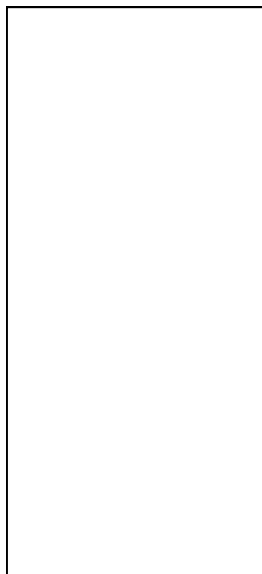


Weekly Worship: Saturday at 5:00 pm, In Person & Live Stream Online, and Sunday at 9:00 am, In Person.
Online Worship updates will be posted on www.faithlutheraneldridge.com and on our Facebook page.
Sunday School and adult faith formation on Sundays at 10:15 am.

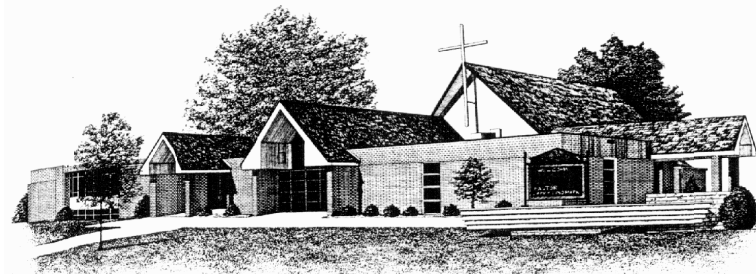
Faith Lutheran Church
500 W. LeClaire Road
Eldridge, IA 52748

Non-Profit Organization
PERMIT NO. 1
Eldridge, IA 52748

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR February 2026

Rev. Dr. Carrie Lewis La Plante
Rev. Heather Geest

500 W. LeClaire Road
Eldridge, IA 52748
(563) 285-4501

www.faithlutheraneldridge.com
faitheldridge@netins.net



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Grace-Gifted, Faith-Lifted
Called to Share, Seek, and Serve
Christ

Dear Friends in Christ,

I have to be honest that in the last several months, and especially in the last several weeks, I have been feeling sad, angry, grief-filled, exhausted, suffocated, and so many other feelings that I cannot quite put my finger on. With the grief in my family, the grief in this congregation, the fear and anger and sadness that I have experienced as I have heard from friends and colleagues in Minneapolis and Chicago about what their lives and the lives of the neighbors that they love is like in those cities right now, and all of this is on top of the everyday struggles that we all face.

In my sermon on January 24, I looked at the call of Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John, from the perspective of the fish, which might sound crazy, but was the take that my seminary advisor and friend, the Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee took in his sermon on this gospel reading at my ordination in 2005. When I looked at the perspective of the calling of the disciples from the viewpoint of the fish, it helped me to make sense of all of the feelings that have been filling me. You see, just before Jesus calls the disciples, they are all fishing in the Sea of Galilee. They have thrown out their nets, and for the fish that have been caught up in the nets of these fishermen who were only moments before swimming along and minding their own business, are now tangled in the net. As the net is tugged through the waters toward the boat, which, from the vantage point of the fish, looks a lot like a coffin, fish are slammed into other helpless fish, eyes bulging, gills flapping, suffocating, it becomes painfully all too real that we are going to die.

This is how I feel right now, like I am caught in a net made up of the systems over which I have little to no control. While I know that I am not as close to the boat as many of my friends, there is still the heaviness that comes with being drug toward the boat. However, I also know that, like the fish in the sea of Galilee that the new disciples released as they let go of their nets to follow Jesus, I am also aware that Jesus has released me from the nets in which I so often get tangled. Also, because Jesus has called me to follow him, I am called to find ways to help others who are caught in the nets in their lives find release from those nets by showing them God's love. This is a time when that love needs to be shown and proclaimed loudly.

However, the truth is that all of this heaviness and trying to live our day-to-day lives in the midst of it all of the pain and grief can be overwhelming and can burn us out. We are often told that we simply need to pull it together and keep going. However, I believe there is a more faithful way to respond. Sometimes, like Jesus, we need to take some time away and spend some time in self-care. It is definitely countercultural and it might seem like a luxury, but there is something sacred about being sure that we are healthy in body, mind and spirit so that we can better be present as God's people in the world for those around us who need that presence.

Because I am coming to realize just how important this is, I plan to spend this Lent with a devotional book entitled, *Sacred Self-Care: Daily Practices for Nurturing Our Whole Selves*, and I would like to invite you to join me. Lent is an invitation to develop and strengthen practices that enhance the depth of our discipleship and our ministry in this world. Some people choose to give up material pleasures, activities they enjoy, or habits that have become addictive or counterproductive. However, there are times when giving up these things can leave a void that we fill with another unproductive habit.

What if, instead, we choose Lenten disciplines that involve taking on practices that nourish and enrich us, practices that usher us not toward death but toward resurrection? What if we could find that learning to care for ourselves could lead us to want to serve God in the world even more? What if we could engage in practices to develop and nurture ourselves as beings who are beautifully and wonderfully created by God in God's own image and likeness? That is the goal of this devotional practice.

This book is an invitation into a journey toward sacred self-care which integrates our spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and relational well-being. Rather than being a book of rote prescriptions about what you need to do in order to care for yourself, this book offers practices and reflections to help you discern your body's Spirit-given wisdom about what you need to be well, not only for your own sake but also to sustain you for the work that God has called you to do in the world, whether that is being a pastor, a parent, an activist, a student or a retired grandparent. You will get to try on different practices to see if they fit. You need not make a commitment to anything. Keep what works. Discard what does not. Hopefully, this will just be the beginning of your practice of sacred self-care throughout your life.

This will be a seven-week journey which will include daily devotional reading, and for those who are interested, a weekly gathering to talk about the things which we are discovering, learning and struggling with. We will gather in the Gathering Space on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 pm beginning on February 17 (the day before Ash Wednesday). If you plan to participate in these weekly gatherings, whether you can be there each week or just now and then, please sign up on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space or call the church to let us know. You can either purchase your own book (available at all major booksellers), or you can mark on the sign-up that you would like me to purchase the book for you and then you can reimburse the church. The cost of the books will be \$15.00.

I look forward to making this journey with you this Lent as we seek to care for ourselves so that we can better love ourselves and all of God's people in our lives.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Carrie





Bloom where you are planted. This phrase may sound spring like, but it applies anytime of year. Galatians 5:22 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” I pray that we can all bloom where we are planted. The fruit of the Spirit is not produced by human effort, but by the Holy Spirit’s work. The fruit of the Spirit should be evident in our daily interactions.

Join me in thanking:

- Cindy Zabel, and Sunday School teachers and Sue Becker for the joyous Children’s Christmas program.
- Diane Krebs for making the angel ornaments given at Christmas Eve services. It is a beloved tradition at Faith.
- Meal Ministry team for serving the congregational breakfast on Dec 14 and Jan. 4. It is our hope that these intergenerational breakfasts are an opportunity for us to grow in faith and in relationship to one another.
- Decoration crew and property committee for removing Christmas decorations.
- Sue and Neal Becker, Tonya Knutsen, Joan Hennigan, Mike Garner, Mary Moore and all who helped with the Lessons and Carols services on Dec. 27, 28, providing beautiful hymns and scripture readings.
- All worship leaders, our pastors, helpers, ushers, communion assistants, readers, counters, Altar Guild, bread bakers, Sunday School teachers and helpers, committee leaders and members, Choir, Chimes, Jubilation, and musicians.
- Service in the World team and volunteers who prepared and served the January Churches United Meal. 81 meals were served. It is an important meal ministry.

- Linda Szemkus and Dennis Kelly for cleaning the kitchen including the ovens and refrigerators recently. Our kitchen gets a lot of use!

The regular council meeting was held on January 15. The great news of the year end giving that will propel our mission and ministry was celebrated. Preparations for the annual meeting were discussed, as well as the restrooms update. A consecutive 30-day Respite time in 2026 calendar year was approved for each of our Pastors. They will take separate months to recharge and prepare to lead us forward. Stay tuned for information and discussions about developing a Sabbatical Policy for our rostered pastors looking to the future of our congregation. I believe we need to be proactive in this effort, rather than reactive.



The annual meeting of the congregation was held on January 25 at 9 am. Pastor Carrie thanked everyone who donated or helped in any way to shine God’s light in our world. The love and hope it spreads is inspiring. Elected to Council: Tom Carlson,

Mike Garner, Joni Kuehl-Schneider, Kim Wilkins. Treasurer: Jerry Neff. Nominating Committee members: John Hintze, Sherri Brundies, Cindy Zabel, Nina Looney, Mike Strom, Kim Wilkins. Endowment committee: John Hintze. Synod Voting Members: Evan Keppy, Linda Golinghorst. Alternates: Betty Strom, Mike Strom. Budget was approved. Serving as your Exec Team is:

President: Mike Garner

Vice-President: Annette Tomlinson

Secretary: Joni Kuehl-Schneider

Treasurer: Jerry Neff

I am honored to have served on your church council for 3 years. It is important work. I see the Holy Spirit at work here at Faith Lutheran Eldridge in many ways and through many people. I pray that you can see God’s Work through Our Hands. We can reflect God by serving others, following Christ’s example.

Joan Hennigan, Outgoing Council President
563-285-6867



All In Lenten Series

Join us this Lent as we consider how we go all in for God. Have you ever decided to go all in for something? Maybe it was when you chose a profession or a partner. Perhaps you made the decision to become a homeowner. Maybe it was when you joined this congregation, or if you came to faith later in life, when you decided to be baptized.

As Christians, God calls us to a life of commitment and caring for our neighbors and our world, even when the cultures around us view our caring as naïve and our commitment as pointless. In the face of the condition of the world around us, it can sometimes seem easier to detach from the need around us, to go numb and to care less as we try to guard our hearts and our expectations. But God calls us to deep engagement instead, to care more in the world trying to protect itself by caring less.

Before we can go all in, God shows us the way. God knows that going all in for this beautiful broken world is a challenge, so God goes all in on our behalf first, revealing what it is like to bet it all on love. This Lent, as we learn about God's own commitment, we'll explore how the elements of our liturgy prepare us for active engagement in the world God so loves. Our preaching, prayer, and devotional time help connect us to our neighbors, to the planet we share, and to God.

This Lent, God is all in for us. Let's go all in for God's love, too. Each Saturday and Sunday, we will use the lectionary text as we consider the various ways we can go all in for God's love. Then, on Wednesdays, we will have conversations about ministries in which we are participating, either as a congregation or in partnership with others. There will also be a daily devotion available that will further help us consider each week's theme:

February 18, Ash Wednesday: All In for Repentance – Going all in on the culturally unpopular idea of repentance brings us back to God.

The week of February 22: All In for Creation – Being all in for creation begins with acknowledging that we are part of it.

The week of March 1: All In for the Unknown – Answering any call from God involves entering whole-heartedly into the unknown.

The week of March 8: All In for Wonder – Relationship with God draws out our questions, wonder, and a true sense of awe.

The week of March 15: All In for Relationship – God does not hesitate to enter into the messiness of human relationships, and calls us to do the same.

The week of March 22: All In for Letting Go – Letting go of expectations allows us to make way for God to do something wondrous and new, taking flight on a leap of faith.

The week of March 29, Holy Week: All In for the Highs and Lows – Balancing Palm Procession and Passion on this day practices entering into all the highs and lows of human life with our congregations and with Christ.

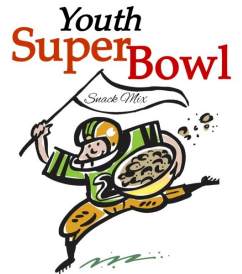
April 5, Easter Sunday: All In for Resurrection – Embracing resurrection as a key part of our faith frees us to embrace the good news that no part of life or death is out of God's life-giving reach.



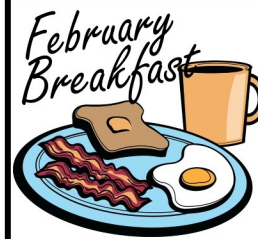
Youth Mission Trip Update

Our youth are raising funds for this summer's mission trip with their annual Super Bowl Sandwich and Caramel Chex Mix Sale. Paper order forms are available on the Welcome Center, and an online form can be found on our Facebook page.

Pick-up will be on Super Bowl weekend, February 7 and 8, around the worship services. Order forms are due by noon on Sunday, February 1. Subs are \$8 and caramel snack mix is \$12 per gallon bag. We look forward to helping to provide your Super Bowl Sunday treats. Thank you in advance for your support.



*Keep your eyes open for the next cinnamon roll sale on Palm Sunday weekend, **March 28 & 29.***



Join us on Sunday, February 15, for our monthly **congregational breakfast** following the 9 am worship service. It is our hope that these intergenerational congregational breakfasts will be an opportunity for us to grow in faith and in relationship with one another.



Guest Choir Concert featuring North Scott Singers

North Scott Singers from the high school has earned regional recognition as one of six high school choirs selected from a ten-state area to perform at the Midwestern Choral Directors Conference in Milwaukee on February 26. In preparation for the event, they are presenting their concert program at Faith for our congregation and neighbors on **Sunday, February 22, at 5:00 pm** in the Sanctuary. Some of our own former Children's Choir members are now members of North Scott Singers! Please plan to attend and give them a warm welcome!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship Hour 10:15 am Sunday School	2 Office Closed 6:00 pm Lions Club Mtg	3 Office 9am-12 noon 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry  6:30 pm VFW (FH) 6:30 pm Jubilation	4 10:45 am Resounding Joy 5:15 pm Confirmation Meal 5:45 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm High School	5 1:00 pm Food Pantry Mtg. 6:30 pm Team Night 7:30 pm Executive Mtg.	6 9:30 am Food Pantry 	7 Sub Pick Up Day 5:00 pm Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
8 Sub Pick Up Day 9:00 am Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School 4:00 pm 4-H	9 Office Closed 6:00 pm Lions Club Exec Mtg.	10 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 	11 10:45 am Resounding Joy 5:15 pm Confirmation Meal 5:45 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm High School Youth	12 Team Reports Due	13 9:30 am Food Pantry 	14 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
15 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Congregational Breakfast	16 Office Closed	17 9:00 am Quilting 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Sacred Self Care Lenten Study	18 ASH WEDNESDAY 10:45 am Resounding Joy 5:30 pm Sour Supper 7:00 pm Worship	19 6:30 pm Church Council 	20 9:30 am Food Pantry  DEADLine	21 Noisy Offering 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
22 Noisy Offering 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am First Communion Class 5:00 pm North Scott Singers Concert	23 Office Closed	24 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry  6:30 pm Jubilation 6:30 pm Sacred Self Care Lenten Study	25 Office 9am-12 noon 5:15 pm Confirmation Meal 5:45 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm High School Youth	26 Office 9am-12 noon 9:00 am Ambassador Folding 6:30 pm WOF Bible Study 	27 9:30am Food Pantry  1:00 pm Friday Fun Club	28 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online  6:00 pm Cheeseburger in Paradise
						Key: (FH) - Fellowship Hall (MP) Multipurpose Room (GS) Gathering Space



First Communion Milestone

Holy Communion is a gift from God! But what is it? How does it work? This Lenten season we will be offering a communion preparation and formation class for students 2nd grade and older Sunday, February 22 and Sunday, March 29, from 10:15am-11:45am. During these learning sessions your child will learn more about the sacrament of Holy Communion with Pastor Heather and Joni Schneider will teach them how to form their own clay chalices which will be used during their first communion worship service on Maundy Thursday, April 2 at 7pm. The expectation is that your child will complete both these learning sessions as we have packed four sessions into just two mornings.

You may be wondering when your child is ready to begin receiving communion. At Faith Lutheran our understanding of what is an appropriate age for receiving holy communion has evolved. In the past, communion instruction and formation were offered to 5th grade students as it was their Holy Communion Milestone. Because we believe each child is different and each will pick up the significance of the meal at different times, our current practice is to include students that are 2nd grade and older. One important clue for discerning your child's readiness are the questions and conversations taking place at your home regarding communion practice, as well as your child's sense of being excluded or included into a sense of belonging in the faith community. If your child shows signs of readiness and is eager to begin receiving the sacrament and the gift it brings, we hope you will bring your child to holy communion preparation and formation classes this Lent.

Please RSVP to the pastors or the church office by February 15 if your child desires to participate in this class. This way we can prepare supplies to equip your child for this milestone. Thank you for encouraging and supporting your children in their faith formation, we look forward to walking with you this Lenten season.

Summer Camp Registration is Here!!

Sign up
for
Church
Camp

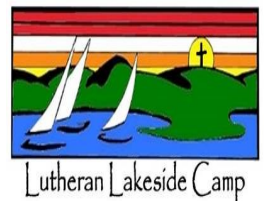


Registration is now open for Lutheran Lakeside Camp this summer. We are planning to attend camp **Week 6, July 19-24**. There is Cultivator Camp for those who have completed grades 3-5 and TrailBlazer Camp for those who have completed grades 6-8. If there are High School youth grades 9-12, Voyage Camp is also available. For more information about camp, please go to www.lutheranlakeside.com and click on the

Summer Camp drop down menu for more information and the Camp Registration tab when you are ready to register. The total cost for a week at camp is \$500 for the first child. If you send more than one child from your household, there is a \$25 sibling discount for the second and subsequent children. **There is an Early Bird Discount of \$50 for all those who register by February 28.** As in years past, Faith will cover \$150 of the cost of camp per child (including friends that they might invite). Therefore, the out-of-pocket cost, if you register by February 28, would be \$300 for your first child and \$275 for any additional children from your household. To receive the \$150 from Faith, when you register, use the DISCOUNT CODE: **FLEcamp**, and the \$150 will be deducted from your total. You can then pay the remainder of the camp fees online. Also, please let Pastor Carrie know when you have registered so that she can make sure that the campership is applied and have an accurate count of who is planning to go to help with transportation plans.

Adults are invited to join us for the adult mission trip to do work around the camp that week as well. If you would like to join us, please register online like above. You will register for **Week 6 Mission Trip**. Please use the DISCOUNT CODE: **FLEmission** when you register to cover the total cost of your registration.

If you have any questions about camp, please contact Pastor Carrie at pastorcarrie@csteldridge.com or call or text 641-275-1326).





2025 Annual giving statements have been mailed out. Please contact Rhonda Webber with any questions about your 2025 contributions. Thank you for your continued support of Faith.



The **2026 Offering Envelopes** are now available. They are on the Welcome Center counter for you to pick up. Please contact Rhonda Webber if you have not had envelopes before, but would like some for the new year.



Mark Your Calendars

Cheeseburger In Paradise Potluck will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, February 28, 2026! The Fellowship Team will provide cheeseburgers, condiments, table service and drinks. Please sign up by February 15, 2026, either on the bulletin board or on-line and include what side dish you plan to bring, so we can plan accordingly for the cheeseburgers! There will be games for the kids to play. Sign up in the Gathering Space. Hope to see you all there! – *The Fellowship Team*

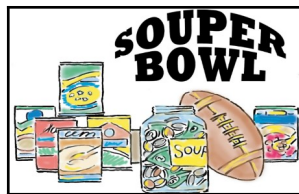
Service in the World

Outreach Fund

In January, the Outreach mission of the Service in the World committee donated \$150 to Kings Harvest Ministries. Kings Harvest serves the poor and homeless in the Quad cities by providing hot meals weekly, by giving out groceries twice a month, by offering an overnight shelter, and by showing the love and compassion of Jesus. More information can be found at www.kingsharvestnet.

Souper Bowl Event

The Service in the World Team is once again offering you an opportunity to root for your favorite Super Bowl team and support the North Scott Food Pantry at the same time. We invite you to bring cans of soup between **January 24 and February 8**, and place your cans on the side of the football field designated for your favorite team. If you do not have a favorite team, you can always place your cans on the 50-yard line. Thank you for supporting our neighbors in this fun way!



Service in the World

Compassion Children and ELCA Missionary Sponsorships

Our thanks to everyone who has sponsored our Compassion children, John and Denisse, as well as our missionary team, the Bencke family. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Your Compassion Child sponsorships help John and Denisse receive support in the form of nutrition supplementation, education assistance, medical checkups and loving Christian care.

The Benckes are members of more than 240 ELCA missionaries that serve in more than 40 countries around the world, invited by global church partners to work together hand-in-hand. Some are doctors in rural areas. Others teach children where there are few opportunities to go to school, or work in seminaries that prepare pastors and future church leaders. Others support, nurture and preach in some of the fastest growing Lutheran congregations in the world. And still others are young adults, engaging in a life-changing, year-long experience through the Young Adults in Global Mission.

No matter where or how they serve, every one of these missionaries needs your prayers, support and gifts to succeed in their work. Your gift connects you directly to these missionaries. You make their life-changing ministry happen.

Please join us in God's amazing work. Help grow the Lutheran church around the world.

There are opportunities to support John, Denisse and the Benckes. The sign up form is on the bulletin board and on our website. Thank you for your past and future support of our Compassion Children and Missionaries.



THANKS FROM THE HEART

With Appreciation...

Thank you to our January Ambassador Folding Crew: Mary Ann Anderson, Donna Benskin, Sue Casel, Marcia Donabauer, Pam Englebrecht, Darlene John, Carol Marten, Mary Jo McVey and Kathy Stoltz. This crew also folded many December bulletins, including over 350 for Christmas Eve!

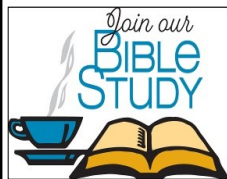
Thank you to Connie Braet, Carol Marten, and Sue Sissel for folding the January bulletins. The help was very much appreciated!

FAITH LUTHERAN FINANCES

	DECEMBER	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME*	\$60,596	\$380,857
EXPENSES	\$39,295	\$380,028
NET POSITIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR WAS \$829		

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Our Christmas Offering of \$2,270.00 was sent to Lutheran Services of Iowa. Thank you for your generosity and support of this ministry!



Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

Join us on each Tuesday afternoon, at 1:00 pm, for a Bible study that looks at the lectionary texts for the week.



It is time for snow removal volunteers! If you are able to help clear sidewalks after a snowfall, please sign up on the sheet in the gathering area or online using the link on our web site: www.faithlutheranelldridge.com.

Thank you for your help!



Birthday wishes are extended to the following members who are celebrating birthday number 70 or above.

David Hardesty	February 1	Jean Keppy	February 14
Fred Jansen	February 2	Dennis Mohr	February 14
Sue Hillman	February 2	Dan O'Flaherty	February 18
Bill Wittkowski	February 3	Janet Bowman	February 20
Kathryn Zelinko	February 11	Myron Zabel	February 23
Carolyn Hulsen	February 12	Kim Flenker	February 24
Karen Schmitt	February 13	David Golvinghorst	February 24
Dale Dammann	February 13		

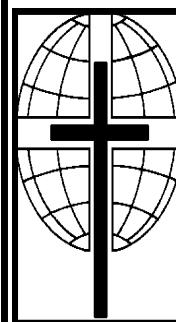


Bob & Carol Kuehl
February 28, 1976



Food Pantry Needs

Food Pantry needs for the month of February are Hamburger Helper and side dishes (boxed potatoes, Knorr noodles or rice, Rice a Roni ,etc.)



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to **Tom and Pam Carlson** for sponsoring the Compassion children John and Denisse in January. There are many sponsorship opportunities available in 2026. The cost for sponsorship is **\$45/month** each for our Compassion Children John Chima and Denisse Grefa and **\$45/month** for the Bencke family. **You can sign up online on Faith's web page, in person on the bulletin board, or by calling the church office at (563)285-4501.** *Thank you for your support!*