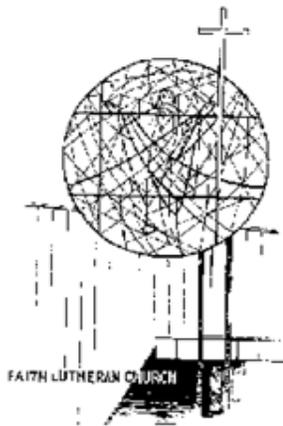


Faith Lutheran Church
50 Leverage Road
Troy, NY 12182



Following Faith

December 2023

And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.

Mark 13:37

Faith Lutheran Church

50 Leverage Road
 Troy, New York 12182
 (518) 237 4641

Pastor Kate Drefke

drefkekate@gmail.com

(518) 279 6127 (Voice and Text)

(Observes Sabbath 9:00 PM Thursday thru Friday)

(In an emergency call the number above)

www.faithlutherantroy.com

Gospel and Sermon Recordings <https://anchor.fm/kate-drefke>

Sunday Morning Worship

In Person and Zoom

10:45 AM at Faith

Church Council Officers**(Committee Assignments)****Council Members**

Bill Jarosz, President (Property)

Sara Martin, Vice President (Education)

Donna Van Zandt, Secretary (Worship)

Linda Hulihan, Treasurer Trainee

Errol and Heather Bull, Financial Secretary

Doug Adamek (Inreach/outreach, Missions, Property)

Katie Bonnier (Inreach/Outreach, Missions)

Errol Bull, (Property)

Evelyn Jarosz (Stewardship)

Dana Cerrone (At Large)

Roberta Hayward, Treasurer trainer, at large

Partnership Council – Linda Hulihan, Bill Jarosz, Doug Adamek, and Donna Van Zandt

Fred Howard, Interim Newsletter Editor

Want to Speak with Pastor?

See phone/text/email contact information above and let her know that you want to speak with her.

Pastor's Desk...**From the Pastor's Desk**

As Advent begins we prepare for the birth of a Jewish baby who will grow up to change the world. As a man, Jesus was deeply Jewish and well-versed in scripture- the Torah, the prophets, the psalms and other writings. He challenged his followers to live into the promises of God's realm, to pray and keep the commandments. From these Jewish roots arose Christianity in the first century, centered on this man's life and teachings, his sacrificial death and resurrection. From the same Jewish roots grew Islam in 610CE, when the prophet Muhammad received the Quran, understood by Muslims to be the final revelation of God.

As we make our preparations for Christmas over December, we remember that we are not alone in our holiday preparations and celebrations. December holds several major religious holidays, including:¹

- December 7 to December 15 – Hanukkah: An 8-day celebration in the Jewish faith that honors the victory of Jews over Syrian Greeks.
- December 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception: The day that Roman Catholics celebrate Mary's conception without original sin.
- Feast day – Our Lady of Guadalupe (Catholic Christians, esp. for Latinx Catholic and Protestant Christians this is a high feast).
- December 21 to January 1 – Yule: A Pagan and Wiccan holiday that celebrates the winter solstice.
- December 22 – Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday: Guru Gobind Singh is the tenth Sikh Guru and spiritual master. This date commemorates the day he was born.

- December 25 – Christmas: An important Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- December 26 – St. Stephen’s Feast Day: The day commemorating St. Stephen’s life and service as he became the first Christian to die for the faith.
- December 26 - Zarathosht Disco - Death of the Prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroastrian)

There are other holidays, lesser festivals within the month, too. It truly is the “holiday season” for us and our neighbors. So, if you’re inclined to say there is a “war on Christmas”... I urge you to reconsider. Our world has been marked this year by real war and attacks on Jews, Muslims, and other religious minorities. In the Holy Land- a place holy to all three Abrahamic religions *and* others- there is active military war, not just the “usual” threat of.

As we gather in worship, and around our tables at home, to celebrate the birth of the Jewish baby we call our “Prince of Peace,” among other titles, remember our Jewish, Pagan, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Zoroastrian neighbors who live and work beside and across the world from us. Pray for their peace, their rights to worship their Divine beings, too. Baby Jesus is not offended by others’ worship, but by us who claim to follow him while not heeding his words and failing to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Peace of the holiday season,

Pr. Kate Drefke

¹from <https://www.diversityresources.com/interfaith-calendar-2023/> and <https://www.interfaith-calendar.org/2023.html>



Advent and Christmas Services

Advent is a bit short this year with Advent 4 and Christmas Eve both falling on December 24th. So, we've made some adjustments to the schedule.

Advent 1-3 (Dec. 3, 10, & 17) will be the usual 8:45 @ELCP and 10:45 @FLC

Advent 4 (Dec. 24) SHARED service hosted @FLC, 10:45am

Christmas Eve services 7pm @FLC and 9pm @ELCP

Christmas 1 (Dec. 31) SHARED service hosted @ELCP, 9am (Lessons & Carols/ hymn sing)

We aren't doing our own special midweek study or worship in Advent. Instead, you are encouraged to logon for a series of weekly compline (evening prayer) services being hosted by The ELCA congregations of Albany – First, Good Shepherd, Holy Spirit, and St. John's. Each week they will reflect on the life of the saint's (Lutheran definition) whose commemoration it is.

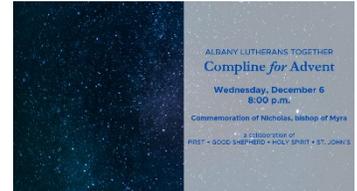
Wednesdays, 8-8:30PM on Zoom (<https://firstlutheranalbany.org/zoom>)

(More information available at <https://stjohnsalbany.org/event/2023-12-06-compline/>)

Dec. 6: Nicholas, bishop of Myra, c.342

Dec. 13: Lucy, martyr, 304

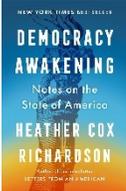
Dec. 20: Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, 1552



What's the pastor reading?

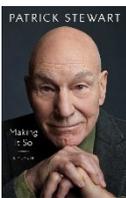
This December is largely about crocheting Christmas gifts and finishing books I've started throughout the year. I currently count seven started to be finished. Among the ones I've recently started and haven't yet shared are a couple that came out this fall:

Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America (©2023) by Heather Cox Richardson.



HCR is a professor of history at Boston College and an expert on American political and economic history. Her daily newsletter, *Letters from an American*, launched in 2019, puts modern political issues in their historical context making it all a lot easier to understand. Her latest book explains how over decades a small group of wealthy people have weaponized language and promoted false history leading us into authoritarianism. She deftly takes her reader (or listener via the audiobook) history including the Founders, abolitionism, reconstruction, and highlighting the political legacies of the New Deal, death of the liberal consensus, and the birth of "movement conservatism," among others. She is somehow both realistic and optimistic about the future of democracy.

Making It So: A Memoir (©2023) by Patrick Stewart.



Before Capt. Janeway, Jean-Luc Picard was my favorite *Star Trek* captain. I've enjoyed Sir Pat Stew in other things (including the wonderfully campy 1995 film, *Jeffrey*), and even got to see him live in 2005 doing his one-man production of *A Christmas Carol*. I knew from interviews I've seen with him that he grew up with a father who was abusive coming out of WWII, but I didn't know just *how poor* the Stewart family was when he was a child, or the role of public libraries in inspiring his own imagination and desire to learn and perform.

Maritime Minute

THANK YOU for your support of seafarers this year! The Christmas-at-Sea boxes you've assembled are being given out and are greatly appreciated!

You're invited to learn more about the Albany Maritime Ministry at our upcoming BEER & CAROLS event Monday, 18 December, at The Warbler Brewery, 155 Delaware Ave. Delmar. Doors open at 5pm with singing beginning 5:30 and going to ~7:30 (with breaks).

Have a night out with food from one of the nearby restaurants, local craft beer, and singing old favorites from a

selection of Christmas carols. We'll tell you more about AMM and take donations to support our work in the coming year.

----- End of From Pastor's Desk -----

Letter to the Editor from Pastor Rebecca Truland, a Daughter of Our Congregation!

Dear saints of Faith Lutheran Church,

As a daughter of the congregation, I was excited to receive the invitation to give you all an update on where the Holy Spirit has called me over the past couple of years! Your support meant the world to be as I completed my seminary studies in Chicago.

After being ordained and serving my first congregation in central New Jersey for three years, I found my life unsettled by the COVID-19 pandemic like we all did. I discerned that I needed to have a stronger support system in the face of the isolation of 2020, so I moved to Michigan and lived with my sister, Rachel, while she attended medical school just outside of Detroit. The bishop of the Southeast Michigan Synod was fantastic to me. I spent several months doing preaching supply, and I ultimately ended up serving more than two years in a term call as an associate pastor.

Earlier this year, with the term of my call to the congregation I was serving in Michigan approaching its completion, I sought a new call that would allow me to return to upstate New York. On November 12, one day after the sixth anniversary of my ordination, I was installed as the pastor of King of Kings Lutheran Church in Liverpool, NY (just outside of Syracuse). I'm only two and a half hours away from Troy! For the first time in over a decade, I can easily take a day trip to visit my family and friends in the capital region.

My favorite parts of ministry are preaching and worship leadership, along with teaching Confirmation classes. You never know what to expect from teenagers, but they are surprisingly astute theologians! I wish you all a blessed holiday season and a happy new year.

In Christ,
Rebecca Truland

November 6, 2023 Council Meeting Highlights

- I. President B. Jarosz called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
- II. Pastor Kate opened the meeting with a prayer.
- III. Approval of the agenda
- IV. Approval of October minutes

V. Treasurer's Report

Our cushion is getting smaller. At some point we may need to dip into our savings.

- Between January and November, 2023, we are basically down \$7,500.00 in collections.
- Everything else is up.
- Linda is working on back checks that were never cashed.
- Pastor's housing will stay at \$2000.00
- Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report – Approved

VI. Financial Secretary's Report

- Revised report was sent to everyone.
- Rich to share a list of congregants who donate to the church

VII. Pastor's Report

- Pastor has sent out a survey to congregants looking for thoughts for Advent.
- Pastor had 2 funerals this past month.
- The Bishop's visit was very positive!
- Catechism is going very well.
- The gospel reading of Mark will occur at ELCP on November 19, beginning at 1:00 PM

VIII. President's Report

- Counting teams have been organized and have begun.
- The Bull's will be taking over as the Financial Secretary. (Thank you Rich for stepping in and helping in the interim.)
- In preparation of the Congregational meeting all reports should be submitted no later than January 6, 2024.
- Our congregational meeting is scheduled for Jan. 28th following the church service.
- Minutes from the Partnership meetings and last year's congregational meeting will be needed.

IX. Committee Reports

- Missions - Oct. to St. Paul's House - \$268.00 plus \$232.00 - \$500.00
- Nov. - Joseph's House - \$500.00
- Dec. - Maritime - \$500.00
- Stewardship - The next meeting will be November 15th
- Can we resurrect looking into replacing/updating the front doors?
- Worship - Joint services will be held on the mornings of December 24th and December 31st.
- Our informal services on the 3rd Sunday of each month will continue for 3 more months. We will reevaluate again after the next 3 months.
- Partnership Council - We will not go 50/50 with ELCP as has been suggested. We will continue to share services.

- Financial/Investment - Our money from Synod has been received. Motion to invest \$175,186.00 at Hudson River for at 10 month CD @ 5.25 annual percent carried.

X. Old Business

- Church Constitution Review. There are parts we cannot change, but there are parts that need to be deleted and/or updated.
- Hopefully more to be presented at our Dec. meeting.

XI. New Business

- Missions - Can we double up and give to two different missions each month?
Regional Food Bank
Wycliff and Lit. Volunteers
Souper Bowl and Lutheran World Relief
Lansingburgh B & G Club and Ebenezer.
etc.
- Motion to add up to \$400 for our Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets if necessary.

XII. Next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 4th via Zoom. - 7:00

XIII. Motion to adjourn at 8:30

----- End of Council Meeting Highlights -----

Stewardship

Over the past few months, in the newsletter, there have been stewardship articles. These articles focused on the dedication of church members and their stewardship caring for our building and grounds.

But our stewardship doesn't end there. Faith Lutheran Church also reaches out to the community and beyond. Financially supporting a mission each month for the calendar year.

One mission is Creative Threads Quilts. Creative Threads has evolved from their original roots, previously the Banners Group. The Banners Group designed, stitched by hand and machine, the beautiful banners that can be seen each Sunday behind the Altar. The supply of banners grew to the point that the group felt the need for banners had been met. Not wanting to disband, the group searched for another mission to use their talents. Creative Threads was "born." The group could use their skills to design and construct single bed quilts and donate them to St. Paul's Center.

October's mission was St. Paul's Center. Because of your generous financial support this past year, Creative Threads donated seven single bed quilts. The day the quilts were delivered there was a mom and a small boy there to greet us. They were so excited to receive these blankets. Creative Threads talents and your financial support brought much joy to St. Paul's Center that day.

Creative Threads is just one of the many missions your pledge will support in 2024. Please fill out the pledge request, found at the end of the newsletter, and return it by December 17, 2023.

Thank you. Evelyn Jarosz, Stewardship

December Mission of the Month

The Mission for December is in support of the Albany Maritime Ministry. The Albany Maritime Ministry is an ecumenical group of volunteers who offer a warm welcome and a variety of support services to seafarers that dock at the Seafarers Center in the Port of Albany. Most Seafarers have been at sea for weeks or months. The Albany Maritime Ministry welcomes seafarers, offers a clothing bank, helps them contact loved ones, conducts Christmas at sea program, provides bible and devotional materials, pastoral counseling and van transportation. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

October Mission Collection was \$500 (St Paul's Center for Women)

Katie Bonnier, Missions

Christmas Baskets

As we do each year Faith will be adopting two local families in need. There will be a tree in the Narthex with gift tags for the children of these families. Monetary donations will also be accepted to help provide meals for these families as well.

All gifts (hopefully wrapped with the tag attached) and monetary donations are due no later than Sunday, December 17th.

Thank you in advance for whatever you can do to help with this mission.

Any questions or donations should be directed to Donna Van Zandt.

Community Christmas Service

The annual Community Christmas concert will be held Saturday, December 9, 2023 at 2:00 PM at the CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH, 3rd Avenue at 115th Street in Lansingburgh. Several members from Faith will be singing in the chorus. A free will offering will be taken with half of the proceeds donated to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and half going to support the Food Pantry at Cornerstone which is experiencing high demand these days. Refreshments follow.

Creative Threads – December Quilt

The quilt featured this month was constructed by Ruth Goerold.

The quilt pattern, Take Five, is Ruth's final quilt. Ruth's favorite color was blue. In most all the quilts she made, blue was a featured color. Her final quilt is no exception.

This quilt will be the first in the collection to be donated to St. Paul's Center in the coming year.
Evelyn Jarosz, Master Quilter



**Serving our December Sunday Programs
Lay Assistants**

- Dec. 3 - Rich Anderson
- Dec. 10 - Errol Bull
- Dec. 17 - Evelyn Jarosz (in Fellowship Hall)
- Dec. 24 - Carol Karpien (Advent 4 - morning service)
- Dec. 24 - Fred Howard (Christmas Eve Service)
- Dec. 31 – Diana Rieker (New Year’s Eve Service)

Flowers on the Altar for December

Dec.17 - In memory of Michael Maselli. Given by Mary Maselli.

The new flower chart for 2024 is now hanging in the Narthex. If you would like to place flowers on the Altar during the upcoming year, please sign your name and who the flowers are in honor/memory of. The price remains the same at \$19.00 per bouquet.

See Donna Van Zandt with questions and/or payment. Checks should be made out to WELCA.

Coffee Hour

The coffee hour service on the third Sunday (December 17) continues this month.

And consider signing up to Host sometime! ***The Lord Loveth a cheerful coffee hour host!***

- Dec. 3 Diana Rieker – after service
- Dec. 10 **This could be you!**
- Dec. 17 Fred & Michele Howard –
Coffee Hour Service in Fellowship Hall
- Dec. 24 No Coffee Hour scheduled
- Dec. 31 No Coffee Hour scheduled

There is a signup sheet on the Bulletin Board in the Narthex if you would like to be a coffee hour host.

Counting Team

- Dec 3 Joyce Duncan & Janet Walsh
- Dec 10 Ev & Bill Jarosz
- Dec 17 Rich & Diane Anderson
- Dec 24 Fred & Michele Howard
- Dec 31 Errol & Heather Bull

If you would like to volunteer to help with counting and depositing our weekly offering, please see Bill Jarosz or Errol Bull.

AMONG OUR PEOPLE

If you have a special Joy or Concern that you would like to have included in this section, please email your item to: farmerf169@aol.com, or by phone at 518 421 4576 and leave a voicemail if there is no answer.

We ask that the Holy Spirit guide us all as we discern and move forward. We pray especially for individual guidance as we commit to personal participation in our congregation's future via our pledges for the coming year and thru sharing our time, talent, and treasure.

Prayers of comfort for the family of Paul Haas, who passed away in Van Rensselaer Manor on November 29, 2023 at the age of 88. He was in Hospice Care at the time of his passing.

Warm thoughts and prayers for comfort for the family of Tom Martin, John Martin's father, who passed away November 8, 2023 at the age of 86 after a brief illness.

Prayers for Alan and Carol Fike as they deal with repeated hospitalizations and now require 24 hour care. Also, for Sara Martin and her sister who plan, manage, and share in their parents' care.

Continued prayers for Larry Lansing, suffering from chronic conditions. We ask for continued healing and a return to better health.

Prayers of supplication for people suffering in war torn counties. Where there is starvation nourishment; where there is persecution, shelter, and clothing for refugees; and where there is open warfare, negotiations leading to peaceful settlement of the issues are leading to the terror of destructive violence.

Prayers for renewal of our Congregations as we work to move into a new journey of faith, service, and outreach in our communities.

Finally, prayers for our country that we focus on the things that unite us as one nation under God, rather than differences that divide us.

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

Newsletter Deadline

The newsletter item deadline for the January, 2024 newsletter is Thursday, December 28, 2023. Please email your articles to: farmerf169@aol.com. If you would like a special joy or concern shared, you can also contact him by phone at 518 421 4576 and leave a voicemail if he is unable to answer.

Online

“Like” Faith on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FLCTroy/> and keep up with what's happening.

Can't make it in on Sunday morning for worship? Join us on Zoom!

Zoom Meeting ID: 83772454374 Password: 049977 Dial-In: 646-558-8656

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83772454374?pwd=ZVJDL3FxRjZSN2ZHHTTFIUGo3TVVmdz09>

Miss worship altogether, but still want that Gospel lesson and sermon? Pr. Kate posts audio recordings of her sermons online each week at <https://anchor.fm/kate-drefke>

Envelope # _____

or

Family Name _____

Faith Lutheran Church Troy, NY

2024 Annual Giving Pledge

Card

“Let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.” ~1 John 3:18b

Current Expenses: \$ _____

Benevolences: \$ _____

Monthly Mission \$ _____

I plan to give by:

___ Using my weekly offering envelopes

___ Automatic checking through my bank account

___ Online through Vanco

(Make all checks payable to Faith Lutheran Church.)

Name _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date _____

WHERE YOUR GIVING GOES

Your generous supports the day by day operations of our church. Your giving also helps us to help our community and grow the wider church. Through regular offering, we are helping to uplift us and our community in our faith journeys, and to serve God through caring for our neighbors. Your regular offering goes to support ministries:

in this congregation, including our quilts to St. Paul’s Center and holiday baskets;

in the Upstate New York Synod, including support of new start ministries and lay leader development;

in the ELCA, including disaster relief and youth faith formation.

Thank you for your financial investment in our congregation and its ministries.

Please return this pledge card by Sunday, December 17, 2023.

Faith Lutheran Church
50 Leversee Rd. Troy, NY 12182
Phone 518 237-4641 FaithLuthTroy@gmail.com
POINSETTIAS

Again, this year, we will have poinsettias adorning the Altar for Christmas. If you would like to place a poinsettia in loving memory of or in honor of someone, please fill in the information below and return it to Donna Van Zandt no later than December 17, 2023.

I would like to purchase _____ poinsettia(s) at \$13.00 each in loving memory or in honor of:

Given by: _____

My plant(s) may be given to the sick or shut-ins. Yes _____ No _____

Please make checks payable to WELCA