

FAITH at WORK

December 2023

Friends in Christ –

This year has been a particularly hard time to think about Advent. Ever since the breakout of violence between Hamas and Israel on October 7th, news reports have been focused on the growing conflict and casualties between those two groups. It's been hard to turn away from videos of explosions, refugees, acts of terrorism and sheer human misery.

Of course this is all occurring in the land called Holy by the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It's hard for me to see the images of families cowering in kibbutz on October 7th and not to think of the parents in Bethlehem, trying to protect their infants as Herod's soldiers carried out his orders (Matthew 2:16 – 18). It's been hard for me to see images of Palestinian families fleeing Gaza or to see the babies brought from hospitals and not to think of the Holy family fleeing Egypt (Matthew 2:13 – 15).

This reminds all of us that Jesus knows us in our joys and our sorrows, knows our grief and our pain. There is something profound in the God who knows us and has been there with us, in the God that joins us in our brokenness and sits with us in our grief. This year our Advent is a profound reminder that the world is full of sin and pain and that God is in solidarity with us. Our God, the babe of Bethlehem, mourns with families on both sides of the border in Israel and Gaza and with families all places of conflict. Our God with us joins us in our grief and promises, as prince of peace to rescue us from it.

So what does that mean for us? Should we sit passively by as conflicts embroil? Should we put our head in the sand and ignore the pain in the world around us? Should we say that this is a centuries old conflict and doesn't really affect us? Most assuredly no! Our faith and our God call us into the world, into the messiness and conflict of human life. An Emmanuel, God-With-Us, calls us into the painful places to the world, to embrace the suffering and speak out for the oppressed.

Faith Lutheran Church

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Preparing the way God means, among other things, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, welcoming the stranger. Our faith calls us into the world, to bring the kingdom now and here.

A couple weeks ago the Patriarch of Jerusalem and other leaders of churches from the Holy Land called for a more reflective Advent season. In a letter, dated November 10th (included on page 3, please read it), the Patriarch and others called for an active faith. Our faith compels us to advocate for pray for peace, give for those in need, and to invite others to our mission of mercy.

As it says in Isaiah 58:6 - 8, is not this the feast I desire:

⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rearguard.

We are called to comfort, called to care for, called to feed, clothe, and welcome. This Advent season, work to do these things.

Peace in Christ,

Pastor Mark Bringman





PATRIARCHS AND HEADS OF THE CHURCHES IN JERUSALEM

Statement on the Celebration of Advent and Christmas in the Midst of the War

November 10, 2023

Each year during the sacred seasons of Advent and Christmastide, our Christian communities throughout the Holy Land take great delight in their preparations for the commemoration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In addition to attendance in religious services, these celebrations have normally involved participation in numerous public festivities and the large-scale display of brightly lit and expensive decorations as a means of expressing our joy at the approach and arrival of the Feast of the Nativity.

But these are not normal times. Since the start of the War, there has been an atmosphere of sadness and pain. Thousands of innocent civilians, including women and children, have died or suffered serious injuries. Many more grieve over the loss of their homes, their loved ones, or the uncertain fate of those dear to them. Throughout the region, even more have lost their work and are suffering from serious economic challenges. Yet despite our repeated calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and a de-escalation of violence, the war continues.

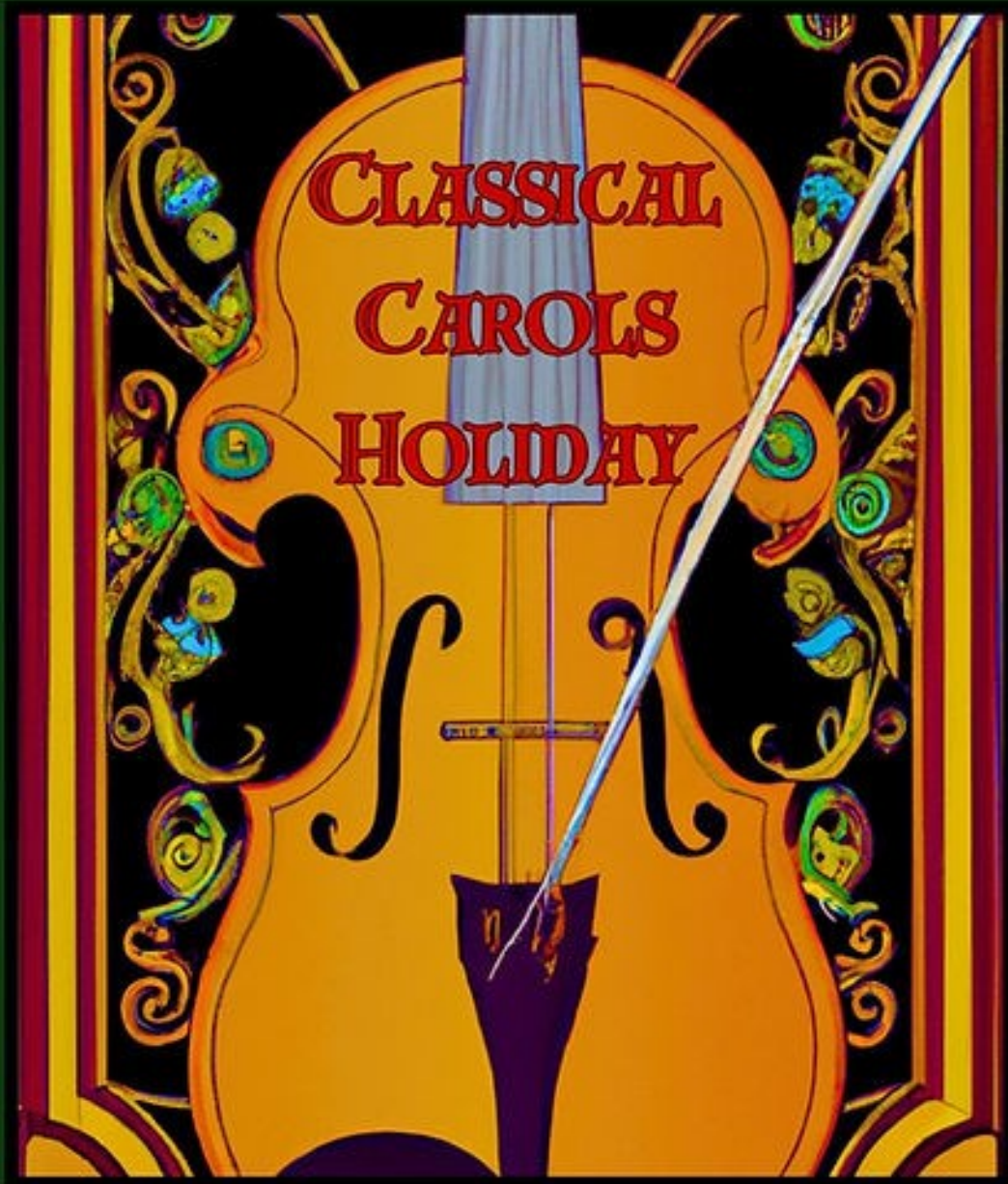
Therefore, We, the Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem, call upon our congregations to stand strong with those facing such afflictions by this year foregoing any unnecessarily festive activities. We likewise encourage our priests and the faithful to focus more on the spiritual meaning of Christmas in their pastoral activities and liturgical celebrations during this period, with all the focus directed at holding in our thoughts our brothers and sisters affected by this war and its consequences, and with fervent prayers for a just and lasting peace for our beloved Holy Land.

Moreover, during this season of giving, we also invite the faithful to advocate, pray, and contribute generously as they are able for the relief of the victims of this war and for those in dire need, as well as to encourage others to join them in this mission of mercy.

In these ways, we believe, we will be standing in support of those continuing to suffer—just as Christ did with us in his Incarnation, in order that all of God’s children might receive the hope of a New Jerusalem in the presence of the Almighty, where “death shall be no more, neither mourning, nor crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

—The Patriarchs and Heads of the Churches in Jerusalem

ALBANY STRING ORCHESTRA WINTER CONCERT



3pm Saturday, December 9, 2023
Albany First Christian Church, 432 SW Ferry St
FREE ADMISSION

Let There Be Peace On Earth

Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth;
The peace that was meant to be.

With God as our father,
Brothers all are we.
Let me walk with my brother,
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me.
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment,
And live each moment,
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with m

—Jill Jackson-Miller



Faith Lutheran Church		2023
STAFF		
Pastor	Mark Bringman	
Office Manager	Carol Armstrong	
Organist/Pianist	Cheryl Blum	
Custodian	Hart's Janitorial	
CHURCH COUNCIL		
President	Terry Virnig	
Vice President	Bob Buswell	
Secretary	Mary Sabatka Gamet	
Treasurer	Janice Lee Virnig	
Financial Secretary	Alice Weber	
Education/Youth	Vacant	
Evangelism & Mission	Dick Olsen	
Fellowship & Social	Denice Rickard	
Property Management	Jon Aaberg	
Stewardship & Resources	Wally Oster	
Worship & Music	Diane Buswell	
Mission Endowment	Carol Olufson	



Financials as of: November 29, 2023

Undesignated Income: \$6,760

Budgeted Undesignated Income: \$8,166.67

Net Undesignated Income: **(\$1,406.67)**

Total Expenses: \$14,029.50

Total Net Income: **(\$926.50)**

Church Announcements and Events

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Holiday Music Events

Light The World Corvallis Choir Concert 2023 — No Cost

6:00pm on Saturday, December 2

Choir Concert & Cookies

**Location: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
4141 NW Harrison Boulevard
Corvallis, OR 97330**

1:00pm on Sunday, December 3

Choir Concert & Cookies

**Location: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
4141 NW Harrison Boulevard
Corvallis, OR 97330**

Albany String Orchestra Winter Concert 2023 — No Cost

3:00pm on Saturday, December 9

**Location: First Christian Church of Albany
432 SW Ferry St
Albany, OR 97321**

Lebanon Community Chorus Winter Concert 2023 — \$10

3:00pm on Saturday, December 9

**Location: First Presbyterian Church
145 W Ash Street
Lebanon, OR 97355**

Grace Lutheran Church

Sunday, December 3

Grace Lutheran Church has called a pastor who will be starting the first Sunday of December.

Bible Study Group—1:00pm

Monday, December 4 & 11

Join us for fellowship, prayer and discussion. We meet in the fellowship hall (and have a zoom stream so that you can join us from your house if that's easier).

Congregational Meeting—11:15am**Sunday, December 10**

Please plan to attend this very important meeting. The 2024 Budget will be presented for approval and there will be conversation about what comes next for our congregation. Your thoughts and ideas are crucial to shaping the future of Faith Lutheran Church. Coffee & Donuts will be served to sweeten our time together..

Advent Wednesdays**December 6 & 13****6:00pm Soup Supper provided by host congregation & 7:00pm Worship Service**

December 6: Good Shepherd Lutheran in Albany

December 13: Faith Lutheran in Albany

Please join us as we gather for food, fellowship and worship with other sisters and brothers. For early Christians, breaking bread together was a reminder that when we eat and drink in remembrance of Jesus, that we are following his command and celebrating the unity we have in the Spirit.

These Wednesday nights are a chance for us to gather with friends in other congregations, to share our story and to hear theirs, to pray and prepare the way for Jesus Christ.

Church Office Closed**December 15, 22, 25 & 29**

Carol will be out of the office several days in December taking both vacation and holidays off.

Pastor Mark—Light Week & Vacation

December 18-26: Pastor Mark will only be available for emergency pastoral care during this time.

December 25-January 1: Pastor Mark will be on vacation and will not be available. Please contact Father Bob Morrison (541) 921-1076 for emergency pastoral care.

Christmas Eve Services—10:30am & 7:00pm**Sunday, December 24**

This year we will have our fourth advent service at 10:30am and will celebrate with a Christmas Eve service at 7:00pm. We look forward to seeing you at both services.



Have Coffee or a Walk With Pastor Mark

Pastor Mark will begin dropping Mary off at Liberty Elementary most days at 7:45am. That means he will be at the church earlier than has been the case previously. While he will use some of that time in study and prayer, if you are a morning person he would love to have a cup of coffee with you or head out for a prayer walk. Please reach out to him.

Food Collection for F.I.S.H. of Albany



We are collecting non-perishable food items FISH of Albany. Donations can be placed in one of the baskets in the parking lot entryway.

*** Please check expiration date markings -FISH cannot accept foods past their marked expiration dates.*

Quilting and TOPs

Wednesdays @ 9am

Wednesday mornings are a busy time at Faith Lutheran Church. We have quilters working to create comforting quilts that are donated to bring people warmth, privacy and shelter. If you are interested in joining them, there is always plenty to do.



TOPs (stands for The Old People, though age is not requirements for the group) are busy working to keep our church property maintained and our grounds clean. If you have able hands and a willing heart, the TOPs will always welcome some help.

Mary Martha Circle



This is a Bible Study for women. We meet on the **second Tuesday of each month @ 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall**. If you would like more information, please call: Karen Glenn at (541) 928-4729 or Shirley Karstens at (541) 967-8309.

Prayer Chain: We are asking those who are part of the prayer chain to lift up the concerns of Faith Lutheran congregants on a weekly basis and to pray for other concerns as they are shared. This is can be as simple as taking a few seconds to ask God to be with those listed, lifting each one up by name. Peggy Preston will be heading up the prayer chain. **If you are interested in being on the prayer chain, send her an email: pegprestonn@aol.com**



Church Office Hours

10:00am-2:00pm ♦ Monday—Wednesday—Friday

Worship Leaders Team 2023

December	3	10	17	24	31
Assisting Ministers	Ellen	Janice	Shirley	Diane (AM)	Ellen
				Diane (PM)	
Altar Prep	George	Pam	Elaine	George	Pam
Ushers	Dick	Diane	Wally	Dick (AM)	Wally
				Shirley (PM)	
Sound Technicians	Daniel	John	Gordy	John (AM)	Daniel
				Terry (PM)	



December 2023 Worship Schedule



December 3	10:30am	Worship
December 10	10:30am	Worship
December 13	7:00pm	Advent Worship
December 17	10:30am	Worship
December 24	10:30am	Worship
December 24	7:00pm	Christmas Eve

All Worship Services are filmed and available on YouTube



December

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 9:00am - 12:30pm String Therapy	2
3 10:30am Worship & Livestreaming	4 7:00pm Boy Scouts	5	6 9:00am Quilters 9:00am TOPs 6:00pm Advent Wednesdays-Soup Supper & Worship @ Good Shepherd Lutheran	7	8 9:00am - 12:30pm String Therapy 12:30pm 20th Century Book Club	9
10 10:30am Worship & Livestreaming 11:15am Congregational Meeting	11 12:30pm - 3:00pm Modern Travelers 7:00pm Boy Scouts	12 1:30pm Mary Martha Circle	13 9:00am Quilters 9:00am TOPs 6:00pm - 7:00pm Advent Wednesdays-Soup Supper & Worship @ Faith Lutheran 7:00pm Council Meeting	14 Janitorial Service Last Day to Deliver Un- Wrapped Gifts for the Giving Tree	15 Carol - Vacation Church Office Closed 9:00am - 12:30pm String Therapy	16
17 10:30am Worship & Livestreaming 3:00pm Bingo & More!	18 Pastor Mark - Off 7:00pm Boy Scouts	19 Pastor Mark - Off	20 Pastor Mark - Off 9:00am Quilters 9:00am TOPs	21 Pastor Mark - Off	22 Carol - Vacation Church Office Closed Pastor Mark - Off 9:00am - 12:30pm String Therapy	23
24 Christmas Eve 10:30am Worship & Livestreaming 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed Pastor Mark & Carol - Holiday 7:00pm Boy Scouts	26 Pastor Mark - Vacation	27 Pastor Mark - Vacation 9:00am Quilters 9:00am TOPs	28 Janitorial Service Pastor Mark - Vacation	29 Carol - Vacation Church Office Closed Pastor Mark - Vacation 9:00am - 12:30pm String Therapy	30 Pastor Mark - Vacation
31 Pastor Mark - Vacation 10:30am Worship & Livestreaming 11:15am Fellowship Meeting	1 Church Office Closed New Year's Day Pastor Mark - Vacation 7:00pm Boy Scouts					

Prayer List

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*PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER THOSE
NEEDING STRENGTH, GUIDANCE AND HEALING:*

Tim B.
Brenda Carroll
Sandy Hina
Robert Jon
Linda Gail Voet
Melba Wright
Brandon Crawford
Noah Holman
Gigi Douglas
Chiera Family

Izzy Covalt
Garrett Baarsch
Stephanie Bauthman
Carl Wogomon
John Busher
Heather
Julie Shaw
Lee Horst
Margaret Rowland
Olivia Hunter

Nicholas Glass
Karen Hoover
Karen Glenn
Jon McLarty
Drew Butler
Pat Norby
Chuck
Rose Mary Aaberg
Cheryl Blum
Carol Olufson

REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND:

Ruth Irwin, Connie Griffis, Izzy Covalt, Cindy Harms, Margaret Rowland, Melba Wright, Sangsau Tran

OUR SYMPATHY & PRAYERS TO THOSE WHO MOURN THE LOSS OF LOVED ONES

Family and Friends of Beatrice Ann Stellflug

A Prayer for Christmas



Loving God, Help us remember the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate
and open the door of love all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy children,
and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven for Jesus' sake. Amen.



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SW
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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

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