

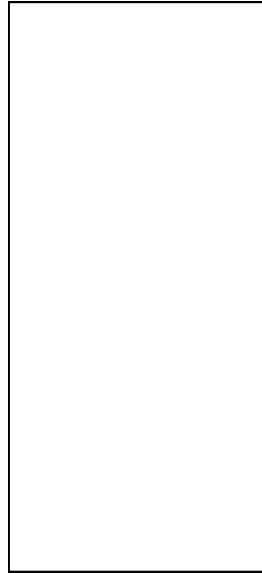
Weekly Worship: Saturday at 5:00 pm, In Person & Live Stream Online, and Sunday at 9:00 am, In Person.
Mid-Week Lenten Worship Wednesdays at 7:00 pm. Online Worship updates will be posted on
www.faithlutheraneldridge.com and on our Facebook page.

Faith Lutheran Church

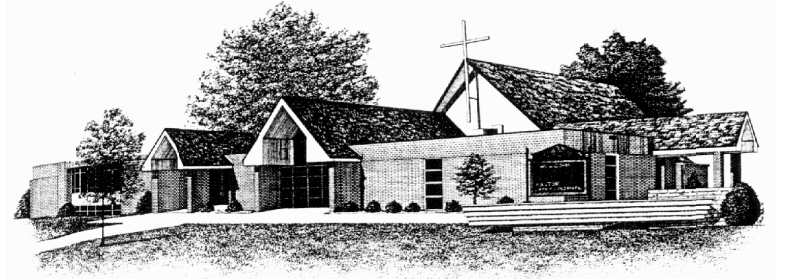
500 W. LeClaire Road
Eldridge, IA 52748

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Faith Lutheran Church



AMBASSADOR
March 2026

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

500 W. LeClaire Road
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Grace-Gifted, Faith-Lifted
Called to Share, Seek, and Serve
Christ



Dear Friends in Christ,

We have entered the season of Lent, and this is, perhaps, my favorite season of the church year. Some think that is odd because it often feels like a somber season. We have put away the "Alleluias." We do not celebrate baptisms.

Many of the hymns of this season are in a minor key. We come face-to-face with the reality of our mortality.

However, while all of this is true, I also believe that Lent really gets at the heart of what living as a Christian in this world is all about. We all know that we sin and fall short of God's expectations of us. We know that we were created out of dust and that, one day, we will each return to that dust. We know that if it were up to us to keep God's law and follow Jesus perfectly, none of us would make it. But most importantly, Lent reminds us that none of this needs to weigh us down or strike fear within us. During the season of Lent, we are reminded that God goes all in to give us life and love and forgiveness and eternal life.

A favorite Bible verse for many people is one that we will hear this coming weekend as we hear the story of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night with some questions. Nicodemus is trying to figure out who Jesus is and what Jesus is all about. They have a long and complicated conversation about the need to be born again, which makes no sense to Nicodemus. Jesus then explains his mission to Nicodemus saying, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16). Jesus tries to explain to Nicodemus that God gave everything so that Nicodemus, and all of creation, or that matter, could have eternal life. God came to be human in Jesus to show us just how much God loves us. Jesus experienced the joys and struggles, the celebrations and the pains of this life that we live. Jesus then gave up everything by dying on the cross to show us the unimaginable depth of God's love for all, and then rising again to give us the amazing gift of eternal life. This is a gift that we can never earn or accomplish on our own. It is the result of God going all in for us.

However, I believe the even more important verse comes just after this most famous one, especially in the world in which we live today. Jesus goes on to say, "Indeed, God did not send the

Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). You see, God did not go all in for God's people and all of creation in order to condemn some, or any, of them. Instead, Jesus came into the world to bring salvation to all people. When Jesus gave everything to die on the cross, he did not just die for a select group of people. Jesus died for everyone and everything that God created and with which God desires to be in relationship. Jesus coming into this world was not about deciding who was in or out of God's kingdom, but to offer to everyone the opportunity to receive this gift of forgiveness and life. Thus, we as God's people cannot be about deciding who God would or would not include into God's kingdom. Our call is to proclaim the good news and that promise of God's love going all in for each of us so that those around us can come to know God's love for them and experience this gift for themselves.

Therefore, we, too, must go all in with our own lives to follow Jesus and to live in this world in love. We are called to keep an eye out for our neighbors, all of our neighbors, near and far, to be sure that they have what they need so that they know that God still provides. We are called to love all of God's people and creation with our whole hearts, even when that is one of the hardest things for us to do because of the differences among us. We are called to live in a way that God's love shines through our lives into the world so that those we encounter, both those we know and those whom we have never met, can experience this God who goes all in for them through us.

Throughout this season of Lent, we will consider the ways that God goes all in for God's people and all of God's creation to bring life and hope and peace and love and joy in the face of difficult circumstances. We will also consider how we can find new ways to go all in for God in our lives to share God's love with the world. Join us at worship on the weekends and on Wednesday evenings as we ponder what it means to go all in together.

May this Lent be an opportunity for us to turn back to God, remember who we are and all that God has done for us and seek to go all in to follow Jesus for the sake of our lives and the world around us. May we come to Easter with a renewed desire to live the resurrected life here and now.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Carrie



Welcome to Lent. A time to repent and focus. A time to focus on ourselves, our relationship with God, and the ways he calls us to join in the message and works of love. Kind of easy to say, harder for me to understand how to actually do that. I believe many of us have heard the phrase, “While we are making plans, God is laughing.” Personally, I didn’t plan to be writing to you as president of the council again so soon. God laughed. As Lent encourages us to repent, pray, fast, and give love, I hope we all grow closer to the call God has for us.

Join me in thanking:

- Dan and Patrick O’Flaherty for hanging the cloth on the cross for Lent.
- Confirmation students and parents, Linda Szemkus, Diane Krebs, and Nina Looney for serving the Lenten soup supper.
- All council members who are giving their time in 2026 to serve our missions from this place.

At the February meeting the church council discussed using money from the sanctuary update funds to enhance the gathering space and fellowship hall. Approved a change to the new sound system that should solve the problem of mics cutting out as well as improve the hearing experience for everyone gathered in the sanctuary. Council participated in a discussion of healthy communication habits that ensure that each member of the congregation is heard in a way that is helpful in resolving concerns and avoids misunderstandings. The council also learned about the challenges facing the pastors in performing pastoral care duties. The local hospitals continue to ask patients for church affiliation, but then fail to pass that information along to the churches. If you or someone close to you wishes a pastor to visit with you for any reason, reach out to them to ensure they know.

Mike Garner, Council President
563-349-4459



On **Palm Sunday, Saturday, March 28, at 5:00 pm** and **Sunday, March 29, at 9:00 am**, we will begin Holy Week with a procession of the palms, and during worship, we will hear a dramatic reading of the passion story according to the Gospel of Matthew. Palm Branches will be available for pick-up on Friday, March 27, from 9:00 am to noon and on Saturday, March 28, from 2:00-4:00 pm for those worshipping at home.

Our **Maundy Thursday** service on **Thursday, April 2, at 7:00 pm**, will include the celebration of First Communion for several of our children.

On **Good Friday, April 3**, we will gather for a Service of Light and Darkness at **7:00 pm**.

Join our **Easter Vigil** service on **Saturday, April 4 at 5:00 pm**.

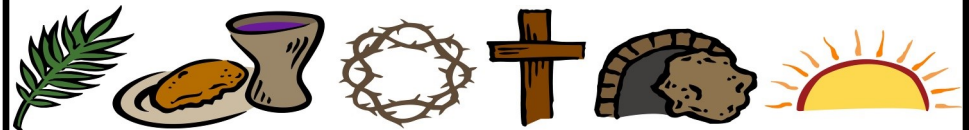
Easter Sunday, April 5

8:00 am – Easter Worship Service

9:00 am—Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

9:30 am—Easter Egg hunt on the front lawn

10:30 am –Easter Worship Service



If you wish to contribute toward Easter lilies that will decorate the altar area this year, please list your name and the name(s) of those you wish to honor on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the narthex area. We are asking for a contribution of **\$18.00** to help offset the cost of the plants. **Please indicate ‘flowers’ on your envelope so we know how to allocate the funds, and place the envelope in the offering plate.** Names received by **March 22** will be published in the Easter worship bulletin.



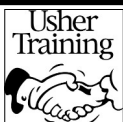
Daylight Savings Time starts on Sunday, **March 8**. Please remember to set your clocks forward an hour when you go to bed on Saturday night (March 7.)



Join us on Sunday, March 8, 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.



On **June 22-25, from 8:30 am—11:30 am**, Faith will be offering a new Day Camp VBS by providing 4 counselors and programming by Lutheran Lakeside! The programming this year will be related to the summer camp theme "A Holy Guide to Loving Your Neighbors." Young adult counselors will bring their energy and excitement to our daily lessons and activities! Some volunteers will still be needed to travel with the kids, provide snacks/drinks and meals for the Lutheran Lakeside Staff. Watch for a volunteer sign-up sheet or contact Cindy Zabel if you are interested in helping out.



Ushers and those interested in becoming Ushers...

The Ushers have a important role in the safety and security of our church. Part of our safety plan requires quarterly training for the Ushers. Quarterly training will be held on **Sunday, March 15, at 10:15 am** in the Sanctuary. **Contact Tom Bauer for more information.**

Good Gifts Christmas Project

Our thanks to everyone that donated to the Good Gifts Christmas Project. Your gifts will make a difference in the lives of people around the world. 22 donors gave 37 gifts totaling \$957. The gift of honeybees was the most popular choice. Thanks to all who purchased goats, chickens, donkeys, cows, honeybees, and pigs, clean water, vaccinations and much more. Thank you for your generosity during the Christmas season.



6th graders: Pre-Confirmation Milestone

All **sixth graders** are invited to join Pastor Heather for pre-confirmation learning, community building and fun for 4 Wednesday evenings during Lent. We will be learning more about what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus and how it makes a difference in our personal lives and the world around us. Classes will be held on Sunday mornings in April, tentatively scheduled for April 12, 19, and 26, at 10:15 am. Please let Pastor Heather know if your child will be attending. Contact her at church 563-285-4501, or text her cell 563-639-9606 (please be sure to include your name in the message.) Feel free to invite your friends, the more the merrier.

Bread Bakers are needed for table communion. Please signup on the bulletin board if you are willing to help with this ministry. Recipes are available. Please deliver on Friday before noon or by 8:30 the morning of worship.



We are looking for Ushers, Readers and Communion Assistants to serve during April. Please sign up using the sheet on the bulletin board, on our website, or contact Kelly Penning to sign up. Thank you for serving during our worship services!



This year's special Easter Offering will be split between the following two organizations:

World Relief of the Quad Cities: This organization is committed to bringing love, peace, and justice to a broken world as they follow Jesus to serve those suffering from poverty regardless of their circumstances.

Iglesia Camino de Emaus: This is a Spanish speaking congregation meeting at St. Mark's in Davenport providing worship and pastoral care to the Latino population in the area.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship Hour 10:15 am Sunday School 4:00 pm 4-H	2 Office Closed 6:00 pm Lions Club	3 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm VFW (FH) 6:30 pm Jubilation 6:30 pm Sacred Self Care Lenten Study	4 10:45 am Resounding Joy 5:15 pm Confirmation Meal 5:45 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	5 6:30 pm Team Night 7:30 pm Executive Mtg.	6 9:30 am Food Pantry 	7 10:30 am Private Event (FH) 5:00 pm Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
8 9:00 am Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Congregational Breakfast ,Sunday School	9 Office Closed 6:00 pm Lions Club Exec Mtg.	10 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Sacred Self Care Lenten Study	11 10:45 am Resounding Joy 5:15 pm Confirmation Service and Mentor night 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	12	13 9:30 am Food Pantry 	14 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
15 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am Usher Training	16 Office Closed	17 Office Hours: 9-12 9:00 am Quilting 5:30 pm Food Pantry	18 Office Hours: 9-12 <i>Spring Break -No Confirmation or Youth Group</i> 10:45 am Resounding Joy 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service	19 Office Hours: 9-12 6:30 pm Church Council 	20 Office Hours: 9-12 9:30 am Food Pantry 	21 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
22 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship & Sunday School	23 Office Closed	24 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Sacred Self Care Lenten Study 	25 10:45 am Resounding Joy 5:15 pm Confirmation Meal 5:45 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	26 9:00 am Ambassador Folding  6:30 pm WOF Bible Study	27 9:30 am Food Pantry  1:15 pm Friday Fun Club	28 Noisy Offering Cinnamon Roll Sale 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
29 Palm Sunday Noisy Offering Cinnamon Roll Sale 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am Fellowship & Sunday School & First Communion Class	30 Office Closed	31 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Jubilation 				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 contact the pastors or the church office 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!!



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. . As in years past, Faith will cover \$150 of the cost of camp per child (including friends that they might invite). 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).



YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

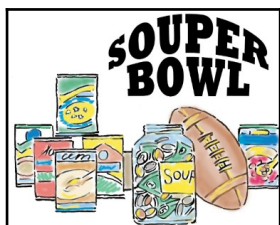
The chart on the next page shows the average weekly giving in 2025 and 2024. Families give weekly, monthly, or annually, so we calculated the total annual offerings by each giving unit into a weekly average for comparison purposes. The total number of giving units for 2025 was 232. As you review the chart, prayerfully ask yourself the following:

- How does my giving compare with other ways I use my money each week?
- How adequately does my giving reflect my gratitude to God for all that I have received?
- How much more could I give I give if I really wanted to?

If we increase our giving, we would be able to begin new ministries that are now only dreams. We will also be able to share those gifts with ministry partners.

Thank you for giving generously and gladly,

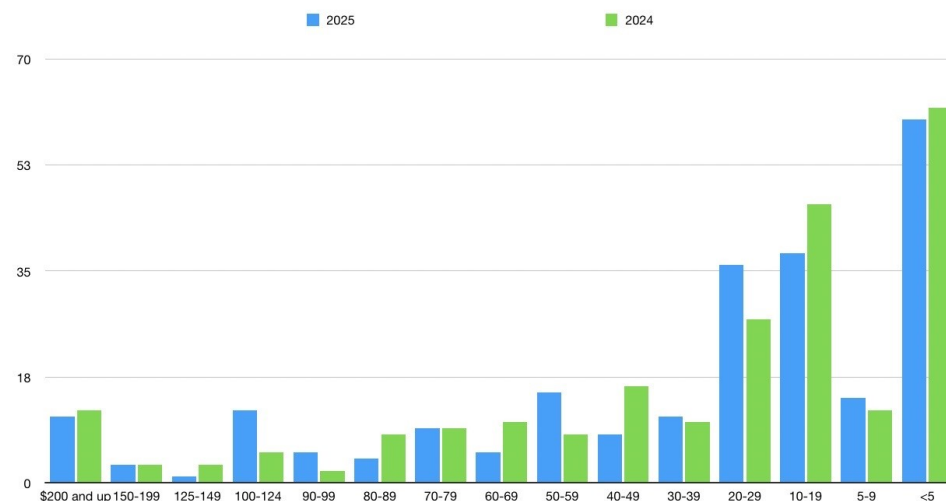
The Stewardship Committee



Service in the World would like to thank everyone who contributed to our 2026 Souper Bowl collection of soups. The drive had an upset this year. Our collection predicted that the Patriots would win by having 35 cans, compared to the Seahawks at 22 cans. The fifty yard line had 42 items, which brought the collection to a grand total of 99 items! Thank you for your generosity towards those in need and the NS food pantry. ~ *Service in the World Team*

Table 1

Yearly giving for the year divided by 52 weeks to achieve an average per week	2025	2024
\$200 and up	11	12
150-199	3	3
125-149	1	3
100-124	12	5
90-99	5	2
80-89	4	8
70-79	9	9
60-69	5	10
50-59	15	8
40-49	8	16
30-39	11	10
20-29	36	27
10-19	38	46
5-9	14	12
<5	60	62





With Appreciation...

Thank you to our February Ambassador Folding Crew: **Mary Ann Anderson, Donna Benskin, Sue Casel, Carol Marten, and Mary Jo McVey.**

Thank you to **Carol Marten** and **Sue Sissel** for folding the February bulletins. The help was very much appreciated!

Thank you to **Rhonda Webber** and **Mary Ann Anderson** for subbing in the office in February.

FAITH LUTHERAN FINANCES

	JANUARY	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME*	\$42,462	\$42,462
EXPENSES	\$30,631	\$30,631

***Monthly income needed to meet budget is \$34,700**



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

We need 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.faithlutheraneldridge.com. **Thank you for your help!**



Service in the World



In February, the Outreach mission of the Service in the World Committee donated \$150 to World Relief Quad Cities, which offers assistance to refugees and other immigrants in vulnerable situations as they rebuild their lives in the United States. More information can be found at <https://worldrelief.org/quad-cities/>.



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

Rita Smith	March 1	Karl Nissen	March 16
Nina Looney	March 2	Dorothy House	March 17
David Lee	March 3	Garry Mueller	March 20
Ida Weibel	March 8	Beverly Schmidt	March 22
Debbie Jenkins	March 8	Sara Nissen	March 23
Gary King	March 11	Ida Bell	March 25
Cynthia Slama	March 12	Mike Smith	March 28

Feed Our Children

During the month of March we are collecting donations of juice pouches. Thank you for your contributions!



Food Panty Needs

Food Panty Needs for the month of March are canned fruit, granola bars, and cereal bars.



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to **Joni Kuehl-Schneider** for sponsoring the Bencke family and Compassion children John and Denisse in February. Thank you to **Chris Schroeder and Rhonda Webber** for sponsoring the Bencke family and Compassion children John and Denisse in March. 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!**