

Faith Lutheran Church
50 Leverage Road
Troy, NY 12182



Following Faith

January 2025 Newsletter

***[...] the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."
-Luke 3:22***

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)**

Evelyn Jarosz, President, (Finance, Inreach/Outreach)

Diana Rieker, Vice President, (Property)

Donna Van Zandt, Secretary (Worship)

Linda Hulihan, Treasurer

Errol Bull, Financial Secretary

Council Members

Doug Adamek (Education, Finance)

Mike Moroskey, (Property)

Diane Anderson (Missions)

Dana Cerrone (Inreach/Outreach)

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

Want to Speak with Pastor?

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

Faith Online

“Like” us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FLCTroy/>

We’re also on Instagram! @faithlutheran.troy

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

Direct link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83772454374?pwd=ZVJDL3FhRjZSN2ZHTTFlUGo3TVVmdz09>

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> or

<https://open.spotify.com/show/0eBYyey9x0b7gCJCnEAwYE>

Vacation! Please note that Pr. Kate Drefke will be on vacation Dec. 26, 2024 – Jan. 3, 2025 (Happy 50th Anniversary to her in-laws!). If you have a **pastoral emergency** during this time, please contact Pr. Josh Evans (serving St. John’s, Albany) at 518-250-9098. Kate will follow up with you upon her return.

From the Pastor’s Desk

I started writing this with a happy new year greeting and going on about that. But I was visiting someone the other day and they talked about hearing that most people die around the holidays. I realized that last year more than half the funerals I did in 2023 were in November and December, and this past week, I’ve had a few calls about people nearing the end of life and getting ready for funerals. Both of my grandfathers died the week before Thanksgiving. And (this may seem silly to some of you), my ninja cat- the BEST cat EVER*- died on December 22 nine years ago. Despite all the songs, and the well wishes that fall so easily from our lips, it is often a hard and grief-filled time for many. Sometimes it’s the first Christmas without a loved one and the pain is especially sharp. Sometimes it’s been years but *something*- a smell, a sound, a picture- brings it all back, and there’s a bittersweet or melancholy felt absence.

We wonder about how God can allow pain and suffering in the world. How can any god who is good and gracious and merciful allow cancer? addictions? for organs to attack and fail? I'm going to make a snarky comment and remind us all that we are talking about the same Creator who made the platypus- a venomous, duck-billed, beaver-tailed, egg-laying mammal. That's some spare parts building. Now more seriously, sometimes being human- or any mortal- is just hard and pain is part of living. (P!nk sings, "God, it hurts to be human".) In the novel, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, Rev. Clare Fergusson is asked about prayer in hard and grieving times. The exchange goes sometimes like this:

"I was going to ask if you believe praying can really help at a time like this."

Clare folded her hands together and pressed them to her lips. She paused. [...] "I believe that God hears our prayers, and cherishes them. I believe he answers by sending His spirit, giving us strength, and peace, and insight. I don't think he responds by turning away bullets and curing cancer. Though sometimes that does happen."

Harlene frowned. "In other words, sometimes, the answer is no?"

"No. Sometimes the answer is 'This is life, in all its variety. Make your way through it with grace, and never forget that I love you.'***"

We have been wonderfully and wondrously made, and God is with us always, even if we feel their absence rather than their presence. God is with us in our griefs and joys alike. In all the variety of life and holiday celebrations, God is with us. As those made in and bearing God's infinitely diverse image, we are called to love and be present with others in all griefs and joys, too.

The peace of Christ be with you,

Pr. Kate Drefke

*Yes, I rank the ninja cat higher than any my current three, and even Mouse who was with me from kindergarten through early Dec. of my first semester of grad school. Though the ninja *juuuuust* barely eeks BEST EVER over Mouse. They're tied, really.

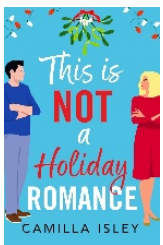


I The ninja: BEST. CAT. EVER. August 2015, somewhere in BC, CAN.

**Julia Spencer-Fleming, *In the Bleak Midwinter* (©2002). I couldn't find it in my copy, so no page number; I copy-pasted from a blogger's review.

What is the Pastor Reading?

It's Christmas Eve. I've been doing catch up/ finish the books I started reading. And some other smut.



Including:

This is Not a Holiday Romance (©2024) by Camilla Isley.

Tropes: enemies to lover, brother's best friend, and forced proximity. A Christmas rom-com. Nina hates her older brother's best friend. For over a decade she and Tristan have been trading pranks and insults. Then one evening she calls his bluff and he can't get her out of his head. Shortly after they snowed in at her parents together for Christmas and new sparks start to fly. If you like Hallmark Christmas movies, this is better. And hotter.

Advent Poem by Faith Lutheran Congregants

Poetry was used during Advent, and on the third Sunday (12/15), the sermon time of our coffee hour worship was used to have all of you write a short poem together responding to the day's Gospel (from Luke 3). Here's what you came up with:

fire and judgment
"do this"
-where is the good news?

John the Baptist is a warning,
fire and brimstone,
riding flames red, yellow, and blue.

John railed his imprecation
against the practices of exploitation
preaching God's expectation
or restoration
living the truth toward a culmination
in fulfillment a light at the end of the excavation

fire fire
transformate
destroy destroy
or regenerate

cut the root
burn the chaff
water water
it shall last

God is powerful, awesome, and all-empowering,
a cloud of brightest, blinding white, silver, and gold

for the water of life cleanses
the soul
and burns like fire
in a quest for our faith

feeling the forgiveness of God
in the washing of baptism

----- December 2, 2024 Council Meeting Highlights -----

6:30 p.m. – Zoom

Attendance - Doug Adamek, Diane Anderson, Errol Bull, Linda Hulihan, Evelyn Jarosz, Mike Moroskey, Diana Rieker, Donna Van Zandt, Pastor Kate Drefke.

Absent - Dana Cerrone

I. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by President Jarosz

II. Opening devotion given by Evelyn. The a unique Biblical 12 Days of Christmas.

III. Approval of the Agenda

IV. Approval of the November minutes

V. Treasurer's Report

- There was an unusual deposit. Due to not being deposited separately during September and October.

- A new stamp is coming with the correct number on this. Thank you, Bill J. for taking care of this.

- For safety reasons a tree was taken down near the annex. Cost - \$425.00

- We had \$ 597.00 in missions. \$250.00 with go to the Lutheran Disaster fund, with the remaining missions going to our Thanksgiving and Christmas adopted families.

VI. Financial Secretary's Report

- Overall, our donations for missions, benevolences, and general offering are doing okay. We seem to be holding our own.

- According to Pastor Kate Vanco is not user friendly compared to Tithely.

VII. Pastor's Report

- Advent Sermons will be based around poetry.

- The Christmas Eve service at Faith will begin at 7:00 p.m.

- December 22, 2024 - There will be a combined service at First United Presbyterian Church in Troy to celebrate the 'Longest Night'.

- Pastor will be on vacation (celebrating her in-laws significant anniversary) from December 26 through January 3, 2025. Pastor Josh Evans will cover for both ELCP and Faith if his services are needed

VII. President's Report

- It seems that our Sunday services are starting later and later. Let's make every effort to begin on time at 10:45 a.m.

VIII. Partnership Meeting

- Chairman, Doug Adamek shared that this committee met on November 21, 2024 at ELCP

- Discussion was held regarding Pastor Kate's salary and each churches financial responsibilities.

- Dates and times for combined services were confirmed. (I.E. - Maundy Thursday, Good Friday)

IX. Committee Reports

- Missions -

- Diane Anderson is asking what we want to do with future Missions. Do we stay at \$250.00 per month and then have another \$250.00 available just in case? January Mission will go to the Regional Food Bank. February to Wycliffe. March to the Lansingburgh Boys and Girls Club.

- Property -

- Mike Moroskey shared that the vacuum cleaner filter needed to be cleaned. New filters have been ordered.

- The snowblower has been fixed.

- Normal replacement of light bulbs, etc. are routine

- The treen next to the Annex has been taken down. Doug and Mike have cut the trunk, etc. More needs to be cut and removed.

- The siding project is completed. All reports should be put in a file and saved.

- Worship
- Pastor Kate will be away on Nov. 29th. This will be a Lessons and Carols Service. We need someone to lead the service.

X. Old Business

- Maritime Boxes - We were able to donate 12 filled boxes to the Maritime Ministry. Some of these boxes have already been delivered to those on ships. Next year we would like to process/share one week sooner.
- Thank you to all who contributed to our ‘adopted’ Thanksgiving Families. This particular giving to two families in need went very well.

XI. New Business

- Concerns were raised about a finance issue (LPL finance) where we get one person’s name off of the investment and a new person’s name/information on. Pastor Kate, Errol, and Evelyn will be working on this. With the Councils approval, this is a work in progress.

- Budget 2025 -

Expenses are up. There is a strong possibility of being financially short next year. By the end of December a final copy of next years proposed budget should be completed.

- Linda H. asked about money being sent to Synod. After discussion, it was agreed upon that we will drop our payment from \$9100.00 to \$7500.00 per year. This is still more the 10%.

- Congregational (annual) Meeting

- Our Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 26, following our regular church service.

- All reports are needed by January 10th. These reports are to be sent to Errol Bull who will compile.

- Christmas Decorations

We can no longer decorate the very Tall tree that we have placed and decorated in the church for numerous years. It was decided to purchase a tree that is of a more ‘normal’ size and decorate. Diana Rieker offered to purchase this new tree. Donna Van Zandt offered to purchase some indoor wreaths and small artificial trees as extra decorations. Although it was not discussed at the meeting (discussion was held afterward) the church will reimburse these ladies for their purchases.

- We have adopted 2 families for Christmas. Congregants will be asked to donate money or gifts for these families.

XII. Joys and Concerns

- Pastor Kate’s car is fixed with a minimal expense.

XIII. Adjournment with the Lord’s Prayer

Meeting adjourned at 8:03

Next Meeting - Monday, January 6, 2025 6:30 p.m. in person

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

Mission of the Month

The Mission for January is in support of the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York. The Regional Food Bank provides food assistance to many charitable agencies serving the hungry and disadvantaged, including food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, youth programs, senior programs and programs for the disabled. Many of our neighbors continue to struggle with hunger and food insecurity. Our support helps make the Regional Food Bank a better and stronger organization that improves the lives of hungry people throughout the Capital Region. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Diane Anderson, Missions

Creative Threads

The Creative Quilt group is working on their projects and getting them ready to be featured in a future newsletter.

Saturday, December 7th, the quilters helped decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season.

The quilt featured this month is a request from a six year old who is part of the family that Faith Lutheran adopted for Christmas. Her request was for a blanket with her favorite colors of purple and teal.

~Evelyn



SERVING OUR JANUARY SUNDAY PROGRAMS

Lay Assistants

Dec 1	Errol Bull
Dec 8	Dave Truland
Dec 15	Bill Jarosz
Dec 22	Diana Reiker
Dec 24	Evelyn Jarosz
Dec 29	Rich Anderson
Jan 5	Donna Truland

Counting Team

Jan 5	Jarosz
Jan 12	Anderson
Jan 19	Howard
Jan 26	Bull

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

Coffee Hour

Jan 5	Andersons	After
Jan 12	Vumbacco & Maselli	After
Jan 19	Peters	During
Jan 26	Cerrone	After

If you would like to be a coffee hour host, please see Bill Jarosz.

Altar Guild

January 5	Diane Anderson
January 12	Diane Anderson & Janet Walsh
January 19	Diane Anderson & Janet Walsh
January 26	Evelyn Jarosz
February 2	Evelyn Jarosz

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

If you would like to volunteer with preparing for the altar for Sunday's service, please see Diane Anderson

Thank you! for the card and cash gift at Christmas. It's much appreciated. ~Kate

AMONG OUR PEOPLE

Teach us to forgive ourselves and one another. Restore wholeness to all who seek hope and healing in times of sickness, economic struggle, and all of life's other difficulties.

Bob Duncan entered eternal life in the resurrection on December 18. Joyce has been in and out of the hospital and recuperating at home from a back injury. Please keep them and their family in your prayers.

Janet Walsh and her son, John, as he is currently in the hospital with multiple, significant medical concerns.

Mike Moreskey's great niece, Brittany.

The Coleman/Lansing family is thankful for the continued healing of matriarch, Carolyn, who has recovered from serious conditions that arose a few weeks ago. Also, remember Steve who is in a nursing home Larry who continues to struggle with his chronic conditions.

Prayers for the Speanburg extended family. For Bill and Carolyn who have both had medical issues and for the rest of the family who are supporting and helping with care and doctor appointments.

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

Prayers of supplication for people suffering in war torn countries. 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.

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 deadline for the February 2025 newsletter is **Tuesday, January 22, 2025**. Please email your letters or articles to Pastor Kate, drefkekate@gmail.com. If you would like a special joy or concern shared, you can also contact her by phone at 518-279-6127 (Voice and Text) and leave a voicemail if she is unable to answer.