

# Faith Notes

2576 Browncroft Blvd. Rochester, NY 14625 Office: (585)381-3970 [faithpenfield.org](http://faithpenfield.org)

## January 2026



*Dear God,*

*Thank You for new beginnings. What an incredible month this is with a fresh year's potential stretched out before me. I want to be found faithful this year in each and every opportunity You bring to me. Thank You, Lord, for new beginnings. I pray this in Jesus' name.*

*Amen.*

**CONNECT \* GROW \* SERVE**

## Faith Lutheran Church Faith Child Care and Nursery School

**2576 Browncroft Boulevard, Rochester, New York 14625-1530**

**Phone:** (585) 381-3970

**Phone:** (585) 385-2360

**Office Hours:** Mon-Thur, 9am-4pm; Fri, 9am-12pm

**Hours:** 7:00am-5:30pm

**Website:** [www.faithpenfield.org](http://www.faithpenfield.org)

**Website:** <https://faithpenfield.org/faith-child-care>

### Church Staff and Faith Child Care Staff

#### PASTORAL and EDUCATION

##### PASTOR

Rev. Peter Johnson

ext. 16

[flypenfield@gmail.com](mailto:flypenfield@gmail.com)

Direct Line 485-0146

Ella Gilzean - DCE Intern

[ella@faithpenfield.org](mailto:ella@faithpenfield.org)

Shannon Wolf - Interim Sunday

School Director

[sundayschool@faithpenfield.org](mailto:sundayschool@faithpenfield.org)

Stephanie Johnson - Interim VBS

Director

[vbs@faithpenfield.org](mailto:vbs@faithpenfield.org)

Taylor Saunders - Nursery

Dave Young - Temporary

Education Assistant

[edassistant@faithpenfield.org](mailto:edassistant@faithpenfield.org)

#### MUSIC

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ ORGANIST

Dianne Christensen

ext. 17

[dianne@faithpenfield.org](mailto:dianne@faithpenfield.org)

DIRECTOR OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Elizabeth Balentine

ext. 11

[elizabeth@faithpenfield.org](mailto:elizabeth@faithpenfield.org)

#### OFFICE

CHURCH SECRETARY

Kris Cronk

ext. 10

[secretary@faithpenfield.org](mailto:secretary@faithpenfield.org)

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Kay Gerlach

ext. 12

[finance@faithpenfield.org](mailto:finance@faithpenfield.org)

Direct Line 485-0142

FINANCE SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Beth Camann

ext. 18

[supportadmin@faithpenfield.org](mailto:supportadmin@faithpenfield.org)

#### BUILDINGS & GROUNDS MANAGER

Kurt Finkbeiner

ext. 15

[building@faithpenfield.org](mailto:building@faithpenfield.org)

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL ARTS

Jason Gerlach

Ext. 13

[livestream@faithpenfield.org](mailto:livestream@faithpenfield.org)

SOUND TECH LEAD

Michael Balentine

[soundtech@faithpenfield.org](mailto:soundtech@faithpenfield.org)

#### FCCNS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mari-Beth Schembri

381-3970 ext. 21

[mbschembri@fccnschildcare.com](mailto:mbschembri@fccnschildcare.com)

Direct Line 485-0151

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND  
OPERATIONS

Lori Connolly

381-3970 ext. 20

[laconnolly@fccnschildcare.com](mailto:laconnolly@fccnschildcare.com)

Direct Line 485-0150



**Traditional Worship---8:30 AM Sundays**

In-House and Livestreamed

**Contemporary Worship---10:45 AM Sundays**

In-House and Livestreamed

Holy Communion Celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays

### ***Christian Education Opportunities***

**Sunday School Classes (Age 3 through Grade 6), Sundays, 9:45-10:40am**

**Jr. FLY Confirmation (Youth in grades 7-8), Sundays, 9:45-10:40am**

**Sr. FLY Bible Class (Youth in grades 9-12), Sundays, 9:45-10:40am**

**Sunday Night FLY (Youth in grades 7-12), 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays, 7-8:45pm**

**Adult Bible Study Class – Sundays, 9:45-10:40am**

## Pastor Peter's Perspective



*"Come, follow me," Jesus said... At once they left their nets and followed him." -Matthew 4:19-20*

We have a Director of Christian Education (DCE) Intern joining us this month! Ella Gilzean is moving here from Concordia University, Nebraska and will be serving alongside Faith for a year as an intern. This year-long internship is the final requirement for her to become a DCE in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS). Her primary responsibilities at Faith will be to assist with our children's and youth ministries. This includes helping with Sunday School, children's events, VBS, FLY, FCCNS chapels, children's messages, and other ministry opportunities. She has been assigned tasks and goal-setting from Concordia Nebraska and our church leadership. As Ella's on-site supervisor, we'll be working closely together in team ministry over the coming year. I am beyond excited to serve with Ella and see how God works through her this year!

It is important to know that Ella is a student with us. She is at Faith Lutheran to learn many things regarding the DCE role, while growing in her leadership abilities and faith in Jesus Christ. As a former DCE Intern myself, I know that this will be an exciting, nerve-wracking, fun, difficult, and joyful time for Ella (and sometimes all those emotions at once)! And that's all okay. God has called Ella to follow Him from California to Nebraska, and now to New York to share the Gospel of Jesus with all ages. What an adventure Ella is on and we are blessed to be part of it!

My friends, we are also on a journey of learning what it means to follow Jesus and using your God-given gifts to serve your neighbors, while pointing them to Jesus. Ella is not alone in this department. We all have "left our nets" and are following Jesus together in this great adventure of life in Him. Following Jesus together becomes tangible in the ways we open our lives to one another.

Throughout 2026, I invite you to take Ella out for a meal, invite her to your home, send her encouraging notes, pray for her by name, and learn her story. These simple acts of hospitality and care are holy work. They are part of how we, as the Body of Christ, come alongside someone God has called to serve His Church. You are helping form a future church worker, not only by what you say, but by how you love.

At the same time, Ella's presence among us is not just about what she will give, but about what God will do through all of us together. Her questions, energy, creativity, and willingness to learn will certainly bless our children and youth – and they will also challenge us to see ministry with fresh eyes. God often uses interns to remind us why we do what we do in the first place: make disciples.

As Ella learns what it means to serve as a DCE, may we also be reminded that following Jesus is a daily calling into relationships, into service, into grace, and into growth. So let's walk together as fellow disciples, trusting that the same Lord who called the fishermen by the Sea of Galilee is still at work here at Faith – shaping servants and drawing all generations closer to Himself. Thanks be to God for His Son who loves His Church!

And all God's children said, Amen!

## Adult Education



Pastor Peter will be leading a three-session New Member class on Sunday – **January 4<sup>th</sup>, January 18<sup>th</sup>, and January 25<sup>th</sup>** from 9:45 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. in the Community Room. This is an informal class designed for newcomers, inquiries, and prospective members of our congregation. The class is a time of discussion, discovery, presentation, and inclusion.

We will be officially welcoming anyone who would like to become an official member of Faith on Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Any questions, call the office at 381-3970.

---

### Achievement Hunters

Our society is driven by an obsession with achievement, but as Christians we are called to focus on what God has accomplished instead. How do we live with one foot in each Kingdom and keep a heart for the Kingdom of God. Please join us for adult education hour while we discuss Ecclesiastes, the life of Christ and the apostles to answer this question.

Michael Balentine will be leading this three-session Adult Education class on Sunday – **January 4<sup>th</sup>, January 18<sup>th</sup>, and January 25<sup>th</sup>** from 9:45 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. in the Auditorium.



---

### Welcome our DCE Intern on Jan. 11!

On January 11, our DCE Intern: Ella Gilzean, will be commissioned at both worship services! Her year-long internship in our Children's & Youth Ministries will begin that morning and we'll pray God's blessings over her and our shared ministry together! Then at 9:45 that morning, join us for a special cake & punch reception in the Auditorium where you'll have an opportunity to meet Ella. We look forward to serving alongside Ella and we can't wait to see what God will do next year!

*\*No Education Hour on Jan. 11.*

---

Please join us as we **TAKE DOWN** the Greens from our Christmas celebration on Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at 12:15 beginning with lunch! Sign up is in the Concourse.



If you are receiving **Offering Envelopes** for 2026, they can be found in the Church Office.

## Save the Date from 7LB

On Sunday, February 1, 2026, we will be holding our annual **Voter's Meeting**. All members are invited to attend. Lunch begins at 12:00pm and the meeting will start at 12:30pm in the Auditorium.

More information to follow.

## **Introducing Planning Center & Church Center at Faith**

We're excited to share that over the coming year our congregation will begin using **Planning Center** and **Church Center** - two connected tools that will help us serve, communicate, and care for one another more clearly and consistently. **Planning Center** is the behind-the-scenes system our church staff and ministry leaders will use to organize worship services, schedules, events, groups, communication, and record your contributions. It helps ensure that details don't fall through the cracks, volunteers are supported, and ministry happens in an orderly and thoughtful way - all so our focus can remain on ministering to God's people rather than paperwork.

**Church Center** is the simple, easy-to-use app (and website) that you'll interact with most. Through Church Center, you'll be able to see upcoming events, sign up to serve, join groups, register for events, give securely, and stay connected to what's happening in the life of our church - all in one place. Our hope is that these tools will make it easier for you to stay informed and involved, while helping our church care for one another well. We'll be introducing features gradually and offering guidance along the way, so no one feels rushed or left behind as we take this next step together.

Over the next month, you may receive an email about the **Giving module** which handles your contributions. This email from Faith is designed as a security measure within the program to ensure that it is your wish to have your contributions shared with your spouse.

Later this winter we will be rolling out our **Vacation Bible School registration** through Church Center. More information on how to register and use Church Center will be forthcoming.

Our church staff will be sharing more info about these new tools at our **Annual Voters Meeting** on Feb. 1, 2026.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our church staff. We are excited for how these new tools will enhance how we Connect, Grow, and Serve together in the name of Jesus!



## For November

The ongoing operations of Faith rely entirely on the generosity of the congregation to provide the funding support for the ministries that are so important to us and the community in which we serve.

We give thanks to God for your gifts to the general operating fund. We experienced a 20% unfavorable variance in envelope giving for the month of November but were blessed with a year-to-date favorable budget variance of \$10,004 or 2%.

*We encourage you to prayerfully consider how God is calling you to be a faithful steward of the many gifts He has given you. We deeply appreciate any way in which you choose to participate in and support the many ministries and outreach of Faith that allow us to continue to "Connect, Grow and Serve".*

*God reminds us in 1 Peter 4:10, "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."*

### FAITH'S STEWARDSHIP RESPONSE FOR PRIOR MONTH:

#### ENVELOPE GIVING

	Voter Approved November 2025	Actual	Variance from Budget	% Variance	Prior Year Actual
Monthly Total	\$62,000	\$49,359	(\$12,641)	-20%	\$65,084
Year-to-Date Total	\$605,000	\$615,004	\$10,004	2%	\$600,076



## Goings on at Faith

### Men's Breakfast Group

Join us as we start the day together in fellowship!

When: **Tuesday, January 6<sup>th</sup> @ 7am**

Where: **Browncroft Diner**, 2501 Browncroft Blvd, Rochester, Ny 14625



It is intended to gather men of all ages together at the beginning of the day.

Whether you are on your way to work, enjoying retirement, dropping the kids off at school or just taking a mental health day, we all deal with a variety of stresses in this life. It is for that reason we are encouraging you to gather on the first Tuesday of each month from 7am to 8am, for a time of **fellowship, encouragement, a brief devotion and of course breakfast.**



**The Dorcas Group** is meeting on **Thursday, January 8<sup>th</sup>** at 11:30 am in Room 204. Please bring your lunch and join us for some socializing and making of pillows, bears, walker bags and shirt savers. Everyone is welcome to join us. Contact Laurie Ebbecke at 671-7285 or Karen Wright at 377-4414 with any questions.

### Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our next meeting will be on **Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>** at 1:30 in Room 204. Marie Ferner, one of our Prayer Shawl Ministry members, is very accomplished both in knitting and crocheting and would be happy to work with anyone who is interested in participating. If you would like a shawl, please contact the church office or Sue Hutchings. Prayer squares are available on the information desk in the Concourse.



### SOLA – Strength of Living Alone

We will meet at 11:30 for lunch on **Friday, January 9<sup>th</sup>**. Everyone will pay their own bill. Donna Kaser will send out an email to let you know the specific restaurant. We will need to know if you are coming so we can alert the restaurant and have enough seats for everyone. ***If you are interested, please email Donna to get on the contact list.*** If you have any questions or want more information please email Donna Kaser at [dontshop@gmail.com](mailto:dontshop@gmail.com) or call or text 259-6488.

We will also be meeting for dinner on **Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>** at 6:00pm.

***Restaurant locations will follow in upcoming announcements.***

The **L.I.F.T. 2026 Sign-Up Sheet** is now available in the concourse book, so don't hesitate to take a month in 2026 and plan the fellowship activity for that month (samples are listed on the sheet). It's a great way to get involved, learn about and support each other, and just have fun together. Some months are more popular, so sign up today!



## From the Mission Board

**Thank you to the Poromon Family** who led Faith's annual Angel Tree project this season! Thank you to everyone who contributed so generously to brighten so many people's lives through Willow Domestic Violence Center, ESWA, Bethlehem Family Service, and Nucor House.



We will be hosting a **Dinner for the Veterans at Nucor House** on Wed. January 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30. The theme will be "**Grilled Cheese and Soup**"! There is a sign up in the Concourse for homemade soups, sliced cheese, crackers, dessert to share with the Veterans this month. No time for food prep? A case of water is always appreciated! Please join us in sharing a meal and Christ's love with these Heroes who served our country so bravely!!

The Mission Board is in the process of **planning for 2026**. Should you have a special mission you would like us to include in our 2026 giving, please contact Pastor Peter, Liz Wood or Chita McKinney.

**The Mission Board is looking for others to help continue and improve the long lasting mission of our church.**

Please see Pastor Peter, Liz Wood or Chita McKinney if you want to chat about the Mission Board.  
Call, text or email!!

Hebrews 10:24-25 *"And Let us consider how to stir of one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near."*



Everybody loves pancakes, plus helping a good cause!  
We will be hosting our monthly **Flapjack Benefit Breakfast**,  
January 17, 8-10AM with proceeds to benefit

**Penfield Coalition of Churches for GR  
Habitat for Humanity**



We offer delicious pancakes, pure maple syrup, scrambled eggs, sausage, blueberry topping, whipped cream, coffee, fellowship and more for \$10.00 per person (\$5 kids)!

Sugar free syrup available

Handicap accessible

First Baptist Church of Penfield 1862 Penfield Rd,  
585-586-2876

[www.fbpenfield.org](http://www.fbpenfield.org)





In order for worship to run smoothly we need volunteers to serve in different roles. We know life is busy, and that is why we have the Sign-Up Genius so that you can choose when you serve based on your schedule. If everyone signed up to help once per quarter in some way, our list would be overflowing with volunteers.

For *Lay Readers, Acolyte, Crucifer, Greeters, Communion Assistants* sign up here or the button on the homepage of our website:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0544afaf2eabfd0-worship1>

For all others:

**Altar Guild:** Preparing communion and the chancel area for worship.

**Ushers:** Greeting your Faith Family, handing out bulletins, and helping them get situated in the sanctuary as needed.

**Livestream Producers:** Running the worship services online every Sunday.

**Joseph Guild:** Maintaining, fixing & painting our beautiful church facility on a regular basis.

**Gardeners:** Weeding & maintaining Faith's gardens once or twice a month.

**Stephen Ministry:** Lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life.

**Prayer Shawl Ministry:** Knit or Crochet prayer shawls for people needing comfort due to illness or personal issues in their lives. Meet with the group on the second Monday of the month at church and/or work at home to complete your projects.

**Dorcas Group:** Please bring your lunch and join us for some socializing and making of pillows, bears, walker bags and shirt savers. Everyone is welcome to join us the second Thursday of every month.

**Visitation Team:** Keeping in touch with and/or visiting our older members

**Missions Team:** Meet monthly to create and organize opportunities for Faith members to serve our community.

**FCCNS:** Looking for volunteers to rock babies, classroom readers, classroom project helpers, craft/basement organizer.

If you are able to assist in any of these areas, please contact Kris Cronk and she can direct you accordingly (381-3970 or [secretary@faithpenfield.org](mailto:secretary@faithpenfield.org))

## *A year in Review: Our Livestream Ministry*

Our livestream here at Faith has evolved and adapted since 2020. In September of 2024, we had to make a choice on what new streaming platform to use as our old platform, “LivestreamStudio”, was purchased by another company and would no longer be active or usable as of December of 2024. After careful consideration and thorough research, we decided to use “ProPresenter” as our presentation platform and “Resi” as our streaming platform. These tools were designed by and made for church workers, and we found these products to be the best fit for our church.

Our first livestream with these new products aired on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. We livestreamed a basic video feed without any song lyrics or words on the screen until February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. Since then, we have reincorporated lyrics into the livestream and have removed the need for an additional volunteer to operate the in-house slides on the projector. We now control the slides for the livestream and the in-house slides through one computer thanks to the combination of ProPresenter and Resi.

Many features of these products have changed our livestream experience both for those watching online and for the staff and volunteers that operate the livestream system. One feature that we use is the “Analytics” tool provided by Resi. This feature gives us data on the number of devices that view our livestream. Since September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 our livestream has been viewed by 8,211 individual devices from across the globe, averaging 86 devices each Sunday. Although 89% of our online worshipers live in New York, our worship services have been viewed by people from 6 other countries, including Australia, Canada, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

This information is essential to tracking the impact of our online ministry and is representative of the impact our online worship has on not just our community here in Rochester, but around the world as well. As the Director of Digital Arts, I would like to thank all the volunteers that have been a part of our livestream production and to thank our congregation for the continued support and patience as we connect, grow, and serve through our online ministry.

- Jason Gerlach  
Director of Digital Arts  
Faith Lutheran Church



## Children's Ministry



Thank you to all the Sunday School students and families who participated in Faith's annual Christmas Pageant! It was so special to hear the story of Christmas from the children through word and song. A special thanks to Peggy Muller and Mari-Beth Schembri for organizing and facilitating the pageant and cookie reception this year! It was well attended and enjoyed by all!

Sunday School will resume on January 4th. We are in need of Sunday School volunteers; especially for our 4th-6th grade classroom. Please contact Shannon Wolf at [Sundayschool@faithpenfield.org](mailto:Sundayschool@faithpenfield.org) if you would like to learn more about Sunday School volunteer opportunities.

On January 11th, our **DCE Intern: Ella Gilzean**, will be commissioned at both worship services! Her year-long internship in our Children's & Youth Ministries will begin that morning and we'll pray God's blessings over her and our shared ministry together! There will be no Sunday School that morning, rather we welcome families to join us for a special cake & punch reception in the Auditorium where you'll have an opportunity to meet Ella.

Our **Kidz Konnect** group continues to give back to our community. Last month we made patriotic journals which were included in the Christmas presents for the veterans at Nucor House.



**Save the dates:**

Easter Egg Hunt: **April 5th**

Kidz Konnect (4th-6th grades): Penfield's annual day of caring: **Saturday, April 25th 8:30am-12:00pm**



FLY



### Thank you..

- To everyone who attended our Sunday Night FLY Christmas Party on Dec. 14!
- To the Schembri's, Kuiper's, and Youth Advisors for hosting our wonderful Progressive Dinner on Dec. 21!
- To everyone who purchased a Faith ornament at our sale last month!
- To all of the youth who are bringing friends to FLY events! Let's keep inviting more!
- To our incredible Youth Advisors for their dedicated service to God and His children!

### Sunday Night FLY "Improv Comedy Night" – Sunday, Jan. 11 @ 7-8:45pm

Laugh the night away with your friends at our "Improv Comedy Night" on Jan. 11! Steph Johnson will be leading hilarious improv games with everyone (she has performed improv on stages throughout Rochester). Feel free to jump in and think on your feet or sit back and enjoy the comedy!

**\*Come early at 6:15pm for GARBAGE PLATES & games!**



### Sunday Night FLY "Guest Speaker: Ella Gilzean" – Sunday, Jan. 25 @ 7-8:45pm

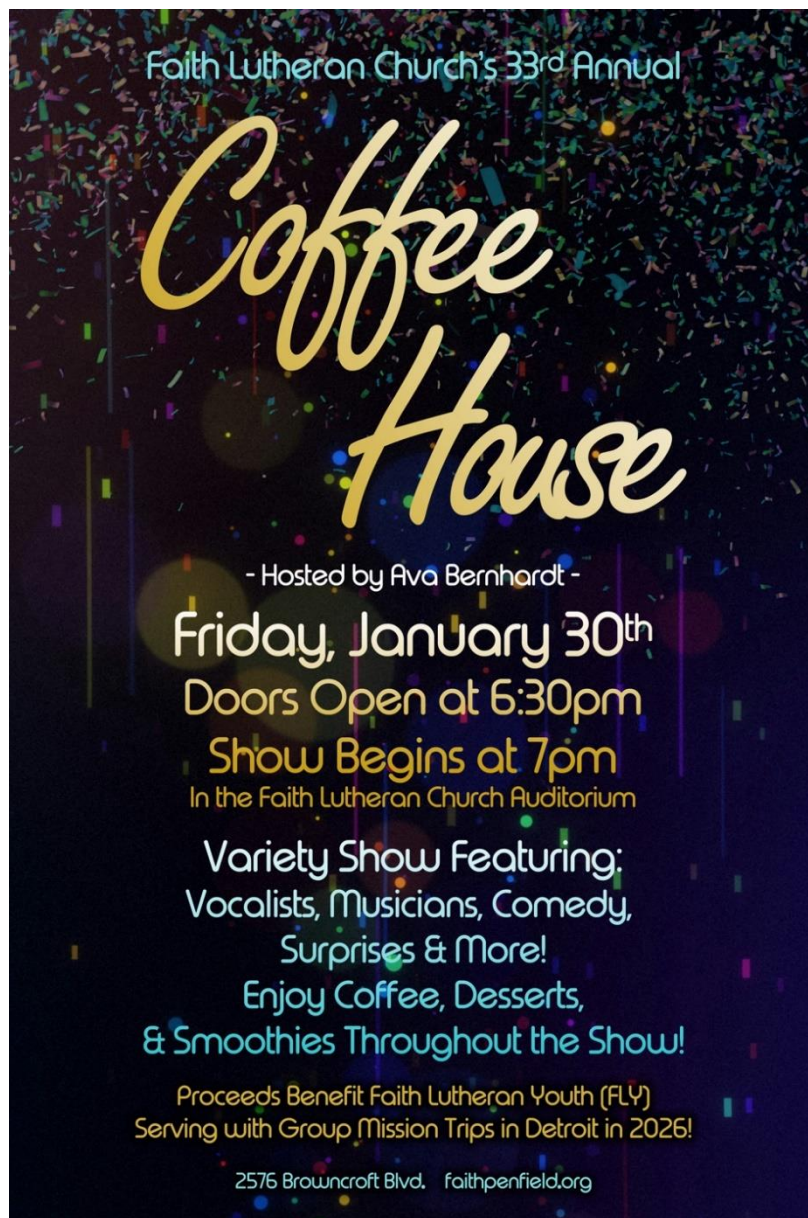
Come and get to know our new DCE Intern Ella better! She'll be sharing her life story and how God led her to our church! We'll also play some games together! Bring your friends!



### \*About Sunday Night FLY (SNFLY):

Youth in grades 7-12 meet on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month from 7-8:45pm in the FLY Room from Sept-June! We worship together, read God's Word, talk in small groups, play large group games, eat lots of food, and more! The nightly topics are always relevant for teens as we grow together in our relationships with God & others. The FLY Café is open from 6:15-9 where youth can purchase candy, soda, t-shirts, and other FLY merch. (Popcorn is always FREE!) Spin the Birthday Wheel for a fun birthday surprise! The Nintendo Switch, air hockey, and foosball games can be played before and after Sunday Night FLY. Friends are always welcome! \*Come early at 6:15pm for dinner and games!





### 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Coffee House –

**Fri, Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm**

Everyone is invited to an evening of fun-filled entertainment in the Faith Auditorium on Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>! Faith's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Coffee House variety show will highlight various talented people from our church while raising money for youth attending the Group Mission Trip in Detroit this July!

Many thanks to all who signed up to share their talents on-stage! A talent can be baking, too, because FLY will be serving desserts made by Faith members! **Bakers can sign-up in the Concourse this month** and deliver their baked goods to the church kitchen before the show.

Please talk to Pastor Peter if you have questions. The doors will open at 6:30pm and the acts will begin at 7. Come enjoy desserts, coffee, smoothies, talented performers, and more!

**\*Help volunteer at the Coffee House! Check out the sign-up sheet on the FLY bulletin board to join a volunteer team! Many thanks!**

### Jr. FLY Confirmation Class – Sundays @ 9:45-10:40am

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are journeying through Luther's Small Catechism on Sundays with Mark Harstad in Room 204.

### Sunday Morning Sr. FLY Class – Sundays @ 9:45-10:40am

High school students are invited to check out the Sunday Morning Sr. FLY Class this year in the FLY Room, as we're connecting Biblical truths to topics that are relevant to you. Our Youth Advisors and FLY Interns are leading the class.

### FLY Internship Opportunity!

Have you ever wanted to serve and grow as a Christian leader in FLY? Are you interested in leading Bible studies or planning FLY events? If so, pray about applying to be a new FLY Intern for 6 months starting March 2, 2026. Mackenzie Hoad and Hailey Keller currently serve as our FLY Interns and their term ends on Mar. 1 (at the Sr. FLY Winter Retreat). There are two spots available for people to serve as interns! The internship application can be found in the FLY Room or the FLY bulletin board. The application deadline is January 31. Talk to Pastor Peter if you have any questions.

**Save the Dates:****\*No SNFLY on Feb. 8 due to the Super Bowl****-Spaghetti Dinner on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 18 @ Faith**

Enjoy a delicious meal of Spaghetti before our Ash Wed. worship service! FLYers can sign-up on the FLY Bulletin Board to volunteer.

**-Sunday Night FLY “Lenten Journey” on Feb. 22 @ Faith****-Sr. FLY Winter Retreat on Feb. 27-Mar. 1 @ Camp Findley**

Registration and more information are coming next month! Our FLY Interns are busy creating a fun and engaging retreat experience for all high school & college-age students! It'll be AWESOME!

**-Sunday Night FLY “MYSTERY NIGHT” on Mar. 8 @ Faith**

Come discover the mystery activities that we'll be doing together at Faith! Bring ALL of your friends!

**Online Contact Form/Activity Participation Agreement**

Our church's insurance company asks every youth to complete the following online form to participate in FLY activities on our church property this school year. We also included some questions about the type of activities and topics you'd like FLY to cover this coming year. <https://faithpenfield.org/resources-forms>.

**JOIN FLY's Text-based Communication Service!**

Sign-up to receive reminders, announcements, and other info about upcoming FLY events right to your Remind App here: <https://www.remind.com/join> and join this class: [flyouth](#).

Check out our FLY webpage at: <https://faithpenfield.org/youth/>

**Check us out on YouTube!**

You can watch hilarious Coffee House videos, FLY promos, and more on our YouTube page?!

[www.youtube.com/faithlutheranyouth](http://www.youtube.com/faithlutheranyouth)

**Connect with FLY on Facebook! Join our group today!**

Search for “Faith Lutheran Youth (FLY)” on Facebook or type out this link...

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/flypenfield/>

**Follow FLY on Instagram!**

<https://www.instagram.com/flypenfield/>



# Faith Child Care and Nursery School (FCCNS)

*"Where your child can grow in body, mind and spirit"*

Our theme for January is Winter. The letters we will be working on are K, L and M as well as working on the Color Red, the Triangle shape, and Sorting. Our Faith Character Words for the Month will be: Baptize, Faithful, Disciples, Miracle, and Teach. Our Bible Stories will be John Baptizes Jesus, Jesus' First Disciples, Jesus and the Wedding at Cana, and the Sermon on the Mount



There are a few special activities happening in January:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences - January 12<sup>th</sup>- 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Penfield Schools Closed - January 19<sup>th</sup> - MLK, Jr. Day (School Age here all day)
- National Lutheran Schools Week - January 25<sup>th</sup> - January 31<sup>st</sup>



## Ordinary Days

January has a quiet feel to it. Christmas has been packed away, the calendar is blank, and life settles back into a calmer norm. It's a month that rarely feels extraordinary—and maybe that's the gift. We often look for God in the dramatic: answered prayers that shake the soul, turning-point moments, mountaintop experiences. But let's remember that the bible reminds us that God is just as present in the small, unremarkable spaces of our lives.

Elijah expected God in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire—yet God came in a gentle whisper. Jesus spent thirty years in Nazareth before He began His public ministry. And so much of His ministry happened not in grand events but in everyday moments: conversations over meals, walks along dusty roads, encounters in crowded streets.

January invites us to rediscover Him in the ordinary. In the quiet routines—morning coffee or tea or Coke Zero, commuting, washing dishes, caring for your family—God is nearby. Each simple task becomes an opportunity to meet Him. A whispered prayer while folding laundry. Gratitude rising during a sunset we almost didn't notice. A sense of peace found in the steady rhythm of responsibility. Ordinary days also give us space to grow. Growth rarely happens in the spotlight; most transformations, whether spiritual, emotional or physical, take place in small, consistent steps. It's in the daily choosing of patience, the repeated act of forgiveness, the unnoticed moments of kindness that God slowly shapes our hearts to look more like His.

If January feels unremarkable this year, take heart, these are the days God often uses to tend the soil of our souls. Don't overlook the grace hidden in routine or the presence of God woven into your everyday life. Extraordinary faith is almost always born in ordinary times. May this month teach us to slow down, pay attention, and welcome God into every simple moment—and to trust that He is already there. May 2026 bring you closer to Him and those you hold dear.



**Faith Child Care & Nursery School**  
**Year to Date Income & Expenses Compared to Budget**  
**As of 11/30/2025**

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Fav/(Unfav) Variance	Prior YTD	Board Approved 2025 Budget
<b>Operating Income</b>					
Fees	836,929	838,305	(1,376)	862,758	924,830
Interest/Misc./Other	29,559	28,258	1,301	46,519	31,433
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<u>866,488</u>	<u>866,563</u>	<u>(75)</u>	<u>909,277</u>	<u>956,263</u>
<b>Expenses:</b>					
Program	41,641	43,530	1,889	40,175	47,586
Employee Related	714,034	743,388	29,354	726,586	816,088
Property & Equipment	60,139	62,536	2,397	54,051	67,840
Supplies	13,510	12,850	(660)	11,936	14,000
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<u>829,324</u>	<u>862,304</u>	<u>32,980</u>	<u>832,748</u>	<u>945,514</u>
<b>Net Operating Income (Loss)</b>	<u>37,164</u>	<u>4,259</u>	<u>32,905</u>	<u>76,529</u>	<u>10,749</u>

*End of November Enrollment 71 children*

# HOW TO REDUCE TAXABLE INCOME WITH A QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION

**Updated for 2025**



*In an effort to help you be a good steward of the gifts God has given you, we would like to share a strategy that could be a blessing to you, your family, and our Faith family.*

The generous standard deduction available for the current tax year is welcomed by many as it will simplify filing and could even reduce your tax bill. Even if you take the standard deduction, however, there is a tax-savvy strategy that allows retirees to further reduce their tax liability by taking advantage of qualified charitable distributions (QCDs) from their individual retirement accounts. This charitable rollover provision allows IRA owners 70 ½ years or older to transfer up to **\$108,000** for 2025 **directly** from their IRA to one or more qualified charities, without that donation being counted as taxable income when it is withdrawn. That's up from \$105,000 in 2024. Married couples can each donate up to their individual annual limit.

For those age 73 or older, these qualified charitable distributions count as part of the person's required minimum distributions from the IRA account.

---

***Please consult your tax adviser and IRA trustee to make sure that you meet the qualifications to take advantage of this provision and that the distribution is properly processed.***

---

If you would like to make a qualified charitable distribution to Faith Lutheran Church, please instruct your IRA trustee or custodian to make a transfer from the IRA **directly** to Faith Lutheran Church as the payee on the check. You may also have the distribution transferred **directly** from your IRA account to Faith Lutheran Church's checking account by contacting Kay Gerlach in the church office at **485-0412 or [finance@faithpenfield.org](mailto:finance@faithpenfield.org)** for the necessary information. Your donation will be credited to support the unified budget of Faith Lutheran Church unless you designate otherwise via written communication to either Kay Gerlach, Director of Finance, or Kris Cronk, Church Secretary.

*Please know that we sincerely appreciate any gift you make to support the ministry and mission of Faith Lutheran Church. We are so blessed that God provides so many ways for us to be a part of His work here on earth! May your gifts serve as a reminder that God provides all that you have and has given to us His greatest gift of all – His Son, Jesus who gave His very life for you!*

**Faith Lutheran Church**  
**Year to Date Income & Expenses Compared to Budget**  
**11/30/2025**

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Fav/(Unfav) Variance	Prior YTD	Voter Approved 2025 Budget
<b>Operating Income</b>					
Envelope Offering	615,005	605,000	10,005	600,076	680,000
Plate Cash	8,455	6,000	2,455	6,467	8,000
FCCNS Facility Cost Sharing	25,667	25,667	0	22,917	28,000
Fund Distribution-Endowment	0	0	0	0	8,000
Interest/Misc./Other	20,043	11,475	8,568	13,840	12,500
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>669,170</b>	<b>648,142</b>	<b>21,028</b>	<b>643,300</b>	<b>736,500</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>					
Education	14,236	19,475	5,239	17,264	20,300
Employee Related	386,555	395,373	8,818	342,238	432,728
Mission & Outreach	62,122	59,658	(2,464)	56,442	68,800
Music	4,613	6,400	1,787	4,755	7,675
Other Expense	10,680	12,083	1,403	7,482	12,750
Property	146,616	137,691	(8,925)	135,203	153,325
Supplies	27,044	28,722	1,678	26,839	31,295
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	<b>651,867</b>	<b>659,403</b>	<b>7,536</b>	<b>590,223</b>	<b>726,873</b>
<b>Net Operating Income (Loss)</b>	<b>17,303</b>	<b>(11,261)</b>	<b>28,564</b>	<b>53,076</b>	<b>9,627</b>
Employee Retention Credit	512,616	0	512,616	0	
ERC Funds Expenses	(6,850)	0	(6,850)	0	
<b>Net Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>523,069</b>	<b>(11,261)</b>	<b>534,330</b>	<b>53,076</b>	<b>9,627</b>

### GIVING AT FAITH

*At Faith Lutheran, giving is something we do with a spirit of joy in response to the love and forgiveness we have freely received in Jesus. "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver," (2 Corinthians 9:7). Your gift blesses Faith's continued mission to "seek and save the lost," (Luke 19:10).*

*There are a number of ways you can choose to give to the many ministries and outreach efforts at Faith.  
(Please contact Kay Gerlach, Director of Finance, at [finance@faithpenfield.org](mailto:finance@faithpenfield.org) or 485-0142 if you have any questions.)*

**1) TEXT GIVING:**

*Simply enter Faith Lutheran Church's own dedicated number which is 833-958-1685, enter the amount of your gift as your text message, press send and follow the remaining easy steps to make your secure one-time or recurring contribution.*

**2) ONLINE GIVING:**

*Visit Faith's website at [www.faithpenfield.org](http://www.faithpenfield.org). Click the GIVING button on the top menu and then the "Start Giving" button. A secure webpage powered by Vanco Payment Solutions will open and provide instructions and giving options for your gifts to Faith. You will be given the opportunity to create an online account, if desired. **\*NEW\*** Online users can now log in to their account, view Scheduled Transaction and click Edit to make changes.*

**3) VANCO PAYMENT SOLUTIONS (previously SIMPLY GIVING):**

*If you originally set up your Vanco electronic giving account through the church office, any changes must be made through the church office. If you prefer to manage your electronic giving, contact the church office to cancel any scheduled transactions. You would then follow the Online Giving instructions in item (2) above to create an account and manage your electronic giving at your convenience. Please contact Kay Gerlach in the church office if you have any questions or need assistance.*

**4) ENVELOPE GIVING:**

*Our traditional method of receiving a box of offering envelopes for the year which allows you to mail your offering to the church office at 2576 Browncroft Blvd, Rochester, NY 14625 or place it in the collection plate during our worship service.*

**5) GIFT OF STOCK OR IRA QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION**

*Both of these methods of gift giving offer additional tax advantages that can best be explained by your tax advisor or IRA trustee. Please contact Kay Gerlach directly at 485-0142 for assistance on how to make these types of contributions.*

### **Endowment Fund:**

*The Faith Lutheran Church Permanent Endowment Fund was established in 2004 to provide members and friends the opportunity to make charitable gifts to Faith that will become a permanent endowment providing financial support for the ministry and mission of the Church. The custodian for the Faith Lutheran Church endowment fund brokerage account is Charles Schwab & Co, Inc. If you would like to make a contribution to this fund, please contact Kay Gerlach directly at 485-0142 or [finance@faithpenfield.org](mailto:finance@faithpenfield.org) for assistance.*



## Giving just got easier!

If you have established an online user account through the Giving tab on Faith's website at [faithpenfield.org](http://faithpenfield.org), you can now edit your recurring transactions online! Simply log in to your account, view Scheduled Transactions, and click Edit to change any of the following giving criteria:

- Amount
- Frequency
- Associated tile/fund
- Start and end date
- Associated payment method

If you originally set up your Vanco electronic giving account through the church office, any changes must be made through the church office. If you prefer to manage your electronic giving on your own, please contact the church office to cancel your electronic giving account managed by our office. You can then create an online electronic giving account by visiting Faith's website at [www.faithpenfield.org](http://www.faithpenfield.org). Click the GIVING button on the top menu and then the "Start Giving" button. A secure webpage powered by Vanco Payment Solutions will open and provide instructions and giving options for your gifts to Faith. You will have the option to create an online account and manage your electronic giving at your convenience. Please contact Kay Gerlach, Director of Finance, at 485-0142 if you have any questions or need assistance.

*Thank you for your continued participation and support!*



# From the Church Office

## Faith Leadership Board Officers

**Chair** – Russ Hignett

**Vice Chair** – Bruce Oaks

**Secretary** – Nancy Alvut

**Treasurer** – Beth Bird

**Nominating Committee Reps** – Karoline Trojjan, Greg Gerbasi, Amanda Ebbecke, Bill Mosko



**Altar Flowers Form:** Help beautify our sanctuary on a Sunday morning by giving altar flowers in honor or memory of a loved one. We will be utilizing silk altar flowers unless someone orders fresh flowers for a Dedication. Any orders need to be in to the Church Office by the end of the **3<sup>rd</sup> week** each month for the following month.

\* Either complete a new online form and pay the \$75 fee at our online giving page here:

<https://faithpenfield.org/resources-forms>

\* Or contact Kris Cronk ([secretary@faithpenfield.org](mailto:secretary@faithpenfield.org)) and send a check to the Church Office made out to "Faith Lutheran Church" and Altar Flowers in the memo line.

\* Or Utilize the sign-up book on the Information Center in the concourse and followup with a check made out to "Faith Lutheran" Church with Altar Flowers in the memo line

### **Announcement Request Form:**

If you have an announcement that you'd like to include in our bulletin announcements or monthly newsletter "Faith Notes." Please submit an Announcement Form either in the Church Office or online here: <https://faithpenfield.org/resources-form>

This form will help us streamline our communications within our congregation and to our community. Thanks for understanding! Please contact the Church Office if you have any questions.

**February Faith Notes Articles** due Friday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> and should be directed to our Church Secretary, Kris Cronk ([secretary@faithpenfield.org](mailto:secretary@faithpenfield.org)). Thank you!

### Births:

- Reese Joseph Koopman (11/21/25), first grandson of Carolee White

### Baptisms:

- Caroline Jesslyn Couture (12/7/25), son of Nik & Veronica Couture, granddaughter of Larry & Robin Arnone

- Bodie Austin Lazzaro (12/21/25), son of Austin & Rebecca (Wood) Lazzaro, grandson of Mark & Liz Wood

### Called to Glory:

- Patricia Berardi (11/23/25, acquaintance of Jane Sandgren

- James Backus (11/24/25), friend of Jim & Janise Pilosi

- Michael Wangemann (11/26/25), good friend of Diane Van Auken

- Rick Huyett (12/4/25, close friend of Paul VanHorn & Beth Camann

- Patricia Luf (12/8/25), aunt of Russ Hignett

- Duane Schepler (12/9/25), cousin of Amanda Gerlach, following a brief illness

- Kathy Mauldin (12/15/25), neighbor of Bruce & Rhea Oaks



## Birthdays

1	Linda Hanss		Elizabeth Trimble	25	Sydney Crouse
3	Janice Schrack	15	Audrey Stenzel		Sharon Kiellach
5	Larry Christensen		Edward Wright	26	Hayden Lincoln
	Bruce Kulp	16	Paul Lucci		Robert Wyman
9	Gabriel Buck	17	Elisabeth Mangerian	27	Mackenzie Harrington
	Jayden Hoad	18	Nik Couture	28	Taylor Albert
	Ayden Kennedy	20	Scarlett Kabat	29	Beth D'Ambrosio
10	Marsha Freeman		Salley Schooley		Maddi Hartley
11	Allison Boyle	21	Harper Cummings		Owen Kaser
	David Lindscoog		Madelyn Cummings		Cheryl Speisman
	Oliver Robeson		Peter Versprille	30	Edward Freeman
12	Maria Gerbasi		Jack Webb		David Lapresi
13	Liam Cervený	23	Madison Steiner		McKinley Pries
	Frederick Mason		Tracey Testa	31	Kennedy Coles
14	Alivia Duckles	24	Chelsea McLean		Carolyn McDonough
	Shane Maginn		Will Withall		



## Wedding Anniversaries

1	Gaylord & Lynne Leinenbach	23	Tim & Kimberley Albert
4	Dan & Katharine Zager	25	Edward & Rae Usinger
8	Glenn & Linda Collins	27	David & Jennifer Cook
9	Vincent & Cristine Alello	29	Siegfried & Liane Bartsch
14	Scott & Stephanie Schabel	30	Dean & Tracy Muller
15	Peter & Mary Versprille		



# WISHING YOU A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

For we are God's  
masterpiece. He has  
created us anew in Christ  
Jesus, so we can do the  
good things he planned for  
us long ago.  
- Ephesians 2:10

 CatholicWeb.com



# January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>*Education Hour 9:45</b> <b>Adult Bible Class (Aud)</b> <b>Children Sunday School</b> <i>(locations on bulletin board)</i> <b>Jr FLY (Room 204)</b> <b>Sr FLY (FLY Room)</b>				<b>1 New Year's Day</b> FCCNS Closed Church Office Closed 	<b>2</b> Church Office closes at 12:00pm	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:45am * Education Hour 10:45am Contemporary Worship 12:15 <b>Taking Down the Greens</b> <i>w/ Pizza</i> 6:00pm Faith Connections (CmRm)	<b>5</b> 10:00am Embroidery Guild (Rm204) 7:00pm Lyric Chorale (Aud)	<b>6</b> 7:00am Men's Breakfast (Browncroft Diner) 10:00am FLC Bowling Lgqe 10:30am FCCNS Chapel 1:00pm Worship @ The Addison 7:00pm FLB Mtg (CmRm)	<b>7</b> 10:00am Church Staff 7:15pm Choir Rehearsal (Music Rm) 6:00pm Girl Scouts (CmRm)	<b>8</b> 11:30am Dorcas Group (Rm204)	<b>9</b> 10:00am Keepers of the Cupboard (CmRm) 11:30am SOLA Lunch	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:45am <b>DCE Intern Welcome</b> <b>Reception (Aud)</b> 10:45am Contemporary Worship 7:00pm Sunday Night FLY <b>"Improv Comedy Night"</b>	<b>12</b> 1:30pm Prayer Shawl (Rm204) 7:00pm Lyric Chorale (Aud)	<b>13</b> 10:00am FLC Bowling Lgqe 10:30am FCCNS Chapel 4:00pm Stephen Ministry (CmRm) 6:30pm Girl Scout Mgrs (Rm204)	<b>14</b> 10:00am Church Staff 5:30pm Board of Ed Mtg (CmRm) 7:15pm Choir Rehearsal (Music Rm)	<b>15</b> 9:30am Property Board (CmRm) 5:30pm Board of Ed Mtg (CmRm) 7:00pm Youth Advisor Mtg (FLYRm)	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 11:30am Trova Baptism (Sanc)
<b>18</b> 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:45am * Education Hour 10:45am Contemporary Worship 6:00pm Faith Connections (CmRm)	<b>19</b> 8:00am Joseph Guild 10:00am Flower City Rug Hook Group (CmRm) 7:00pm Lyric Chorale (Aud)	<b>20</b> 10:00am FLC Bowling Lgqe 10:30am FCCNS Chapel	<b>21</b> 10:00am Church Staff 5:45pm Girl Scouts (CmRm) 7:15pm Choir Rehearsal (Music Rm)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 9:00am Stephen Ministry Refresher Training
<b>25</b> 8:30am Traditional Worship 9:45am * Education Hour 10:45am Contemporary Worship 7:00pm Sunday Night FLY <b>"Guest Speaker: Ella Gilzean"</b>	<b>26</b> 7:00pm Lyric Chorale (Aud) 6:00pm FCCNS Board Mtg (CmRm)	<b>27</b> 10:00am FLC Bowling Lgqe 10:30am FCCNS Chapel 6:00pm SOLA Dinner 6:30pm Girl Scout Mgrs (Rm204)	<b>28</b> 10:00am Church Staff 5:30pm Nucor House 6:00pm Coffee House Stage Set Up (Aud) 7:15pm Choir Rehearsal (Music Rm)	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>  6:30pm Doors Open 7:00pm Entertainment Begins <b>Lutheran Schools Week</b>	<b>31</b> 9:00am Stephen Ministry Refresher Training

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
2576 Browncroft Blvd  
Rochester NY 14625-1530

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED