



FAITH ALIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, LCMC

From Pastor's Heart

There is something that has been laid on my heart these first few months, and I presented it to the Church Council last month because I feel compelled by the Holy Spirit to talk about it. I have heard how people have been hurt or offended by what someone(s) has said or misunderstood what was meant by what was said. Instead of asking or talking to the person(s) they have kept it inside or have talked with other people about it. And in some cases, if they are Christian and attend church, because of what happened they may have stopped coming to church altogether. Therefore, I would like to talk about what we Lutherans call the Power of the Keys.

The Power of the Keys is the authority to represent Jesus, the Savior, in proclaiming His Gospel to the world. The power was given to the Church – not as a hierarchical organization, but as Christians, the Body of Christ living and working in Jesus' name. Every Christian receives this authority to represent Christ. On the basis of Scripture we call this "the universal priesthood of believers" (1 Peter 2:9).

It is Jesus himself, the One Mediator, who called this authority to speak for him in a very pointed fashion "The Keys of the Kingdom." He gave the authority: To Peter, after hearing his great confession of faith (Matthew 16:13-19). To the Twelve, after teaching them about humility (Matthew 18:18-20). To his assembled disciples,

to whom he appeared on Easter (John 20:19-23).

It is helpful to think of two keys: A "right-hand" key, which we Christians love to use, that assures the repentant (those that are sorry for their sins) of the forgiveness of their sins. And a "left-hand" key, which we Christians must use occasionally, that tells the unrepentant (those that are not sorry for their sins) that their sins are not forgiven.

The left-hand key extends an urgent call to repentance to members of the church who are persisting in sins of commission – like adultery or sexual promiscuity. It urges those guilty of sins of omission – like persistent neglect of Word and Sacrament or continued unwillingness to serve in Jesus' name – to renewed discipleship. It should be used when someone has hurt another person by what they said or did.

This left hand key is never to be used arbitrarily or in judgment of thoughts or attitudes. It may be applied only to situations of obvious sin. Jesus himself outlined the process for its use:

1. Person to person – (Any member or pastor /An "intervention")
2. Along with one or two others – (Members/Council members)
3. Report to the church – (Church Council/Congregation)
4. Removal from membership – (Excommunication)

A key factor in the appropriate use of the Power of the Keys is the proper distinction between Law and Gospel and their proper application to situations. The Law is to be used to humble willful

sinner and lead them to repentance. The Gospel is to be used to give assurance of forgiveness to the repentant.

An axiom puts it this way: "The Law is used to afflict the comfortable; the Gospel is used to comfort the afflicted." Much spiritual harm results from confusing the application of Law and Gospel. Then it is the comfortable who are comforted, and it is the afflicted who are afflicted all the more.

The Power of the Keys may be used privately by any Christians on occasions when their interaction with fellow Christians produces situations in which they need to rebuke and to forgive one another in Jesus' name (Luke 17:3).

It is vital that this use of the Keys of the Kingdom be kept private. We are to speak to one another in Jesus' name to overcome problems, not gossip about one another.

There is an evangelical compulsion involved in this matter of forgiving those who sin against us. We pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," and it is vital that we learn to forgive others as God forgives us! Our own spiritual health requires it! Jesus said that a persistent refusal to forgive others becomes an effective block to God's forgiving us (Matthew 6:14-15 and Mark 11:25)!

As a way that we as a congregation should deal with conflict and forgiveness, I presented to the Church Council

a document entitled Covenant for Conflict Resolution and Unity. The Council and I would like every member/family to read this over and then do their best to do this whenever they find that they are in conflict with a fellow member. I also believe that this could be used in our everyday lives as we deal with

conflict with anyone, therefore I would encourage each of us to use this in the way we see fit to use in our everyday lives.

We cannot refuse to forgive others because we stand before God as unworthy suppliants. Jesus spoke of forgiving the same offender even seven times in a day and encouraged unlimited

forgiveness with his "seventy times seven times" (Matthew 18:21-22). We need to forgive and turn things over to God even when reconciliation eludes us (Romans 12:19-21). I pray that this will help us to forgive and forget and to move on to do the work that God has given us to do. Pastor Alsen

Faith Lutheran Church, Great Falls, Montana Covenant for Conflict Resolution and Unity

We, the members of Faith Lutheran Church, enter this covenant to cultivate and sustain strong, positive relationships with one another, in order to ensure that we honor our mission to worship Jesus Christ and serve people in His name.

We, the members of Faith Lutheran Church, agree to faithfully adhere to the following covenant details so that our relationships model, for our church and community, how we Christians conduct ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we covenant and commit with each other to:

1. Pray

We will pray for each other on a regular basis. We agree to pray with each other or ask for prayers about concerns that we are comfortable sharing with a trusted church member.

2. Forgive

We will seek forgiveness and strive to forgive each other for sins committed against one another. Our model of forgiveness will be that of God's unconditional forgiveness of all sins through Jesus Christ. Our power to forgive will flow from the cross and empty tomb of our Savior; as we have been forgiven the debt of our personal sins, we will forgive one another (Matthew 18:15-19, Colossians 3:12-15).

3. Support

We will defend and support one another publicly. We will speak personally and privately with a church member when issues of theology, ministry, philosophy or practice need to be addressed. The teaching of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 18 will direct and guide our ministry and interaction with one another. We will work toward reconciliation and understanding and not toward blame and fault finding. We will seek to positively support each other in fulfilling our Lord's Great Commandment and Great Commission.

4. How Faith Lutheran will embrace conflict resolution: Philippians 4:1-9

We will not allow conflict to steal our joy: "Rejoice in the Lord always" (v. 4).

We will not allow anger and retaliation to divide us (we will be considerate of each other): "Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near" (v. 5).

We commit to regular and fervent prayer: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (v. 6).

We choose to be positive and grace filled: "Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (v. 8).

We commit to Christ-like living: "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you" (v. 9).

The result we will see at Faith Lutheran will be that we will experience God's peace: "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (v. 7).

We are deeply appreciative of your gift to the Great Falls Senior Citizen's Center. All of us at the Senior Center wish to thank you for your contribution and generosity. Bob Meys

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7 ESV

Dear Faith Lutheran Church,
Thank you for your recent gift of \$848.45 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.
The Great Falls Community Food Bank

Thank you for your gift of \$500 for US Disaster Relief and \$500 for California Wildfire Response - Samaritan's Purse

Men of Faith, Thank you for your wonderful donation of \$500 for Longfellow School. You continue to amaze us with your generosity, giving us much success in our student/teacher projects.



Care Team

The Care Team of Faith Lutheran Church has been busy providing meals and rides to our members who are homebound due to an illness, or are unable to get out for other reasons. We have been providing this to our members for several years, and feel blessed to have the opportunity to get to know those who are not able to attend church regularly.

We meet every other month at the church and would happily welcome anyone who feels the calling to be a part of this ministry.

In His Service,
Karen Nebel



Thanks to our church ladies who bring dinners to us. They are blessings in many ways. Roine Grosvold

Visit our website:
www.FaithLutheranGF.com
for our up-to-date Church Calendar.



'LORD, HAVE MERCY'

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It's common to hear people exclaim "Lord, have mercy!" when trouble or tragedy comes near. In the liturgy, the Church cries out, "Lord, have mercy." Moments after the confession and absolution, the liturgy moves to the "Kyrie eleison," Greek for "Lord, have mercy." It seems like a natural progression - from confessing our sins to our request for God to have mercy on us. But the Kyrie is not related to the confession and absolution; it is tied directly to the hymn of praise that follows it.

A REQUEST MADE IN FAITH

When we sing "Lord, have mercy," we are not crying out in uncertainty to a faceless, fearful God whom we hope will look kindly on us. Rather, it is with complete confidence we say: "Lord, have mercy!"

This may seem presumptuous, but we are merely asking for the very thing that God has promised to give us. In other words, we are asking God to be true to His promise—a request only faith can make. We are not crying out in fear but demonstrating the good courage of faith when we pray this prayer. God's character or nature is to show mercy. We call upon God to listen, to be near us and to give us aid in all our needs and troubles. This is what God has told us to do.

NO WHINING

If you've ever been around children, you know about whining. Whole books have been written on the subject. Whining is often born out of frustration of wanting something we don't think we'll get. Maybe that's why we ask

for it in such an obnoxious way. When we cry to God for mercy, we are not whining. It's just the opposite. God has invited us to ask for His mercy. He long ago promised that mercy and love. His promise became flesh and blood in Jesus Christ. Our Savior suffered the full weight of our sins and broke down the walls of death so that we might know the full mercy of God. We are asking God for a mercy that is already ours in Christ Jesus.

FIRST PRAYER OF THE LITURGY

Part of the entrance rite, or beginning of the liturgy, the Kyrie is the first prayer of the Divine Service. The gathered congregation begins by praying for God to be true to His Word and answer His people with the mercy He has promised. In the Lutheran Worship, this prayer takes the form of several intercessions or prayers. The people's response, "Kyrie eleison" or "Lord, have mercy," is like the "Amen" we say at the end of other prayers. Like the Amen, these words say to God that this is our solemn and pious prayer.

Early in the life of the Church, these full prayer petitions were saved for special occasions and the Kyrie was reduced to the basic response alone: "Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy."

What ties the Kyrie to the Hymn of Praise is Jesus Christ. The mercy for which we cry to God is not a matter of words but flesh and blood in Jesus Christ.

A HYMN THAT SINGS LIKE A CREED

The Hymn of Praise, which follows the Kyrie, is a Christ-centered hymn that sings like a creed. This is no nameless and faceless God to whom we cry for mercy. This is the Triune God: the

Father, the Son—who took flesh and blood from the Virgin Mary and became man—and the Holy Spirit.

It is no secret that we think of Christmas when we sing the first Hymn of Praise, "Glory to God in the Highest". This hymn begins with the song the angels sang at the incarnation of our Lord. When we sing this hymn, we add our voices to the angelic voices of Luke 2:14.

Several generations of confusing Christmas carols have led some to believe that the good will of which the angels speak is good will from people to people. The world around us may think of Christmas as a time of generic good will, but Christians know that it is God's good will that really matters. It is God's good pleasure, His grace, and His favor of which we sing. The angels are not expressing a pious wish but an accomplished fact in Christ Jesus. Glory is given to God and peace to all humankind in the birth of the long-promised Savior who will suffer and die for the whole world.

AN EASTER HYMN OF PRAISE

Sometimes, a second hymn of praise is offered: "This is the Feast". This is an Easter hymn to the crucified and risen Lord, based on passages from Rev. 5:9-13 and 10:4-9. Because of its place in history and its clear confession of the Trinity, the Glory to God in the Highest is used more frequently—especially during the Christmas and Epiphany seasons. Because of its resurrection theme, "This is the Feast" is used during Easter and festivals of Christ, e.g., the Last Sunday of the Church Year.

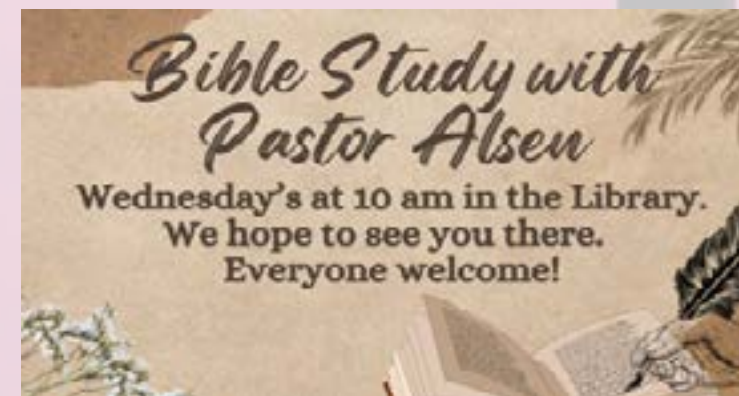
Life Happens - Led by John Gass

This is a study designed to employ the 12 step principles to help recover from various life experiences. We all have at times experienced life setbacks. They could be a major health issue, death of a loved one, divorce, financial losses, or job loss. We will study how each step will carry us through recovery. Recovery is not always easy, but trusting God is key. Any questions contact Colleen Palmer or Pastor Wenzel.



Love Day Quilters News

We had a wonderful crew of workers in March and accomplished a lot. Thank you Marilyn and Dixie, for the yummy apple fritters and fruit that gave us an extra spurt of energy. Newcomers are always welcome! - Augie Records



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.

April Anniversaries

- 6: Tom & Lone Gruss
- 8: Ron & Diane Steffens
- 27: Joel & Dixie Demko
- 29: Sean & Andrea Hoven

April Birthdays

- 1: Andrea Mikulecky
Sherry Tempel
- 2: Patricia Sletten
Josh Sommer
- 3: Haven Hellman
- 4: Becca Bortnem
Robert Larance
- 5: Steve Sem
Tricia Sommer
- 7: Kenneth Boobar
Tim Drown
- 9: Missy Bortnem
Brandi Clewley
- 10: Tom Fundis
- 12: Leroy Ahlers
Tim Webb
- 13: Diane Lowry
Stewie Reum
Sophia Scheels
- 15: Deb Ammondson
Kim Hollandsworth
- 16: Barb Holden
Adeline Tollefson
- 17: Keith Bortnem
- 18: Anna Micklealson
Danita Severson
Chance Stone
- 19: Carl Dunn
April Hall
Zeke Jackson
Carolyn Schmidt
- 20: Carol Dawson
- 22: Tom Gruss
- 24: Gordon Matson
- 27: Judy Stubbs
- 28: Tara Rosipal
Wayne Wilson Sr.
- 29: Carol Anderson
Amy Dorr

News from the Education Team/Youth & Family

Sunday School: We are always looking for volunteers to help with Sunday school, please consider sharing your time.

The Easter Egg Hunt will be Saturday April 12th at 11:00 am for children ages 10 and younger. Share the date with any families with children that you know. We will be needing donations of small, wrapped candies and volunteers. There is an egg stuffing table at each Wednesday soup supper for volunteers to stuff the many eggs for the hunt. Please consider volunteering to help stuff eggs after partaking in the delicious food each Wednesday.



A big thank you shout out to Karen Schaefer with Sign Gypsies for placing the Easter Egg Hunt signage up for this year's Easter Egg Hunt. What a wonderful gift and talent she provided.

VBS this year is scheduled for June 23rd – 27th, from 5:30 – 8:00 pm. This year's theme will be "True North – Trusting Jesus in a Wild World" from Group Publishing. We will need volunteers! Please consider volunteering your time and talents! There will be lots of ways to volunteer. Come share God's good news and love. Please reach out to Annette Hocker with any questions and/or to volunteer.

The April education team will be meeting on Monday, April 8th at 6:30 pm. We welcome you to attend.

Annette Hocker

<p>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!</p>	<p>FISH News</p> <p>Faith Lutheran Church is scheduled to work FISH the week of April 14-18, 9:00-11:00am. If you are willing to work one of these days, it's only a two hours commitment, please let me know. Sandy Clapshaw</p> 
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GREETINGS FROM THE KEYBOARD

Greetings my Faith sisters and brothers! I found the following devotion that I believe (and I'm positive Jan, our other wonderful pianist does as well) that—it's more than Music. Not only are the words important in praising our awesome God, the music aspect is very essential, as "it is the universal language" that everyone can relate to in one way or another. We may not understand spoken/written languages of others, but music can speak to everyone's heart!

Worship helps in this way. It lifts the soul (mind), to God who is able, to God who heals, and to God who honors His word. It helps to realize that there truly is nothing impossible for him who believes. (Mark 9:23) We are singing more than just words, we are singing the Word of God wrapped in music. That's why I believe that the word of God carries the same power whether preached or sung.

Music can help people understand God, not only through the words but also through the melodic interpretations that reach our hearts.

Think of your favorite hymn. Does the music fit the words you sing with or just listen to? That is the purpose of music worship! Let me help you understand the purpose of music in worship.

- Music teaches us the gospel.
- Music connects us to God in unique ways.
- Music allows us to express our love to God with our whole being.
- Music as worship fulfills God's command.

I plan on explaining more on these next time—as it seems to be "I'm writing a book again!"

Singing is an important part of who we are and who God created us to be. We're all wired uniquely. We have different gifts, strengths, and favorite styles of music. Scripture encourages us to find the music that allows our hearts to sing and connect to God.

Music that honors God will cause our hearts to sing. And when our hearts sing, worship happens. We're transformed on the inside as we're filled with the Spirit and devote everything we are to worship, praise, and thanksgiving to our heavenly

Father. I'm so excited to praise God as I'm typing this article... that I'm about ready to burst! I know...that is goofy! But you know me!

Please know that we (as a music family) would love everyone who is interested in worshipping our awesome Lord and Savior at Faith Lutheran Church to: "Raise The Roof" by joining any aspect of the music worship family. If you would like to be part of the music team—such as sharing whatever God's talent you have—and be a music worship leader/an instrumentalist/a music selector of songs that reflect and emphasize what the lessons/sermon are for any specific service—please let us know! We welcome you with open arms! Remember that God doesn't care how we worship...just that we worship with our hearts praising Him!

Until next time—
Musically in
Christ our Lord
and Savior—

Elaine



APRIL SERVICE GROUP

As a way of serving each other, Faith Lutheran is refreshing our monthly Service Groups. The following are being asked to be available in the month of April. If a need arises for a funeral or wedding we will call you from the church office.

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.

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

- Karl and Amy Dorr
- Carl and Crystal Dunn
- Pat and Monica Fournier
- Karlene Frank
- Tom and Galia Fundis
- John and Donna Gass
- Irene Ghekier
- Andrea Mikulecky
- Tory and Austin Mills
- Dale and Charlene Schaeffer
- Ron and Diane Steffens
- Dale and Jeanie Thomas



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CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor:	Pastor Alsen Wenzel
Secretary/Office Manager:	Cindy Fowell
Bookkeeper:	Robin Western
Facilities Manager:	Bob Palmer
Outreach Coordinator:	Colleen Palmer
IT Manager:	John Plank

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 - Julie Waag	
Secretary - Mellissa Severson-Hampton	
Jim Brown	Christy Sem
Robin Western	Tammie Klinker-Mayes
Rex Derr	Bamma Taylor
Bob Palmer	Deb Schwandt
Sean Hoven	Colleen Palmer



THIS IS THE JOURNEY OF FAITH.

