November 2026

Happy Thanksgiving!

FAITH ALIVE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH, LCMC

From Pastor's Heart

When I was in seminary, I wrote a sermon for a Homiletics class using the Gospel lesson for Thanksgiving, Luke 17:11-19, Jesus Cleanses the Ten Lepers. The sermon had spoken of what we are thankful for and gave various and assorted examples of "daily bread" that we should give thanks for. I assure you the sermon was nothing memorable, even though my fellow seminarians were very kind and supportive after I preached it in front of the class.

But my professor was not so supportive. He wanted to challenge me in my theology and my preaching, which of course was his job. He took all of the things I was thankful for and turned them around. Instead of health, there was sickness; instead of a table full of food, it was a rumbling belly; instead of a warm home, it was as cold as ice; instead of gathering with family and friends, it was the loneliness of a prison cell. "Now, how would you preach Thanksgiving to those kinds of people?" he asked. "How could you ask them to be thankful for cancer, for no food, no shelter, or being alone and afraid?" I just shrugged because I didn't have an answer.

You see, I had fallen into the typical trap of American theology. He said the typical expression is to be thankful for things. The problem is that the emphasis is on the things, be they food, family or football. Therefore, if the things are gone, so is the thanks. Instead, he said a Christian's thanks is grounded in Jesus Christ. This enables the child of God, then, to be able to follow St. Paul's encouragement in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "give thanks in all circumstances." My professor's point was that we don't have to give thanks for sickness, homelessness, hunger, or loneliness. But, through Jesus Christ, we give thanks to God even in the most difficult of circumstances.

In her book, "The Hiding Place", Corrie Ten Boom tells her story of surviving the Holocaust in World War II. She was in a barracks with dozens and dozens of other women and girls, surviving on little food and without warm clothes in the German winter. Yet, they were forced to forage and work, even in bitter and cruel conditions.

One afternoon, a couple of women began arguing about how they were knitting socks for the German soldiers. The problem escalated until a guard opened the door and yelled at the women to be silent. The women expected the worst, guards to swarm the room and beat the prisoners. Instead, the guard merely slammed the door shut. As the women began working, they whispered, wondering why the guards didn't come into the room. Someone had been listening near the door and suddenly exclaimed, "I know! I know why they didn't come in! I just heard the guards talking. None of them wanted to come into our room because of the lice and fleas!"

A few days earlier, Corrie and her friends had a secret worship service with a smuggled Bible and had read in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." One of the younger girls had wondered how they were expected to "give thanks in all circumstances," given the cold, the poor food, and the lice and fleas. Corrie looked around at the group of women. She remembered her sister had complained of the lice and fleas that day. In that terrible, bug-infested room, they stopped and gave thanks to God.

My friends, my professor helped me distinguish between giving thanks to God for things and giving thanks in all things. It's not a case of one or the other, nor is one greater than the other. Both are necessary. Giving thanks to God for things helps us remember that all gifts come from God. Giving thanks to God in all things (circumstances) helps us keep our eyes focused on the cross and heavenward. Therefore, we thank God for the gifts showered upon us. We give thanks to God in times of plenty and in times of want, which means to give thanks to the Lord in all things. Why? Because the Lord is good, and His mercy and love endures forever. Amen.

Pastor Alsen

Pastor Alsen will be on vacation
November 10 – 15th.
Lon Holden will be leading
and speaking for the service
on Sunday, November 15th.

NOVEMBER SPECIAL OFFERINGS

FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

ST. DISMAS PRISON MINISTRY

THIRD SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

TUNNELS TO TOWERS

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.







GriefShare

Surviving the Holidays

SCAN ME!

Encouragement, support, and valuable tools to navigate the challenges of the season.

Join us for this holiday seminar

Wednesday
November 18th
3:00 pm

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

Dear Faith Lutheran Church,
As we celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Alliance for Youth, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support. On behalf of the dedicated members of our board, thank you for believing in our mission. Your kindness is truly making a meaningful impact on the vital work the Alliance for Youth does within our community.

Warm regards,

Brenda Demers, Dan Baker, Sarah Cawley, Cortney K. Day, Ivan Kauffman, Leticia Albert



FISH Chosen for Fundraiser

Town Pump has selected FISH to be part of the 25th Anniversary of "HELP THOSE IN NEED" Challenge. Town Pump will match all donations to reach $30,000.00 that FISH receives between September 1st and November 30th. If mailed, please mail by **November 14 or drop it off at FISH between 9 to 11 o'clock by November 30th.** What a great way to double your gift & help FISH.

Mailing Address: FISH P.O. Box 662

Great Falls, MT 59403

Thank you for your support in reaching our goal.

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Project



RETURN YOUR BOXES ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 22!



Dear Red Cross Supporter,
On behalf of the American Red Cross, thank you for your generous gift of $2,305.25, which will be applied to **where it is needed most**. Support from organizations like yours truly making an impact in the lives of those we serve every day. During their darkest hours, people know they can turn to the Red Cross for comfort and care. Our humanitarian mission of preventing and alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies depends on the compassion of our generous donors.

Sincerely.
Cliff Holtz
President and CEO, American Red Cross

CARE TEAM

The Care Team will again be helping with holiday meals this year. If a food basket or a prepared meal would help make your holiday more enjoyable, easier on the budget or just less stressful, please reach out to the church office and add your name to our list of recipients. Please specify if you would like Thanksgiving, Christmas or both and whether you would prefer a food basket to do your own cooking or a meal delivered. Also note the number of people in your household and any food allergies.

We want all of our church family to enjoy the holidays.

Ronda Wiggers and Care Team

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

and info sheets are set up in the narthex for you to pick up. Pray for the child who will receive your box as you fill it full of toys, school supplies and perhaps a photo of you/your family and a note of encouragement. Please include in your box, a check for $10 for S&H made out to "Samaritan's Purse" with "Operation Christmas Child" on the memo line. These gifts are an expression of God's love and are shipped to countries around the world. YOU can help spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth!

Can we top last year's total of 94 completed boxes? Please return your filled boxes ON or BEFORE Sunday, November 22nd.

GREETINGS FROM THE KEYBOARD!

Happy November! Can you believe that it's already November? Didn't we just celebrate New Years! Oh well, I'm thankful God has blessed me with another month to celebrate His blessings through music and humor!

While I "have" played on pipe organs before, I must say that when I first moved to Great Falls and was hired by Faith Lutheran to play and I saw that pipe organ – I was quite nervous! I was on a probationary period for the first couple of months for the council to make sure I was ready and fit the position. Believe it or not, I was intimidated by the beauty, the huge pipes looming over me (the pipes on the previous organs I played were all hidden) and my back was toward the altar. Never had that experience before ! As I began to feel more comfortable playing that beauty, I could definitely feel God's presence and grace. Yes, I'm telling the truth when I say I was feeling inadequate. (Of course you really can't tell it now – but I do get nervous at times). Now to continue with "God's Sense of Humor"–

What do the following questions have in common that I'm positve God chuckled at?

1. Small makeup mirror vs balance
2. Furniture polish vs organ or piano benches and keys
3. Wide spread taped music copy vs regular piano music shelf

The answer to all 6 questions is– yup – you guessed it ! ME!

They ALL happened to me. Why, I don't know since I'm the "perfect" organist! (Okay I heard several chuckles from YOU).



1. As I mentioned the pipe organ at 3125 5th Ave. S was in the balcony with the organist facing the organ and my back facing the altar. In order to see what was going on during service (without a direct view of the altar) – there was a small round makeup mirror on the right side of the keyboards for me to glance at the altar. Sometimes it was wobbly but worked nonetheless...until we had one of the high school choirs come to sing for special music. They came early to practice in the balcony and then were heading down to practice on the steps in front of the altar when one of the girls accidently bumped my mirror and down it went breaking into several pieces. She was mortified and I said not to worry. But the choir director was furious. He yelled at them for being so reckless (no they really weren't) and then asked them who had a compact mirror. Of course high school girls have compact mirrors! Then he told the girl that did the accident to hold the mirror where and when I needed it. Poor thing was shaking and crying. I gave her a huge hug and said she did great. Then I asked her if she would like a paid position for "holding my mirror!" She smiled, we laughed, and hugged each other again. I never saw her again or at least I don't think I did. However I did see the director again since we both taught in the GFPS music department. I was elementary and he in high school. PS – my heart did stop when I thought of how was I going to finish the service without seeing the altar area. God is always in control!
2. NEVER use polish on an organ or piano keys or bench. Let the organist/pianist take care of it with a damp cloth. Benches: I was sliding onto it to play and just about slid right off the other side – both the organ and piano bench (just not on the same day). Keys: the piano ivory keys kept "slipping away" so I wouldn't play the one(s) I wanted or should have played. I must say the benches won the "racing heart" trophy!
3. I was playing for a wedding and the soloist had a "new" accompaniment version for a familiar song. It was taped together so I could spread it out on the piano. Well it turned out to be too long so I had to place a music stand on each side of the piano to display the entire song. This was before I learned to punch holes or just put them in plastic sleeves and into a binder to turn the pages better!

We began the song (during the wedding) and all was well until there was a breeze! Of course you know what happened – the ends started falling forward. I reached for one side to catch it while the soloist took charge of the other side...while we were still playing/singing the selection! We got the giggles but finally through the grace of God finished without anyone noticing what had happened.

Okay – as I have said before – God has bestowed this wonderful musical talent to share His glory with all. And as He never promised us a life without troubles – He never promised that I would be even close to having problem free musical experiences! Only that He is with me ALWAYS! He is truly a loving, forgiving, humor filled Heavenly Father that is with all His children who have a relationship with Him with adoring love and trust.

Thank you to my Faith Family!

Happy Thanksgiving everyone.

Musically in Christ,
Elaine





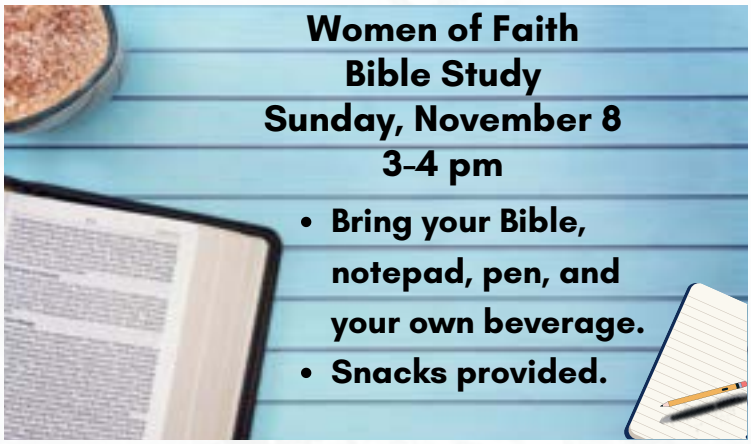
Love Day Quilters News

Hopefully we're all ready for chillier weather and indoor projects. We only have this month to complete the quilts we will give away next month to those in need of the warmth they will provide. Thank you, Sandy Matthews, for the blueberry muffins, fruit and nuts last month. Welcome, Lynne Lemke! We love having newcomers join us! - Augie Records

Women of Faith

The Women of Faith Bible Study meets the second Sunday of each month.
Currently we are in the Epistle of 1 John.
November 8th we will study 1 John 3:24-4:19.
Come join the discussion.

The Women's Advent Tea will be on Saturday, December 12th at 2 pm











November Birthdays

1: Tom Stevens
2: Barbara Clark
3: Lee Haven
6: Pearl Miller
12: Matthew Hampton
15: Pastor Alsen Wenzel
16: Jan Abbott
17: Ana Harris
18: Don Suek
20: Fay Stokes
21: Brad Franklin
Kevin Schmid
Sandy Clapshaw
Roy Dittler
Rudy Robinson
Gary Somerfeld
25: Brittney Webb
26: Karen Nebel
29: Donna Herdina
30: John Gass
Michael Hocker

Anniversaries

3: Bill & Diana Holliday
11: Brandon & Anna Mickealson
12: Pastor & Susan Wenzel
20: Fay & Judy Stokes
27: Lon & Barb Holden
29: Dale & Jeanie Thomas
Pastor & Julie Waag

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!

IMPACT Youth Retreat 2026











November News from Education Team/Youth and Family

As we welcome the month of November, let us remember that this is a wonderful time to thank God for His goodness, His protection, and His unfailing love. November reminds us to pause, reflect on our blessings, and appreciate the people God has placed in our lives. Even when life gets busy, let us make time to share our blessings, pray together, and give thanks for all that God has done for us.

LCMC Youth Retreat

The LCMC Youth Retreat in Idaho, held October 17–19, was a wonderful weekend filled with fun, faith, and fellowship! We had four boys from Faith attend. Throughout the weekend, we participated in Bible studies and discussions on the book of Daniel, led by Jonny Radcliff, worship services, a campfire with s'mores, hikes, games, crafts, and plenty of tasty food and late nights. One of the highlights was our servant project, during which we packed 196 family bags for Voice of the Martyrs to be sent overseas. It was a wonderful opportunity to serve others and put our faith into action. A big thank-you to Bryon Tempel for chaperoning the weekend with me! This newsletter includes a few photos from the retreat for everyone to enjoy.

Faith Friends Needed!

We are still looking for **two volunteers to serve as Faith Friends** for two of our new confirmands. A Faith Friend is someone who offers support, encouragement, and prayer to a young person as they grow in their relationship with God and learn more about their faith. This is a wonderful opportunity to walk alongside our young people and encourage them on their faith journey. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information, please contact me. I would love to talk with you about this meaningful opportunity. Thank you for helping us support and encourage our young people in faith!

Family Movie Matinee – November 14

Join us on **Saturday, November 14, from 2:00–4:00 p.m.** for a Family Movie Matinee featuring David! Bring the whole family and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship, snacks, and a movie together. We look forward to spending this special time with you!

Volunteers Are Always Welcome!

We are always looking for volunteers to help with our youth and family activities and programs. Whether you are interested in helping with Sunday School, Confirmation, High School Youth, or family events, we would love to have you be part of our team. If you are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact me at **(406) 590-1061** or reach out to the church office.

November Education Team Meeting

Our next Education Team meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 11, at 6:00 p.m**. Everyone is welcome to attend!

A November Reminder: Keep God at the Center

As we prepare for the end of the year, let us not become so busy with activities and celebrations that we forget the One who gives us life. May November be a month of renewed commitment to God and to the faith we share. Read the Bible together, attend church faithfully, pray for one another, and help teach the younger generation to trust in the Lord. Let us be intentional about making faith a part of our everyday lives and showing God's love through our words and actions. Joshua 24:15 declares: "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." May this be the declaration of every Christian family this month. Let November be more than a month of thanksgiving. Let it be a month in which our lives become a testimony to God's goodness!

Blessings,

Annette Hocker
Youth and Family Coordinator





November 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 All Saints Day 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship Offering:Prison Ministry 11 am Kids SS 11 am Youth Group 11:30 am Confirmation 2 pm Women's Crafting	2	3 10 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Music/Worship 5:30 Bell Choir 6:30 pm Choir Practice	4 10:30 am Bible Study 1:15 pm Grief Share 5:30 pm Men of Faith	5 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 9 am Love Day Quilters 2 pm Biblical Citizenship	6 Noon Evangelism Team Meeting	7
8 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship 11 am Kids SS 11 am Youth Group 11:30 am Confirmation 3 pm Women's Bible Study	9	10 10 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Personnel 5:30 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm Choir Practice	11 9 am Finance Meeting 10:30 am Bible Study 1:15 pm Grief Share 4 pm Property Team 6 pm Youth Ed Team 6 pm Praise Team	12 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 10 am LCMC Pastors 2 pm Biblical Citizenship	13	14 2 pm Family Matinee "David"
15 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship Offering:Tunnel to Towers 11 am Kids SS 11 am Youth Group 11:30 am Confirmation	16	17 10 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Council Meeting 5:30 Bell Choir 6:30 pm Choir Practice	18 10:30 am Bible Study 1:15 pm Grief Share 3 pm Navigating the Holidays 6 pm Praise Team	19 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 2 pm Biblical Citizenship 5:30 pm Security Team	20	21 2 pm Women's Crafting
22 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship 11 am Kids SS 11 am Youth Group 11:30 am Confirmation	23	24 10 am Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Bell Choir 6:30 pm Choir Practice	25 10:30 am Bible Study 1:15 pm Grief Share 5:30 pm Praise Team 7 pm Thanksgiving Service	26 Thanksgiving Office Closed	27 Thanksgiving Office Closed	28 10 am Christmas Decorating
29 8:30 am Bible Study 9:30 am Worship 11 am Kids SS 11 am Youth Group 11:30 am Confirmation	30	**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS** **Sunday, November 1st** **Set your clocks back one hour.**				

"SERVE ONE ANOTHER HUMBLY IN LOVE." GALATIANS 5:13

Planning Center App: Everyone who attends Faith Lutheran is included in Planning Center. Group leaders will be able to contact members with updates, send resource materials, and respond to questions. I've also set up email reminders for the day before each event. I've also started sending links for downloading the app to people's smartphones or tablets. We now have an iPad at the Connection Center to streamline sign-ups for studies, classes, and groups. I'll have a QR code at the Connection Center if you'd like to set up the app on your phone. You can also use this link: https://faithlutheranchurchl-cmc.churchcenter.com/setup

Survival Guide: Navigating the Holiday After Loss: We'll offer this 2-hour seminar on November 18 at 3 p.m. with Pastor Alsen Wenzel and Barb Holden. Sign-ups will be available at the Connection Center and online: https://find.griefshare.org/events/307224

Tender Hearts Tired Hands: We would like to offer this as an ongoing support group for people who care for a spouse or another family member. We've ordered the books, three online caregiving videos, discussion guides, and ministry training resources are available. Three people have already signed up for the support group. We need someone to lead it. If you feel called to this ministry, please contact me. More information is available at this website: https://my.griefshare.org/leaderzone/news/1130

Coffee Bar: We learned that the council approved the coffee bar a couple of years ago. They would like a buiness plan. Staff is working to put this together for council.

Christmas Cantata: Jay Gregg, Music Director is leading the choir as they prepare for a December 13 production of "O Holy Night!" at 6 p.m. This event will be open to the community. He'll hire musicians for a small orchestra for the event. He's also invited other churches to join the choir. We're planning to collect a free-will offering and canned food donations for the Great Falls Rescue Mission. The choir plans to sing two songs from the cantata at Sunday's 9:30 a.m. worship service.

ANGEL TREE: I've contacted Headstart, and they have provided paperwork for parents to complete. If they want to be included in Christmas gifting for their children the deadline to return their paperwork is October 30. As soon as they provide us with a list, we'll put the Angel Tree out in the narthex. The ornaments will list information for each child so you'll know what to shop for. Please return the gifts unwrapped or in gift bags so they can see what each child will receive. Please drop them off in the classroom next to the library. I'll let you know when Headstart will come to pick them up.

ADVENT EVENT: We used to have a craft or quick project on a Sunday in December. If anyone is interested in offering one to the congregation, let me know. One year, Monica Fournier taught people how to make some pebble art. What fun project can you share?

Spiritual Gifts Ministry: Susan Hayward from Church Doctors met with Cindy Fowell and me on October 6. She's a coach with the Momentum program. We're hoping to launch this class in March.

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY: If you would like to be included in the addendum to the pictorial directory, please contact the church office.

Blessings,

Colleen Palmer, Connections & Outreach Coordinator

November Service Group

Thank you for serving at Faith Lutheran this month.

- **Carol Dawson**
- **Chris & Cindy Reiquam**
- **Martin & Sarah Shabaan**
- **Layne & Debbie Shanahan**
- **Gary Somerfeld**





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

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CHURCH STAFF

Senior Pastor:	Pastor Alsen Wenzel
Secretary/Office Manager:	Cindy Fowell
Bookkeeper:	Nicole LaMere
Custodian:	Kristina Cochran
IT Manager:	John Plank
Outreach Coordinator:	Colleen Palmer
Youth & Family Coordinator:	Annette Hocker
Music Director:	Jay Gregg

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

OFFICE HOURS:

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

Our monthly calendar is on our website!

www.faithlutherangf.com

Phone: (406) 454-1309

Faithlutheran.gtf@gmail.com

Love God · Love Others · Serve the World
THIS IS THE JOURNEY OF FAITH.

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Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ