! If you need a personal hard copy of a Bible, please let me know ASAP! Also, this month we will be headed back to Players in Westminster for a fun night of games and laser tag! More details to come!

YAM was able to celebrate last month with our Christmas Cooking Competition and being in community with one another for small group. This month, ALL Young Adults and Friends are welcome to join us at SKI LIBERTY to go SNOW TUBING on the first Saturday of the month. Though before that, we will have pizza at the Blessings house at 6:00 p.m. Sign up and more details will come via email/ or by Facebook! We also look forward to two other small group gatherings discussing how to be an everyday missionary!

Meghan O'Hara, DCE

Small Group Ministry

"So Philip ran to [the Ethiopian] and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' And the eunuch said to Philip, 'About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' **Then Philip opened his mouth,** and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus." (Acts 8:30-35 ESV)

A number of years ago the church my family attended did a sermon series focused on evangelism titled, "Talking to Your Friends About Faith." I had the opportunity to teach a Saturday morning workshop during this series on how to do just that. In my opening remarks, I shared that really we could change the title to "Listening to Your Friends About Faith" because when it comes down to it, listening is 90% of the conversation. In listening, we better meet people where they are at when sharing the good news of Jesus.

And good news to you *introverts*, as Finke writes in chapter 14, "...a strong argument can be made that introverts are actually better suited for missional conversation--once the difficulty of initiating conversation is overcome--because they would rather ask questions and listen than hear themselves talking."

It is a short story, but look at what you read of Philip and the Ethiopian. Philip did initiate the conversation, but after listening to the Ethiopian and hearing what he was struggling with, *"then Philip opened his mouth..."* What a perfect example!

Finke closes chapter 14 with these words and a question, "Jesus can do more with two people who are talking with each other than he can with two people who are successfully ignoring each other. So, what kind of conversations are you having with the people around you?"

And speaking of listening, from reading Matthew 4, what do you hear Jesus teaching you? What act of faith is He challenging you to practice?

<http://joiningjesus50daydevotional.blogspot.com/2014/11/day-25-of-50.html>

Fun Fact: Greg Finke, author of *Joining Jesus on His Mission*, lived on the same college freshman floor as Meghan's dad! #smallLutheranWorld

You don't want to miss out on this wonderful opportunity to discuss, pray, serve, learn and grow as a Christian community in a small group. Join one and find out what this is all about! Contact DCE Meghan O'Hara via email at dce@faithmd.org or by phone at (410) 795-8082 ext 204 if you would like to get involved into a small group. We hope that you consider this opportunity to grow in your faith and with fellow members of our church family.



Worship Ministry

“What joy to know, when life is past, The Lord we love is first and last, The end and the beginning!

He will one day, oh, glorious grace, Transport us to that happy place Beyond all tears and sinning!

Amen! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Crown of gladness!

We are yearning For the day of Your returning!”

— *Lutheran Service Book*, “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright,” 395:6.

Happy New Year!

While we look with anticipation at the opportunity to start afresh and anew with the dawn of a new year there are often many things we don't want to leave behind from the year past. Change is often one of the most difficult things we face. Especially the change that comes when we lose a loved one. We reluctantly move forward from one day to the next, one week to the next, one month, one year; we keep going. But while we keep on keeping on there is always a part of us that stays behind. We don't want to move forward even though we must. We want to keep our memories close; we don't want to forget voices, phrases, mannerisms, scents.

Thankfully, we know that this life is only temporary and is not truly our home. We, as our departed loved ones already are experiencing and know, belong to God our Heavenly Father. As Paul writes to the church in Corinth:

“So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

(2 Corinthians 6-10)

So take that step into the new year with confidence. God has a reason and purpose for each of us. We belong to Him and through Him; we have the strength to carry on the work He has for us. Until that joyful reunion that we know awaits us, when we will run into God's loving arms shouting Abba Father! Surrounded once again by those who went before us.

Please join us for morning services at either 8:00 and 10:45 each Sunday this month.

May you always have God's Word in your heart and a song of praise on your lips!

Connie Simmons

Women's Ministry Team

“Daughters Of The King” Women's Ministry Update

Exciting things are planned for Daughters of the King this year, including a brand new format for our Monthly Women's Ministry Gatherings! These meetings will continue to be held on the third Saturday of each month and will revolve around a quarterly theme. The theme for the first quarter of 2018 is “Visual Faith.” More details to follow in the church bulletin. In the meantime, for more information regarding this topic, please visit <https://www.visualfaithmin.org>.

January Women's Ministry Events:

- **Pizza & Game Night:** Wednesday 1/3 - 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- **Monthly Women's Ministry Gathering - An Introduction to Visual Faith:** Saturday, 1/20/18 - 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Event details can be found in the church bulletin. Please contact Dana Stigdon (dstigdon@gmail.com) or Debbie Geiger (geigermama14@gmail.com) if you have any questions or would like to help out with any of these events.





Youth Sunday School Mission Statement

Making Christ the center of each lesson, we will teach the children the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, show enthusiasm for Jesus so they will want to share it with others, and make the Gospel message relevant to every age or level of learning.

Sunday School

Sunday School Opening Begins promptly at 9:30

Please join us as we continue our new interactive opening. Connie and Ben Simmons continue to enrich us as we prepare our children to be a special part of our worship service with their voices.

Sunday School Envelopes

The 2018 Sunday School envelopes have been distributed or placed in your mailbox. Please remember to continue bringing in your offering to help support our Compassion International child, Witness Musa Mhwaji of Tanzania where she lives with her parents.

Ages 3, Pre-K and K “FaithWeaver Now”

Weaving faith into today’s families NOW.

Grades 1-8 “Growing in Christ”

The winter quarter will focus on how “The Holy Spirit Leads the Apostles.”

High School Class

Life’s Big Questions and God’s Answers
By Brad Alles
(Modular)

Adult Bible Study Classes began on December 3rd

That the World May Know

**Curt Thomas
(Sanctuary)**

**Keep it Shut
Dana Stigdon
(Modular)**

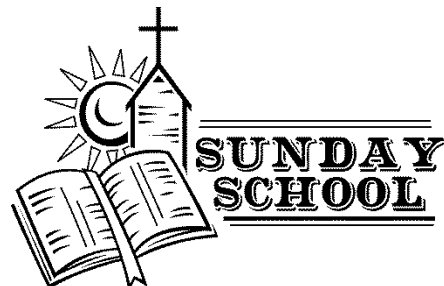
The Book of Esther

**Don Hall
(Modular)**

Tuesday Morning Bible Study

I Know His Name, By: Wendy Blight

Any questions, contact Michele Narcross, [410-549-1707](tel:410-549-1707) or mcnarc@msn.com. Hope to see you then!



Public Relations & Communications Ministry

COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION

This & That About Our Ministry

Live Nativity flyers were given to local establishments for posting. Thank you, Debbie Foster, for helping me with this. A New Member Welcome Letter was given to new members on New Member Sunday, and pictures were taken for the Photo Board. Photos were taken of Christmas church decorating and Live Nativity set-up. An ad was submitted to the *Carroll County Times* for their "Holiday Worship Directory." A photo/caption of the Cantata and Live Nativity were sent to the *Carroll County Times* and website's "Faith in Action." And in early January, a revised "Yellow Pages" will be given to members, a 4th Quarterly Report 2017 will be sent to the Leadership, and the password to the Member's Area of the website will be changed, and the congregation informed.

This will be my last newsletter article. It is with mixed feelings that I have decided to step down as Team Leader of Public Relations & Communications Ministry. It has been a good 10-year run, giving me both purpose and fulfillment, and I know I will miss it. Those years were God's plan for me, and it will be His plan for my successor. "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

A New Beginning

It's a new year and a new beginning for the congregation of First Lutheran Church, Lorain, Ohio. In November, 2014, I wrote an article about a fire, caused by vandalism, that completely destroyed the historic 90 year old church. We attended that church. I remember admiring the beautiful stained glass windows and listening to the music from the one-of-a-kind John Brombaugh Opus 4 organ, valued at \$1 million. Both were victims of the fire.

Today, a new modern structure sits close to the site of the old church. God always makes something good come from something bad. While the windows and organ were irreplaceable, the building boasts other attributes that the previous church did not have. There are special offices for the Lorain Cooperative Ministry, a joint program of nine Lorain area churches to fight hunger and provide help for those in need. A multipurpose room stores the food pantry. There is a

full-service kitchen with a new walk-in freezer. Nursery rooms with windows and a youth room wired for electronics and gaming are features. And, there is a patio with memorial bricks around a gas fire pit for use in the Easter vigil service, with a fireside room next to it.

"After much prayer, and much paperwork," God has created a new beginning for the 150 faithful what evil took away. "You are good, and what you do is good." (Psalm 119:68)

In His Service,
Lenni Lange

Missions Ministry Team

This month's Highlighted Mission Envelope effort will be in support of:

"Brazil Mission Society–Holy Trinity Institute, Moreira, BA"

Holy Trinity Institute (a LCMS recognized service organization) is an oasis of hope for children in Brazil. The goal is to assist children in all aspects of life: material, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social. Located on the institute's complex are a children's home, senior's home, elementary school, church, farm and mechanical workshop. Most of the children and seniors who come to live at Holy Trinity Institute have no other place to go. Many are homeless, while others who have families still have to work in the streets to find money for food. For further information, go to www.brazilms.org.

Our congregation was able to share our blessings with The Shepherd's Staff by donating \$945.00 for the month of November 2017.





LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES

Lutheran Hour Ministries has added 3 new courses to the online learning program described in the December newsletter. The new courses are:

I AM: The Statements of Jesus

At the burning bush, Yahweh told Moses, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex 3:14). Jesus' "I Am" statements during His earthly ministry showed His connection to Yahweh. In these five spiritual reflections, we will explore who Jesus says He is in connection to God the Father and in His connection to us.

Stress & Worry in the Life of a Christian

This course explores stress and worry: the causes, effects and strategies to manage them. It will equip you through God's Word to look to Him as the source of strength.

At the end of this course, you will carry out intentional actions to manage your own stress or worry and also reach out with Christian support to someone who is dealing with stress or worry.

Love Came Down

In Love Came Down, we see how the heavenly Father spared nothing—not even His own Son—to work out our salvation. Though we had rebelled in our sins and spurned God and His Commandments, He chose us—not for exclusion, but redemption. The Father's love sought us out in our perilous condition and, in His infinite mercy, bridged the divide to our isolation through Jesus—the one Mediator between God and Man.

To continue to learn or to enroll go to lhm.org/learn