

**A History of Faith Lutheran Church at its 75th anniversary,
1949-2024**

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Faith’s mission statement *(rev. 2019):*

“As loving servants of God, fed by Word and Sacrament, we will reach out, welcome, and provide a safe haven for all.”

The 75th anniversary task force chose the hymn “Rise up, O saints of God!” as our mission theme (**Evangelical Lutheran Worship** #669, hymn text by Norman O. Forness, b. 1936):

**“Rise up, O saints of God! From vain ambitions turn;
Christ rose triumphant that your hearts with nobler zeal might
burn.**

**Speak out, O saints of God! Despair engulfs earth’s frame;
as heirs of God’s baptismal grace, the word of hope proclaim.**

**Rise up, O saints of God! The kingdom’s task embrace;
redress sin’s cruel consequence; give justice larger place.**

**Give heed, O saints of God! Creation cries in pain;
stretch forth your hand of healing now, with love the weak
sustain.**

**Commit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod;
and, quickened by the Spirit’s pow’r, rise up, O saints of God!”**

Thank you to the members of our 75th Anniversary Task Force:

**Tracie Eaglen, Cozella Eckroat, Lana Fortin, Barb Klaproth,
Deacon Mary Lord, Kathy Maas, Char Ray, Sandra Taccone,
and Pastor Jean Kuebler**

Pastor's Introduction

God is the only one who knows all of our stories in their fullness. Any human attempt to write a history necessarily has a particular point of view. Some things will be left out, and no doubt many things could be told differently and better. For the last two years, members of our 75th anniversary task force have been researching and compiling the material for this history booklet. Many others from the congregation and the wider community have also contributed their knowledge and expertise. It has been a fascinating project and a labor of love. We have learned a great deal about Faith Lutheran Church along the way. I suspect that in spite of our efforts, there will be some parts of the story that we haven't gotten quite right, and there are some parts of the story that still wait to be told. There are certain bits that remain mysterious; for example, we have not been able to identify the donor of the marble altar, and we have not been able to track down the name of the artist who made the chancel cross.

Consider this booklet in your hands the first edition of a collaborative work in progress. If you have corrections or additions, please contact me at faithlepastor@gmail.com, so that we can make updates to the electronic file for future researchers. From the human perspective, 75 years is a pretty long time. As it says in the psalms, "The days of our life are seventy years, or perhaps eighty, if we are strong" (Ps. 90:10). There are still some folks around who were part of the early years of our congregation, including a few who were charter members. Some remember the days from their childhood when Faith worshiped in "the hole in the ground" on Fair Avenue, while others remember when our current sanctuary faced the other way around. Some have fond memories of the church youth group, or the live nativity, or serving proudly as an acolyte under the high

expectations of Pastor Wertz. While some will remember particular events or ministries, such as the SOS 4 Kidz yard sales or singing in the choir, many others will recall more personal moments of their life in the church—a marriage or a baptism, or the care provided during the illness or death of a loved one.

Our history is more than statistics, but numbers can also contain stories. As part of the process of compiling the timeline data below, we went through all our existing parish records to tally the official pastoral acts (baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and funerals) for each year. In our 75 years as a congregation, Faith has celebrated at least 852 baptisms, 597 confirmations, 488 marriages, and 702 funerals. Perhaps some of the events in your own life are included in those numbers. I don't pretend to know what this all means. But I do know that the Holy Spirit was present at every single one of these significant occasions. I know that God's saving grace and steadfast faithfulness were proclaimed. I know that seeds were sown and lives were transformed. I know that people's lives were intertwined with the larger life of God, that people found hope and welcome and community and commitment through the rites of the church. Over the last 75 years, our culture has become more secular; the church is no longer a central or obvious part of community life in the way that it once may have been. Even so, I believe that what happens in our liturgies and ceremonies still matters; maybe now, more than ever.

As our Lutheran confessions remind us, the church is not the building, but the community of believers gathered around the Word and the Sacraments, called, gathered, guided, and sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit. I cannot pretend to know what Faith Lutheran Church will be like in another 25 years, or whether this particular congregation will even still be in existence. I hope that we will! By the grace of God, the church of Christ continues; in one

way or another, the gospel will be proclaimed. The church continues, even as congregations come and go and as ministry takes new forms in new contexts. Over the last 75 years, Faith has been involved in shared ministries and congregational mergers; it is likely that this interdependence and mutuality of local congregations will continue to be part of our story. As we all know, the future belongs to God.

It remains a joy and an honor to serve as your pastor. Faith is blessed with the gifts of generosity and a desire to serve. The hard-working Angel Board is just one small example. This congregation values liturgical worship and excellence in music, and we have been good stewards of our current building and beautiful grounds, which serve the community in various ways. In the six years that I have been here, I have on many occasions observed Faith's hospitality, openness to try new things, and resilience. Perhaps the greatest gift I have observed is the genuine love and mutual support you have for one another. I believe that all these gifts will help carry us forward into whatever future God has in mind.

I will close these reflections with one of my favorite collects. It seems appropriate for this anniversary celebration: "O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through joys and perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Your sister in Christ, Pastor Jean

Early history of Faith Lutheran church: its founding, property and congregation

Research into this property was varied and included input from PA State Archives office for Research in Harrisburg, PA., Erie County Courthouse for deeds, Erie County Library, Harborcreek Historical Society, Hagan History Center located in Erie, Erie-Times News, Jim Edwards of the Ft. LeBoeuf Museum in Waterford and A History of Harborcreek Before 1900 by Dave Shuttle. It has been a journey!—Char Ray

In the years between 1400-1600 AC, the early American tribes of the Eriez and Iroquois (or, as they called themselves, the Haudenosaunee) were the early inhabitants of the area where Faith Lutheran Church is now located. Lake Erie was named after the Eriez Tribe. They lived on the southern shore of Lake Erie which included Eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania and western New York State. In their prime, the Eriez Tribe numbered 14,000 and translated into “longtail,” in reference to mountain lions in the area. This explains the nickname for the Eriez tribe, also called the Cat People. They hunted beaver for their pelts and farmed this land, growing mainly squash, beans and corn. Communities or clusters were formed with long rectangular multi-family homes made of logs. There were wars with other Native American tribes, especially the Iroquois, mostly over beaver pelts which could be traded with Europeans for guns and rifles. Most of the time, the Eriez Tribes did not trade for firearms so the other Native American tribes who traded for these weapons became more powerful. By the mid 1650’s, the Eriez tribe began to move or be absorbed by the powerful Iroquois tribe.

By September of 1788, a tract of land known as the Erie Triangle was sold to the Population Company by the federal government.

This land was traded to the federal government by the Iroquois tribe but the historian did not know what was traded in exchange for the land. Thomas Rees was appointed Deputy Surveyor for the State of Pennsylvania to travel to the Erie Triangle. He tried to travel to Erie twice to begin surveying in 1792 and 1793 but the Native American tribes forced him to return to Philadelphia. The third time traveling to Erie in 1794 was successful because he was accompanied by the Allegheny Brigade of the State Militia, which included 77 men. By 1796, Thomas Rees took out a tract of land called the Rees Reserve in Harborcreek. Faith Lutheran Church was part of this. Thomas Rees was the first Justice of the Peace in Erie and ran a sawmill in Harborcreek.

The deeds to our property go back to 1837. Very little was found as to what each person did with this property such as what their livelihoods were or what was built on this land. To the best of our knowledge and through research of deeds, by a very kind gentleman at the Erie County Courthouse, our original property on Fair Avenue was owned by the following people:

1. In June 16, 1837, Thomas and Ann Rees sold this property to George N. Tatham.
2. February 26, 1848-George N. Tatham sold property to Thomas Crowley.
3. October 2, 1916-Mary Crowley sold property to Joseph J. Weber.
4. June 17, 1925-Joseph J. Weber sold property to Andrews Land Company.
5. February 4, 1932-Andrews Land Company sold property to Charles O. Johnson and his wife Minnie.
6. March 5, 1948 Charles O. and Minnie Johnson sold property to Trinity Lutheran Church, city of New Brighton, PA for \$1.00.

7. June 12, 1956-Trinity Lutheran Church of New Brighton, PA sold property to Faith Lutheran Church of Fairfield for \$1.00.

According to the Erie-Times News the following occurred historically to Faith Lutheran Church.

1. On October 6, 1946, Dr John Bermon with the support of Robert Moreland established the Faith Mission Sunday Church School at the Fairfield Hose Company. There were around fifty children attending this church school.
2. On February 5, 1949, A lot was provided by Trinity Lutheran Church of New Brighton, PA at 420 Fair Avenue for the church school. The children of Faith Mission Sunday Church School in Fairfield voted to christen the new building Faith Lutheran Church.
3. On October 2, 1949, Faith Lutheran Church was organized.
4. On January 16, 1959, Faith Lutheran Church congregation approved to relocate the congregation and in July of 1961, a tract of land (6.14 acres) was purchased at the current site on the banks of Lake Erie. It came to \$31, 000 and ground was broken for our church on September 29, 1963.

History of Lutherans in Pennsylvania

This very summary is based on the far more extensive research of Pastor David Laakso, to whom we owe a great debt. We include it here to put Faith's story in its larger context.

The first Lutheran Pastor on the American continent, Rasmus Jensen, arrived in 1619, and Lutherans were among the Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam in 1623. By 1638, Swedish Lutherans had arrived in Delaware, and by 1646, there were at least six Lutheran congregations in America, and Luther's Small Catechism had been translated into the language of the Delaware Indians. By 1682, German Lutherans had settled in what is now Pennsylvania; by 1735, German Lutherans also had a presence in all the central colonies. In 1742, Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg arrived as a missionary in Pennsylvania; he planted churches and spread the Lutheran faith in America until his death in 1787. By 1771 there were 81 Lutheran congregations in Pennsylvania and adjacent colonies, comprised mostly of German immigrants.

In 1793, John Stauch was among the first Lutheran missionaries to cross the Alleghenies into western Pennsylvania. In 1803, Trinity Lutheran in Meadville and First Lutheran in Saegertown were established as preaching points. In 1808, St. John was founded as the first Lutheran church in Erie.

According to Pastor Laakso, "in 1808, Erie sought ministerial services, and was told to locate the missionaries. Philip Muchenhaupt (a teacher and doctor known as a heavy drinker and good preacher) was already in the area, but had no connection to the Pennsylvania Ministerium". In 1817, Pastor John Christian Friedrich Heyer preached the first English Lutheran sermon in western Pennsylvania at the Crawford County Courthouse. (the Lutherans in New York had switched from German to English a few years prior to this but reverted to German in 1837!)

In the 1800's, the Lutherans in America became more organized, as the church continued to grow and spread, primarily due to immigration from Germany and Scandinavia. The first General Synod was formed in 1820, Gettysburg Seminary was founded in 1826, and the Philadelphia Seminary founded in 1865, due to theological differences with the Gettysburg leadership. (The latter was more pietist in its origins and the latter more confessional). Various institutions of learning and social services were founded in this century, including Thiel College in 1866, the Orphan's Home in Zelienople in 1852, the Home for the Aged in Erie in 1906, and a "home in Meadville for the use of wayward and neglected children" in 1918. Camp Lutherlyn was founded in 1949. Meanwhile, most of the many Lutheran bodies in the United States continued a series of coalitions and mergers into a national denomination. In 1987, the ELCA was formed from four predecessor bodies, the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Augustana Lutheran Church. At that time, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod became one of 65 synods of the ELCA.

In the evolution of Lutheranism in Erie County, almost all of our current congregations began as mission starts from neighboring congregations. On the East side, Grace was founded in 1905 from Luther Memorial; Christ, Lawrence Park, was founded in 1913 from Grace; Messiah was founded in 1916 by the Mission and Extension Society (later, St. Peter's, North East). During that post-war boom of optimism and population growth, Christ, Lawrence Park then founded Faith (1949), Hope (1951), and Redeemer (1952). In more recent decades, those four mission starts ultimately re-merged—Hope with Faith, Redeemer with Christ, and finally, Christ the Redeemer with Faith in 2020. In a sense, we have come full circle.

jnk

Memories from Pastor Wertz

In July of 2024 we discovered an old file dated 2009 on the parish administrator's computer. It turned out to be the draft of an unfinished memoir written by Pastor Wertz, recalling episodes from the first several years of his call to Faith. Here are some selected excerpts:

On meeting with the call committee in March of 1961: "The seminarian sat at the table alone. He reasoned that when the call committee all excused themselves to the men's room, that it was a very polite way of telling him he was not the pastor for Faith Lutheran Church.

After all, he failed to meet the most essential criterion for the call. He was single, and the desire was for a married man. He had no previous experience in the church, and was still in seminary... Besides, Faith needed an outstanding if not great preacher to bring in the people. He also had to be a leader and possess good administrative skills. Yes, there was no doubt that Seminarian Charles R. Wertz, an older, bald-headed, inexperienced seminarian could not qualify for the call."

On feeling unwanted and rejected when he began serving at Faith in June of 1961: "The first and second graders were playing softball. The pastor stood motionless, watching. Then he noticed one of the first graders race across the yard toward him. He was dressed in a yellow shirt and shorts. "You're our new pastor, aren't you?" he asked. "Yes, I am," the pastor answered. "What's your name?" The little boy looked up at him. "My name is David. I live across the street. Will you come and play on my side?" It felt great! "I tell you what. I can't play now, David, but I'll always play on your side." David ran back to get his bat. That's all David wanted to know. It

was all the pastor needed. There was someone who wanted the pastor on his side. There was ministry to do and that ministry could be done.

On the dedication of the new building on East Lake Road, July 12, 1964: Worship at Faith on Fair Avenue that Sunday morning was a wonderful celebration. No empty chairs. God could have been deaf and He would have heard the people sing. Barbara Veritz, the church organist, began playing the recessional hymn. The acolyte extinguished the altar candles. Then, with the congregation watching, the other acolytes and congregation council members took every representation of the church from the building. The Bible on the pulpit with the green book marker was closed quietly and handed to a second acolyte. The missal stand book, the candle holders and candles, the fair linen and paraments were taken from the church. Finally, when the pulpit was bare and the altar was bare also, the cross was lifted slowly and reverently from the altar and carried by the pastor down the center aisle and out of the church. The people followed and never looked back.

On early financial challenges: To the surprise of many, the new church building did not attract a steady stream of visitors to worship. To the surprise of many, the new church building did not greatly inspire the congregation to support the ministry generously. There were times when the church seemed too big for us. When the total offering for a Sunday morning was \$25.00, the building seemed to expensive for us. Hanging over the heads of the congregation like a giant black cloud was the church mortgage of more than one hundred thousand dollars...If ever a congregation lived hand to mouth, it was Faith Lutheran Church. Yet each year, the Rev. Paul Daugherty of the Board of American Missions graciously recommended that our past due bills be rolled into our

mortgage...Each year the congregation started off the new year with the delusion that there were no unpaid bills. The trouble was the church mortgage grew and grew!

On his hayride accident at Lutherlyn on July 3, 1967: In a moment, the wagon and the tractor jack-knifed. Campers were thrown from the wagon. Fearful that some of the campers would be thrown between the wagon and the tractor, the pastor wrapped his arms around the girls sitting next to him. At that instant, his right leg was ground between the wheel of the tractor and the bed of the wagon, pulling him to the ground just behind the wheel as the tractor and wagon stopped moving...News of the accident spread like fire. Everyone knew that the pastor's chances of living were less than 50%. Everyone knew that four hours of surgery that evening did not offer much hope that the leg would not have to be amputated eventually. Yet, everyone also knew the pastor. As one member said, "He'll be back home in two weeks"...Well, it didn't happen that way. The pastor was not discharged from the hospital until November 23rd of that year. ..But as so often happens, each council member pledged himself or herself to do what was necessary until the pastor returned...Gladys Miller was authorized to travel to Butler to tell the pastor that the congregation would wait for his complete recovery and that his salary and allowances would be paid even though he was a patient in the hospital.

On returning to the pulpit after almost two years of convalescence: The fact is that it is so difficult to come back, that the pastor made the decision one Saturday evening to leave the ministry...to leave Erie...to disappear. It seemed like an easy thing to do. So, on the way out of town, he stopped at the cleaners to pick up his two suits. But as he drove along Route 5 toward Cleveland, he began to think of how unfair it would be to just disappear without anyone knowing

he had a plan in mind. So he turned the car around and drove to the home of Al and Helen Dembaugh...Helen invited the pastor to stay for dinner, and he accepted. It was so pleasant sitting at the table with the family. Their two daughters were home for Christmas and the Christmas decorations were so warm and inviting. Something happened to the pastor at the table. For the first time in more than two years, he became aware that people were laughing...that he was laughing...When dinner was over and it was time to go, Al walked the pastor to the door. There was silence as the pastor pulled on his coat and looped his white scarf around his neck. "And where are you going now, pastor?" Al questioned. "Home where I belong", the pastor answered. "Even though it is hard to put things back together, I am going home. Good night".

Timeline

1400 – 1600 AC

Indigenous tribes – Eriez and Iroquois inhabited what became the church property.

1796

Thomas Rees of Philadelphia owned a tract of land called Rees Reserve in Harborcreek which included Faith Lutheran's property.

1803 – Harborcreek Township is founded

1837

6/ 16/1837 – Thomas and Ann Rees sold this property to George N. Tatham.

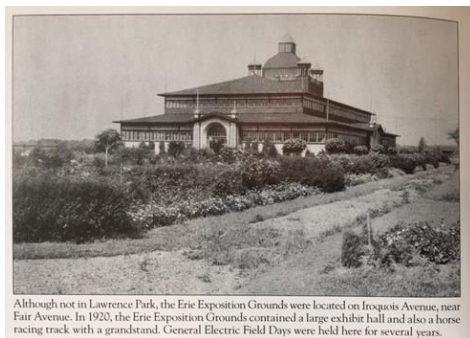
1848

2/26/1848 - Tatham sells the property to Thomas Crowley

1916

10/2/1916 - Mary Crowley sells the property to Joseph J. Weber

1920's – the land was the Erie Exposition Grounds – Fairgrounds on Fair Avenue.



1925

6/17/1925 - Weber sells the property to the Andrews Land Company

1932

2/4/1932 – Andrews Land Company sells property to Charles O. and Minnie (wife) Johnson

1940 – Population of Harborcreek 3602

1944—June 6, D-Day, allied invasion of Normandy

1945

May 8, 1945—VE Day

August 6 and August 9, bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki

September 2, end of World War II

1946

9/11/1946 – Rev. Bermon canvassed Fairfield and started SCS as a branch of Christ Lutheran.

10/6/1946 – Sunday School at Fairfield Hose Co. 5 children attended. Later, counts were 55.



1948

3/5/1948 – Charles O. and Minnie Johnson sold property to Trinity Lutheran Church of New Brighton, PA (this church is now permanently closed)

1949

47 baptisms, 18 confirmations, 0 marriages, 0 funerals

2/5/1949 – Dedication of Lot provided by Trinity Lutheran Church, New Brighton, PA at 420 Fair Ave. for Church school. Children of the Faith Mission Sunday Church School at Fairfield Hose voted to christen the new building “Faith Lutheran Church”.

9/4/1949 – Rev. Kenneth R. May assigned as first Pastor

10/2/1949 – Faith Lutheran Church organized



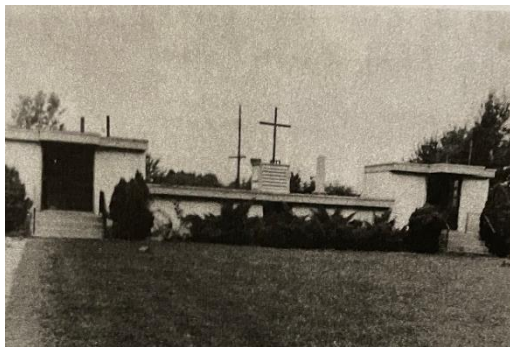
1950

16 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 0 marriages, 2 funerals

Population of Harborcreek is 7475

1/15/1950 – Rev. Houser dedicated Faith Lutheran at 420 Fair Avenue. Basement served as church.

6/25/50 – Korean War begins



1951

4 baptisms, 2 confirmations, 1 marriage, 0 funerals

1952

16 baptisms, 5 confirmations, 3 marriages, 1 funeral

1953

1 baptism, 5 confirmations, 4 marriages, 0 funerals

7/29/53 – Korean War ends

9/1/1953 – Rev. Kenneth May ended his service as Pastor of Faith and Grace

1954

2 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 3 marriages, and 0 funerals

1/1/1954 – Rev. Robert C. Richter began as Pastor of Faith and Grace

1955

15 baptisms, 1 confirmation, 1 marriage, 0 funerals

11/1/55 –Vietnam War begins

1/1/1955 – Sponsored Boy Scout Troop 175

1/1/1955 – Rev. Robert C. Richter ended his service as Pastor of Faith and Grace

6/1/1955 – Rev. Charles D. McAdoo began as Pastor of Faith
Albert Dembaugh got first organ

1956

8 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 3 marriages, 2 funerals

1957

18 baptisms, 15 confirmations, 2 marriages, 5 funerals

1958

8 baptisms, 6 confirmations, 0 marriages, 2 funerals



1959

0 baptisms, 6 confirmations, 3 marriages, 2 funerals

1/25/1959 – Members of Faith Lutheran Church approved relocation

1960

6 baptisms, 6 confirmations, 2 marriages, 3 funerals

Population of Harborcreek is 10,539

9/15/1960 – Rev. Charles McAdoo ended his service at Faith Lutheran

1961

16 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 0 marriages, 2 funerals

6/11/1961 – Rev. Charles R. Wertz called as Pastor

7/16/1961 – Purchase of 6.14 acres at 5414 E. Lake Rd. for \$31,144 from Bill Carney. Parsonage rented at 417 Baker Avenue.

1962

0 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 8 marriages, 3 funerals

1963

0 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 2 marriages, 4 funerals

- Polly Loosley children's choir, Janet Leech, 8:15 organist, and Barb Veritz, 11:00 organist

- Luther League donated Missal Book for the new church

4/8/1963 – Approval of Architect's Plan from Martsof, Gross, and O'Neal of New Brighton, PA. Jack Rigney of this firm designed the sanctuary cross.

9/15/1963 - Walnut crosses sold for \$.13 as fundraiser for building project

9/29/1963 – Groundbreaking of new church

11/22/63 –Assassination of President John F. Kennedy



1964

19 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 5 marriages, 3 funerals

- Vacation Bible School had 118 children in attendance

- LCW gift of Fair Linen

- Council's approval is request to allow Christmas program without covering the altar. Dr. Hankey does not approve of the junior choir standing in front of the church with their backs to the altar.

3/2/1964 - More people worshiped at Easter Services than ever before in Faith's history

4/2/1964 - Laying Cornerstone for new church with time capsule containing church history, building plot plan, list of members, walnut cross, Bible, plaque with the names of council members, bulletin, 2 pennies, The Service Book and Hymnals, LWC pen and purpose of that organization, brochures of building fund drive.

6/1/1964 Received pews from Bethany Lutheran

6/12/1964 Dedication of the new Faith Lutheran building on East Lake Road

7/12/1964 Blessing of the church. Silver and gold baptismal book given by architect, Jack Rigney

1965

10 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 6 marriages, 2 funerals

- 11 a.m. nursery starts with Mrs. William Billig

- Church women give stamp books for the Sunday Church School drapes

- Council members are directed to set an example and attend worship with their families on Sunday and at mid-week Lenten services

- Luther League and LCW Women save Coke and Tab bottle tops to purchase 37 silver chalices and tray for communion.

-Communion is offered 8 times a year, at Epiphany, Ash

Wednesday, Easter, Trinity Sunday, First Sunday in August, World Wide Communion Sunday, Sunday closest to All Saints, and the first Sunday in Advent

- Letter from Dept. of Social action of Synod concerning activities of LCA in Selma, AL read

- Mrs. Suchta agrees to lead junior choir

- Mrs. Veritz resigns and Mrs. Webb is the next organist at \$7.50 per Sunday

1/7/65 Volunteer signup sheet to clean church starts

4/1/65 Mayme Northrup \$2000 legacy bequest to remain at Marquette

5/12/65 Mother Daughter banquet held at “Little Bit of Sweden”

1966

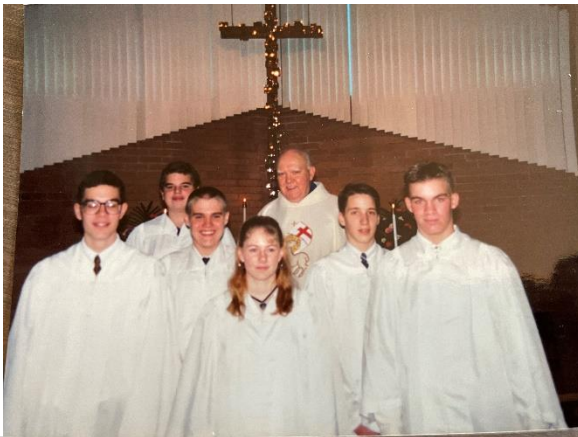
6 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 4 marriages, 3 funerals

- Confirmation classes changed from being offered to 10-year-olds to commencing in the seventh grade.

- Council considers establishing a church office

- Church has recreation program using Harbor Creek High School gym.

- First honoring of outstanding acolytes – Ronald Leech and Gary Rose



6/5/66 Greeters began – Pastor made a list from council and their wives.

7/7/66 desk brought to church

12/1/66 Reorganization of council and committees to Standing-evangelism, stewardship, social ministry, educational, property, music and worship.

1967

4 baptisms, 10 confirmations, 4 marriages, 2 funerals

1966-1967 Special council meeting to create Lutheran Churches Association of Harborcreek and Lawrence Park is to be presented to congregation. There would be a joint use of pastors of Faith, Hope, Redeemer, and Christ with a common office at 606 Nagle Road.

- Ethel Suchta started as organist

- Field trips, classes in parsonage

- Youth cut grass at Fair Ave. property

7/26/67 Pastor Wertz suffers accident at Lutherlyn. Council wouldn't let him resign.

1968

7 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 5 marriages, 2 funerals

1969

11 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 8 marriages, 7 funerals

Purchased Kirby vacuum sweeper with Betty Crocker coupons

December: 207 communing members, church school, 107 members

1970

7 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 10 marriages, 4 funerals

-Population of Harborcreek is 12,038

- East Erie Lutheran Parish coop with Faith heading Vacation Bible School; Hope in charge of Publicity; Redeemer music library; Christ recreation programs and athletics; and Messiah visual aid library.

- Explorer Activity Club with a trip to Washington D.C. A retreat to Camp Judson

6/14/1970 Letter sent to Fairfield Hose Company Board of Directors and to the State Liquor Control Board expressing regret on the conversion of Fairfield Hose Company to become a club selling liquor.

9/13/70 Girl Scouts request and are approved to use church facilities

11/8/1970 Council approves sponsorship of Boy Scout troop pack

175 of Fairfield. Howard Leech/Albert Dembaugh, leaders

12/13/70 Educational Ministry is to study edict of the LCA concerning administering the sacrament of Holy Communion to children fifth grade and up.

1971

13 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 8 marriages, 9 funerals

- Bought parsonage on 6750 Belle Rd. for \$16,500

- Church is able to operate without aid from the Board of American Mission as they have not for the past 15 years

- Boy Scouts receive permission to erect a storage shed

- Messiah and Faith had combined Catechetical classes as Messiah was without a Pastor.

- East Erie Lutheran Parish had a blood bank donor club to provide blood to all members and their families

- District One Voting Place changed from Fairfield Hose to Faith Lutheran for \$20

4/15/71 Lutheran Home for the Aged expansion program \$200,000.

Pastor Gesler presents to the congregation the need to pledge. Faith pledges at the advanced level of \$8 per member or \$1,488 in two years.

6/4/1971 Strawberry festival

9/12/1971 Girls could serve on Altar Care (instead of serving as Acolyte) to earn a cross and chain

1972

6 baptisms, 12 confirmations, 10 marriages, 9 funerals

- Rev. David Daniels, Professor of History and ordained Lutheran minister, Missouri Synod, at services to talk about support for Protestant Campus ministry at Penn State Behrend

10/5/1972 Jr. Choir formed with 14 people and Mrs. Polly Loosley serving as director

10/8/1972 Explorers have official charter from the Boy Scouts of America



1973

16 baptisms, 15 confirmations, 11 marriages, 6 funerals

- Live Nativity at Hope Lutheran

- Outdoor altar built by Eagle Scouts; it is named Eagle Point Memorial Chapel

- First Communion age lowered to 13; however, the just-confirmed youth voted no

1/14/1973 Blessing of children at communion table began because of visitors

1974

26 baptisms, 12 confirmations, 12 marriages, 7 funerals

3/15 to 17/1974 Explorers retreat “Find Yourself at Camp Judson

3/31/1974 Couples Club theater party

7/13/1974 – 25th Anniversary Picnic

8/11/1974 First outside worship

9/28/1974 25th church anniversary held at the Concord Hotel in North East PA with a large group of new members

10/2/1974 – Organ, chimes, and bell tower dedicated



1975

5 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 8 marriages, 5 funerals

4/30/75 –Vietnam War ends with Fall of Saigon

1976

21 baptisms, 15 confirmations, 0 marriages, 11 funerals

- Diane Faulhaber worked on organizing the library

3/16/1976 Carol Perrotto’s application to start pre-school

5/18/1976 Ad hoc Committee meets on pre-school

1977

11 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 24 marriages, 12 funerals

- First place in basketball league

11/19/1977 Saturday evening services at Hope discontinued

1978

11 baptisms, 14 confirmations, 19 marriages, 11 funerals

- Carol Perrotto becomes 1st Preschool teacher

1979

17 baptisms, 13 confirmations, 10 marriages, 7 funerals

- Mark J and Tim Uglow – end of distinguished Acolyte Silver Cross award

6/17/79 Eagle Scout James R Soder builds 6 benches for outside worship



1980

16 baptisms, 11 confirmations, 11 marriages, 7 funerals

- 200th anniversary of Lutheran Sunday Church School

- 1980s Youth Group does ministry with residents at Brevillier Village

1981

13 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 8 marriages, 7 funerals

- Switched altar back to front
 - Preschool starts in kitchen – Judy Himrod, preschool teacher
 - David Ricke serves on the Synod's World Hunger task force
- 2/81 – Hope Lutheran and Faith Lutheran merge at Faith
11/1/1981 Merger of Hope and Faith complete



1982

12 baptisms, 14 confirmations, 9 marriages, 10 funerals

- Evangelism sponsors a Koinonia group
- PRISM83 LCA Mid Atlantic Regional Youth Gathering was attended by Val Weber, Laura Conley, Mariea O'Hara, and Karl Ludwig.

7/26 to 29-1982 Youth group trip to World's Fair

1983

12 baptisms, 6 confirmations, 5 marriages, 7 funerals

1983 & 1984 Youth Group Trash-a-thon earned \$330 in wheat and rice bags

1983 & 1984 Youth Group Sponsored Tri-School Dance 500 youth attended

1984

1 baptism, 17 funerals (no statistics of confirmations or marriages)
7/15/1984 Hope Chapel Sale \$137,500 to John and Joan Graham
-Plan for expansion and renovation of building by Crowner-King, architects.

1985

10 baptisms, 4 marriages (no statistics of confirmations or funerals)
7/14/1985 – Mortgage burning
7/21/85 Second Mortgage
8/11/85 Congregation to approve expansion plan, discuss financing, proceed with drawing, capital fund project
9/29/1985 – More space needed – improvements necessary – Christian education, enlarging sanctuary and multi-purpose space. Estimated cost: \$400,000. Parking and drive \$25,000

1986

10 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 7 marriages, 13 funerals
4/13/1986 - Ground breaking #2 for improvements: Fellowship Hall and Educational rooms.
Handicap ramp, wheelchair, ministry at Brevillier Village, Saturday evening services begin
12/7/1986 – Rededication of renovated/expanded building – Sidewalk to Brevillier Village
Hammermill closes.
April to October 1986, SCS classes were held at the Ball Pavilion during construction

1987

17 baptisms, 13 confirmations, 11 marriages, 9 funerals

- Youth Group: 1985-1987 Cystic Fibrosis Bike-A-Thon at Presque Isle State Park

2/1/1987 – Pastor Wertz was speaker and Legion of Honor awardee at vespers service of Remembrance at Faith.

1988

17 baptisms, 13 confirmations, 11 marriages, 9 funerals

- Jan Oshlick begins as Preschool aide

1989

3 baptisms, 1 marriage, 9 funerals (no statistics of confirmations)

- May – Eric Marshall becomes Faith's first Music Director

1990-1995 Faith Youth Club was an after school program for 3rd through 7th grades

1990—Population of Harborcreek is 15,105

12 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 9 marriages, 7 funerals

7/7/90- Dane and Barb Klaproth were the first wedding in new sanctuary

1991

16 baptisms, 12 confirmations, 11 marriages, 13 funerals

- August: Council approved start of Day Care Program

1992

10 baptisms, 18 confirmations, 8 marriages, 17 funerals

- Refinance church mortgage by July 1, 1992: \$298,000

1993

16 baptisms, 9 confirmations, 12 marriages, 12 funerals

- Catechetics changed to a modular form with classes offered in the summer for the first time.

- Three Lutherlyn counselors held a day camp “Camp on the Road”.

In 1993 there were 42 kids attending

- Fall 1993: Eagle Scout Steven Walker, built planter on the east side of church facing Brevillier for his project. His brother James assisted with masonry. Mike Berry and some other scouts participated.

- In-house printing of Beacon began using a risograph machine.

- Church library work done by Jennifer Jandt

1994

10 baptisms, 9 confirmations, 8 marriages, 13 funerals

- Catechetical camp moved from Lutherlyn in Butler PA to Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Camp in Bemus Point NY

- Seder meal for Sunday School children

9/3&4/1994 Library dedicated

10/17/1994 Michael Berry becomes Eagle Scout.

1995

23 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 9 marriages, 17 funerals

- New acolyte robes purchased

1996

16 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 8 marriages, 11 funerals

1997

9 baptisms, 9 confirmations, 10 marriages, 20 funerals

- June: Wedding policy was revised and wedding consultants were provided

1998

17 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 10 marriages, 20 funerals

- Purchased computer from Erie Insurance and Council moved to access internet

1999

0 baptisms, 5 confirmations, no marriages, 4 funerals

- New Roger's organ 960 from Tellers Organ Company \$75,000

- Church sign purchased and installed: interchangeable letters

- Parking lot extended, exterior lighting installed, and sidewalks were installed beside west side of church

5/1/1999 – Rev. Nancy Reeves called to serve as Associate Pastor

10/23/1999 - 50th Anniversary; commemorative tiles created from a watercolor of Faith's Easter altar by Marcia Hatton

12/4/1999 – New organ dedication



2000

Population of Harborcreek is 16,269

Unfortunately no record of pastoral acts was found for this time period

Judy Himrod, preschool teacher

- Web page developed with Adelpia

9/1/2000 – Rev. Nancy Reeves leaves Faith Lutheran

10/2/2000 – 50th Anniversary dinner at the Waterfall Restaurant

2001

16 baptisms, 2 confirmations, 15 marriages, and 9 funerals

9/11/01 --Terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Flight 93

10/7/01 – War in Afghanistan begins

- Church office has internet access and networking installed

2002

12 baptisms, 6 confirmations, 7 marriages, and 13 funerals

- Barb Klaproth organized the library

2003

15 baptisms, 17 confirmations, 7 marriages, and 15 funerals

3/20/03 – War in Iraq begins

- August: Pastor Wertz announced his decision to retire

- September: Call committee met with Bishop Ralph Jones to review Call Process for next pastor

2004

8 baptisms, 13 confirmations, 7 marriages, and 12 funerals

6/21/2004 Rev. David Laakso called to serve as Pastor

- Pastor Laakso teaches catechetical classes

2005

12 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 7 marriages, and 12 funerals

- New green, red, and purple paraments are purchased

2006

9 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 5 marriages, and 14 funerals

- New refrigerator, microwave and stove are installed.

- 4/24/2006 church broken into, locks changed

2007

1 baptism, 0 confirmations, 4 marriages, and 7 funerals

- Pastor Laakso elected as Dean of Erie Lutheran Conference

2008

16 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 7 marriages, and 25 funerals

- New pews and carpet

- All shingled roofs replaced

2009

9 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 8 marriages, and 13 funerals

- August: ELCA voted to allow the ordination of persons in same-sex committed relationships

- Development of website enabled The Beacon to be shared electronically

2010—Population of Harborcreek is 17,234

9 baptisms, 8 confirmations, 2 marriages, and 8 funerals

2011

8 baptisms, 2 confirmations, 2 marriages, and 15 funerals

12/18/11—War in Iraq ends

- New benches built for outdoor worship

2012

5 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 7 marriages, and 14 funerals

No smoking policy in place for entire grounds

2013

4 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 4 marriages, and 15 funerals

2014

5 baptisms, 6 confirmations, 4 marriages, and 14 funerals

- Installation of new LED sign in front of church

11/10/2014 – Eric Marshall's last day as music director

-Sue Mohnkern succeeds Eric Marshall as Music Director

2015

8 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 4 marriages, and 17 funerals

- Air conditioning installed in the sanctuary

- Government required all those working with children and youth to have background checks

- ELCA youth gathering in Detroit – 3 students and 1 adult attend

- Hosted Youth Encounter with 36 attending

- March - Paid off mortgage, all locks changed in church

2016

17 baptisms, 7 confirmations, 4 marriages, and 13 funerals

- Faith joins other Harborcreek churches supporting Ella Cochran

Food Pantry and Our Lady of Mercy. Dan McBride asked by Pastor

Laakso to serve on pantry board

2017

8 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 2 marriages, and 7 funerals

5/6/2017 – Pastor Laakso dies from lung cancer

7/10/17 – Rev. Ken and Karen Thompson serve as interim pastors

12/9/2017 – Live Nativity continues

2018

2 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 1 marriage, and 13 funerals

6/30/2018 - Rev. Ken and Karen Thompson end their service as interim pastors

7/1/2018 – Rev. Jean Kuebler is called to serve as Faith’s new pastor

9/1/18—Banana Split Dash.

Pastor Jean Kuebler offers two First Communion workshops

2019

7 baptisms, 9 confirmations, 1 marriage, 13 funerals

-Faith becomes a Purple Zone Domestic Violence Safe Space

10/20/19—Dedication of new prayer room

-Al-Anon group begins meeting at Faith

2020—Population of Harborcreek is 16,630

5 baptisms, 3 confirmations, 1 marriage, 16 funerals

- January: Brian Gray becomes new music director

- Faith and Christ the Redeemer Lawrence Park merge

-First annual Irish Concert and Dinner, with music by Brian Gray

- Covid: Mid-March, in person worship stopped. Services were live-streamed. Vacation Bible School met by Zoom.

- Brief period of in person worship during the summer with masks, social distancing and sanitizing.

- December rise in infection rates forced return to Zoom services

-Live Nativity is cancelled due to Covid

2021

9 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 0 marriages, 18 funerals

8/30/21 – War in Afghanistan ends

- Covid vaccines became available in spring. Return to in person worship with Zoom, masks, social distancing, and hand sanitizer. No common cup. Introduction of pre-packaged individual “Celebration Cups” and “Communion-to-go”.

- Boy Scout troop 175 and Cub Scout pack disband, due to lack of adult leaders; Scouting continues at other Eastside locations
- Two Brownie/Girl Scout troops and two Cadette troops begin meeting at Faith

2022

7 baptisms, 4 confirmations, 1 marriage, 17 funerals

4/24/2022 – Dedication of “The Welcoming Hands of Christ” mixed media piece by Jonathan Craig Chisholm commissioned for 75th anniversary

-The Northwestern PA synod changes organizational structure from smaller clusters to larger conferences. The East Erie Lutheran Cluster is dissolved. Faith once again becomes part of the Erie Lutheran Conference.

2023

4 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 3 marriages, 21 funerals

-SCS celebrates Matt Szewczyk’s ten years of perfect attendance as teacher

-Pastor Jean elected dean of the Erie Lutheran Conference

2024

As of July 2024: 3 baptisms, 0 confirmations, 0 marriages, 5 funerals

2/11/2024- Celebration of Pastor Jean’s 25th ordination anniversary

4/8/2024 – Solar Eclipse watch party; some 50 people attended from multiple states.

6/2/2024—Dedication of new playground

10/6/2024 - 75th Anniversary service and dinner

25th and 50th Anniversary Celebration Highlights

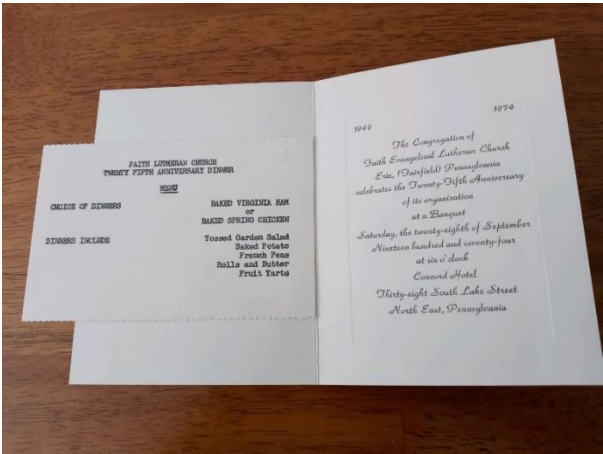
The 25th anniversary of Faith Lutheran Church was a series of events beginning on July 13th, 1974, with an anniversary picnic. It was an afternoon event with dinner at 5 and a brief worship service at 7 pm. Former Faith pastor Rev. Charles McAdoo attended for a meet and greet.

Events closer to the actual anniversary date began on September 14th with an Outreach Fair. It was followed two weeks later by the Anniversary Dinner at the Concord Hotel in North East.

In the many keepsake boxes Pastor Wertz’s family donated to Faith Lutheran we found programs for all the services, embossed napkins, invitations, menus and an RSVP card for the dinner. Additionally, there were articles and advertisements in the local papers highlighting the events and the participating speakers.

The keynote speaker at the dinner was The Rev. W. Gordon Joyce, Dean of the Erie district. His speech was “Faith Lutheran, This is Your Life”, is reminiscent of a popular TV show at the time.

He led them on a timeline from 1946 when the first Sunday School was held at the Fairfield Hose Company to the present day 1974. The first church building was a 20 x 30’ chapel that was primarily a Sunday School until 1949 when it began holding church services. It



was replaced by a basement unit dedicated in 1950 which served as the church until 1963.

When the church moved into the current East Lake Road location, the Fair Ave. chapel was sold to Hope Church and moved to Dutton and Highmeyer roads.

The first pastor of Faith, Rev. Kenneth May who became the Bishop of W. PA and W VA spoke at the dinner. The Rev. Dr. William Clancy also spoke.

The many artifacts of the 25th Anniversary are gifts indeed. They are wonderful windows into the history of the church.



The 50th Anniversary celebration began on October 23, 1999.

There were ceramic tiles made from a water color of the Easter altar painted by Marcia Hatton.

It was almost a year later on 10/1/2000 that the 50th Anniversary was celebrated with a buffet/banquet at the Waterfall Restaurant on E. Lake Rd.

Bookmarks designed by Shirley Muscarella with the theme “Forward in Faith” commemorated the event.

A “Do You Know” quiz tested the congregation and guests’ knowledge about the history of Faith Lutheran. A question about the design of the sanctuary cross was included. In addition to the questions, an answer sheet was attached to the program in the file.

So although the donor who paid for the cross isn't known, the designer was Jack Rigney, of the architectural firm that designed the church.

The program also included memories of Faith from the congregation. The topics were:

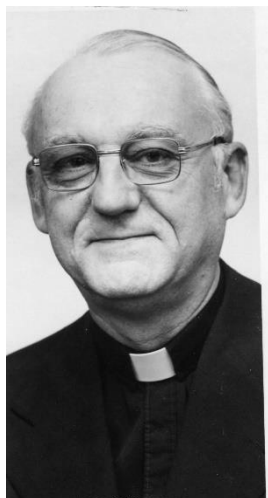
- What does Faith Lutheran mean to you?
- Humorous memories from worship services
- Sunday school memories
- What is your vision for Faith Lutheran in the next 10 years?

Only a few of the items on list may have come to fruition, but air conditioning and pew cushions have become a reality.

There was also an addendum: What changes in Faith Lutheran Church stand out most in your memory? Why?—*Deacon Mary Lord*



Pastors serving Faith Lutheran:



The Reverend Kenneth R. May: September 4, 1949-September 1, 1953

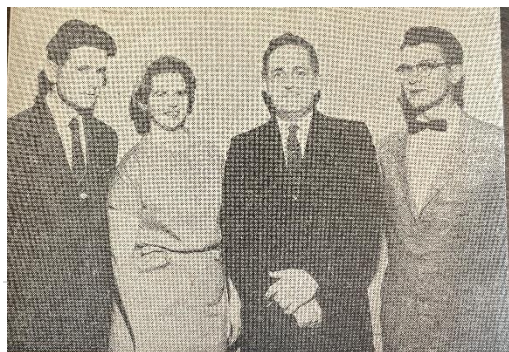
The Rev. Kenneth May, Faith's founding pastor, was born October 28, 1923, in New Brighton, PA (note that the architectural firm for our East Lake Road building and prior owners of the Fair Avenue property both hailed from New Brighton). He was graduated from Thiel College, Greenville, in 1945 and from the Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary in 1948. His parish calls included Grace and Faith Lutheran Churches in Erie. He later served as President, then Bishop of the W. Pa-W. Va.

Synod of the LCA and served on numerous church-related boards and agencies. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from Thiel in recognition of his synodical and congregational leadership. He died on July 28, 1989.

The Reverend Robert C. Richter: January 1, 1954-January 1, 1955

The Rev. Robert Richter served as pastor of Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh prior to being called to serve Grace Lutheran (on 10th and Wayne) and Faith Lutheran Churches, after Pastor May accepted a call to a congregation in Millvale, PA.

The Reverend Charles D. McAdoo: June 1, 1955-September 15, 1960

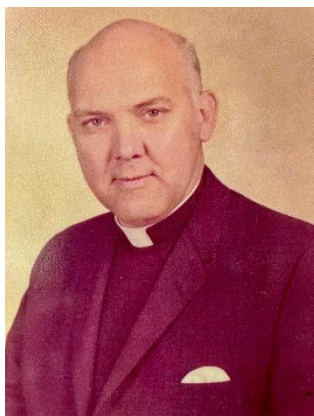


Reading from left: The Rev. Charles D. McAdoo, Mrs. Fred Stephenson, Jr., Dr. Gordon J. Massey, guest speaker; Robert Spacht.

The Rev. Charles MacAdoo was born March 30, 1930 in McKeesport, PA. Like Pastor May, he attended Thiel College and

the Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary, graduating in 1952 and 1955, respectively. After his ordination at Trinity Lutheran Church in Greenville, his first call was to Faith Lutheran. The Rev. G. Lawrence Himmelman, President of the Pittsburgh Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America, presided at Pastor MacAdoo's installation. According to an Erie Daily News article of June 27, 1955, "it was Dr. Himmelman's son, the Rev. Paul Himmelman, who did much of the initial work in organizing this congregation over five years ago." Pastor MacAdoo was Faith's first full-time pastor. He went on to serve several congregations in the Pittsburgh and Baltimore areas. He died on November 4, 2000.

The Reverend Charles R. Wertz: June 11, 1961-August 15, 2004



The Rev. Charles Wertz was born April 8, 1931, in Munhall, PA. He graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a B.S. in 1954, then served in the U.S. Air Force as Chief of Laboratory Services at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, from 1955-57. He then attended Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary and was ordained on June 7, 1961. His first (and

only) call was to Faith, where he served for 43 years. During that time, he served as a member of the Harbor Creek School Board for 34 years. After retirement, he served as interim pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran in North East. He served on various community boards, including the Protestant Campus Ministry at Penn State, Behrend and the Chapel of Four Chaplains. He died on September 16, 2018.

In the 1950's and 60's, Albert Dembaugh, Dimitri Dominik, and Clyde Couse were among the lay leaders of the congregation who assisted Pastor MacAdoo and Pastor Wertz in various ways with worship leadership and other pastoral duties.

The Reverend Nancy R. Reeves, Associate, May 1, 1999-September 1, 2000

The Rev. Nancy Reeves served at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Broken Arrow, OK before her brief call as associate pastor at Faith. She later served Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hermitage.

The Reverend David Laakso: June 21, 2004-May 6, 2017



The Rev. David A. Laakso, was born on Dec. 8, 1954 in Conneaut, Ohio. He was a graduate of Westminster College and Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary. Prior to being called to Faith, he served Holy Trinity Lutheran in Erie, as chaplain at the Bethesda Children's Home in Meadville, as well as parishes in Westminster, MD and Johnstown,

PA. He served on the board of the Perseus House in Erie, loved genealogical research, and was proud of his Finnish heritage. He died on May 6, 2017 while still under call to Faith, after an extended illness.

**The Reverends Ken and Karen Thompson, Interim pastors,
7/10/2017-2018**



Ken and Karen Thompson served as interims after Pastor Laakso's passing. They had recently moved to the Erie area after retiring from full- time ministry. Pastor Ken graduated from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg in 1974.

He has been ordained 50 years and served parishes throughout western Pennsylvania: the West Sunbury Parish, Ascension Lutheran Church in McKees Rocks; Shannondale, New Bethlehem; St Paul's Canonsburg; St Peter's, Evans City; and Christ Charleroi, (which later became part of a six church cooperative, The Mid-Monn Valley Lutheran Parish. He also served four years at St Peter's, Carlsbad, New Mexico. He retired in 2013.

Karen has always been active in the Church, even as a child. She was raised in the United Presbyterian tradition. When she met and married Ken, she became a Lutheran- Ken says "she was predestined to be Lutheran! After their children were grown, Karen entered seminary and was consecrated as an Associate in Ministry, which is now known as a Deacon. She served St Luke's Lutheran Church, Saxonburg as Director of Christian Education. Karen served Trinity, Gibsonia as organist and choir director for several years. While in New Mexico she served as a Synodically Authorized Minister for Trinity Lutheran Church in Hobbs, New Mexico. Returning to Pennsylvania, Karen participated in the

TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministry) from The Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg and was ordained into Word and Sacrament ministry in 2012. She retired in 2017. Currently she serves as an interim pastor with St James, Fairview and St John's, Girard.

Ken and Karen were honored to serve as interims at Faith Lutheran Church after two such respected Pastors, Charles Wertz (who was Ken's cousin) and David Laakso. Serving together was an interesting experience in many ways. It was an honor to be a part of Faith's 75-year ministry. *—Karen Thompson*



The Reverend Jean N. Kuebler: July 1, 2018 to present.

The Rev. Jean Kuebler was born June 14, 1962 in St. Louis. She received degrees in Biology and Philosophy in 1983, from Dickinson College in Carlisle, and received an M.A. in Philosophy from Purdue University. She taught philosophy at Gettysburg College for several years before enrolling at Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, and received her M.Div. in 1998. Before coming to Faith in 2018, she served in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, with calls to the Big Spring Cooperative Parish and Big Spring United Lutheran Church in Newville, and an interim position at Shells Lutheran Church in Grantville. She is currently serving as dean of the Erie Lutheran Conference. Previously in the Lower Susquehanna Synod, she served as dean of the West Cumberland Conference and chair of the committee of deans.

Pastors connected with Faith Lutheran:

Rev. John Coleman

John Coleman came to Faith in the mid-1970s as a teenager and found a loving home here. He participated in Luther League and served as a youth representative on Church Council. He loved singing in the choir and learning the tenor parts of hymns from Polly Loosely and Les Miller. Pastor Charles Wertz and all the sisters and brothers at Faith were at the center of John's life until he graduated from Penn State-Behrend in 1984 and moved to Baltimore for graduate studies in writing.

In 1997, John, his wife Kathleen and their children Elena and Micah moved to Columbus, Ohio, to attend seminary and prepare for parish ministry. Since his ordination in 2001, John served for fourteen years as pastor of Abiding Hope Lutheran Church in Millcreek and for the past eight years at St. John's Lutheran Church in Ontiontown, Pennsylvania. Kathleen, an oncology nurse, and John reside in Erie and are the proud grandparents of Cole, Killian and Gavin. His gratitude for Faith Lutheran Church remains strong to this day. —*John Coleman*

Rev. Cindy Sue Coleman

Cindy Coleman was born in 1957; she is John Coleman's oldest sister. She was active at Faith and Messiah Lutheran Churches and was endorsed for candidacy for the ministry of Word and Sacrament by Faith's council in 1980. She is the first woman from Faith to have been called to pastoral ministry. She began her theological studies at Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary in 1988; she was a classmate of our current NWPB Bishop, Michael Lozano. Cindy was ordained in the ELCA, and served a congregation in Warren. She moved to the roster of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries for a

while, then returned to the ELCA. She is happily married, living in North Carolina, where she recently retired as a hospice chaplain. She says she found joy and fulfillment in her hospice ministry. —jnk

Rev. Philip Harcourt

Philip Harcourt was baptized and confirmed at Faith, and was ordained in 1962. He served various congregations in the Pittsburgh area, then served Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Titusville from 1980-1986. He died in Titusville in 2005.

Rev. Scott Lee

Scott writes: I came to Faith around 1992 when I joined the BSA. While at BSA meetings, Pr. Wertz would often be around and I would ask him all of my God questions. After the 2nd or 3rd conversation, he invited me to church. I was baptized as a teenager, a believer's baptism which made for good conversation in seminary around Baptism. While at faith I enjoyed the fellowship of the church at large but was connected to the small youth group that mostly consisted of me, my brother, Dave Frank and Eric Larson. One of the things we were all proud of was holding that top heavy cross as high as we could, especially when the entrance or exit hymn was of a more triumphal feeling.

I enrolled at Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary in the summer of 2006 and graduated in 2010. I did a residency the following year at Christiana Hospital in Delaware. I graduated from the residency program in 2011 and found immediate employment as a hospice chaplain. I worked for 8 years in hospice while also serving St. Mark's Lutheran Church as a quarter time pastor. In 2016 I was offered two part-time churches: Immanuel, Norwood and St. Matthew, Woodlyn since there were not any full time positions

locally. I will graduate in June of 2024 with a second masters becoming a Marriage and Family Therapist. I am hopeful that I will be able to find full time work as a therapist and help people transform their lives for the building of the Kingdom.

Rev. Larry Smoose

Larry Smoose served at Faith during the summer of 1968, while Pastor Wertz was undergoing additional surgeries and convalescing from the leg injury he had suffered the previous year at Lutherlyn. Larry was not yet ordained when he served here; in fact, he had just graduated from Thiel College that spring, and had been accepted to Philadelphia Seminary. Pastor Wertz knew him from when he had served as an interim pastor at Larry's home church in Pittsburgh. He lived in the parsonage on Belle Road with Pastor Wertz, and baked a lot of pies that summer. The church secretary, Nicki, gave him a cheesecake recipe and a parishioner shared a pie crust recipe, both of which he still uses today. He and Laure Smith exchanged letters and Christmas cards for many years. He is now retired from the Southeastern PA Synod and living in the Delaware Valley. --*jnk*

Rev. Charles Urban

Charles Urban and his family were members at Hope Lutheran and were neighbors of Pastor Wertz on Belle Road. When Chuck was growing up, he said that Pastor Wertz often filled in at Hope and Redeemer. Pastor Wertz provided pastoral care for the family and was like a chaplain for the whole neighborhood. As a teenager, Chuck did yard work for Pastor Wertz, who became a mentor for him. Chuck and his family appreciated Pastor Wertz' community outreach through serving on the Harbor Creek school board. Pastor Wertz sponsored Chuck when he went to seminary and preached at

his ordination service at Drake's Mills in 1976. After his first call there, Chuck became a professional chaplain and served in various hospital and hospice chaplaincy calls in Florida and California until his retirement. He is grateful that Faith supported Pastor Wertz in his pastoral care to the wider community and his service on the school board. *—jnk*

Organists and music directors

February 5, 1949-Mrs. Thelma Forsha was organist for the dedication of Fairfield Sunday School Building.

December 10, 1949- Mrs. Eleanor Weber, an organist from Grace Church, was the guest organist during the first service of Faith Lutheran Church.

1955-Layman, Albert Dembaugh. Church received first organ.

1963-Children's choir-Polly Loosely. Early service at 8:15AM-Janet Leech. Barb Veritz-11:00AM service.

September 29, 1963- Barbara Veritz organist for 11:00AM building ground breaking celebration. Mrs. Janet Leech (assistant organist) for the 8:15AM service.

July 12, 1964-Barb Veritz and Janet Leech played for the Service of Dedication.

July 3, 1967-Ethel Suchta organist.

October 2, 1974-Dedication of Albert Dembaugh Memorial Organ, chimes and Bell Tower.

1999-New order placed on July 16, 1999 for organ from Tellers Organ Company

Eric Marshall, Director of Music, 1988-2014

Sue Mohnkern, Director of Music, 2014-2020

Brian Gray, Director of Music, 2020-present

Since 2021, Darryl Bush has served as volunteer musician (guitar, banjo, mandolin) for the Saturday night service.



Recent capital improvements

Over the last ten years there have been many significant changes and improvements to the facilities of Faith Lutheran Church. The following list highlights many of the capital improvements and accomplishments:

2014—Installation of air conditioning in the sanctuary; installation of outdoor digital sign

2015—Sealed and lined the parking lot; backflow prevention device was installed and landscaping of the area around the sign was completed.

2016—Purchase of zero-turn mower; window replacement for Choir room and Mayme Northrup room; roof replacement for Scout shed and picnic pavilion.

2017—Portico ceiling replaced with vinyl because plaster was falling down; updated electrical systems; new lighting in Sanctuary.

2018—Transitioned to using licensed and insured contractors for most of the skilled work; electrical repairs and corrections for the entire facility; started upgrading the interior lighting in the building; concrete work done for the front sidewalks.

2019—Replaced the office doors after break-in damaged them; installed security cameras and Ring doorbell; installed LED parking lot lights; new flat roof installed by Alex Roofing.

2020--An automated external defibrillator (AED) was obtained and installed; First aid kits were updated and installed; evacuation and emergency preparedness plans were printed and placed throughout the building; smoke detectors and carbon monoxide sensors were installed; installed air conditioning for Preschool

2021—Replaced the landscape timbers in the courtyard garden; coated and relined the parking lot; installed air conditioning for Social Hall.

2022--New audio/visual system was installed; work was done on several areas of the roof to help correct persistent leaks.

2023—Benches for outdoor worship were stained to present a more uniform appearance.

2024--Playground was installed; a new marble lectern for outdoor worship area installed.

2022-2024—The outdoor digital sign has failed. A long-term effort has taken place to try to repair it. It is beyond repair so we are currently working to replace it.

Over the entire time, all of the outdoor maintenance, gardening, lawn mowing, mulching, tree cutting, stump grinding, firewood cutting and downed tree removal has been going on as needed. Most of the work has been done by volunteers, with some professional help. The bricks on the building are going to be cleaned and repointed over the summer of 2024. A tree contractor is scheduled to open up the view of the lake from our bluff. –*Bruce Tackett*

Church during the pandemic

In 1527, Martin Luther wrote a letter to a friend who had asked whether a Christian should flee from the plague: “Therefore I shall ask God to mercifully protect us. Then I shall fumigate, help purify the air, administer medicine, and take it. If God should wish to take me, he will surely find me, and I have done what he expected of me. If my neighbor needs me, however, I shall not avoid person or place but will go freely...*Yes, no one should dare leave his neighbor unless there are others who will take care of the sick in their stead and nurse them. In such cases we must respect the word of Christ, “I was sick and you did not visit me ...” [Matt. 25:41–46]. According to this passage we are bound to each other in such a way that no one may forsake the other in his distress but is obliged to assist and help him as he himself would like to be helped.*” Luther’s pastoral advice balanced prudence and personal responsibility with compassion for those in need.

Almost five hundred years later, Luther’s counsel became newly relevant, as the church figured out how to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. At Faith, we did our best to continue being the church. We found new ways to worship, learn, serve our neighbors, and provide pastoral care. We followed the guidance and best practices of our denomination, our synod, and the CDC, and proceeded with

an abundance of caution out of love for one another and love for our neighbors.

In mid-March of 2020, pretty much everything shut down because of the emergence and rapid spread of a dangerous and often deadly new virus. We sheltered in place and kept social distance. In many places, hospitals and nursing homes were overwhelmed with Covid patients. We experienced significant disruptions in the supply chain.



(Remember the toilet paper shortages?) We engaged in fierce political debates about how to balance personal freedoms with the greater good. We argued about masks (and later on, vaccines), and weathered all sorts of conspiracy theories. We struggled with

loneliness, anxiety and depression. Health care workers, teachers, and others suffered professional burnout. Far too many people died alone, without the company of loved ones.

At Faith, we cancelled in-person gatherings for what we thought would be just a few weeks, but turned out to be several months. We pivoted quickly to recording worship services and posting them on our Facebook page. We learned how to hold meetings and teach classes on the Zoom platform. We tried an online VBS, provided online curriculum for Sunday School, and did our stewardship campaign as a series of Zoom “Faith Chats”. Our Preschool classes even held weekly Zoom meetings that spring. Pastor Jean began offering weekly “Prayer Room Chats” on Facebook, to provide another way for us to pray together, reflect, and connect. She also began posting her sermon texts on our Facebook page and mailing hard copies of sermons and weekly devotions to shut-ins and folks without internet access.

From a pastoral point of view, the pandemic imposed on us a long season of fasting from Holy Communion. It also limited pastoral visitation for a time. When visitation did begin to resume at nursing homes, it involved talking across plexiglass barriers and wearing full personal protective gear. Many Faith members contracted the virus; a few became seriously ill and required hospitalization; others experienced relatively milder symptoms. Three of our older members died of Covid during the pandemic.

By the summer of 2020, we established protocols for sanitizing and social distancing. We returned to in-person worship with masks, social distancing, and without congregational singing. For many months, we used individual pre-packaged “Celebration Cups” for Holy Communion; later, we introduced the use of individual



communion cups and a pouring chalice (rather than intinction or common cup) to distribute the wine.

Due to a rise in community infection levels, we reluctantly returned to online worship

from December 2020 –February 2021. By that spring, vaccines were finally available; we continued to require masking and social distancing, but gradually returned to congregational singing. Our Preschool continued to operate in-person for the 20-21 and 21-22 school years, with masks, social distancing, and lots of hand sanitizer. Some of our members responded to the crisis by sewing masks; we gave away hundreds of masks in the congregation and community. During all this time, the congregational leadership and staff were unfailingly diligent, responsible, and creative as we

established policies and figured out all sorts of unanticipated practical details. Overall, our congregation remained remarkably patient, kind, unified, and resilient through all the stressful changes.

The pandemic has changed our life together; not all of the changes are bad. Zoom continues to be an efficient and normal option for meetings. We continue to live-stream our worship services, and engage a larger online population than we had previously.

“Communion-to-go” (with the pre-consecrated individual packs) has remained a useful way of receiving the sacrament for many of our households. Sermon texts will be shared online for the foreseeable future, and dozens of members still appreciate receiving weekly mailings with the sermon and devotions. It is unlikely that we will return to intinction or common cup for communion distribution any time soon! On the whole, we all practice better hand hygiene now, and have learned that it is kind to our neighbors to wear a mask when we are sick. Hopefully, living through the pandemic has expanded our compassion and deepened our humility. *jnk*



Ministries, Organizations, and Outreach

Faith Lutheran Preschool

Our little preschool opened its doors back in the year 1978. It was a carefully thought out wish of Pastor Charles Wertz and Carol Perrotto, who then became the first of twelve preschool teachers here at Faith. This was approximately eight years before the wonderful addition to the building that we are familiar with today, including new offices, restrooms, fellowship hall, kitchen, and the preschool rooms. Pastor Wertz and his team successfully found enough room to accommodate the new preschool in the areas that are now the narthex and prayer room.



Folks attending services and Faith employees came in through the same entrance as today, but essentially had to pass right down the center of the preschool to get to the sanctuary or the offices. It was a little inconvenient, but to Pastor Wertz, starting a preschool was more important. Over the years, a team of many, including Pastor

David Laakso, Pastor Jean Kuebler, office staff, Preschool Board members, and teachers have successfully kept this dream alive and thriving, 46 years and over 1000 students later. It has been and will continue to be my privilege to be a part of this ever improving little community. --Jan Oshlick, Preschool Aide

Preschool Teachers, 1978-present

1978 Carol Perrotto

1980 Mary Ann Bach

1981 Judy Himrod

1988 Jan Oshlick began as Aide

1994 Sandy Folland

2000 Judy Himrod

2005 Chris Claypoole

2006 Lana Fortin

2007 Joni Ladaika

2008 Carrie Wood

2009 Judy Himrod

2011 Joni Ladaika

2013 DeDe Fox and Maggie Jaraczewski

2016 Debbie Bemis

2020 Kelly Drahushak

2024 Lee Manafo

Scouting

For over 50 years Faith Lutheran Church sponsored both Cub Scout Pack 175 and Boy Scout Troop 175. The council approved the



sponsorship of the troop in November of 1970. The church and the Scouts had a mutually beneficial relationship. The church provided a place for the Scouts to have their meetings and events, as well as storage for

all the required equipment for all sorts of outdoor activities.

The Scouts performed many Eagle Scout projects and other miscellaneous projects on the grounds to benefit the church and or the community. Just a few examples are

- Basic cleanup of the church grounds
- Adopt a Highway along Iroquois Ave from Nagle to Troupe Road; they cleaned up this stretch of road for 25 years.
- Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in Scouting. Troop 175 had 59 boys attain this rank over the years. Below is just a small sampling of the projects completed in pursuit of their rank.
- Building the outdoor altar.
- Placing the lectern at the outdoor worship location.
- Making benches for the parishioners
- Building and placing sturdy outdoor seating with backs around the grounds.

The Worship area at the north end of the church grounds became known as Eagle Point, something all the Scouts are very proud of. The parishioners also value it because without the effort of the Scouts there might not have been outdoor worship. This area not only praises God, but praises the natural beauty and serenity this place brings.



- Other benefits to the church are the huge Scout shed, which was wired with electricity and erected in 1971.
- The lawnmower shed.
- The outdoor pavilion with picnic tables and lights.
- The hostas planted around the church.
- The ramp to the church from Brevillier Village.
- The bat houses.
- The grill inside the stone enclosure.

These are only the Eagle Scout projects that were completed on the church grounds. Parents and Scouts worked together to get the projects done. The community also benefited from blue bird houses at Project 79, and painting the fence at Whitford Park, among many other projects.

Without parents, Scouting can't succeed. Parents served as leaders, committee coordinators, fundraising coordinators and transportation to caving, rappelling, white water rafting in West Virginia, camping at Scout Camp, biking and the fun of bogging, camping at Oil Creek State Park, and many other adventures. These Scouts the church sponsored learned many valuable skills--responsibility, teamwork, self-reliance, problem solving, morality, and leadership just to name a few. Eagles are respected members of the world. --Alexis Peterson

Sunday Church School

Faith Lutheran Sunday Church School has been in progress for more than 75 years, teaching the word of God to hundreds, from three-year olds to adults, thanks to many dedicated teachers, administrators, and music leaders.

At one time, the SCS had its own hymnals. In 1994, the SCS organized an educational Seder meal for the children. Currently, we offer a multi-grade class for K-5, as well as a nursery class for 3-4 year olds.



Matt Szewczyk has been teaching the little ones for over ten years now, with a

perfect attendance record. We currently offer one adult Sunday School class. The Sunday School has long had a tradition of presenting Bibles to third-grade students.

The SCS has been involved in many service projects over the years: Lutheran Association of Missionaries and pilots (LAMP now LIM); ANNA Shelter; Parma Pennies; SOS 4 Kidz Christmas; purchasing animals, planting flowers in the church garden, Christmas programs, soap for Haiti, collections for World Hunger, Thanksgiving placemats for Brevillier Village, Valentines for Brevillier Village and Soldiers and Sailors, Faith Kids Clean Up, breakfast with the pastor, and caroling at Brevillier.—*Sandra Taccone and jnk*

(although, according to Martin Luther’s Small Catechism, it is the parents who are expected to teach the basics of the faith). In 2023, we incorporated adult mentors into the program. During some periods of our congregation’s history, Faith has joined forces with other local congregations (Grace, Hope, Christ) to offer confirmation instruction. In 1971, Messiah and Faith combined classes, as Messiah was then without a called pastor. In 1993, catechetics changed to a modular form with classes offered in the summer for the first time. (Our current program runs from September through May). In 1994, Faith chose to participate in Confirmation Camp at the Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center in Bemus Point, NY. Prior to that, Faith had been part of the confirmation camp ministry at Camp Lutherlyn in Butler, PA. — *Sandra Taccone and jnk*

Day Camp

For a number of years, Lutherlyn counselors held a day camp at Faith “Camp on the Road” for area children (first through fifth graders), Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. In 1993 there were 42 kids attending. Camp on the Road was offered in 1993-95 and 1999-2008. The counselors ate breakfast and slept at the church, held camp outside, ate packed lunch provided by church member families, and ate dinner at church family homes. A shower was installed at church for their convenience. Each day included devotions, singing, recreation, Bible study, nature study, story time, group activities, crafts, lunch, and snacks. —*Sandra Taccone*

Here is a memory shared by one of those counselors:

“My name is Michelle Moon. My parents are Tom and Lana Fortin. I am a Kindergarten teacher at Iroquois Elementary School. I live in Harborcreek with my family.

Growing up, I attended Lutherlyn as a camper. When I was a freshman and sophomore in college (18 and 19 years old), I worked for Lutherlyn as a Day Camp counselor. This job consisted of traveling to various churches for a week at a time and putting on a day camp for the church. The church was responsible for housing us and feeding us.

I traveled to so many places and met so many people, but one place will always be in my special memories. That place is Faith Lutheran!! We slept in the church and I distinctly remember sleeping by steps in the room!! The people in the church took amazing care of us. And dinner at Pastor Wertz's house was out of this world good!!!!!! Your hospitality will always be special to me!! THANK YOU!! Happy Anniversary Faith Lutheran!!"

Luther League and Youth ministry



The youth of the Church have been active throughout the history of our congregation with activities such as preaching on Youth Sundays, free car washes, father-son breakfast, shoveling snow at Conrad House, cutting

grass at Fair Avenue, Halloween kidnapping party, caroling, New Year's dance with over 100 attending, cleaning the church and grounds, retreats to WLD Ranch, tours of local businesses, touring an Air Force base, museum visits, and trips to Pittsburgh for ball games. There were elected officers creating their own budget and agenda. Here are some highlights of youth ministry over the years:

1967 Youth cut grass at Fair Ave. property

1970s Explorer Activity Club with a trip to Washington D.C. and a retreat to Camp Judson

1972 Crusaders were created

1982 PPRISM83 LCA Mid Atlantic Regional Youth Gathering was attended by Val Weber, Laura Conley, Marica O'Hara, and Karl Ludwig.

7-26 to 29-1982 trip to World's Fair

1983 & 1984 Trash-a-thon earned \$330 in wheat and rice bags

1983 & 1984 Sponsored Tri-School Dance; 500 youth attended

1987 Tri-School Dance at Harbor Creek High School with 750 youth

1980s Pets to Ball Pavilion program. Also, seniors at Brevillier Village could sign-up for youth to visit.

1985-1987 Cystic Fibrosis Bike-A-Thon at Presque Isle

1990-1995 Faith Youth Club was an after school program for 3rd through 7th grade students

—*Sandra Taccone*

Vacation Bible School



Vacation Bible School has always been a great outreach program in our neighborhood with more than a 100 participants for many of the early years (1964 had 118 attending, according to, Violet Harcourt). VBS has evolved into a collaborative outreach effort with Harborcreek Presbyterian, Eastminster Presbyterian, Messiah Lutheran, and Faith in most recent years

(2023 and 2024). The ever evolving VBS has ranged from day time to evening, from two weeks to one week, from holding family vacation bible school and regular bible school. These science projects, arts and crafts, bible story enactments, skits, and songs, created lifetime memories for many. –*Sandra Taccone*

Live Nativity



For over 40 years, beginning sometime in the mid-1970's, Faith offered a live nativity display for the community every December. Volunteers dressed in costumes to portray Mary and

Joseph, shepherds, angels, and wise men; sometimes, an innkeeper and a census taker were also part of the tableau. As many as two or three dozen volunteers were involved each year to make it all happen. The live nativity would be presented on two evenings in early December, no matter the weather. Visitors could simply drive by, or they could stop and enjoy some hot chocolate and cookies while they viewed the Christmas scene.

At one of the first live nativities, which was held in a barn in South Harborcreek, an infant Andrea Eckroat played the role of the Christ child. In 2019, Andrea (now Konkol) enjoyed seeing her twin daughters, Lauren and Meghan Konkol participating in the live nativity as angels. Mark Concilla, along with other Faith members and friends of the congregation, built the wooden stable that is set up every Advent on the lawn in front of the church. In 2013, Faith began including animals in the nativity scene. For several years, the

Giambrone family of Harborcreek brought calves, sheep, chickens, and even a donkey (if the donkey was in a cooperative mood). For a couple of years, Becky Laakso also shared some of her pet chickens for the display.



The live nativity went on hiatus in 2020, due to the pandemic. It has not returned since then, as fewer volunteers are available than there used to be. However, the men from the prayer breakfast group still put up the stable every December for what is now a “non-live” nativity scene with a lighted manger, sheep, and a wooden star and angel donated by Linda Davis. So the tradition is continuing in a new way, and we continue to remind our community of the “reason for the season”. –jnk

Chapel of the Four Chaplains

Pastor Charles Wertz was active for many years in the Erie Chapter, Legion of Honor, of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, based in Philadelphia. The purpose of the Chapel is interfaith understanding and cooperation; their motto is “unity without uniformity”. The Chapel of the Four Chaplains honors four military chaplains who gave their lives rescuing others when the SS Dorchester sank on February 3, 1943, after being torpedoed by a German submarine. The chaplains helped other soldiers onto the life rafts, gave up their own life jackets, and said prayers and sang hymns as they went down with the ship. They were a Methodist minister, George Fox; a Reform Rabbi, Alexander Goode; a Catholic priest, John

Washington; and a Reformed Church minister, Clark V. Poling. On February 1, 1987, Pastor Wertz was the speaker and Legion of Honor awardee at a vespers service of Remembrance at Faith Lutheran. *jnk*

Mission Trip to the Dominican Republic—Reflection by Carolyn Fialkowski

In January 2010, I went on a mission trip with an agency called “Meeting God in Missions”. This is a nondenominational group that sends people to the Dominican Republic or Haiti to help the people to learn about God through supporting and giving assistance in areas of need. I went to Hato Mayo, D.R. for a week. We could assist in activities of Eye Exam and glasses, Bible school, construction of church buildings and sorting and giving out donated clothing. We all journeyed one day to the sugarcane fields and fed the people lots and lots of peanut butter sandwiches and visited them in their homes. Also we attended a church service high up on a mountain top afterwards they served us cookies and cakes. Through serving others, I learned so much myself about self-worth and dignity. God really does work through us. Members of Faith supported me with prayers.

While our group was there, the southern part of Haiti, including Port-of-Prince was hit with a category 4 hurricane. Our home building was in the northeastern part of the D.R. so we had only strong winds and rain. But then came the weather forecast of a possible tsunami and that would affect us by closing the airport and possible damage.

I was told by Bruce Tackett, who was my prayer partner that year that he never prayed so much for a prayer partner than that week I was in the Dominican Republic! Prayer works, there was no tsunami and I returned home safely. It was a wonderful week serving and learning. I appreciated all the prayers from the congregation.

At home, I worked with the Sunday school children and the Pre-school classes in collecting soap and washcloths for an LWR project. Also, I demonstrated how to make dirty water drinkable through a small device, which children in an area that had no drinking water, were getting to take home for their families. VBS raised money for these devices one year.

Be blessed and go forth and serve the Lord by serving others!

Ella Cochran Food Pantry

Ella Cochran was established in 1980 by Peaches Cochran and is located behind Our Lady of Mercy on Bartlett Road. Others have run the pantry up to 2016 when OLM brought three other Harborcreek churches into the fold. The three churches are Faith Lutheran Church, First Presbyterian and South Harborcreek Methodist. Grace Church lately has been involved in certain functions. A board was formed of eight people and Pastor Laakso and they asked me to be Faith's liaison to the board.

We service approximately 196 registered families in the Harborcreek district that have food insecurities and qualify to the income standards of the federal government. We provide food every third Wednesday of the month. Most of the food is provided or bought from Second Harvest and we pick up weekly from Walmart. Local schools and agencies do food drives on occasion to supplement our food shelves.

Financially, we get grants and donations from all of the churches, the Moose Club and other benefactors such as Sisters of St. Joseph, etc... We do not have any financial liabilities other than Second Harvest as all workers are volunteers and we do not pay rent. Our mission statement is as follows: “Through compassionate, supportive service the Ella Cochran Food Pantry provides food and other necessities to Harborcreek residents who are in need.”—*Dan McBride*

Bethany Outreach Center

The Bethany Outreach Center, located in the former Bethany Lutheran Church, is a non-profit organization that provides a weekly food distribution and free clothes closet to those in need. Located in an area with highest child poverty rate in Erie, Bethany Outreach has also offered a variety of educational programs to children and adults. Programs have included nutrition and exercise for healthy living, sewing skills, gardening, an afterschool teen program and a Saturday morning story time for children.

Faith Lutheran Church was first introduced to the Bethany Outreach Center by our long-time parish administrator Deb Galloway. Deb served on the Bethany Outreach board of directors for many years and often shared her love for this nonprofit that serves from the former Bethany Lutheran Church on East 10th Street.

When the decision was made to expand the Bethany Outreach Center, new membership was sought from Lutheran churches in the area. Faith Lutheran members stepped right up and have continued to serve as active members of the board of directors. In addition, several church members are dedicated weekly volunteers at the food pantry.

In addition to the active volunteer work with Bethany Outreach, Faith Lutheran also maintains a large clothing bin where members donate their gently used clothing to be delivered weekly to the Bethany Outreach clothes closet. Financial donations to support the work of Bethany Outreach are collected via several special collections each year

Yard Sales

The first Yard Sale at Faith Lutheran took place in the summer of 1996. That sale had several tables set up in the parking lot with a small table of new items that were being raffled



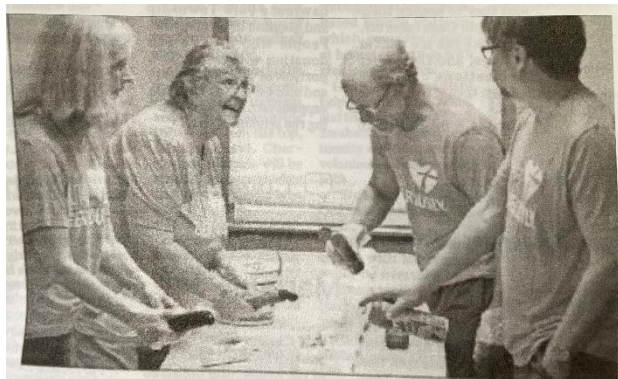
off. The sale grew in popularity and attendance for the next 20 years. Later sales boasted a DJ, bounce house, gift raffles of over 200 items, bake sale, concession stand, several large tents with items for sale, etc. Each year coupons were provided to over 50 social services agencies to give to their clients. Coupons were good for whatever the person or organization needed/wanted, excluding the raffle items. The Social Ministry Committee sponsored the event each year, donating the money raised to the abused and neglected children of Erie County. –*Mary Jo Szewczyk*

SOS 4 KIDZ

SOS 4 KIDZ became an official non-profit agency in 2010, founded by Mary Jo Szewczyk. Its mission is to provide



equal opportunities to abused and neglected children in Erie County. Faith Lutheran supported SOS 4 KIDZ through the annual yard sale. They also did a “Birthday Party” for Jesus where the Sunday School children would bring in new or gently used toys that they would wrap and donate to needy children. They would then have cake to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. The Sunday School still collects and wraps gifts every December. –*Mary Jo Szewczyk*



Banana Split Dash

On September 1, 2018, Faith hosted the world’s first (and only?) Banana Split Dash. This event was the brain child of Pastor Matt

Dennison, serving St. Peter’s Lutheran in North East. The goal was to create a 100 foot long sundae in the fastest possible time. 26 volunteers took part in this unique event, which raised \$571.21 for a Ramps of Hope project to build a wheelchair ramp for a local community member. The Dash was sponsored by the congregations of the East Erie Lutheran Cluster (Faith, Messiah, St. Peter’s, and Christ the Redeemer). *jnk*

Art at Faith

Over the years, Faith has been blessed to receive several original artworks by professional and amateur local artists. They include the following:

- Oil painting of Daniel in the lion's den, on display in the narthex; painted by a 19th century female artist from Pennsylvania. This was her only known biblical subject. The painting was donated by a family member of Laure Smith.
- Watercolor of Faith's altar at Easter, by Marcia Hatton (2000), currently on display outside the Northrop Room. This image was commissioned for Faith's 50th anniversary and was used to create commemorative ceramic tiles.
- Watercolor of Christ with the crown of thorns, by Faith member Sandy DiNicola (1995), currently on display in the narthex. This piece originally hung at Christ the Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lawrence Park. Sandy donated it to Faith in 2020 when Christ the Redeemer and Faith merged.
- Two oil paintings of landscapes (1997 and 2008) by Faith member Patricia Via, currently on display in the fellowship hall. Pat donated them to the church shortly before her death in 2022. After she retired, Pat was looking for something to do and took a painting class. She became a prolific and accomplished artist in her later years.
- Icons of the Face of Christ (2009), the Ascension (2018), the Holy Family (2021), and the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (2024), by Pastor Jean Kuebler



- “The Welcoming Hands of Christ” (2022), mixed media by Jonathan Craig Chisholm. This piece was commissioned for our 75th anniversary and was dedicated on the Second Sunday of Easter, April 24, 2022. The design was inspired by our mission statement themes of welcome and hospitality in Christ’s name, as well as by our beautiful lakeside location. The artist happens to be a neighbor of ours at Brevillier Village, where he maintains both an apartment and a studio space. Jon has had a long and fruitful career as an art teacher and studio artist. *jnk*



75th Anniversary Quilt

A quilt in honor of our anniversary was created by Marcia Groce, who is a member at St. Peter’s, North East, an associate member of Faith, and an active participant in Faith’s Craft ‘n’ Chat group. The quilt incorporates fabrics from old vestments and stoles from Faith’s pastors and old paraments from Faith and Christ the Redeemer. *jnk*

Cradle Roll

When a child is baptized at Faith, the child is enrolled in cradle roll. Parents regularly receive age-appropriate faith formation and family worship resources until their child's third birthday. Birthday postcards are sent to the child on their first, second, and third birthday. On the child's third birthday, they are sent an invitation to Sunday Church School. Carol Dolak handled these responsibilities for over 30 years; JJ Lee has recently taken over Cradle Roll. –

Sandra Taccone



Baptismal butterflies

Sandy Wertz was instrumental in organizing a ministry originally known as the Craftshare Group, and now known as “Craft ‘n’ Chat”. It is a weekly gathering for fellowship and working on quilting, crocheting, knitting, and other craft projects. One of the early fruits of the group’s labors was a small quilt entitled “Eternal Life” that hangs on the west side of the

sanctuary. In 1997, Pastor Wertz invited the group to design and create a quilted baptismal banner for the church.

The design includes a cross and flowers, symbolizing rebirth, resurrection, and new life. Margaret Laramie, Kathy Calkins, Margaret “Peg” Eschenbach, Nancy Glass, Linda Jackula, Darlene Leasure, Kathy Maas, Ann Rocco, Shirley Sonney, Jan Toohey, Kathy Vrenna, and Sandy Wertz all contributed to the project.

“The fellowship which began and developed around the making of this banner bloomed into significant relationships and friendships,

blessing each of us.” Whenever an infant or small child is baptized at Faith, the family places a butterfly on the banner. When the child turns three years old, their butterfly is removed and presented to them, with an invitation to begin Sunday Church School. Cozella Eckroat has been making the butterflies for some time. Each is personalized with the child’s name, date of birth, and date of baptism. *jnk*

Memorial crosses

Another unique and meaningful congregational ministry is our



memorial crosses. Sometime early in his tenure at Faith, Pastor Laakso started our tradition of making small wooden crosses in memory of loved ones who have died. Jim and Barb Wenner accepted Pastor Laakso’s invitation to take on this ministry. Jim made a large wooden cross, which is mounted on the west wall of the sanctuary. Whenever a member dies, the Wenners make a small wooden cross inscribed with the person’s name; the small cross is

then placed on the large cross. We also make crosses for family members or fellow travelers for whom Faith has provided the funeral services. Each All Saints’ weekend, we give thanks for those who have died and entered eternal life in the previous year. At that time, the bereaved families are presented with the small cross with their loved one’s name. After many years of faithful service, the Wenners have recently retired from this ministry, and Tom and Lana Fortin have begun making the small crosses. *jnk*

Library

Faith's library includes Bibles, biblical reference and study books, theology, writings of Martin Luther, devotional books, biographies, church history, art, teaching resources, and more. The original collection came from Pastor Wertz's personal library and has been significantly expanded over the years. On September 3, 1994, the library was dedicated. Diane Faulhaber and Barb Klaproth helped organize materials in 1976 and 2002; in 2023, Deacon Mary Lord did a thorough refreshing of the library. Anyone is welcome to use and sign out library items. *jnk & st*



Prayer Room



When Pastor Jean arrived at Faith, the small area between the library and the choir room had become a jumbled storage space. The worship and music committee came up with the idea of transforming the space into a prayer room. Jim Wenner refinished the original wooden altar from our Fair Avenue location. (This altar had been stored in the Wertz's home for many years). The Wenners also rebursished a prie dieu (a kneeling bench for prayer), which was generously

donated by Elkin Funeral Home in North East. John Krahe donated volunteer time to paint the room, and comfortable furnishings were purchased with memorial funds. The space is decorated with icons (including the first one made by Pastor Jean, of the Face of Christ) as well as two serigraphs, “Crucifixus” and “Christus Victor”, by Dale Garman in 1984, which originally came from Hope Lutheran Church. The prayer room was dedicated on October 20, 2019. *jnk*

Playground



One of the priorities that emerged from a mission planning retreat in 2021 was installing a playground on our property. A playground task force was created that summer to work on this project, with representation both from the congregation and the Preschool. (Thanks to Robert Dolak (chair), Barb Noonan, Jan and Richard Oshlick, Kayla Frederick, Amy Hall, and Pastor Jean for seeing this project to fruition). The task force researched playground design and equipment, selected a design and location, applied for several grants, and launched a brick fundraiser project. Although we were not awarded any grant money for this project, we received enough from the fundraiser and other donations to prepare the site in the fall of 2023 and to purchase the playground in the spring of 2024.



The equipment was installed on April 9, 2024, which meant that the Preschool children, who had been waiting eagerly for the new playground, were able to enjoy it that spring. Since then, we have added a glider swing and two outdoor musical play items (Rainbow

Chimes and Rainbow Bongos) to be included on the site. The playground was dedicated on June 2, 2024. In the meantime, we have received our first order of 192 bricks (and are still taking brick orders at least through the end of 2024). Our current plans are to install the bricks as a walkway between the playground area and the picnic pavilion. *jnk*

Eclipse Watch Party



On Monday, April 8, 2024, Erie was in the path of totality for a solar eclipse. For most of us, this is a once-in-a-lifetime experience; the next total eclipse in the contiguous United States won't occur until 2044, and Erie won't be in the path of totality again until 2144! This special celestial event brought thousands of visitors and lots of publicity to Erie. Schools were closed, as were many businesses. Free eclipse viewing glasses were provided to the community by Penn State Behrend, The Erie County Library, Country Fair, and others. Many public and private venues across the region hosted eclipse celebrations and watch parties—among them, Faith Lutheran Church.

The weather, of course, was the biggest unpredictable factor, this being Erie in early April. But the morning rain and fog dissipated and the skies miraculously cleared in time for the eclipse. Faith had about 50 people of all ages who attended our watch party, including church members, neighbors, and visitors from places as far away as Virginia Beach, VA, Lititz, Harrisburg, and Orchard Beach, NY.



We provided eclipse-themed snacks (think Sun Chips, moon pies, and fabulous cookies made by Cozella Eckroat), free eclipse glasses, prayer resources, arts and crafts, and a themed playlist hosted by our own Brian Gray. It was genuinely awe-inspiring to experience almost four minutes of totality. In that strange afternoon dusk, dozens of turkey vultures came to roost, the bees in the flowering cherries went to sleep, and the spring peepers started singing. Truly, “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims its maker’s handiwork” (Ps. 19:1). *jnk*

75th anniversary celebration, 2024

In October of 2023, we began celebrating our 75th anniversary with a variety of monthly mission and outreach activities:

- October 2023—We collected 50 blankets and 93 items of men’s winter clothing for the Upper Room’s annual Blizzard of Blankets.
- November 2023—We collected small items (candy, snack crackers, hand sanitizer, personal hygiene items, etc.) and packaged over 150 “Goodie bags” for all the residents at the Soldiers and Sailors Home
- December 2023—We had a “Kindness Tree” in the narthex on which we hung ornaments describing acts of kindness given or received. We documented 68 acts of kindness.
- January 2024—Our special collection for the Lake Chautauqua Lutheran Center raised \$215 for capital improvements at the camp.
- February 2024—Our special collection for the ELCA Fund for Leaders raised \$557.25 for seminarian scholarships.
- March 2024—We collected 120 items for the ANNA Shelter.
- April 2024—Our goal was to (collectively) invite 75 people to church. We documented inviting 43 folks, which is a great start.
- May 2024—Our special collection for ELCA Good Gifts raised \$394 for world hunger ministries. One way to look at the amount is that this was enough to purchase ten piglets and two goats.
- June 2024—We celebrated the dedication of our new playground on June 2, 2024.

- July 2024—We collected school supplies for our Community Vacation Bible School’s mission project of supporting neglected and abused children and youth being served by SOS 4 Kidz.
- August 2024—We picked up trash at Shorewood Beach.



- September 2024—We partnered with RELEAF at the Erie Arboretum to facilitate planting our goal of at least 75 trees in Harborcreek and other East side communities. We began in May with planting 12 trees on our property, and partnering with our neighbors to plant 25 trees at Harborcreek Community and Highmeyer Parks, as well as several trees each at the Eastside YMCA, the Harborcreek Historical Society, and Ace Supply. In October we will partner with RELEAF and Diehl Elementary School to plant a fruit orchard at Diehl.

*You are warmly invited to Faith's
75th Anniversary Celebration*

Sunday, October 6, 2024

We will enjoy one worship service for this special weekend

FESTIVAL SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION
WITH BISHOP MICHAEL LOZANO PREACHING
AND SPECIAL MUSIC BY
THE CATHEDRAL BRASS QUINTET ~ 11:00 AM
FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
5414 EAST LAKE ROAD

~

BUFFET DINNER WITH CASH BAR ~ 1:00 PM
LAWRENCE PARK GOLF CLUB
3700 EAST LAKE ROAD



*Your response for dinner is requested
by the sixteenth of September*

ADULT BUFFET DINNER WITH CASH BAR \$35.00
CHILDREN AGES 3-12 \$12.50

M _____

— ACCEPTS WITH PLEASURE
— NUMBER ATTENDING
— DECLINES WITH REGRET

YOU MAY ALSO RSVP TO FAITHLEADAST@GMAIL

RSVP

Faith Lutheran Church 75th Anniversary Celebration at the Lawrence Park Golf Club, October 6, 2024

1:00 p.m. Gathering and fellowship

1:30 p.m. Invocation and table grace—Pastor Jean Kuebler

Buffet Dinner

Stuffed chicken breast

Gnocchi/braised beef and mushroom sauce

Tossed salad

Green beans Almandine

Roasted red potatoes

Pasta marinara

Pasta alfredo

Coffee, tea, lemonade, soda, water

Cash bar

Cake and cookies

Program following, with Brian Gray, Master of Ceremonies

- **PowerPoint slide show--Faith through the decades**
- **Theme hymn: “Rise up, O saints of God”**
- **Some highlights from previous anniversary celebrations**
- **Faith trivia**
- **Guest speaker--Rev. Michael Lozano, Bishop of the Northwestern PA Synod, ELCA**
- **Guest speaker--Nancy Dusckas, Supervisor, Dusckas Funeral Home**
- **Closing reflections and Benediction—Pastor Jean Kuebler**



A few joyful moments from our 75th anniversary year

