

faithforward

september 2021



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Fall Sermon Series

faithforward

is a publication on the mission and ministry of Faith Lutheran Church.

Do you have a story idea?
Email it to us:
denniss@faithfl.org

ON THE COVER: Rev. Justin Grimm from the St. Paul Area Synod staff takes a selfie with the congregation before he preaches on August 1.



A Resilient Church

What's it like to look out at the congregation from my view over the last 18 months?

Honestly, a bit weird.

From the earliest days of an empty sanctuary last March to gatherings this spring with 50 people that felt “packed”, every time I see someone return to worship or come to the church for an activity, it feels like a long-lost friend has returned.

Maybe you've felt that too.

This summer, we have seen larger in person gatherings because vaccination rates increased, and the CDC guidelines advised that it was safe to be unmasked if vaccinated.

I loved inviting vaccinated members to remove masks in worship in June. There was such a feeling of hope and we all legitimately thought the worst of the coronavirus was behind us. Planning for the fall began with a different level of

energy—knowing people could be together was exciting.

Then the words delta variant became real.

Vaccinated individuals could still test positive for Covid and transmit the disease to others—but the good news is that vaccinated individuals are much less likely to experience symptoms that require hospitalization or death.

As the state fair and the return to school is nearly upon us, I am personally nervous about what will happen to our youngest members of Faith who are unvaccinated and exposed. The news around the country paints a bleak picture for places that have returned to school and seen spikes in transmission and overflowing ICU's and PICU's (pediatric intensive care units).

At Faith, our council and staff continue to monitor the Minnesota Department of Health recom-

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I Spy.....

It's time to play "I spy!" and provide updates on things happening connected to worship at Faith

First up... I DON'T spy something red and candle-y, where is the eternal flame?

The eternal flame, also known as the red candle that hovers right above the altar, was removed for safe keeping this summer.



The pulley system that is used to raise and lower the candle was down to the last thread. Have no fear, the candle will return. We've commissioned Glenn Terry, an artist from the congregation, to repurpose the candle so it can become a permanent and safe fixture of the sanctuary again soon. Thanks for noticing!

I spy something smaller and less wordy.

Ah, the worship bulletin has shrunk. Since most of the order of service is visible on the screens, the printed bulletin with everything in the service is redundant. To reduce the amount of paper used each week, the new format of this bulletin will provide the scripture passages and a place for you to write down prayer requests or worship notes for personal follow up. Thank

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mendations and we have regular discussions about how this impacts our ability to safely worship.

In mid-August, Washington County finally moved from Substantial to High level of Covid transmission.

In the words of Martin Luther, what does this mean for us?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our church has looked out for each other. We took precautions and loved our neighbors. We've worn masks in public and many of us got a vaccine when it became available. Now is the time to take care of our youngest members. **I strongly recommend wearing**

you for helping us in our creation care efforts!

I spy something cranberry on a cart.

That would be the hymnals. The hymnals were removed from the pews due to Covid, but we haven't returned them while we wait for the pews to be revarnished. If you'd like to sing along during the 9 am service and want the music in front of you, help yourself to a hymnal at the back of the sanctuary when you arrive and please return it when worship is done.

I spy something cordy and speakery.

As Daniel Diemer, from the Faith A/V team writes on page 6-7, we are waiting for the new soundboard to arrive. Because the old board needs cords to plug into sound, the speakers at the front are temporary until the new system is installed. With more cords along the left side of the sanctuary, access to those pews is restricted so we don't have an accidental from someone tripping. We are all excited for the cords to disappear again, but appreciate your patience!

Thanks for playing "I Spy" with me—look around the outside of the building for new developments happening in the prairie restoration and the 2nd Columbarium in the Prayer Garden!

-Pastor John

masks again when you are in worship and in larger crowds and get vaccinated if you are not already. Thank you to everyone who has re-adjusted to this recommendation over the last few weeks.

One of the most important traits over the long history and tradition of Faith Lutheran is resiliency—being able to withstand challenges and obstacles by leaning into our relationships with each other and trusting in God. In this next (and hopefully last) wave of a world-wide pandemic, we lean into resilience once more and care for each other. We live in uncertain times, but we are led by the Spirit to share God's grace. Thank you, Faith!

Peace, Pastor John

NOW Is the Time to Worship



When the discussion around Faith's August newsletter centered on the idea of "worship" news and updates, the refrain of the contemporary hymn, "Come, Now is the Time to Worship", by Brian Doerksen ran through my mind.

*Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are to worship
Come, just as you are before your God
Come*

Since March 2020 our definition of and experience with "worship" has expanded and blossomed in new and exciting ways here at Faith. We are provided the opportunity to listen to/watch/attend worship "... just as you are before your God." While it is wonderful to gather again, in person, just as we are, it is also awesome to know that if we are at home, in the car, at a cabin, or elsewhere in the country, we can - thanks to the on-demand links - be part of the worship community at Faith Lutheran at any time. Thanks be to God for all the staff and volunteers who have given tirelessly of their time to make worship happen seamlessly.

Brian and I have so appreciated being part of the Facebook stream on Sunday mornings,

being able to say, "Good Morning, Faith," while maintaining safety protocols at home. We've appreciated being able to **feel comfortable wearing a mask at worship**, even though we are fully vaccinated, because Faith has made us feel comfortable ... "coming as we are..."

My prayer for all of us in the days ahead: May we look for ways to be inviting to all, sharing God's grace, and working diligently to keep each other safe and protected. May we continue to worship God joyfully from wherever, whenever! May God guide us to be hands of service and love in this community and the world.

Wherever you are.... come just as you are!
Come.

-Jennifer Tolzmann, Faith Council President

Music in the time of COVID

Music ministry at Faith has taken on a new look throughout our pandemic adjustments. We have seen musicians of all ages present their gifts live in worship, on video, and in music collaborations from their homes. We have welcomed familiar faces and new faces into ministry as so many have taken advantage of the new opportunities we have discovered during this unique and changing time. I am so grateful for each and every person who has shared their amazing music to enhance our online and in person worship experience. Thank you to our musicians and thank you to our congregation for lifting them up and for sharing how much you appreciate all they have done!



Moving forward, we continue to embrace the changes as we enter another year of programming. 9:00 worship will see members of the Faith Choir leading our singing from within the congregation, as song leaders for our hymns, as well as stepping out from the congregation to present the anthems we've prepared each week in worship. Special music will continue to be a time where small groups and individuals can enter into music ministry in worship or through a prerecorded video. Alan Ball will continue to enrich our worship with preludes and postludes and skillfully guiding our hymn singing. The Bells of Faith, led by Dean Jensen, will move from the screen to playing live each month in worship! The music for 10:30 worship will continue to be guided by our Worship Band: Kyle Trapp, Scott Prins, Elizabeth Forsund, Lydia Ross and myself.

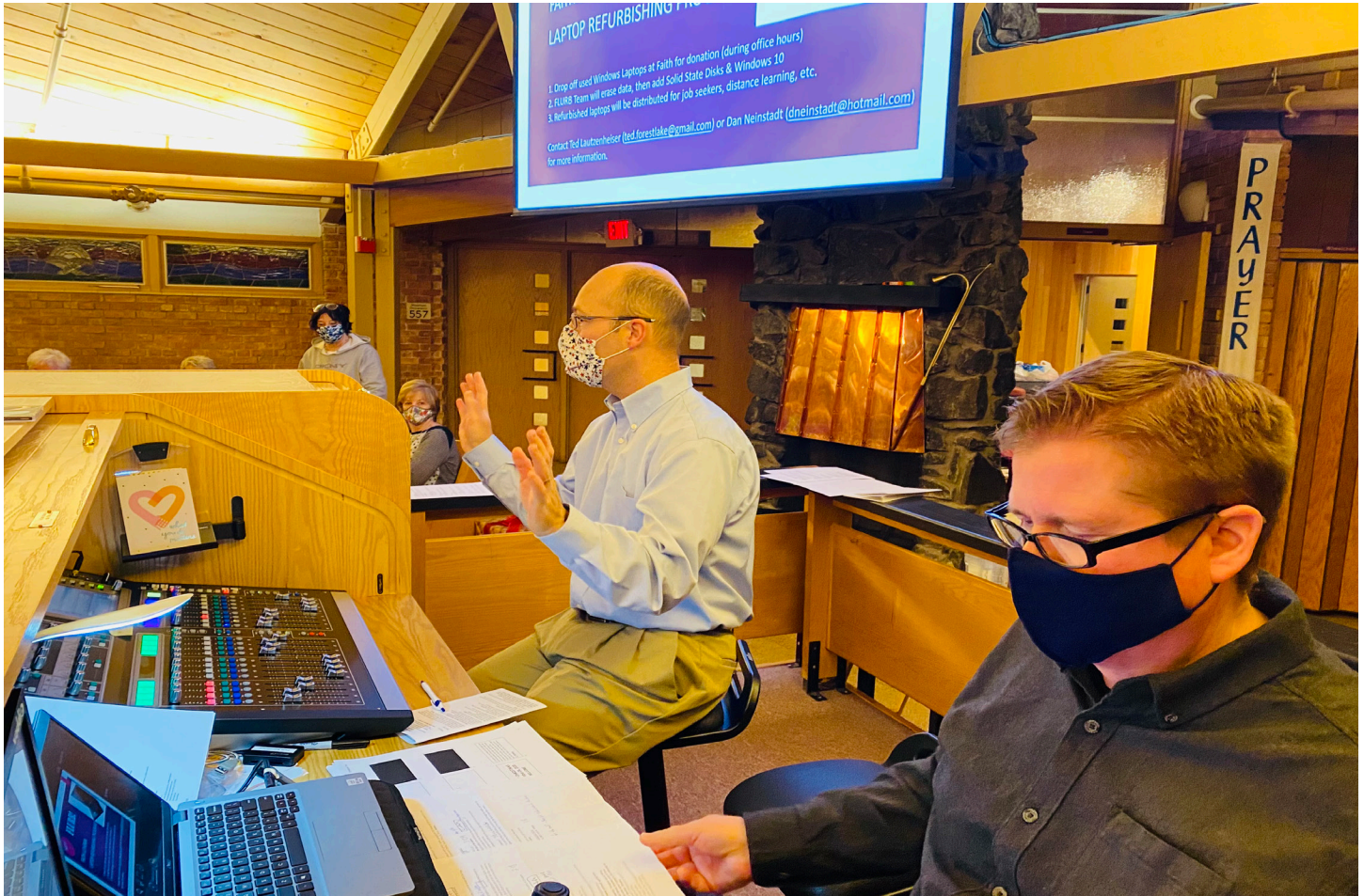
It has been a joy for me to be included in the work of planning and participating in the music for both the 9:00 and now 10:30 services and to work with this wide array of musicians and styles of music that express the Word in so many ways.

We have adapted to the changing ways we can make music throughout this pandemic and in doing so, we have found new ways to include more people in music ministry. The choices for making music are so rich: participating alone or with a group of your choosing, participating from your home, and participating live in the sanctuary. And the door is wide open for anyone, any age, any interest, any skill to find themselves in music ministry.

You are invited. You are welcome. Let me know you are interested, and I will look forward to working together with you!

-Linda Burk, Traditional Worship Arts Director

Wired for Sound



Greetings from the soundbooth!

As a member of the Faith A/V team, I would like to update you on the current status of our technical setup in the sanctuary. To recap why I'm giving you an update, our soundboard crashed on May 5th. We had our A/V vendor come out and verify that the soundboard was indeed a goner. Our crash was actually the first time the vendor has seen this problem from this manufacturer. Shortly thereafter, we placed an order for a new one to replace it. The original estimate for installation was mid-June. Then July. Then August. As with many things during this pandemic, it's difficult for supply chains to keep up. So we continue to patiently wait for our new soundboard to arrive.

Because the new soundboard is from the same manufacturer as the old one, it is compatible with all of our other sound equipment. Once it arrives, it should be just a few hours to get everything hooked up and have us working properly again.

Until the new one arrives, our sound is running through the soundboard from the Gym. We brought that into the sanctuary, hooked up a few speakers and enough microphones to be able to hear the organ, piano, band, Pastor John and Deacon Nina. On the positive side, it's a good listening experience in the sanctuary and we can send sound to both the radio and the livestream.

However, several inconveniences remain. We can't send sound to the speakers in the narthex. We have temporary wires on the floor all over the sanctuary. We don't have enough inputs on the soundboard to hear all of the people and instruments that we would like to. We can't close the soundbooth cabinets because of all the temporary wires. Recording music is more difficult. We can't use the normal setup for streaming. We're getting by, but we're excited for the new soundboard to get here so we can remove the temporary solutions.

In spite of the downsides, we are quite fortunate that only one piece of equipment failed. The

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video cameras (including a new one in the back of the sanctuary) are working perfectly. We were able to easily hook up all of the wireless microphones to the current soundboard, allowing us many options for hearing people and instruments. We actually had a sound-

board in the Gym that we could repurpose. We had extra speakers that now sit on high tables in front of the pews, allowing us to hear in the sanctuary. (The speakers on the ceiling won't work until the new soundboard arrives.) The laptops for running the slides and stream have been perfect. We count our technical blessings whenever we can. Our hope is that your experience isn't too different than it was with the old soundboard. Just ours.

If you're interested in learning more about our A/V setup and maybe even helping out once in a while, we're always happy to have new faces.

We have one person running sound and another running video on Sundays. Even if you'd like to just shadow us for either of those roles for a service, please reach out. We would be delighted to hear from you.

Thanks,
- Daniel Diemer, Faith A/V Team

Refugee Baby Bundles Faith Feeds Families



We have been busy putting together baby bundles for future mamas in the refugee community. For one baby due in October, Faith is supplying a welcome basket of diapers, diaper bag, wipes, gift set (shampoo, wash, lotion, Desitin), sleepers, onesies, plates, bowls, spoons, sippy cups, teethers, some toys, a stroller, an eating chair, and a baby monitor.

The other 5 baby bundles for future babies will include the diapers, gift set, sleeper, onesies, and a Target gift card.

We are blessed to have donations and grant money to provide these important items to our new neighbors in Minnesota. Thank you, Faith for sharing God's love and welcome. Thanks be to God!!

-Nancy Mollner, Chair Refugee Outreach

The YMCA is providing free non-perishable food packs with no questions asked, available during all open hours in the lobby vestibule of their Forest Lake location for individuals and families. Every Meal has partnered with Y of the North and Faith Lutheran Church to provide fresh food in Forest Lake to ensure all have access to healthy foods this summer. We will continue to communicate about any additional food distribution opportunities and events at the Y.



The Stories We Love...



...with a twist!

August 29-
October 1

Our school year kicks off with a special day! “Rally Day” is our Faith Fall Kickoff with carnival games and a meal after worship. During worship, we will celebrate Christmas in August—hear the good news of the birth of our Savior in Bethlehem. Then, in the month of September, we lift up stories that inspire and encourage our faith. The Good Samaritan. The Prodigal Son. The Body of Christ. We are led by the Spirit to share God’s grace. These stories help us live that out!

Our annual Women of Faith Sunday preacher brings guest Kaycee Stanley. Her organization, Reel Hope Project, helps makes videos of every child in Minnesota awaiting adoption in an

effort to partner them with a forever family.

Our series “concludes” with the greatest story ever told. Resurrection. Why are we visiting the Christmas and Easter stories out of “season”? The stories are like comfort food. Right now, as we embrace so much sadness and despair across the world with pandemic, wildfires, and war—the message of God’s love inbreaking into our world can continue to change our hearts and provide healing. I hope you join us in person or online and tell a friend who might need to hear a good word, to join you.

The Stories We Love...

August 29th: Luke 2:1-20, New Beginnings

Sept 5: The Good Samaritan, Luke 10: 25-37

Sept 12: The Prodigal Church. Luke 15:11-32

Sept 19: We are the Body, 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

Sept 26: Women of Faith Sunday, John 19:25b-27

Oct 1: We Rise Together, Luke 24:1-12

...with a twist!

August 29-
October 1