

BUILDING ON FAITH

God wants us to grow in Christ so we can build up His Church in Cottonwood, the Verde Valley, and to the ends of the earth.

Upcoming Events:

- **April 5th**
Palm Sunday
- **April 9th**
Maundy Thursday
- **April 10th**
Good Friday
- **April 11th**
Easter Vigil
- **April 12th**
Resurrection Sunday
- **April 25th**
Church Picnic
- **May 9th**
Mommy & Me Tea

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FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE VERDE VALLEY FAITH FORWARD

2021 E. Fir Street-P.O. Box 3732, Cottonwood, AZ 86326
928-634-7876 (www.cottonwoodfaithlutheran.org)

MARCH/APRIL/MAY 2020



A Turn For The Worse – Or For The Better?

It seems that lately there has been a lot happening in the lives of most, if not all, of us here at Faith Lutheran Church. Not just small changes, but weddings and engagements, divorce and serious illness, births and deaths. Yes, these things are expected in life, but when they happen in our lives, they can turn our lives and our world into something that we no longer recognize, a world that we never saw coming. Whenever things change, as they always do, we must change with them. We are forced to decide how we will fit in to the new realities of our world and what role we will play and our lives turn into something different and new. Some of these bring great joy and some bring terrible grief, but all of them move us on inexorably from what was before. The real question is, amidst all this, is which way to turn? How can we come to terms with God's promise to us through the words of St. Paul "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good..." – Romans 8:28? No matter if life brings us joy or grief, turning to our God who loves us makes every turn, a turn for the better! Lent is a time for turning to our Lord as we focus our eyes on His matchless love for us upon the cross, receiving His forgiveness – that makes every turn, a turn for the better.

God's peace, Pastor Karl



Worship Services for the Easter Season

Palm Sunday: 9:00 a.m. April 5th

Maundy Thursday 7:00 p.m. April 9th

Friday: 7:00 p.m. April 10th

Easter Vigil: 6:00 p.m. April 11th

Resurrection Sunday, April 12th

Sunrise Communion Service: 6:00 a.m.

Easter Festival Communion Service 9:00 a.m.



Special Thanks To.....



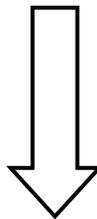
- All who clean the inside and outside of the church and work behind the scenes to make the church function smoothly.
- All the greeters, church service volunteers, Sunday School teachers and nursery helpers.
- All who helped make the Birthday Bash a success and for diaper/wipes donations for House of Ruth
- All who work on the landscaping to keep our grounds looking great.

We are truly blessed here at Faith Lutheran Church. Please join us in a Thank-a-Thon. Find members of our church to thank in the coming weeks for their service.

**This section, which includes Birthdays and Anniversaries,
is left blank intentionally to protect
member's privacy, on-line. Please refer to the hard copy
at the church for more information.**

This newsletter continues on the next page.

Thank you.



From the Computer of the Council President...

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: I'd like to share with you a story I came across years ago on the Internet:

Once there was a farmer who owned an old mule that accidentally fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule 'braying'- or whatever mules do when they fall into wells. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. Instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened...and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back...a thought struck him. It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back...HE SHOULD SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! This he did, blow after blow.

"Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!", he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows, or distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought "panic" and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP! You're right! It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, STEPPED TRIUMPHANTLY OVER THE WALL OF THAT WELL! What seemed like it would bury him, actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity. THAT'S LIFE! If we face our problems and respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity...the adversities that come along to bury us usually have within them, the potential to benefit and bless us!

What a lesson we can learn from that old mule! How many times have the difficulties of life threatened to bury us! But do you realize how much better off we are than that mule? The mule only had himself to rely on in SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP. You and I, of course, have the Lord Jesus to help us shake off all the dirt that life could possibly dump on our backs. All we have to do is ask Jesus for His help in overcoming any obstacle. Put your trust in the Lord and He will help you through any crisis, whether it be sickness, injury, loss of a job or loved one, or anything else, Jesus can help us with it all. He will help us climb triumphantly over that wall, and step into a new life in the "Sonshine." Just ask, and He will be there for you. And may the Peace, Strength, and Love of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

Yours in Christ,
Gene Sucharski

A Big Shout Out - "Congratulations!"

8th Grade Graduate: Ryan Ritter

High School Graduates: Kayla Frederic, Luke Ritter, Josie Valenzuela

College Graduate: Bailey Aston (Arizona State University)

We wish them God's Blessings as they begin the next stage of their lives!



TREASURER'S REPORT

This report reflects our financial position as of December 31, 2019.

The envelope and loose plate offerings totaled \$186,813.79. The yearly budget required \$203,961.71. Thus, the offerings were \$17,147.92 LESS than the budgeted needs. Expenses for the year totaled \$200,787.78 as opposed to total income of \$186,813.79; producing a shortfall of \$13,973.99 versus current expenses.

As of December 31st, our current assets were as follows:

Checking Account	\$24,493.40
LCEF Stewardship Account	47,179.46
LCEF Hardship Fund	472.27
Edw. Jones Acct. (Chevron Stock)	<u>5,535.46</u>
Total:	\$77,680.59

As of 12/17/19, the loan balance was: \$171,491.95. Work on the Youth Room was completed in May 2019. The sum we had in Designated Funds as of 12/31/19 was \$37,619.68. These funds are designated for a bench, sidewalk, front property landscaping, Board of Outreach funds, Christmas decorations, Memorial Meals, a shut-in meal fund, Parish Life donations, Seminary collections, newspaper ads, poinsettias, and \$32,584.54 towards the roof repair.

Although we have reached the top level for Shared Blessings, brochures are still available in the mailboxes in the Narthex – this is still a great investment for you, a child, or grandchild to have.

As I continue to mention in these reports, there are several ways that the congregation can help the church, outside of your tithing on Sundays, and your ongoing Pledges toward the Roof Fund. Thrivent Choice, Fry's Community Rewards (*Enroll now for the Fry's Community Rewards Program. And remember...all participants must re-enroll each year to continue earning rewards for their chosen organization.* – Taken from their website on 11/09/19) and Amazon Smile through smile.amazon.com. (Someone mentioned they couldn't find FLC on the website – search for Faith Lutheran Church, Cottonwood under “charities”.) If anyone needs help in setting up donations through the above funds, please contact me or the church office.

Also, for your information, the “free will offering” basket during coffee hour has brought in \$380.03 during the last year. These funds will go toward the Parish Life line item in the budget, which helps with kitchen expenses.

May the Lord bless you from His abundance to continue the work of His church.

Respectfully submitted, Gene Sucharski, (former Treasurer 2015-2019)

His Grace is Enough.....



Board of Outreach: Board of Outreach Chair-Kathy Wagner

The Board of Outreach has several upcoming events for Faith Lutheran Church.

The **church picnic is scheduled for Saturday , April 25th at Garrison Park.**

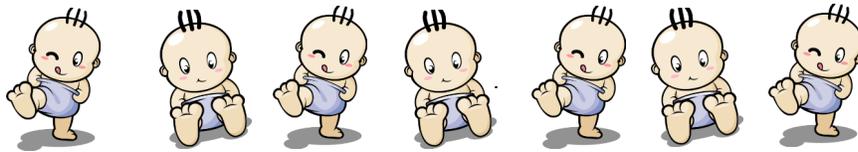
Hope to see you all there!

Ladies, don't forget the **Mother's Day Tea - Saturday, May 9th.** This tea is to honor the mothers of the children that attend Hilltop Christian Preschool. You are all invited and you will be blessed when you hear what those precious children have learned.

More information to follow about these events. If you have any questions or comments, please contact myself, Myra Anderson or Pam James. We will welcome your input and assistance.

A Clean Baby is a Happy Baby:

A great big THANKS for your donations of diapers and wipes for House of Ruth. Thank you for your continuous generosity by giving back to our community. We collected 470 diapers and 11 boxes of diaper wipes, totaling 800 wipes. That's a lot of happy little ones.



When life gets to hard to stand, kneel.....

Board of Trustees Report - Board Chair– Merrill Sorenson

First of all, thanks to all who have been working on various projects in and around the church and continue to do so as time and money permit. Thus far this year a new drinking fountain was installed in the hallway between the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. A railing was put in outside the sanctuary door (painted silver) and grounds and cleanings are ongoing. We also replaced the exhaust fan in the ladies' restroom.

Future Plans:

Grind down the uneven part of the sidewalk (which is a tripping hazard) and fill the crack as need be.

Cleaning the exhaust fan in the men's restroom.

More miscellaneous jobs are pending. Please report any problems or issues to Terri Mickle or Merrill Sorenson.

In His service,
Merrill Sorenson



Board of Christian Education News

Board Chair - Terri Mickle



Sunday School:

Sunday School is provided from 10:40a.m.-11:40a.m. following fellowship and then onto the classrooms to learn more about God's word. The children will meet in the far classroom and the youth in the new youth room. We average between 2 to 4 students a Sunday. **Please have your child in the designated classroom by 10:40 a.m.**

The children are learning thirteen New Testament Bible stories covered in "The Holy Spirit Leads The Apostles" and also making a special banner for the upcoming 50th Anniversary of Faith Lutheran. On **Sunday, April 5 (Palm Sunday)** the children will process with the palms. **Sunday School will conclude on Sunday, May 17th.**



Hilltop Christian Preschool

Director - Windy Mickle



We currently have 44 children enrolled this school year. There are 14 in the 3's class and 30 children between the 2 Pre-K classes.

We are so excited to have received 5 STARS with Quality First. A Five Star rating is the highest quality rating that an early learning facility can be awarded in Arizona and means that we exceed quality standards. The preschool staff continue to work hard to improve the quality early learning experiences of our communities' young children.

What will we be learning?

Ms. Crystal & Ms. Aileen's class AND Ms. Brittany & Ms. Melissa (Pre-K) continue to work together on their curriculum and getting the children ready for Kindergarten in the Fall! They will continue to work through the alphabet and numbers.

In Ms. Sara & Ms. Kirstin's class they will be working on the letters Ll through Zz, as well as number 12-26. They will also be focusing on Spring activities.

All of our classes will be learning about the life of Jesus and His disciples as well as the miracles that he performed in our Bible lessons and in Chapel.

In March we will begin our **Little Hands Can Serve-a-thon** where we will be making cough pillows for people recovering from surgery. The children (& their families) will mail out pledge letters to help raise money to support our scholarship fund. Some lovely ladies from the church and parent volunteers will be sewing our pillows and the children will add their hand prints and stuff them! We love this fundraiser as it not only helps families to be able to attend our preschool but it also creates a heart for serving others in the littlest of children! If you or someone you know would like to help either financially or by sewing please see Ms. Windy!

In April and May we will be celebrating Easter, having our annual Mommy & Me Tea and preparing our Pre-K classes for graduation in May. ***continued on next page.....**



Preschool continued: Special thanks to all who help on a weekly basis by helping with the laundry and vacuuming our classrooms! We are also very appreciative of Faith Lutheran's congregation for helping some of our students & their families with tuition! You are truly a blessing! Even though we aren't doing a drive specifically for these items at this time we can always use paper plates, paper towels, paper coffee filters, tissue, 5 ounce paper cups and paper bowls. We use these items daily and go through them quite fast!

Reach for the Stars!

Congratulations to our, Hilltop Christian Preschool. They were awarded a **Five Star Rating** with Quality First. A Five Star rating is the highest quality an early learning facility can be awarded in Arizona and means that they exceed quality standards. Quality First is a program of First Things First and works with preschools to improve quality of learning in Arizona. In November 2006, Arizona voters passed Proposition 203, a citizen's initiative to enhance early childhood development and health services for children from birth through age five, known as First Things First.



The criteria for being awarded a five star rating includes things such as staff qualifications, teacher-child interactions, quality early learning settings, improving on basic health and safety, teachers who know how to work with young children, learning environments that nurture the development of every child, positive, consistent relationships and interactions that give children the individual attention they need to succeed. The importance of parent communication is also vital, as well as, giving children the tools to be successful and ready for school.

Please take a moment to congratulate Director Windy Mickle and her staff for providing a nurturing educational Christian environment! Hilltop Christian Preschool has been serving the Verde Valley for over 40 years.

The Mountains Are Calling! The Youth Must Go!

Youth! Look for a date soon for fun on the slopes. The lifts are open at Snowbowl in Flagstaff from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Skiing, snowboards, etc. It's best to wear water resistant clothes. See Mark Ritter for more information on the time and location to meet.



Celebrating 50 years of Ministry– *Walking in Faith* March 22nd following Worship Service

We hope you will join us in celebrating 50 years of ministry in the Verde Valley!

- Guest preacher
- Potluck of international fare
- A table of memories



Celebrating
50 Years
of Ministry:

With thanksgiving for the past, with joy in the present, and with hope for the future, we celebrate what God has done. Please join us. Be part of our history!

Please sign up for a dish on the church bulletin board.

Look What's Coming Up!

50 Anniversary of Faith Lutheran Sunday, March 22nd

Following Worship Service
Theme: Walking in Faith



Palm Sunday

Sunday, April 5th

Children will process with Palms

*The Holy Week Schedule is on
the front of the newsletter*

Mommy & Me Tea

Saturday, May 9th
(more info soon)

Church Picnic

Saturday, April 25th
Garrison Park - Cottonwood
(more info soon)



Ongoing Ministries

Women's Bible Study - First Monday of the month 10:00 a.m. at the church

Men's Bible Study –Second & fourth Wednesdays of the month 8:30 a.m.

(locations vary). See Deacon John Schaefer for more information.

Young at Heart - Third Wednesday of the month (times and locations vary).

See Bruce Seldon for more information.



Lent is the season of the church year, lasting about six weeks. It begins on Ash Wednesday and ends the day before Easter Sunday. People typically give up something, in remembrance of what Jesus gave up for us, His life. It is also a time when we look forward to and prepare for His death and resurrection. During the forty days of Lent, we remember God's faithfulness to His people and how His faithfulness is complete in Jesus.



The Days of Holy Week:

During Holy Week we celebrate **Palm Sunday**, when Jesus went to Jerusalem and people celebrated his arrival. **Maundy Thursday** was the Lord's last supper. On **Good Friday** Jesus died on the cross and on **Holy Saturday** he awaits His RESSURECTION on **Easter Sunday**.

What Happened to the "A" Word?

There is one word that is often used in the church that isn't used during Lent. It is usually used after responsories and other parts of worship. We stop singing and saying **Alleluia** during Lent and won't speak it again until Easter morning. Alleluia is a Hebrew word that means Praise the Lord. Since we focus on the sufferings and death of Jesus during Lent, we stop using this joyful word until we celebrate Jesus' resurrection. On Easter morning we hear these words of hope "The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"

Color is Everywhere....even on the altar:

Have you ever wondered why we change the paraments on the altar? Their purpose is more than just decorating the altar. They convey messages throughout the church year.

Blue-observance of the new church year. Advent a time of waiting and watching, communicating the message of hope.

Black—used on Good Friday and Ash Wed. sober reflection of the cost of our redemption, hiding the light of the "Son."

Green - The Season of growth. The reminder of growing and maturing as disciples of Jesus.

Purple - is used during the season of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn Jesus endured, and the sacrifice he made for our eternal salvation. Ecclesiastical purple should remind all Christians of their daily need to humbly give attention to leading a life of repentance.

Red - is used for Pentecost, reformation, and ordination services. It represents the Holy Spirit. It also serves well as the traditional color for the heroic martyrs of the church.

White - is the color of purity and completeness. The theme for the "great fifty days" of Easter is supported by the use of white. This color, used primarily during these Sundays, gives the message that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Christ's triumph from the grave on Resurrection day is the cause for our rejoicing. His purity before his Father becomes our purity. White reinforces that message of joy.

Source: Adapted from the Lutheran Worship Notes. Douglas Escue

