

Faith Lutheran Church
50 Leverage Road
Troy, NY 12182



Following Faith

February 2024

***“you are dust,
and to dust you shall return”
~Gen. 3:19***

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 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.

From the Pastor's Desk

***“you are dust,
and to dust you shall return” ~Gen. 3:19***

Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day are the same this year. Reminders of mortality are not *usually* considered romantic. “Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, roses are red... be my valentine...” doesn't really work. At least, not for me. Of course, romance and all that is a secular, pop culture celebration of St. V's day. The real story behind his martyrdom is a lot more gruesome- beaten with clubs and beheaded.

I think for me, I will always remember the last time these days collided: February 14, 2018. I was on internship in Anchorage, AK, working at a table outside the front office with my supervisor at that congregation. It was late morning or early afternoon. I was getting ready for Ash Wednesday worship at my other congregation that evening. I think I must have seen it first on my computer, but maybe it was a push notification on my phone. Ultimately, one nineteen-year-old man went through the halls of his former high school, murdering seventeen people, injuring another seventeen, and forever changing the lives of an entire community. As of this writing, it is the deadliest high school shooting in US history. What a way to begin Lent.

Thinking about this collision of Church days, I looked up the shooting. The shooter. Nikolas Cruz. He didn't die in the shooting. He walked out with fleeing students and hid out in plain sight for a bit. The shooting, his arrest, a quick exam in the ER, and back to the jail all lasted less than four hours; the time difference between FL and AK. His trial was delayed by COVID-19, but in November 2022, at the age of twenty-four, he

was sentenced to life in prison. More accurately, thirty-four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. The death penalty was debated, but not unanimous (a requirement that has since changed).

Life in prison. Or executed by the state. I think they're both death sentences in their own way. Each is a statement that the person is irredeemable. The death penalty says a person isn't worth keeping around. Life without parole- nothing a person ever does will be "good enough" for a second chance. Please don't misunderstand me. The death of seventeen people is horrific. All the life and potential and allowances to just be, mediocre, "nothing special," etc., GONE. I understand they have no second chance. Their one chance stolen. For the injured and surviving, some of them have injuries that changed their life plans. It's not fair. It should be punished. But fairness and punishment aren't the same as justice.

As a value of our faith, justice is often synonymous with righteousness. Joseph was a righteous man who answered a difficult call. His ancient ancestor, Tamar, sought justice for herself from her father-in-law, Judah. Neither life was one of "fairness" or even equality. But each gave and received what was best and needed for themselves and the people involved. What is justice when teenagers are murdered en masse? When the murderer is a teenager himself? I think the survivors of the Parkland shooting, who organized in the aftermath and, on the eve of Holy Week that same year, held March for Our Lives in DC, demanding that our elected officials do something about gun control- what weapons are available, who can have them, etc.- were doing justice work. They were seeking better for all.

As we enter our Lenten journey this year, we enter a season of self-reflection, prayer, fasting, almsgiving. We contemplate our mortality, the temptations of Jesus. We think about this hurting world and wonder how do we even begin to reconcile so many things- murder, punishment, fairness, redemption, mortality, resurrection, grief, love, temptation? Among so much else that we value, like grace, justice, peace, forgiveness. What does justice look like in this world hurt by so many evils?

My apologies for ending this so abruptly, and without any answers. I leave you instead with this Ash Wednesday breath prayer, from Cole Arthur Riley's new book, *Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human* (©2024), p.247:

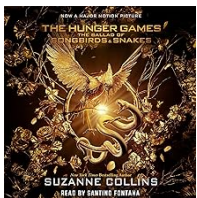
Inhale: I will carry the ashes.
Exhale: God, bring rest to the suffering.

Inhale: There is breath in these ashes.
Exhale: No death is final.

In Christ's Peace,
Pr. Kate Drefke

What's the Pastor Reading?

The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes: A Hunger Games Novel (©2020) by Suzanne Collins.



This prequel novel to the dystopian *Hunger Games* trilogy is a sort of origin story for President Snow. In the lead-up to the 10th annual Hunger Games, Coriolanus Snow is 18 years old, living with his "grandmam" and cousin, Tigris. His parents died when he was young, and the once mighty Snow family is facing social and economic ruin. His only hope of keeping the family in their home is to win a prize to the university. But now getting such a scholarship is being tied to his performance as a "mentor" to a tribute in the Hunger Games- something that has never been done before. To make it worse, he gets assigned the girl tribute from District 12. The lowest of the low. She doesn't have a chance at winning, so how does he help her make it as long as possible? How does he make himself stand out in the Capital's desire to make people everywhere care about and watch the Hunger Games?

Grievors (©2021), by adrienne maree brown.



Dune's mom is patient zero of a new disease called Syndrome H-8. It freezes people where they are, in the middle of whatever they're doing- dishes, walking, driving, shopping. They just stop. And take on a look of grief. Unable to pay for the hospital care, she takes her mom home and cares for her until she dies. Though nobody seems to know where it came from or how it's passed, the

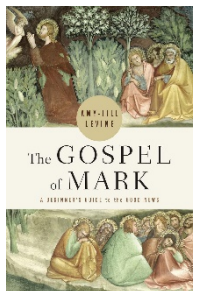
city of Detroit issues curfews and other emergency measures to slow H-8's spread. It only affects Black people. People leave Detroit by official means, or by sneaking through barriers. Dune stays (she has to take care of her Chinese grandmother who hasn't spoken since her son's death some years ago), and in her own grief, Dune begins to take data on the sick and dying in Detroit. She doesn't know why, but she's compelled by something to figure it out, and to work out survival for herself and grandmother.

Holy Runaways: Rediscovering Faith After Being Burned by Religion (©2023) by Matthias Roberts.



Roberts is a psychotherapist who grew up in a high control religion. His parents were/are missionaries. In this book he shares pieces of his own story, growing up in fervent belief, having his faith stretched and cracked open, and what it means to be "runaway." He talks to those who have left their religious communities citing the institutions' hypocrisy and resistance to change, because of trauma they've experienced in those spaces. Instead of church being a safe place, they are places of harm for many. Before his counseling degree, he earned a Masters in Theology and Culture. Throughout, he deftly weaves together his own story, new interpretations of familiar Christian parables, and recent scholarship on trauma.

Lenten Book Study



What: *The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News* (©2023) by Amy-Jill Levine. Sessions include a 10-12 minute A-J video talking more about each chapter. Books will cost ~\$14-16 depending on ordering source and shipping.

When: Wednesdays of Lent, 2pm in person & 7pm on Zoom
February 21, 28, March 6, 13, 20, 27

Who: You! Anyone interested in co-leading either the 2pm or 7pm times should talk to Pr. Kate.

These are a few of my favorite hymns

If you're in worship January 21 and/or 28, you'll have gotten an insert in your bulletin with this heading. It's a handful of questions and other prompts regarding hymns we love, want to try, and how we use them in worship. Please take a few minutes to complete all or part of it, and give it back to me. The practical purpose is to help worship planning with picking hymns. The less "practical" idea is that it helps me learn more about you all. Since we all have opinions on hymns (even if some of you are less vocal about those opinions than some of the rest of us).

Just a quick personal update- As of January 1, Lowell is also pastoring Good Shepherd, Loudonville. GS and First are doing a one-year shared ministry trial with him at 3/4x, while he also does his synod staff job and we share the Port Chaplain position.

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

Letter to the Editor

How Can I Help the Church???

Have you ever given any thought to becoming a Lay Assistant from time to time at Faith??? In all honesty, it is very easy. All you must do is read the lessons, lead the Psalm of the Day and assist with communion. The readings are available ahead of time for you to look at/practice, and there are numerous congregants willing to help and guide you, as well.

If you think this is something you would be interested in, please let me know. High School students to Senior Citizens will be graciously received. If interested, speak to Donna Van Zandt or Pastor Kate.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Donna Van Zandt
Worship Committee Member

January 8, 2024 Council Meeting Highlights

Zoom attendance -

Doug Adamek, Rich Anderson, Katie Bonnier, Errol Bull, Roberta Hayward, Linda Hulihan, Bill Jarosz, Evelyn Jarosz, Sara Martin, Donna Van Zandt, Pastor Kate Drefke.

- I. President B. Jarosz called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.
- II. Pastor Kate opened the meeting with a reading - Psalm 69
- III. Approval of the agenda - No additions were made
- IV. Secretary's Report
Motion to approve the Dec. minutes as written by Sara Martin
- V. Treasurer's Report
Report sent out prior to the meeting.

There were no questions

Motion to approve – Carried
- VI. Financial Secretary's Report
Report sent out prior to the meeting.

The check from Synod (\$275,000.) is now in a CD for tracking purposes.

General offerings to be sent out by Rich A.

Motion to approve – Carried
- VII. Pastor's Report
The Advent and Christmas Seasons seemed to have gone well.

Thinking about mid-week Lenten services

Catechism will continue Jan. 9 - Looking forward, let's think about Lent.

VIII. President's Report

President Bill thanked the Council for all the help that they have given over the past few years.

Thank you to Errol Bull, Sara Martin for all their help as Council members for the last 4 years. **Thank you** to Katie Bonnier for all your help to Faith over the last 2 years.

The following people are interested in becoming Council members upon the congregation's approval.

Diane Anderson, Mike Morosky, Diana Rieker

Many thanks to Bill Jarosz for sitting in the President's role over the past couple of years. Your service to the church has been very much appreciated.

IX. Committee Reports

- Missions - The Council needs to decide on April, May and June's missions. Suggestions include Lutheran World Relief, Unity House, and Bread of Life Food Pantry.

Motion to include these three suggestions by Katie Bonnier - Carried

- Education - Technically no report

Sara will continue to help with Education when needed. The Martins will take care of taking down the tree and Christmas decorations. (Thank you So.... much!)

- Property - No report

Our Sexton's health is deteriorating but his family members are giving a hand to help with the cleaning and upkeep of the church.

X. Old Business

- None

XI. New Business

- 2024 Budget
- Stamps are going up; purchases of our weekly bulletins are going up.
- The use of our own Booklets with the celebrate seem to be a positive.
- Basic offering is down.
- The budget needs to be sent out/made available this week.
- **THANK YOU Roberta** for all your hard work and financial help over the past few years.
- After discussion and Q's and A's, a motion was made to accept the proposed 2024 budget - Carried.
- A motion by Roberta Hayward to have Linda Hulihan become the new Treasurer at Faith. - Carried
- A motion by Donna Van Zandt to have Errol Bull become our new Financial Secretary at Faith. - Carried.

XII. Adjournment

Our next meeting is scheduled for Feb. 5, via Zoom

Motion to adjourn after the Lord's Prayer - Carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:19.

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

Stewardship

Pledge forms were distributed and collected during December. **It isn't too late to fill yours out** for 2024 if you didn't get around to it during the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.

February Missions of the Month

Wycliffe Bible Translators. Our congregation has a personal connection with this organization. Jeff and Sissie D'Jernes successfully completed the translation of the New Testament in the Arop dialect of the Arop-Lokep language spoken on Long Island, Papua New Guinea in 2014. **Jeff is Bill Speanburg's nephew!** They are continuing in the Arop-Lokep language development project through involvement with local literacy efforts; linguistic analysis and description; and Old Testament translation. While these initiatives continue, they are ready to launch a new 3-year initiative to adapt the Arop translation into the Lokep dialect and use that effort as a training platform to develop an already identified national translator to subsequently assist the speakers of the Karnai language on Umboi Island with their own Bible translation goals. This is an exciting time for Jeff and Sissie as they pursue this new phase of ministry. Read more at <https://www.wycliffe.org/partner/djernes>

The second February Mission will support of the work of Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County. Through our donations, Literacy Volunteers provide tutoring in Reading/Basic Literacy and in English as a Second Language to approximately 250 teens and adults. One-to-One and small group Tutoring help individuals learn to read, to write, and to speak English, and to improve their math skills. Tutoring is free and confidential. Students and tutors work together for an average of 2 hours per week to meet student goals. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

The December Mission collection was \$230.00 in support of Albany Maritime Ministry. In addition, quite a few **Christmas at Sea gift packages** were assembled for distribution to sea farers docking at the Port of Albany.

Serving our February Sunday Programs

Lay Assistants

Feb. 4 - Tim Lund
Feb. 11 - Evelyn Jarosz
Feb. 14 - Ash Wednesday - 12:00 noon
Feb. 18 - Fred Howard
Feb.25 - Diana Rieker

The new flower chart for 2024 is on the bulletin board 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.

Flowers on the Altar for February

No Memorial Flowers are scheduled for February.

Coffee Hour

The coffee hour service on the third Sunday continues this month.

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

Feb. 4	Fred & Michele Howard
Feb. 11	Bill & Ev Jarosz
Feb. 18	Diana Rieker – Coffee Hour Service in Fellowship Hall
Feb. 25	Heather & Errol Bull

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

Creative Threads Winter Scene Applique Quilts

The picture this month displays the machine applique project the quilters have completed. The little quilts are all made from the same pattern. Even though the quilts are constructed from the same directions, you may notice subtle differences. Can you see them?

Our "winter break" over, Creative Threads have chosen new quilt blocks to stitch into single bed quilts.

We would like to have you join us. It is easy, just speak to Janet, Diane, Diana or Evelyn.

Evelyn

Counting Team

Feb 4	Errol & Heather Bull
Feb 11	Joyce Duncan & Janet Walsh
Feb 18	Ev & Bill Jarosz
Feb 25	Rich & Diane Anderson

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



AMONG OUR PEOPLE

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 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.

Prayers for healing for Peter and Patricia Edelman as they deal with serious medical conditions.

Prayers for strength, healing, and continuing support for Nancy Johansen as she lives with chronic conditions and disabilities.

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

Prayers of thanksgiving for the prayers that have been answered for the numerous successful medical procedures that our members have undergone in recently.

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 that 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.

Newsletter Deadline

The newsletter item deadline for the February, 2024 newsletter is Monday, February 26, 2024. Please email your letters or 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=ZVJDL3FxRjZSN2ZHTTFlUGo3TVVmdz09>

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>