Faithfully Yours

Monthly e-newsletter

February 2026

Pastor Candice

Grace & Peace to you!

This January we began First Holy Communion classes with our fifth graders: Robert, Vance, and Tucker (all boys!). It's a joy to walk with them as they prepare to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time on Transfiguration Sunday.

In his *Small Catechism*, Martin Luther asks a simple question: *"What is the Sacrament of the Altar?"* His answer is direct: *"It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given under bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink."*

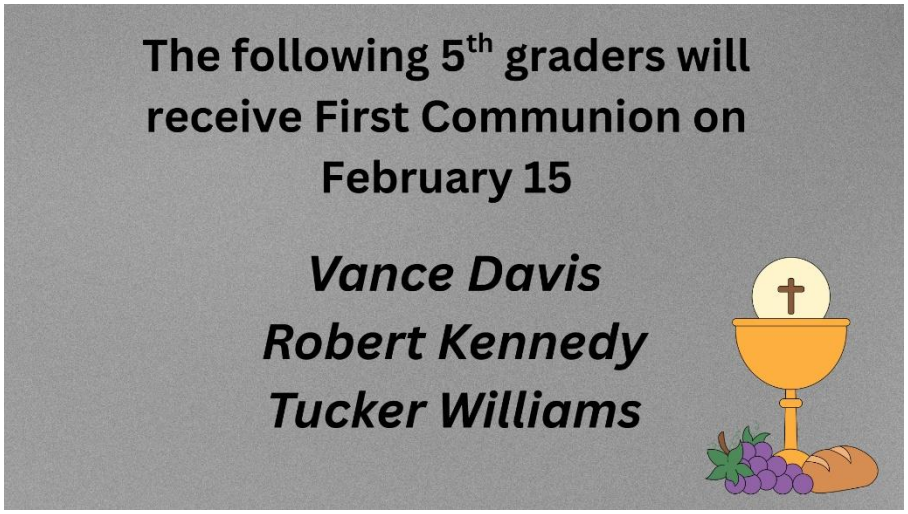
Luther goes on to ask who is worthy to receive this sacrament. His answer may surprise us. It isn't about age, intelligence, or even moral perfection. He writes that those who believe the words *"given for you"* and *"shed for you"* are truly worthy and prepared. In other words, Holy Communion is not a reward for spiritual achievement, it is a **gift** received in trust.

That understanding shapes how we teach our children. First Communion classes are not about mastering theology or passing a test. They are about learning to recognize what God is already doing in their lives: showing up with grace, forgiveness, and a promise. A promise that Communion is not something we *earn*, but something we are *given* again and again.

It is fitting the boys will receive their First Communion on Transfiguration Sunday, a day when the disciples glimpse the glory of Christ shining through the ordinary. Bread and wine remain bread and wine, and yet Christ meets us there. What is revealed is not just who Jesus is, but how God chooses to be present with us.

As Robert, Vance, and Tucker prepare for this holy milestone, please join me in holding them in prayer. Let's pray that they grow in faith and trust, that this meal roots them in God's love, and that they always know Christ's promise is for them. And let's pray that each of us remember these things every time we open our hands to receive this precious gift.

Peace & joy, Pr Candice Wassell



President's Pen

I find myself turning away from social media again as the events going on in our country seem overwhelming. I am turning toward my love of designing weaving items for others, sewing, knitting, and crocheting, listening to music, walking, swimming, and tuning out the chaos that seems to be reigning over our lives. It's a hard balance to try to stay abreast of the news and not become overwhelmed with everyone's' opinions. I find that keeping my hands busy also keeps my mind busy and focused on beautiful things. I can easily go "down the rabbit hole" over social media comments and what the algorithm sends me, so my cure is to deliberately walk away from the television, news, and others' opinions. I don't want an algorithm controlling my decisions and emotions.

I also find myself planning for spring, thinking about gardening and flowers. A couple of years ago I'd designed and planned a spiral garden. I used the blocks I had at hand, and I planted a plethora of different flowers, trying to time their growth and blooming so I had something beautiful to look at all summer long. It became an out-of-control flower garden that the birds love to hide in, full of butterflies and hummingbirds. This

year I hope to create some raised beds for vegetables and maybe add more flowerbeds, because I can never have enough beauty of nature in my life.

I hope you can find beauty in your life and know with surety that spring will come with its warmth and beauty, just as Christ has promised to return to us.

In Christ,
Eunice Peterson
Congregational President

Admin's Turn

It's February, the month of hearts and love. What better way to show our love of nourishing minds, bodies, and souls than to spotlight our Monday Night Community Ministries! Kie Zelms and I worked on creating a page on our website that shows all the ways we are nourishing our community on Monday nights! Click on the picture above and check out how we show God's love in the world!

I hope you are enjoying Jim Curtis' Angel class on Sunday mornings! Just to give you a little teaser, Jim has some great plans for Faith's Adult Education! I don't want to give too much away, but we are excited to see the growth of our Adult Education. Check out Jim's class, chat with him, and watch the March newsletter with a plan and next

class information! Very exciting times!!!!

Can you believe Lent is here? It feels like we just finished Christmas and here we are in Lent! Check out the newsletter with all that is happening for Lent, starting with Shrove Tuesday and the burning of the palms on February 17th. Do you remember where you set your palms from last year? Bring them on the 17th! If you don't, no worries, we will have some for you to add to the burn. Then, we get to eat pancakes! This has become a favorite part of Lent for many of us!

On February 18th we will have the traditional Ash Wednesday worship with the imposition of ashes. Remember, even though this is on a Wednesday, we do NOT have a meal before the worship service at 6:30pm.

Kristin has designed an amazing Lenten mid-week worship on Prayer. I hope you will make every effort to join us on Wednesday evenings for the 5-weeks of Lent. There is something special in each of those weeks that you will not want to miss! Also, we will have a soup supper at 5:30pm before worship.

There are two very easy ways to find all things Faith related in the palm of your hand. Do you have the church app yet? If not, you may wish to have it. It gives you easy access to all of Faith's social and online information. It is also a way to send notifications of unexpected changes in the worship schedule. You can get this in your app store or https://tithely.app.link/faithofallon.

I don't know if you noticed, but we don't print church directories anymore. Instead, we have our directory in the cloud. This means, you can sign up to create a log in with Breeze and have access to not only your information but also contact information for your Faith friends. Please reach out to me if you wish to receive an invitation to Breeze.

As always, if you have any questions or need help getting connected here at Faith, please reach out to me. I would love to help you find your way here at Faith!

Janet Hernandez, AdminCoordinator

Youth & Children

Youth Ministry Update: February 2026
After a joyful and high-energy Advent season this past December, our youth programs enjoyed a well-deserved, laid-back January. It was a wonderful time to reset and prepare for the exciting spring semester ahead.

Welcome Back, Alexis Farmer!

We are thrilled to officially welcome Alexis Farmer back to our leadership team! Alexis is returning to lead all youth groups and oversee our high school programming. Her passion for our students is a gift, and we are so blessed to have her back in the fold.

First Holy Communion

Our 5th graders began their First Holy Communion classes on January 18. They have been working hard to understand the significance of the sacrament, including working on making their Chalices and baking bread as we look forward to celebrating with them as they receive their First Communion on **Sunday, February 15**.

Be Like Jesus (BLJ) Registration

Registrations are now open for our "Be Like Jesus" event! We are looking for both participants and volunteers to make this weekend a success. **The registration deadline is February 8.**

ELCA Extravaganza Conference

From January 30 to February 2, Lene Shepherd and I have the privilege of attending the ELCA Extravaganza Conference in nearby St. Louis. we are looking forward to a refreshing time of professional development and spiritual renewal, and are excited to implement several new ideas we will bring back to share with our youth.

Senior Graduation Blankets

The graduation season is approaching faster than it seems! As our seniors have been signing up for their graduation blankets, I have successfully matched each student with a volunteer blanket maker. These handmade gifts are a beautiful tradition representing the warmth and cover of our congregation's prayers.

Looking Ahead to Lent

As we enter the season of Lent, I am looking forward to seeing our families at our Shrove Tuesday Palm Burn and Pancake dinner and at the Wednesday night dinners and the Holden Evening Prayer services. These mid-week gatherings are a cornerstone of our community life, and I hope to see you there for food, fellowship, and reflection.

Grace & Peace
Kathy Turner
Youth Director

Music Notes

February brings to us many musical opportunities to worship Jesus!

- Lent is fast approaching! Our Ash Wednesday service on February 18 will begin at 6:30 pm. This very introspective and important service will be a reminder of just what price our Savior paid for us. We will have the imposition of ashes and communion in this service. Please mark your calendars.
- Make plans to attend our upcoming midweek Lenten Services as we focus on The Practice of Prayer. Each week will focus on a specific part of the practice of prayer through a spotlight musician. This year, we will have all styles of music including classical, contemporary, gospel, Celtic, instrumental and vocal. Each night will be a special night you don't want to miss. Services begin at 6:30 pm each night. Soup supper with a Free-will offering begins at 5:30pm. Childcare available during the service.

- Feb 25 – The Purpose of Prayer
- Mar 4 – The Place of Prayer
- Mar 11 – The Posture of Prayer
- Mar 18 – The Petitions of Prayer
- Mar 25 – The Perception of Prayer

- We are looking for more volunteers to add to our Multimedia rotation and our Altar Guild. If you are interested in learning to serve both in our livestream and sound booth areas during services, please let me know directly for individual training. Keep an eye out for training dates for Altar Guild or talk with Lin Haskett, Penny Cooper, or Jane Wieland about being trained.
- February is full of many great small group and individual musical selections. We have so many talented individuals. If you are interested in using your skills in future services, please contact me about dates and possible musical selections!

Tune your heart to sing His praise,
Kristin Runyan

Financial Secretary Report

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT

DECEMBER 31, 2025

GENERAL FUND RECEIPTS	**2025 *YTD* ACTUAL**	***2025 YTD BUDGETED***	***Difference* of ACTUAL to *BUDGET***	**2025 Full Year BUDGET**
Pledged Giving*	658,452.60	*593,438.00*	65,014.60	593,438.00
Non-Pledged Giving	111,955.43	*75,000.00*	36,955.43	75,000.00
Plate Offering	8,357.21	*8,500.00*	(142.79)	8,500.00
Total General Fund Offerings	**778,765.24**	***676,938.00***	**101,827.24**	**676,938.00**
Other Income**	4,035.14	*4,850.00*	(814.86)	4.850.00
TOTAL General Fund Receipts* **	**782,800.38**	***681,788.00***	**101,012.38**	**681,788.00**
% of Full Year Budget Received versus Budgeted	**114.8%**	***100%***		

NOTES: *Actual Figures are year-to-date through DECEMBER 31 2025*.

*The *$*658,452.60 of **Pledged Giving** is **$65,014.60 MORE** than the Budgeted (Expected) amount of $*593,438* through DECEMBER 31. *This amount includes $86,136 in Prepaid Pledges which have been transferred from Prepaid Pledges Allocated to General Fund this year through DECEMBER 31. All Prepaid pledges received in 2024 for 2025 have now been transferred into the General Fund.*

The total General Fund Pledges received/recorded at budget approval in November 2024, were $593,428. General Fund Pledges have increased to $637,778 currently, which accounts for much of the positive difference of Pledged Giving YTD as compared to budgeted (expected) giving.

***__Total General Fund Receipts__** of $782,800.38 were **$101,012.38 more** than the Budgeted (Expected) amount of $681,788 and were 114.8% of the yearly expected amount. The Budgeted expected percentage (12/12 of yearly budget) would be 100%.

__Other Income__ includes Thrivent Choice Dollars, Credit card rewards, and checking account interest which go into the General Fund.

PHASE 2 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE:

As a result of our Capital Campaign "Preparing Space for Grace", Faith Lutheran has received pledges from 105 Households totaling **$1,654,288** over three years from 6/1/2024 through 5/31/2027.

From 1/1/2024 through 12/31/2025, Faith has received a total of **$1,306,316.64 in** contributions from Faith givers for Phase 2, which is **79%** of the total pledges received.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jan Mikkelson, Financial Secretary

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORT – December 31, 2025

	Actual Dec 2025	Actual YTD 2025	Budget Projected (100%)	Actual YTD Received/ Expensed (%)
Total Budget Giving – Pledged/Unpledged	75,695.97	770,408.03	668,438.00	115.3%
Budget Giving - Plate	1,634.56	8,357.21	8,500.00	98.3%
Total Budget Giving	**77,330.53**	**778,765.24**	**676,938.00**	**115.0%**
Total Other Additions	750.36	10,065.00	4,850.00	
Total Budget + Other Additions	**78,080.89**	**788,830.24**	**681,788.00**	**115.7%**
Board Expenses (Discretionary)	8,511.02	77,279.49	75,340.00	96.1%
Building/Equipment Expenses (Fixed)	8,433.91	117,613.28	129,400.00	90.3%
Staff Salary Expenses (Fixed)	39,681.80	442,820.96	459,254.00	96.4%
Staff Support Expenses (Fixed)	1,196.86	15,659.27	16,975.00	91.4%
Mission Support (Benevolence)	7,733.18	77,877.95	67,694.00	115.0%
Total General Fund Expensed	**65,536.77**	**731,250.95**	**748,662.80**	**97.7%**
Variance * **	**+12,544.12**	**+57,579.29**	**(68,875.00)**	
Special Offerings Received ** **	**61,694.87**	**224,072.70**		
Phase 2 Capital Campaign Received	**80,851.02**	**350,140.28**		
Total Rcvd (General+Special+Capital Campaign)	**219,876.42**	**1,352,978.22**		

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS BALANCE – December 31, 2025

Carrollton Bank Checking	24,962.92
Carrollton Bank Money Market	38,097.72
Fidelity Investment	427,154.15
Fidelity Endowment Investment	76,029.15
Fidelity Legacy Gift Investment	468,455.97
TOTAL	**$1,034,699.91**

FUND ACCOUNTS BALANCE – December 31, 2025

Allocated Funds (Restricted/Designated)	$262,112.08
Carryover Fund	97,968.27
Endowment Fund	76,000.00
Fidelity Endowment Investment Gain	29.15
Fidelity Legacy Gift Investment	468,455.96
Fidelity Investment Gain	51,963.17
General/Budget Fund	61,168.36
Mission Support (Benevolence)	15,476.47
Phase 2 Capital Campaign Fund	1,526.45
TOTAL	**$1,034,699.91**

LOAN STATUS

	Dec 1 BAL	Interest Paid	Principal Paid	Addnl Principal	Dec 31 BAL
Faith Ctr Mortgage	$275,497.59	$918.33	$497.59	0	$275,000.00
Phase 2 Const loan	$280,000.00	$1,511.80		$98,000.00	182,000.00

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PHASE 2 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FUND STATUS – December 31, 2025 – (9/01/2023 thru 12/31/2025)

Pledged amount	Received	Pledge Remaining	Total Expensed	Dec 31 BAL
$1,654,288.00	$1,314,061.02	$340,227.00	$1,312,534.57	$1,526.45

Respectfully submitted.
Susan Carlson, Accounting Manager

Programs for Young Children Happenings

Programs for Young Children Happenings: Can you believe we're already planning for next school year? At the end of January, **we will open pre-registration for the 2026-2027 school year.** We will continue our regular programming, to include Playgroup, Toddler Time, Preschool, Pre-kindergarten, Enrichment, and STEAM. Specific class descriptions and **enrollment forms are available at www.faithpyc.com**. **Enrollment opens for current PYC families and Faith Lutheran church members on January 26**. We will then open up registration for new families on February 2. We anticipate filling very quickly this school year. If you are interested, please don't delay in contacting us!

Here's a brief description of our programs:
Playgroup – Playgroup is designed for children under the age of 3 to attend with a caregiver. Children become comfortable in the PYC environment while feeling secure with the caregiver nearby. Art exploration, music time, and playtime are set up for enjoyment together.

Toddler Time – This parent morning out program for two year olds meets the social needs of toddlers before entering preschool. Activities include playtime, music, snack, and art experiences, as well as outdoor or indoor large motor time. Options for this class include one day or two day.

Preschool – With a three day or two day option, our preschool programs are for 3-4 year olds. These classes are geared toward developing social skills and learning to follow directions, getting along in a group, making independent choices, and being exposed to play-based activities that foster learning.

PreK (with an enrichment option) – Children must be 4 on or before September 1 of the current school year to attend our PreK class. PreK is full of play-based, nature focused experiences that prepare them for kindergarten the following year. Students also have the opportunity to enroll in a STEAM Monday class to focus on hands-on science, engineering, and math activities.

We hope you'll **help us spread the word** about the high quality, play-based, part-day programs we offer at PYC. Our school cultivates a loving environment for children to grow intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It's also a beautiful community of young families who are forever connected by their time at PYC together. It's a special place!

Blessings,
PYC Oversight Committee
Kristin Flor, Director

Phase 3 Update

Phase 3 is moving forward. This past month, we established the architecture firm selection method and started this critical decision process. Working with our Construction Management Company, Poettker Construction, a list of six companies was drawn up as potential candidates to be the architectural firm we will work with on this project. Each of the companies has a local presence, has experience designing educational facilities, and has worked with churches.

A Request for Qualifications was issued on January 14th to those companies which required a 50-page proposal from interested companies. We hosted a proposal meeting at the church where companies were able to get a walk-through of our facilities and ask questions. The proposals are due the second week of February when we will develop a short-list of candidates to come back for an interview and questions.

LWR QUILTERS

Next meeting is February 9 at 2PM in the Faith Center. All are welcome; no sewing experience needed!

Birthday's and Anniversaries

Feb 1 Jim Burton
Feb 2 Bob Frisse, Robyn Frederking
Feb 3 Gretchen Best
Feb 5 Pam Duitsman
Feb 7 Lilly Knapp
Feb 10 Alex Horesji
Feb 11 Steve Heinrich, Kristin Flor
Feb 14 Marvene Hernke
Feb 15 Jean Claxton
Feb 17 Jason Biggs
Feb 18 Rebecca Micheletti
Feb 21 Declen Wood
Feb 22 Paul Ahlvin
Feb 24 Trevor Knapp
Feb 25 David Cooper
Feb 26 Lucas Eccher, Julian Eiler
Feb 27 Alyssa Frederking
Feb 28 Lisa Melzer

Feb 3 Bill & Gloria Souser, 52 years
Feb 9 Tyler Horejsi & JoAnne Sukus, 18 years
Feb 11 James & Barbara Curtis, 48 years
Feb 14 Timothy & Eunice Peterson, 44 years
Keith & Barbara Hollis, 33 years

Prayers

Please notify the church office if any of these names can be taken off the list

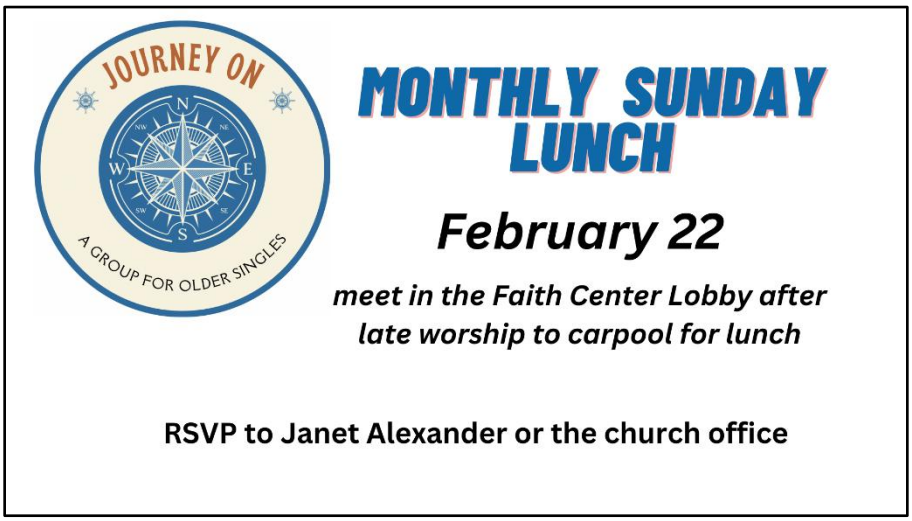
Health Concerns:

Jackie Mitchell, Joslyn Anderson, Janet Middendorf, Pat Schultz, Marie Blanchard, Jane Bergo, Diane Runyan, Kie Zelms, Jason Larson, Charlie Claxton, Bob Skogh, Jeremy Alf, Kendra Dhaene, Keith Hamann, Kathleen Reichert, Cindy Stepp, Barbie Hollis, Sheri Engel, Karen Miles, Marilyn Dichsen, Meg Corson, Bruce Moeller, Lou Ann Moeller, Taylor Torres, Lori Goessman, Onnie Wargo, Angie Brown, Rodney Brown

Grieving:

Bill Souser, loss of brother-in-law
Denise Burton, loss of father
Carol Bandre, loss of sister
Debbie Cyr, loss of father
Family & friends of Terri Ahlvin
John & Sheila Hellrung, loss of nephew
Rodney Brown, loss of brother
Bill Brunner, loss of niece
Family & friends of Wendy McDonnell
Family & friends of Elaine Entrikin
Family & friends of Jerry Bowen
Lisa Melzer, loss of mother
Family & friends of Galen Pool

Family & friends of Bob Austen
Family & friends of Sandy Fix
Family & friends of Doug Bush
Charlotte Kraus, loss of sister
Carson Kenneth, loss of great-uncle
Family & friends of Jim Kraus



Community Meals
Mondays, February 2, 9, 23
5-6:30 pm, Faith Center

Come and enjoy a hot meal prepared for you, your family, friends, and anyone else.
Take-outs are always available.

Please spread the word - all are welcome!

If you want to represent Faith as a volunteer server, cleaner, or cook's helper on a Monday night, please contact Betsy Layfield at betsylayfield@gmail.com or 618-791-5070.

FAITH'S SHOWER MINISTRY

Need a hot shower?

Need to do a couple loads of laundry?

Call 618-632-5562 to schedule an appointment

Faith Lutheran Church
520 E. Hwy 50 O'Fallon, IL

LOADS OF LOVE
a ministry of
Faith Lutheran Church

Healing Prayer
Every Monday During Community Meals
5-6:30 pm, FCC1

Are you suffering pain, disease, depression, spiritual issues, or anything else for which you'd like prayer? God wants to minister to you! The Faith Healing Team is offering Healing Prayer with the laying on of hands and anointing. Questions? Contact John Hellrung at john.hellrung@gmail.com.

Child care is available Sundays from birth to five years old during all worship services!
Contact Kristin Howe with your questions at nurserymanager@faithofallon.org or 618-972-8622.

2026 Flowers & Eternal Candle
Sign-up chart outside Janet's office.
Flowers - $30 for two vases
Eternal Candle - $10 for the month

Winter Weather Advisory
Cancellations and/or scheduling changes for Faith Lutheran Church can be found:
Website: www.faithonline.org
Faith Lutheran Church Facebook
On our church app
Television: Channels 4, 5, and FOX
If there is severe weather on a Sunday morning and you are a worship volunteer, your safety is the most important thing.
Use your best judgment.

Faith Lutheran Church
We exist to Nourish Minds, Bodies, and Souls

Church Office Hours
Monday - Friday
9 am - 3 pm
618-632-5562

Sunday Worship
9 and 10:30 am
Sunday School at 9 am

faith@faithofallon.org

Ministers: People of Faith
Senior Pastor: Rev. Candice Wassell

Newsletter articles due the
3rd Sunday of the month.

Newsletter Editor:
OPEN

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Church App