

FAITH ALIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, LCMC

From Pastor's Heart

I am writing this mid-January. Ash Wednesday (February 18, 2026) is fast approaching, which begins the liturgical season of Lent. Lent is traditionally a season of repentance and, to a lesser degree, demonstrated by "giving something up" during the 40-day season. By the way, Lent is the 40 days before Easter, excluding Sundays because they always carry the Good News of Easter seeing that Jesus Christ rose on a Sunday. Therefore, there are Sundays in Lent and not of Lent.

Now traditionally, the giving up of something in Lent was a personal, private matter. This follows the Biblical wisdom of not letting the left and right hands know what the other is up to. Jesus also describes that when fasting, one should wash one's face and brighten one's smile and not grumble about being hungry, so others don't know your discipline.

Regarding fasting, it has become a bit of a wellness fad because it is good for you, and like all things that are "good for you" it presumes you are generally healthy for the activity to begin with. You can look up the medical health benefits of fasting for yourself. I am going to talk about the spiritual ones.

First, a word about the kinds of fasting. The most basic fast that is recommended is before receiving Holy Communion. That is learning to not eat or drink (except water/ plain tea/coffee) for an hour before worship begins. Next is a single meal fast, skipping a meal and not replacing it with larger portions before/after or snacks. Aim for 8-16 hours between meals. If you do this regularly it can be known as intermittent fasting. Next is entire

day fasting, going 24-36 hours between meals. Beyond that is multiple day fasting stretching 3-5 days and beyond. Other means of fasting include abstaining from certain kinds of food, say meat and dairy, two or more days a week or even a vegetarian fast. The key to fasting is not replacing the abstained food or meal with a different one, say fasting from Coke or Pepsi and drinking another soft drink. Instead, just choose water.

Now a word about the benefits of fasting. Jesus says to Satan, "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that falls from the mouth of God." Fasting teaches us to trust our heavenly Father's abundance over our appetites and desires that tell us there's never enough. It frees extra time for our prayers and Scripture reading. The suffering of hunger focuses our attention to the suffering of humanity, the sin in our lives, and the suffering of Christ on our behalf. I think if you try fasting this Lent, you will find it a rewarding experience.

So, at the risk of failing to keep this private and personal, but with the spirit of using myself as an example of encouragement for those of you who are surrendering something for Lent and, also, wanting a little bit of accountability and encouragement, I want to share my Lenten plan with you.

This year, my Lenten discipline (a thing that a disciple does) will include not only giving something up, but also continuing for myself and encouraging you to a personal daily devotional life. I will be doing intermittent fasting, which means for me not eating on Mondays,

Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as watching how much I eat when I do eat. Therefore I will give up eating sweets and staying away from the candy that is in the office. Now, I am not only doing this during Lent for the reasons given above but I will be continuing this after Lent is over in hopes of losing the 50 pounds or more that I have gained.

What I have taken up and will be continuing to do and what I would like to encourage you to do is personal daily devotions. For my personal daily devotions, I do them soon after arriving into the office in the mornings. I not only use the Portal of Prayers and Daily Bread that is provided by Faith Lutheran, I also subscribe via email to a daily devotion from the Lutheran Hour Ministries (LCMS). I also have via email a little devotion from a friend who is a retired LCMC pastor. I am also using a devotional given to the men's Bible study from Pastor Ken called "Spirit Calling." I also have a weekly devotion via email from another retired Lutheran pastor. If anyone would like to use these resources as well, please come and talk with me and I would be glad to share them with you.

Let's journey together and learn and grow in our daily devotions this Lententide. Be deliberate and intentional in your morning or evening devotions. Perhaps try something new. I have learned to adore and worship God by returning to the Word. How about you? How do you adore, praise and worship God in your prayers, devotions, and life?

Pastor Alsen

Revelation for Lent Midweek Worship Series

As I said earlier, on February 18th, the Church will once again begin the penitential season of Lent with Ash Wednesday. This year, seeing that our Wednesday morning Bible class is studying Revelation, I thought that during our midweek and Holy Week services we would use a Lenten theme entitled "Revelation for Lent." Now, to be clear and upfront, I used this theme from a resource from Concordia Publishing House by Rev. Donald Neidigk, back in my LCMS days. My prayer is that you would find these sermons and services to be inspirational and thought provoking as we go into depth looking at the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2:1-3:22.

So let me ask you a question: Has it ever crossed your mind that our congregation might have its own angel? That's not such a far-fetched idea, especially because the apostle John was instructed by the Lord Jesus Christ to write letters to the angels of seven churches in Asia (Revelation 1:10). As we learned in our Bible study class, it is not absolutely certain that the angels to whom John refers are heavenly beings. Some scholars believe them to be pastors. But others consider them literally to be angels sent by God from heaven to do his will for the preservation and growth of his people. Just imagine our own congregation with its very own angel! Wouldn't it be comforting to know that God is taking care of us and our congregation like that?

John's Revelation probably occurred during the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian, who presided over a great persecution of the church, one of the many the Christians would endure before faith in Jesus would be tolerated under the Emperor Constantine. The seven churches to whom letters were addressed were in the same general area of western Asia that is now called Turkey. Each church had problems that were amplified by persecution, and each church had something for which it could be commended, all but Laodicea, that is.

The medieval church spoke of the seven deadly sins. Traditionally, these were pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth. These sins turn one away from God and place the focus on one's self, one's own feelings, and one's own desires. Yet as John witnesses, the sins plaguing the seven churches posed a more deadly and immediate danger because forsaking Christ in favor of idolatry is the root of other sins. For example, gluttony is more than overeating at the family gathering. It is a habit, an enduring decision to make a god out of one's stomach (see Romans 16). Behind the sin of gluttony lies the more fundamental sin of seeking another god. Thus we might call John's concerns for the seven churches the "seven 'deadlier' sins."

Though the issues addressed are

rooted in historical circumstances, they are timeless, relating to Christians in every era, including our own. All churches face the threat of deadly sins such as leaving Christ, their first love; growing fearful of persecution; falling prey to idolatry; succumbing to immorality; and becoming lethargic, neglectful, and complacent. These are not only first-century problems, but they are also problems in our 21st century as well.

Therefore, the letters found in Revelation are written for us too. Jesus would have John's letters delivered by angels; therefore, in keeping with the spirit of His intent, I will be taking on the role of an angel for each of our midweek sermons. Each sermon will be written in the first person, so please be aware of the difference in how I will be delivering each message. The names chosen for each angel amplify a specific element of each letter, whether it is a name of Christ or a trait of the particular first-century congregation. As we travel together to visit each of the seven churches, we will hear from an angel what is commended and soberly consider the deadlier sins that are addressed. Sins that require repentance and faith in Jesus Christ if we as a congregation are to partake of eternal life. Hear now what the Spirit says to the churches. God bless our Lenten worship.

Pastor Alsen

*Ash
Wednesday*
February 18th
7 pm

Soup Suppers
Wed., Begins Feb. 25th
at 5:30 pm
Lenten Service at 7 pm



Thank you for your 2025 donation in the amount of \$2108.13.

We are grateful for your support as we endeavor to glorify God by reaching out to North Americans and inviting them to give of their time, talents, and treasures to help the LCSS share the Gospel.

Carol Davis, Assistant Treasurer, LCSS-NA

Hi Faith Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your faithful giving (\$560.00) to the vulnerable and broken whom you many never meet in person on this earth. Trust me, we see in part, but someday we will see in full! You are touching lives everyday with us.

You continue to empower moms and dads to make life-affirming choices, guided by love, grace, and the truth of God's Word. Because of you, moms and dads considering abortion have a safe place to go to make healthy life-affirming choices.

Autumn Robertson, CEO of Echoz

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your donation of \$495 to the Great Falls Rescue Mission.

Through the kindness of caring friends like you, so many who are experiencing challenging times in our community are being blessed with nutritious meals, comfortable beds, clean clothes, biblical guidance and hope for the future.

Jim McCormick and Carrie Matter

Dear Faith Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$545 to help feed the hungry in Cascade County. Your compassion and generosity make our efforts to meet the growing demand for food throughout the area possible.

Shaun M. Tatarka, Executive Director
Great Falls Food Bank

FEBRUARY

Special Offerings

First Sunday of the Month

Samaritan's Purse

Third Sunday of the Month

Neighbor in Need

On behalf of FISH, thank you for your kind and generous support. Your love and concern make this worthwhile organization possible. You have been generous to FISH in the following ways: contributing to the Town Pump challenge; volunteering at FISH when your week is scheduled; donating food; supporting FISH with financial gifts; helping and attending the Loaves & Fishes dinner; and praying for our continued success in feeding needy families.

With your help FISH did receive the \$25,000.00 for matching funds.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of FISH thank you again for all your support and your partnership in the FISH program this past year.

FISH Board of Directors

Dear Friends of CASA,

Because of you, children like Lily have someone standing beside them during the most difficult moments of their lives. Your gift (\$540) to CASA of Cascade County means that more children will have a trained advocate - a steady voice in court and a caring presence when everything feels uncertain.

Roxanne Gray, Board President



A Word From Our Outreach Director

MANY CHURCHES ARE PLATEAUED OR DECLINING.

I read this and the following paragraphs in the book written by Kent R. Hunter with Tracee J. Swank titled, "Focus On Mission: Transformative Christian Leadership Series" with ChurchDoctor Ministries. This was sent to me because our church is included in the 12-church cohort with Momentum Network.

Many churches are plateaued or declining. One major reason is that they make the church building the destination. **Change that: Your church is the launchpad. The world is your destination.** John 3:16 doesn't say, "For God so loved the **church** that He gave His only begotten Son." It says, "For God so loved the **world**." Turn your church inside out, and God will use you to start a revival!

It goes on to talk about how in Revelations 12:9-12, it says the

Enemy of God is defeated by a two-part strategy. Part one: "The blood of the Lamb" - Jesus' death on the cross. And part two: "The bold word of ... witness" - our testimony.

Your testimony is your personal story of your faith. This is not rocket science.

Many Christians are freaked out by that second part because they don't understand the key elements of this divine/human strategy.

Element #1: Start in your own Jerusalem. Who does that include? They are the unchurched unbelievers in your social network. They are on the directory in your phone. They aren't strangers. You likely hang out with most of them regularly.

Element #2: Lose the word "testimonies." Instead, consider them as "your own personal God stories." Ask yourself this diagnostic question: "What has God done in my life?" Think about that question

every day for a month. Like most everyone, you will likely discover that you have hundreds of "God stories." As you interact with those in your social network, listen for when they share a hurt, challenge, or difficult change in life. Consciously think about your own life. Identify how and why you think God got you through it. Then, unrehearsed, unpolished, share it from your heart. You just became a witness!

If you would like to be included in this network that includes training, webinars, coaching and sharing ideas with other churches contact me or Pastor Alsen Wenzel.

Let's continue to Love God. Love Others. Serve the World.

Thank you for all you do!

Colleen Palmer, Outreach Coordinator



News from Education Team/Youth & Family February 2026

The **youth game night** held at the end of December was a great success. Fifteen youth attended and enjoyed making their own personal pizzas, along with playing a variety of games. The evening was filled with laughter, fun, and fellowship, making it an enjoyable time for all who participated. (See pictures below.)

It was such a tremendous blessing to watch the **baptisms** of Ezekiel, Ezarius, and Ezariah Jackson, Greyson Reum, and Elodie Stubbs in January. May their faith grow daily, their hearts remain rooted in Christ, and their lives reflect His love and grace.

Faith's **Family Super Bowl** party is just around the corner – February 8 th at 4:00 pm! We hope you'll join us for an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship. This will be a potluck, so please bring your favorite Super Bowl food to share. The game will be shown on a big screen, making it a fun and entertaining experience for everyone. During the game, we'll enjoy: Games and commercial Bingo, football game predictions, and an NFL logo quiz. We hope to see many of you there to enjoy the fellowship and fun together!



Our annual **Easter Egg Hunt** is right around the corner! The hunt will take place on Saturday, March 28th at 11:00 am and is open to children ages 1 year through 6th grade. We are currently collecting donations of small, wrapped candy and Christian trinkets to fill the eggs. Donations may be dropped off at the church beginning February 1st. Volunteers are also welcome to help stuff eggs during the Wednesday Lenten soup suppers. Once again, we will have an Easter Bunny photo opportunity for the children during the event. Families may also pre-register for this year's Vacation Bible School (VBS) at the hunt. Please invite any children you know to join us for this fun community event!

Vacation Bible School 2026 – Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God. Faith's VBS will be held June 22–26, from 5:30–8:30 pm, for children preschool (3 years) to entering 6 th grade. Dinner will be served each evening. Volunteers are always needed, and there are many ways to help! Please prayerfully consider volunteering. If you're interested or would like more information, contact me—I would love to share how you can help.

If your family is looking for a practical resource in which your family can grow together in faith, **Holy Family Time** is a free online resource produced by Sola Publishing, the same publisher we use for Faith's Sunday School lessons. It is designed to help parents and children develop the habit of praying together, reading Scripture, and talking about faith at home. The resource is intentionally simple and accessible, making it easy to use even with busy schedules. It can be accessed on computers, tablets, and phones, with no registration, membership, or access code required. Visit www.holystfamilytime.com. The Holy Family Time devotional is always featured on the homepage.

Volunteers are always needed to support our youth and family ministries! If you are interested in helping with Sunday School, Confirmation, High School Youth, or family events, please contact Annette Hocker at (406) 590-1061 or reach out to the church office. We would love to have you join us.

The **Education Team** will meet on Tuesday, February 10th, at 7:00 pm. All are welcome to attend.

Peace and God's blessings,

Annette Hocker, Youth & Family Coordinator



February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am Worship Offering: Samaritan's Purse 10:45 am Kids SS 11 am Confirmation	2 6 pm Praise Team	3 10 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm Constitutional 5:30 pm Music/Worship	4 10 am Bible Study 5:30 pm Men of Faith 5:30 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm Choir Practice	5 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 9 am Love Day Quilters 1 pm Grief Share	6 Noon Evangelism Team Meeting	7
8 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Kids SS 11 am Confirmation 4 pm Super Bowl Party 4 pm Women's Crafting	9 6 pm Praise Team	10 10 am Staff Meeting 11:30 am Soul Sisters 1:30 pm Constitutional 5:30 pm Executive 6 pm Personnel 7 pm Youth Ed Team	11 9 am Finance Meeting 11 am Bible Study 4 pm Property Team 5:30 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm Choir Practice	12 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 10 am LCMC Pastors	13 14	
15 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship Offering: Neighbor in Need 10:45 am Kids SS 11 am Confirmation	16 President's Day Office Closed 6 pm Praise Team	17 10 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm Constitutional 5:30 pm Council Meeting	18 10 am Bible Study 5:30 pm Bell Choir 7 pm Ash Wed. Service 6:30 pm Choir Practice	19 6:30 am Men's Bible Study	20 21	
22 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship 10:45 am Kids SS 11 am Confirmation	23 6 pm Praise Team	24 10 am Staff Meeting 1:30 pm Constitutional	25 10 am Bible Study 5:30 pm Bell Choir 5:30 pm Soup Supper 6:30 pm Choir Practice 7 pm Lenten Service	26 6:30 am Men's Bible Study	27 28	
						2 pm Women's Crafting



**MEN OF FAITH
BIBLE STUDY +
BREAKFAST**

Thursday mornings at 6:30am



*Men of
Faith*

**MONTHLY MEETING ON
FEBRUARY 4 AT 5:30 PM**



HOMEBOUND COMMUNION

PLEASE CONTACT
THE CHURCH OFFICE
IF YOU, A FAMILY MEMBER
OR FRIEND WOULD LIKE
TO RECEIVE COMMUNION AND
AREN'T ABLE TO ATTEND CHURCH.
WE HAVE CHURCH MEMBERS WHO
ARE HAPPY TO BRING YOU
COMMUNION AND PRAY WITH YOU.
CALL (406) 454-1309.




**Submit your
newsletter
articles and
upcoming events
for March by
February 15!**

faithlutheran.gtf@gmail.com or
drop them off at the front desk.

Love Day Quilters News

We have begun working on our 2026 collection of quilts and invite any interested women to join us. In January we were happy to have Marcia Hollandsworth help stitch labels on children's quilts as she joined us. Thank you, Cindy Reiquam, for the treats, and Jeanie and Deb for setting them out. We welcome new volunteers and we always stop for treats! - Augie Records



Love Day Quilters

Thursday, February 5th,
at 9am



Women's Crafting Group

Sunday, February 8th at 4 pm

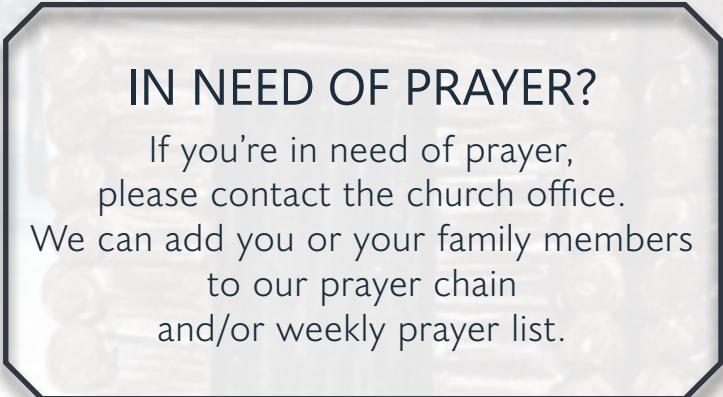
Saturday, February 28th at 2 pm

Bring your craft or supplies available.
Devotions, Prayer, Snacks, Fellowship



SOUL SISTERS

February 10th at 11:30
at City Bar



IN NEED OF PRAYER?

If you're in need of prayer,
please contact the church office.
We can add you or your family members
to our prayer chain
and/or weekly prayer list.

February Anniversaries

15: Jim & Diane Lowry

February Birthdays

- 1: Boaz Frost
- 2: Mary Somerfeld
- 3: Melissa Hampton
- 5: Andrea Hoven
- 6: Marian Franklin
- 8: Claire Imus
- Layne Shanahan
- 11: Bryon Tempel
- 13: Cindy Fowell
- 14: Karyl Viste
- 21: Marilynn Nesemeier
- 22: Ranel Smith
- 25: Carsen Kieffer
- 26: Roine Grosvold
- 27: Sue Ferrin
- Judy Tankink

From Our Music Director

Hi church!

In this new year, a personal goal of mine is to push the boundaries, limitations, and assumptions of a typical church choir. We have one of the greatest evangelistic tools at our fingertips, so let us use music to spread the gospel and encourage the faith of one another. With that being said, I would like to plant the seed of a project. A project in which the choir not only sings, but tells the story of Christ, even if it is only a small portion of His life. And while music is a powerful spiritual gift, I am well aware that there are many many other gifts that God has equipped us with to tell others about Him.

So if you are a visual artist, singer, dancer, actor, poet, or writer. If you have experience with staging, props, costumes, public speaking, or countless other involvements, please get in touch with me

(jaygregg2013@gmail.com or 719-644-5122). The story of Christ does not need to be bettered or improved upon, the story in itself has power. So the proposal is not, "How can we do something in our power to make the story of God better?" No, the question becomes, "How do we effectively use the gifts that God has given us to dedicate them back to Him in an act of worship."

We already have the 'why' of this project. So it's time to determine the 'who.' We have begun discussing ideas and aspirations in choir. As we journey through the 'what and when,' I'm absolutely certain that we will have roadblocks that pop up throughout this project. This is exactly why we leave the 'how' in the capable hands of our God.

With prayer,

Jay Henry Gregg, Music Director

ADULT BIBLE STUDY RESUMES FEBRUARY 8TH SUNDAYS AT 8:30AM

Wednesday Bible Study

REVELATION

Available In Person

Online or Zoom

10 am weekly

(11 am 2nd Wed./month)



Note: If you're not listed on the birthday list, please call the office at 406-454-1309 or email us:

FaithLutheran.gtf@gmail.com.

We love wishing all our congregational members a very happy day!

So, please, make sure your name and correct date are on the list!

FAMILY SUPER BOWL PARTY



**FEBRUARY 8
4:00 PM**

1300 FERGUSON DRIVE
GREAT FALLS, MT 59404

FaithLutheranGF.com (406) 454-1309



This will be a potluck, bring your favorite super bowl food to share!

Amusing Music “Tidbits” From Elaine ☺

Happy Start of February! Greetings Faith Family. “I’m b-a-c-k!” Here’s another story from the past. I was attending college and as most students – wanting to make a little ‘extra money’! The organ from my hometown church was your basic pull bars and not a pipe organ. (Remember that I began playing for church at 13.) So now I’m in college—and being that piano was my major—one of my music professors wanted me to ‘try out’ the college’s pipe organ in the auditorium. That was when I definitely learned to hate organ shoes. (if you want to know what organ shoes are... come find me and I’ll bestow the knowledge!) Anyway, I had to play for the music department’s musical of “Oklahoma” on ‘said organ’. Nervous as all get out—I somehow managed to pull off two performances! That is when a local church heard me play and asked if I would be willing to come and play for a short time while their organist retired and they were in the process of searching/hiring a fulltime replacement. Of course I agreed.

Once I got the chance to

check the pipe organ out, I found myself with a new challenge—actually two new challenges!

1. This organ had pistons in the shape of ‘buttons’ and you pushed/pulled to change them as needed.
2. This is the first time I experienced a “cypher” in the pipes.

“What is a cypher-you ask”? Well, it’s when a bug and/or dust get stuck inside the pipe or something more expensive—forcing the inside of the pipe to remain open producing a droning sound. This actually happened for the first time during a church service! I tried and tried pushing and pulling the stops but it kept droning! The choir, who obviously had experienced it before didn’t tell me anything! The Pastor finally asked “Hi Elaine..are you having a bit of trouble with the organ?” I said yes! He suggested I power down the organ....let it sit for a minute or two and start it back up. I did and by the grace of God—the droning was gone!

Music is a prayer from my heart to the ears and heart of God! It is Him who guides me/leads me

to play certain selections that He knows mean something to me and you!

Praise God for He gives us everything we need....even ‘cypher’ experiences to teach me that He is in control! So I close this chapter of ‘smiles and groans’ with all the love I have in God and that He has guided me to share with you all, my dear Faith Family!

Till we meet again next month—stayed tuned!

Musically in Christ----Elaine

P.S. At that same church—I was also responsible to play the ‘chimes’ at the end of the service! I will explain that little experience next time! This is an example of a pullstop.



FEBRUARY SERVICE GROUP

As a way of serving each other, Faith Lutheran has refreshed our monthly Service Groups. The following are being asked to be available in the month of February.

We are also asking the Service Groups to help with set up and clean up for Sunday Fellowships. The treats are provided by the church. You are welcome to bring in treats to share as well.

If a need arises for a funeral or wedding we will call you from the church office.

Thank you to each of you for giving your time and talents to help at Faith Lutheran.

- Fred Burow
- Russ and Cheryl Klette
- Sandy Clapshaw
- Karl and Amy Dorr
- Becki Kately
- John and Kali Tuckerman



1300 Ferguson Drive
Great Falls, MT 59404
Telephone: (406) 454-1309
Web: www.faithlutheranGF.com

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CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor:
Secretary/Office Manager:
Bookkeeper:
Custodian:
IT Manager:
Outreach Coordinator:
Youth & Family Coordinator:
Music Director:

Pastor Alsen Wenzel
Cindy Fowell
Nicole LaMere
Kristina Cochran
John Plank
Colleen Palmer
Annette Hocker
Jay Gregg

OFFICE HOURS:

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday
Our monthly calendar is on our website!

Phone: (406) 454-1309

Faithlutheran.gtf@gmail.com

www.faithlutherangf.com

CURRENT COUNCIL MEMBERS

President - Fred Burow	
Vice President - Tammie Klinker-Mayes	
Secretary - Mellissa Severson-Hampton	
Jim Brown	Bob Stubbs
Fay Stokes	Tom Gruss
Rex Derr	Adam Dahlman
Crystal Dunn	Deb Schwandt
Carl Dunn	John Gass



THIS IS THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

