

FAITH ALIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, LCMC

From Pastor's Heart

He is risen!! He is risen indeed, Alleluia! Boy doesn't that sound wonderful after having left behind the dark and dreary days of Holy Week and the five weeks of Lent! We are now in the festival season of Easter, which is the high point of the Church Year. We just celebrated Easter on April 20th, the day that the Lord rose from the dead. Having conquered sin and Satan, Jesus guarantees victory for us over death and the grave. Referring to the festival itself, Easter is the "queen of feasts." No preparation is too elaborate, and no observance is too jubilant when it comes to celebrating this time of the Church Year. The Easter Season is celebrated over fifty days or seven Sundays and includes two others Feasts: Ascension and Pentecost.

The color for Easter is white, symbolizing perfection, celebration, and joy. We will use the color white until Pentecost on June 8th when we will change to red, so please wear red on June 8th. More on that in next month's newsletter

During the Season of Easter we use the Paschal Candle, which has been placed down front, and represents that Jesus Christ was seen throughout the forty days until his ascension. Therefore, during the beginning of the Seventh Sunday of Easter we will blow out the light signifying that Jesus is no longer visible to us on the earth. Besides reminding us that Jesus made himself known throughout the forty days, the Paschal Candle also reminds us of Christ's

victory over the darkness of sin and death. That is why we also use this candle during funerals and baptisms, representing the Light of Christ.

The Ascension of Our Lord is forty days after Easter, which always falls on a Thursday, this year on May 29, 2025. And seeing we do not have a service on that day, I will always try to alternate from year to year whether we have the Seventh Sunday of Easter or do the Ascension of Our Lord or a little bit of both.

Even though the Easter Season is only seven weeks long, each Sunday we come to this place to celebrate the risen Lord. For each Sunday is special in that regard. The first day of the week we come to celebrate the resurrection, the good news of the gospel that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; for that is the good news we proclaim each Sunday. There is no other reason for us to gather together than the good news of the gospel that Jesus broke the bonds of death and gives to each one who believes in him the hope and the power of the resurrection.

But will this Easter make a difference? What's so important about Easter? Well, it's important because it proved that Jesus was who He claimed to be. Jesus is God in the flesh, and He came to earth to save us.

Three events occurred in a dramatic succession on that Easter weekend: the trial of Jesus, then the death of Jesus, and finally the resurrection of Jesus. Let's look at each of those

events and their implications.

His Trial: Jesus actually went through six trials. In that one night, he was brought before Annas, Caiaphas (the high priest), the Sanhedrin (the religious Supreme Court), Pilate (the governor of Jerusalem), Herod (the governor of Galilee), and then back to Pilate. At the end of those six trials, what truth did they find to accuse him of? None. Jesus had done nothing wrong. They brought in people to make up phony charges, but those didn't stick. Finally, they convicted Him on one count: claiming to be the Son of God. That's the sole reason Jesus went to the cross. They didn't like that claim!

Everyone who has ever been presented with the truth about Jesus has already made some kind of decision about who He is. You either believe He's a liar, or you believe he's a lunatic, or you believe He's the Lord. It can't just be: "I believe he was a good teacher." He couldn't be just a good teacher because a good teacher wouldn't say, "I'm God, and I'm the only way to Heaven." A good person wouldn't say that unless it was the truth.

Jesus claimed to be the Savior of the world. In John 12:47b, He promised: "I did not come to judge the world but to save the world" (ESV). Jesus allowed Himself to be put on trial so there would be no doubt about who He was. He could have stopped the trial at any moment. He knew He would be proven guilty and put on the cross, but He allowed it to happen. It was

all part of the divine plan.

His Death: After a night of beatings and mocking, after being crowned with painful thorns, Jesus was crucified. Crucifixion is probably the most brutal and torturous death penalty ever devised by men. His hands were stretched out wide against the cross and nailed through the two bones in each wrist. As the nails went through this part of the flesh, they would strike the nerve that travels up the arm and cause excruciating pain.

If you hung this way for any period of time, the muscles around your chest cavity began to be paralyzed. You'd be able to breathe in, but you couldn't breathe out. Death on a cross would have been a simple matter of suffocation, except the Romans didn't want to make it that easy. They'd take a person's knees and bend them a little bit and nail the feet to the cross. So, a man would hang there in absolute agony until the pain in his chest was about to explode and then he would lift himself up on his nailed feet to painfully grab a breath.

When the pain in his feet grew unbearable, he'd let himself back down again, until the pain in his lungs became unbearable. It was an incredibly torturous event. Eventually, the soldiers would break the legs of the criminal to hasten death by suffocation.

In the case of Jesus, they didn't have to break His legs because He had already died. But just to make sure, they stuck a spear in His side. Water and blood came out of the chest cavity, which,

doctors say, only happens if the heart rips. Why did Jesus have to die? Because He alone was able to pay for our sins. We deserved punishment, but Jesus paid the penalty. What happened is truly a miracle: For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).

His Resurrection: After Jesus died, they took His body down and put Him in the tomb, and a giant millstone was set in front of the cave. The religious leaders, worried that Jesus' body might be stolen, asked for Roman guards to be posted in front of the tomb. They didn't want Him coming out! But of course, He did.

You know the story. But it's important to remember that Easter is not some memorial to a nice, good religious teacher who lived 2,000 years ago. It's a celebration of the fact that He is alive today. I'm living proof, and so are the billions of Christians who celebrated Easter this year. He "was declared to be Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 1:4 ESV).

Easter is the Good News about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who came as a human baby, born into King David's royal family line. Four historical records say he showed himself to 500 people at one gathering. Can you imagine witnessing His death and then seeing Him walking around Jerusalem three days later?

What an amazing thing! When Jesus was hanging on the cross, the skeptics and critics mocked Him and in effect said, "If you're the Son of God, why don't you just pull yourself down from that cross? Why don't you just come down and show that you're really God?" Jesus had something more spectacular planned. He essentially said, "I'm going to let you bury Me for three days, then I'll come back to life to prove that I am what I am."

What does this mean to us today? In one sense, Jesus Christ is still on trial. He's on trial in the heart and mind of every person who has not yet acknowledged Him as the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

What's your verdict? You see, Easter really boils down to only two issues. One, is Jesus who He says He is? Is He God? Or is He a lunatic or a liar? And two, if He is who He says He is, when are you going to start fully following what He says to do with your life?

And so as you ponder that question, let's not forget that even though Easter Sunday is over and the candy has been taken off the store shelves, we come together each and every Sunday to celebrate the fact that He Is Risen!! He Is Risen Indeed, ALLELUIA!!! So don't be surprised if sometime during the summer or fall I might just try to catch you off guard, but of course I will not catch you off guard for the next few weeks. Let's have a joyous time as we celebrate the Resurrection of Our Lord.

Pastor Alsen

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

On behalf of the staff of Doctors Without Borders, thank you for your generous gift of \$973.45 received in March. Your donations helped fight childhood malaria in South Sudan, helped treat people at hospitals in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gaza.

 **JUNE 13 & 14, 2025**
8AM - 2 PM

ANNUAL GARAGE SALE



1300 FERGUSON DRIVE, GREAT FALLS, MT FAITHLUTHERANGF.COM

May Special Offerings

First Sunday of the Month

Toby's House

Third Sunday of the Month

Habitat for Humanity



Dear Generous Donor,
Thank you for your support for My Neighbor in Need/My Student in Need. Your donation of \$848.45 will significantly improve the lives of those in need within our community.



Submit your newsletter articles and upcoming events for June by May 15!

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

Dear Rev. Wenzel and Faith Family,
Thank you so much for the gift card. Playing the Holden Evening Worship music is always a pleasure, and I'm glad the congregation enjoys it as much as I do. The music is beautiful!

Thank you again.
Sharing in Christ's love,
Marge Kline

To our family of Faith!
Thank you for the beautiful flowers. They were a blessing to remind us that God has filled our world with joy and sadness – through these times He is holding us as we walk arm and arm with Him! Thank you for your prayers! God's love to you from Sharon Farnsworth and family

Thank you so much for donating to the efforts of Project Graduation for the School Year 2024-2025.



Men of Faith

MONTHLY MEETING ON MAY 7 AT 6 PM



MEN OF FAITH BIBLE STUDY + BREAKFAST

Thursday mornings at 6:30am

'THE CHURCH YEAR'

The church calendar helps us remember and celebrate the life, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Christians understand, that each day of the year is a gift from our gracious God. Indeed, for us it truly is the "year of our Lord." But another year has been adopted and used by the church. It is a powerful tool to assist Christians in remembering the life and times of their resurrected Lord as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. It is called the church year.

Used by Christians for centuries, the church-year calendar has evolved to provide daily and seasonal signposts of hope throughout the secular year for those who live in a world with change and decay. Not only does it help believers in Christ to live daily by faith, it can also aid them in fulfilling the Lord's great commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18ff).

A LONG AND RICH HERITAGE

This historic calendar started with the early Christians. After the day of Pentecost, these brave and Spirit-filled people began to engage in a specific way of life and worship. St. Luke writes, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42); and, "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 5:42). Those early believers worshiped every day. One of the first Christian customs that arose, however, was to make the first day of the week, Sunday, "the Lord's Day" - even though these believers were coming out of the Jewish tradition of worship that emphasized Saturday (Sabbath) services. St. John (Rev. 1:10) uses the phrase "Lord's Day" to call

attention to this special day of the week which came to be used as a special day to commemorate the Lord's resurrection. This gave way to the tradition that each Sunday is a "little Easter".

USING THE CHURCH-YEAR CALENDAR

In the church year, the 52 weeks are separated into two parts: the festival half and the non-festival half. The first half of the church year contains "The Christmas Cycle" and "The Easter Cycle". The second half of the year includes "The Time of the Church".

The festival half elaborates on the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, beginning with His prophetic coming in the flesh and the events surrounding His birth. It emphasizes His baptism, the beginning of His three-year preaching ministry and His earthly suffering, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.

The non-festival half celebrates Jesus' promise to send the Comforter, fulfilled when the Holy Spirit was revealed on Pentecost—the 50th day following Christ's resurrection. This season emphasizes the action of that powerful Spirit working among Christ's people.

THE CHRISTMAS CYCLE

Surrounding the birth of Jesus are the seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

Advent consists of a four-week period that precedes Christmas Day. Although the secular world is already celebrating, the church-year calendar calls on Christians to use Advent as a time to prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord at His birth. These days preceding Christmas focus on the Old Testament prophetic themes about the coming Messiah.

Christmas and the 11 days that follow celebrate the "Word

becoming flesh, making His dwelling among us" (John 1:14).

Epiphany (Greek for appearance or manifestation) begins its season with the celebration of the presentation of the gifts by the eastern magi—the gentiles. The appearance of these gentiles, foretold in the Old Testament (Is. 60:1ff), initiates a mission-outreach theme for the church of Bethlehem's babe.

The First Sunday after the Epiphany commemorates the Baptism of Jesus, which initiated His three-year preaching ministry. The season of Epiphany can last up to 8 weeks, depending on the date of Easter. The last Sunday after the Epiphany celebrates the transfiguration of Jesus (Matt. 17:1-9).

THE EASTER CYCLE

This holy season includes Lent, Holy Week and Easter. It begins with Ash Wednesday, the 7th Wednesday before Easter. Lent's focus of 40 days (not counting the six "little Easter" Sundays within the season), is on the theme of spiritual renewal, repentance and self reflection.

Palm Sunday, the day Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a colt, begins Holy Week. This sacred time calls every Christian to concentrate on the great suffering and sacrifice of their Lord. The Lenten season concludes with the final three days of Holy Week. The Triduum observe Christ's betrayal (Maundy Thursday), His suffering and death (Good Friday), and Saturday, used by some as the Easter Vigil—a day to watch and wait for Easter Day.

The date for each Easter Sunday is established as the first Sunday following the first full moon of the Spring equinox. Easter can be no earlier than March 22 and no later than April

25. It proclaims to the world the greatest victory that "Christ Jesus...has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10).

The church calendar reserves six Sundays as a time to commemorate the great event of Easter. On the 40th day, the church celebrates Jesus' ascension into heaven.

THE TIME OF THE CHURCH

On the 50th day following

Easter Sunday, God's people remember the great day of Pentecost, sometimes referred to as the "birthday of the church." Ten days following Christ's ascension, the promised Holy Spirit was revealed to the 11 disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1).

The day of Pentecost initiates the non-festival half of the church year, which can last up to 28 Sundays concluding with the last Sunday in the church year, also known as Christ the

King Sunday. The First Sunday after Pentecost is observed as Holy Trinity Sunday.

What would the year be without a calendar? For each day, week, month and year on this earth, we can live with a sense of confidence and hope. The church-year calendar can be a helpful tool to remember the life and times of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ as time "flies by".

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.



Love Day Quilters News

We were very busy in April and our collection of quilts is growing. We were also given a new project to participate in - knitting and/or crocheting white baptismal blankets. Carol has found the right patterns, soft fine yarn, knitting needles and/or crochet hooks. We will supply the needed items for any willing volunteer. Please call Cindy in the church office and we will get back to you. Thanks to Marilynn Nesemeier for the colorful and yummy Easter treats in April. - Augie Records

HOMEBOUND VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Are you able to take Communion to our Homebound friends. Please call the church office at 406-454-1309.



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.



News from the Education Team/Youth & Family

Sunday School: The month of May brings us to the last of the Sunday School classes for this school year. The last day of class will be May 11th. It will be a fun get together for the kids with ice cream and games outside, weather permitting, during the Sunday school hour.

High School Graduation Recognition of Theresa Dittler. Sunday May 18th we will be recognizing Theresa during the church service for her upcoming high school graduation. There will be a basket for congratulation cards if you would like to bring one, and cake during the fellowship hour to celebrate her accomplishment.

The Easter Egg Hunt was so much fun. There were over 100 children. It was great to see all the kids so excited to "hunt" and their joy and laughter was music to our ears. Many families in attendance shared their gratitude to the church for holding the event. It could not have happened without the generous support from the congregation. Thank you to all who helped in so many ways - from donations of eggs and candy, to volunteering to stuff eggs at Wednesday Lent Soup Suppers, and finally to those willing to help the day of the hunt to put it all together (being the bunny, hiding eggs, manning the VBS table, cleaning up and more). Also thank you to Karen Schaefer with Sign Gypsies for placing more decorations on the lawn. It made it so festive and gave us places to hide the eggs. Thank you all again.

VBS "True North – Trusting Jesus in a Wild World" is June 23rd – 27th, from 5:30 – 8:00 pm. It is for children who will be in preschool thru the 6th grade in the fall. Please invite and encourage families who have children in those age ranges to attend. 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 me at the church or call me at (406) 590-1061 with any questions and/or to volunteer.

The May education team will be meeting on Tuesday, 13th at 6:30 pm.

Wishing God's blessings to you all,
Annette Hocker



Women Crafting Together
Starting Saturday, May 10th at 2 pm
Bring craft you are working on.
Need a craft? Supplies available.
Devotional Time. Prayer for one another.
Snacks and fellowship.
See Susan Wenzel if you have questions.

The block contains various illustrations of crafting supplies: scissors, thread, a spool of thread, a woman sitting and knitting, a colorful mandala, a spool of thread, a bag of yarn, a box of colored pencils, a flower, a circular mirror, and a string of beads.

Pastor Wenzel will be taking May 30 – June 13 for a two-week vacation to officiate his Aunt's memorial service, who passed last August. Pastor Ken Waag will be leading/preaching on June 1, 2025, and Lon Holden will be leading/preaching on June 8, 2025. Pastor Wenzel will be back in the office on June 14, 2025.

Congregational Life
Invites You to Celebrate
Mother's Day

Join Us For a Light Lunch
Following 9:30 am Service

Door Prizes
Fellowship

The block features illustrations of a chocolate cake, a bowl of fruit, a plate of bread, a sandwich, and a bowl of salad.

GREETINGS FROM THE KEYBOARD!!

HE IS RISEN!

I'm sitting at my computer—sunshine—cats sleeping nearby! This is one of my favorite times and “eating it all up!” 😊

I feel that I need to explain the pre-service Hymns and why we use CD singing:

1. The reason we are having the two presongs is to help us all learn new songs that are out there to praise God!

2. We are not trying to replace the beautiful hymns we already know...now you can relax! 😊

3. The reason we use the cd's is we need strong singers to help us learn the songs. When we are able to have volunteers from the congregation, who already know the songs well enough to lead the singing, then the cd's won't be needed.

4. We have been trying to begin the pre-selections about 9:20...so if you are already in the sanctuary, preparing your hearts and minds for the wonderful words of God... please sing along with us. Remember, God loves to hear

His children sing—no matter what—as long as it's from the heart!

We have a small group of dedicated music lovers who have agreed to work together to select the music for services. We have many resources we pull ideas from to help this process. It all depends on what fits the gospel message! These music selections may be very familiar hymns all the way to some of “today's music” we hear on Christian Radio.

Please keep in mind my statement before—we are not trying to replace our old favorites—just trying some fresh material we can possibly add to our list of favorites!

Think back to Abraham, King David, Moses, Noah. What do you think they would be thinking of some of the ‘music we consider our favorites’? I'm almost sure they might be flabbergasted—but after hearing/singing/listening to the words, they'd realize that it's all praising God!

1 Samuel 16:23 (NKJV) – *And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.*

Singing together to the Lord embeds the message of His love in our minds and souls. It is a powerful ministry of teaching and encouragement that we share together. Whether our hearts cry out, “*Create in me a pure heart, O God*” (Ps. 51:10), or joyfully shout, “*And he will reign forever and ever*” (Rev. 11:15), the power of music that exalts God lifts our spirits and grants us peace.

Singing helps unite us to the church. The gospel alone unites believers to one another. However, music is a tool that allows us to do so. As we gather on the Sabbath, we join together as one body, and praise God with one voice.

Please feel free to submit suggestions of songs that you like/dislike, and we'll use that information in future selections.

Thank you for listening to a ‘rambling piano player’!
Musically in Christ—Elaine



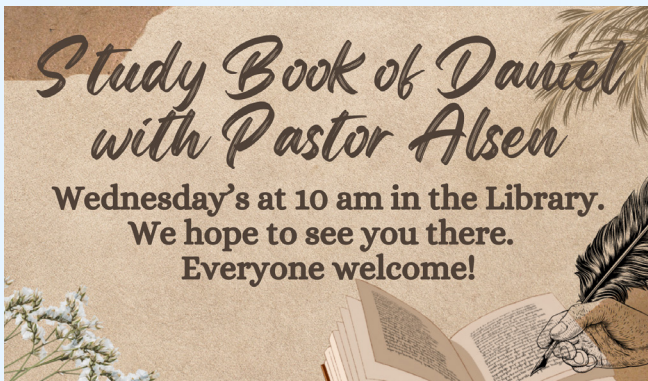
Would you like to join the Evangelism Committee?

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 24 ESV

Study Book of Daniel with Pastor Alsen

Wednesday's at 10 am in the Library.
We hope to see you there.
Everyone welcome!



Faith Lutheran Church Invites you to our Annual

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE & CARE TEAM LUNCHEON

This is a catered luncheon for all church members celebrating our homebound members as our special guests. We're planning a wonderful afternoon featuring good food, music and fun! This is a great way to stay connected with all our congregation members.

June 22, 2025 following our 9:30 AM Church Service

06.22.25

RSVP Church Office (406) 454-1309 or FaithLutheran.gtf@gmail.com

Paperback Books Needed for Local Prison Ministry Library New and Used Are Welcome!



News for Outreach

Happy Spring! He has Risen!

Thank you to everyone for all you do! Your love and care is a blessing for our Faith Family, community and world.

Welcome to all those returning from your snowbird dwellings. Welcome to those who are navigating the loss of a loved one, or healing from an injury or sickness. Welcome to those new visitors who are looking for their home church. We hope you find it here at Faith Lutheran Church.

Here's your update for May! Homebound Communion Volunteers are visiting about 12 members in their homes and/or assisted living facilities. Lon

Holden visits 2 others each week in his vocation as Chaplain at Benefis.

Pastor Wenzel and I continue to attend the Inter-Faith group meeting each month. We've got a great start in donations of paperback books, devotionals and candy for the prison ministry. We shared the Blue Sunday video on Sunday and have asked the congregation to continue to pray to end child abuse and neglect.

The evangelism team is working on the "Life Happens" curriculum and the plan is to launch this class in the fall. We'll bring it first to our congregation and in the future offer it to the community.

Congregational Life and Care Teams are planning a catered luncheon on June 22, 2025. We'll be celebrating our homebound members as our special guests. We're planning a wonderful afternoon featuring good food, music and fun! This is a great way to stay connected with all our congregation members. We'll be sending out invitations soon, you can RSVP by calling the office (406) 454-1309, faithlutheran.gtf@gmail.com or on our website under the upcoming events tab. Blessings, Colleen Palmer, Community Outreach Coordinator

May Birthdays and Anniversaries

2: Lynn Dittler
4: Deborah Bern
Lorna Kennedy
Alec Rosipal
5: Rod Thorne
7: Lisa Perkins
9: Gabe Cunningham
13: Christie Sem
14: Kathy Johnson
15: Cyra Jones
16: Monica Fournier
17: Sherry Freiboth
20: Bart Crabtree
23: Robbie Stubbs

28: Gene Bern
Don Morss
29: Dylan Clewley
Pat Fournier
Ione Gruss
Jerrod Perkins
Ron Steffens
30: Harry Grosvold
Warren Mayes

2: Chris and Cindy Reiquam
8: Josh and Tricia Sommer

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!

MAY 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 May. 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.

- Jim and Cathy Graham
- April Hall
- Scott and Melissa Hampton
- Henry Henning
- David and Donna Herdina
- Michael and Annette Hocker
- Marcia Hollandsworth



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CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor:
Secretary/Office Manager:
Bookkeeper:
Facilities Manager:
Outreach Coordinator:
Youth & Family Coordinator:
IT Manager:

Pastor Alsen Wenzel
Cindy Fowell
Robin Western
Bob Palmer
Colleen Palmer
Annette Hocker
John Plank

OFFICE HOURS:

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

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.

