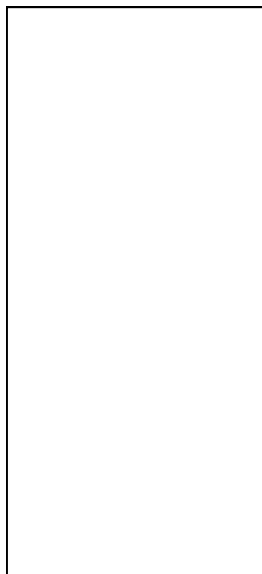


Weekly Worship: Saturday at 5:00 pm, In Person & Live Stream Online, and Sunday at 9:00 am, In Person.
Online Worship updates will be posted on www.faithlutheraneldridge.com and on our Facebook page.
Sunday School and adult faith formation on Sundays at 10:15 am.

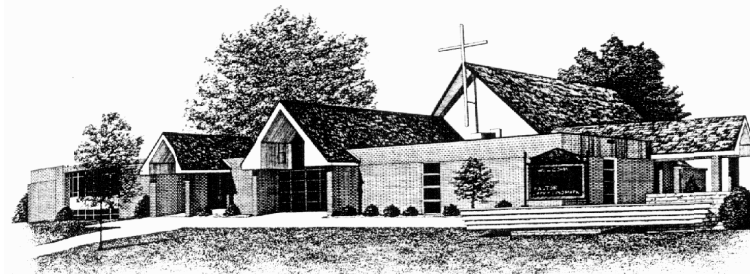
Faith Lutheran Church
 500 W. LeClaire Road
 Eldridge, IA 52748

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Faith Lutheran Church

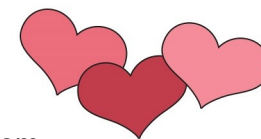
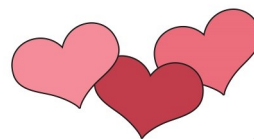


AMBASSADOR February 2024

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,

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines joy as “a feeling of great pleasure or happiness that comes from success, good fortune, or a sense of well-being: gladness.” However, in my experience, joy is something more. As I was trying to put my finger on how to explain joy as I know it, I came across a discussion of the difference between happiness and joy on the Compassion International website. They write:

The difference between joy and happiness lives in the mind and the heart.

- Joy is in the heart. Happiness is on the face.
- Joy is of the soul. Happiness is of the moment.
- Joy transcends. Happiness reacts.
- Joy embraces peace and contentment waiting to be discovered.
- Joy runs deep and overflows, while happiness hugs hello.
- Joy is a practice and a behavior. It’s deliberate and intentional. Happiness comes and goes blithely along its way.
- Joy is profound and Scriptural. “Don’t worry, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4-6). Happiness is a balm. “Don’t worry, be happy.”
- Joy is an inner feeling. Happiness is an outward expression.
- Joy endures hardship and trials and connects with meaning and purpose.
- A person pursues happiness but chooses joy.

While happiness and jubilation and exhilaration are emotions that may be present with joy and may even be expressions of joy, they do not define joy. Instead, in its purest form, joy transforms difficult times into blessings and turn heartache into gratitude. Joy is that which brings meaning to life. Joy brings life to life.

Perhaps that is why joy is considered one of the fruits of the Spirit: “[T]he fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23a). When we find joy, there is a sense of comfort and peace not only when things are going well, but also when things feel like they are upside-down. Joy provides grounding that is born out of the hope that God is the one in control of our lives.

I firmly believe that joy resides deeply within each one of us and that God has put the seed of joy into each of God’s beloved children. However, sometimes, we have a hard time tapping into that joy, especially when things are not going as we had hoped and when happiness is not the emotion that is on our face. Sometimes, it can be hard to tap into that joy and live in the hope of life in Christ.

Therefore, during the season of Lent, we will take some time to peel back the layers of nuance that allow joy to adapt to different life circumstances. We will seek out the seed of joy that can ground us in God’s love and hope for each of our lives.

Throughout the season, we will use the lectionary texts each weekend to reflect on different aspects of joy. On Wednesday evenings, we will gather for Evening Prayer, and together, we will experience various practices of prayer to help us to center us in the joy that is within us. Finally, a daily devotion will be available for you to use during the week that will invite you to journal and use the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, although not in the traditional ways, as practices of joy. More details about our midweek worship and devotions can be found on page 5.

I pray that our Lenten journey will lead us beyond happiness into the joy of Christ that is within us. I pray that during this more solemn period of the church year, we will indeed find the seed of joy that will lead us to the joy of Easter and the hope and promise of life in Christ, now and forever. Join us as we journey together.

In Christ’s love,
Pastor Carrie



If you know me, you know I love an adventure. I am always dreaming of the next one. Sometimes, however, the next adventure isn't planned. Sometimes, it just happens. My time on council might just be one of those adventures. Six years ago when Gary King convinced me to join the council representing the property team, I was unsure if I was the right person for the job. I agreed, because fixing things is a very comfortable place for me.

"Leading the team" was something very new. Since then, I have learned more from this unplanned adventure than I could ever have imagined. I have had a great time, and I thank every one of you for what you taught me. I have learned how to encourage, thank deeply, express faith honestly, support others, trust, grow, forgive, and teach. I Have learned these things from all of you as you shared yourselves with me. I thank God for calling me to serve, even if I wanted to let it go to voicemail. For I said "yes" and it has made all the difference.

Join me in thanking:

Everyone who I have served with on council. Your gifts and strengths have not gone unnoticed.

Joan Hennigan for agreeing to be the next council president. I am so excited to watch her lead. She will be kind, considerate, focused, and awesome in every way.

Pastor Carrie, and Pastor Heather for all that they do for us. After 6 years of supporting their success, and encouraging their growth, I can assure you, these amazing women, go above and beyond at every step. We are lucky to know them.

The regular council meeting was held on January 18th. The great news of the year end giving that will propel our missions was celebrated. Preparations for the annual meeting were also discussed.

The annual meeting of the congregation was held on January 28th at 9am. Pastor Carrie thanked everyone who donated or helped in anyway to shine God's light in our world. The love and hope that it spreads is inspiring. Elected to council are: Kim Wilkins, Sherri Brundies, Val Zelinko, and Nina Looney. Nominating Committee members are: Theresa White, Joan Hennigan, Mike Strom, Dan O;Flahrity, and Tom Bauer. Endowment committee members are: Kim Wilkins and Allen Lewis. Synod Voting delegates are: Tom Bauer and Madelyn La Plante. There was also a discussion of the sanctuary update, and a motion was approve to begin a capital pledge campaign as the first step towards beginning the update.

Mike Garner, Outgoing Council President 563-349-4459



Midweek Lenten Worship

Lent can be a somber season of the church year. It begins with an ashen sign of mortality and sin. Bright colors turn to deep purples, alleluias fall silent, and we ponder what to give up this year. Easter, on the other hand, is obviously joyful. Bells ring, alleluias echo, white and gold shine brightly, and every single candle is lit. Jesus is risen, and so are the daffodils, hyacinths, and lilacs. Joy clearly belongs to Easter.

Why reflect on joy during the quiet introspection of Lent instead of waiting for Easter? A joyful Lent is not an oxymoron. As it turns out, joy is right at home during a minor-key season like Lent—and if joy is there, perhaps there are other seasons of life that joy calls home, too. Joy is a beacon that points us toward God's unfailing presence, even in the heart of fear and pain.

During the season of Lent, we will explore how joy is planted, tended, nurtured and nourished by God and God's people through the scripture readings assigned for each week. Each Wednesday, during our Lenten Evening Prayer Service, we will use Holden Evening Prayer and will respond to readings from the previous Sunday using a different devotional practice to help provide fertile ground to explore the seed of joy. The theme and practice for each week will be:

Ash Wednesday: Setting the Stage for Joy—Imposition of Ashes

Week 1: Persistent Joy—*Lectio Divina*

Week 2: Expectant Joy—Honest Prayers

Week 3: Liberating Joy—Embodied Prayer

Week 4: Transformative Joy—Praying the News

Week 5: Vocational Joy—Vocational Prayer

Holy Week will focus on "Joy Everywhere and Nowhere," and Easter will finally erupt in "Glorious Joy."

There will also be an accompanying daily devotion guide that will guide us through the covenants of God as we explore scripture's lead to explore the different textures and colors of joy each week. With the exception of the brief half-week at the beginning of the season, each week's devotions are structured by the regular practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving using a journal or through reflection or conversation, whatever works best for you and your life. Sundays will reflect on the scripture. Mondays will invite you the practice a kind of prayer to connect to a specific aspect of joy. Tuesdays will provide a prompt for journaling that suggests how you might ask for God's help. Wednesdays provide a suggestion for a fast, not from food, but to help you focus on what you already have rather than what you have given up. Thursdays return to the journal with prompts for how to direct thanksgiving to God. Fridays invite you to respond to God's work in your life by giving time, talent or treasure in a way that honors the week's exploration of joy. Saturdays invite you to connect with creation to learn how to "tell forth the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1).

We hope that you will join us on this Lenten journey as we seek that God-given



Mark Your Calendars - Cheeseburger In Paradise Returns!



Cheeseburger In Paradise Potluck will return to the Fellowship Hall following worship on Saturday, February 3rd, 2024!!!! The Fellowship Team will provide cheeseburgers, condiments, table service and drinks. Please sign up by January 24th, 2024, either on the bulletin board or online 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 (Bags, Hula Hoop, Limbo, Flamingo Ring Toss to name a few). Sign up for Door Prizes: Child and Adult. Other prizes to be awarded: Best Hawaiian/Tropical attire. Who has the palest legs at Faith? – We shall soon find out!

Hope to see you all there – *The Fellowship Team*



Join us on Sunday, February 11, 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.

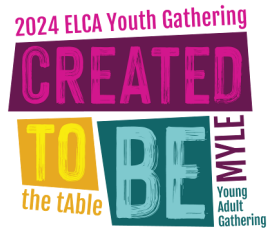


January Congregational
Breakfast with Lutheran
Lakeside Camp

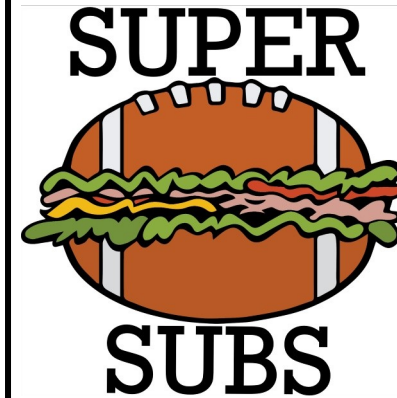


Youth Gathering Update

We have eleven youth and five adults who are signed up for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this summer. They are excited for the opportunities that will come with this trip, and they look forward to sharing our experiences with you.

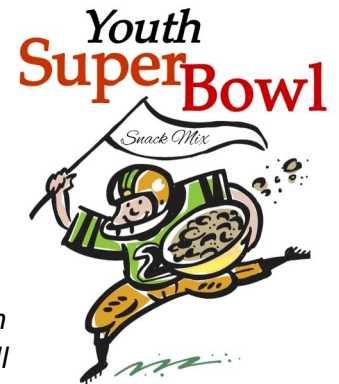


In order to make this trip a reality, our youth will be doing a few fundraisers throughout the year to help pay for the trip. The current fundraiser is the **Super Bowl Sandwich and Caramel Chex Mix Sale**. While pre-orders are complete, there will be some extra sandwiches and snack mix available on a first-come first-served basis.



Pick-up will be on Super Bowl Weekend, February 10 and 11, around the















worship services. We look forward to helping to provide your Super Bowl Sunday treats, and **thank you** in advance for your support.



Also, keep your eyes open for the next cinnamon roll sale on Palm Sunday weekend, **March 23 & 24.**



Fellowship and Communion at youth IGNITE event in January

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Key: (FH) - Fellowship Hall (MP) Multipurpose Room (GS) Gathering Space				1 9:00 am Ambassador Folding 1:00 pm Food Pantry Mtg. 6:30 pm Team Night 7:30 pm Executive Mtg.	2 9:30am Food Pantry 	3 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 6:00 pm Cheeseburger in Paradise 
4 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship Hour 10:15 am Sunday School	5 <i>Office Closed</i> 6:00 pm Lions Club Mtg	6 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry  6:30 pm VFW (FH)	7 5:00 pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm High School Youth 7:00 pm Resounding Joy	8 <i>Team Reports Due</i>	9 9:30 am Food Pantry 	10 9:00 am Sub Making 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
11 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Congregational Breakfast	12 <i>Office Closed</i> 6:00 pm Lions Club Exec Mtg.	13 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 6:00 pm Soup Supper 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service *NO CHOIR REHEARSALS*	15 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting 	16 9:30 am Food Pantry 	17 11:00 am Private Event (FH) 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
18 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship Hour	19 <i>Office Closed</i>	20 9:00 am Quilting 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:15 pm Resounding Joy 5:30 pm Food Pantry	21 5:00 pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation (MP) 5:45 pm Pre Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	22 6:30 pm WOF Bible Study	23 9:30 am Food Pantry 	24 <i>Noisy Offering</i> 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
25 <i>Noisy Offering</i> 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am 6th Grade Pre-Confirmation 12:00 pm—Girl Scouts (FH)	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:15 pm Resounding Joy 5:30 pm Food Pantry  6:30 pm Jubilation	28 5:00 pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation (MP) 5:45 pm Pre Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	29 9:00 am Ambassador Folding 		



First Communion Milestone

Holy Communion is a gift from God! As with any gift that God gives, it is given with no strings attached. There is nothing we can do that makes us more or less worthy of the gift. Yet—when you or your child receive a gift, it is natural to want to know all about the gift. What is it? How does it work? What do you do with it? These are some of the big questions we'll be learning about during the "First Communion Milestone."

Pastor Heather will hold two Sunday afternoon learning sessions for all students who are interested in learning more about the sacrament of Holy Communion. If your child is already receiving Holy Communion and would like a refresher on the basics of communion, they are invited to attend as well. After completion of these two class learning sessions, students are invited to receive their first communion at worship on Maundy Thursday, March 28 at 7 pm.

Classes are March 3 and March 24 from 11:15am to 12:00pm. If you have any questions or would like to sign your child up for this important milestone, please contact Pastor Heather at church 563-285-4501, or text her cell at 563-639-9606. We need to know how many children are planning on attending so that we have materials ready for your child. We look forward to growing in faith with your child this Lenten season.

6th graders: Pre-Confirmation Milestone

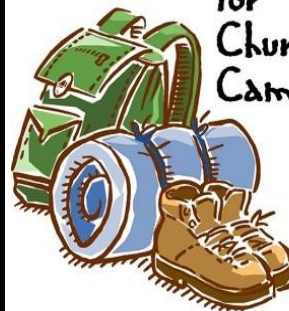
All sixth graders are invited to join Pastor Heather for pre-confirmation learning, community building and fun for 4 Sunday mornings during Lent. We will learn more about what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus and how it makes a difference in our personal lives and the world around us. Classes will be held in the youth room on Sunday mornings from 10:15-11:15am on February 25, March 3, March 17, and March 24. 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 put your name in the text.) If you have any friends that would like to join you, please invite them to join the fun!



THE HOLY SACRAMENTS

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 **July 21-26**. There is Cultivator Camp for those who have completed grades 3-5 and TrailBlazer Camp for those who have completed grades 6-8. How we will get to camp will be determined at a later date.

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 \$480 for the first child. If you send more than one child from your household, there is a \$15 sibling discount for the second and subsequent children. A \$100 deposit is due at registration. **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 \$280 for your first child and \$265 for any additional children from your household. Please only pay \$100 at the time of registration and be sure to let them know that you are going with Faith Lutheran Church so that they apply the \$150 campership appropriately. You can pay the remainder of the camp fees after the campership is applied. 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.

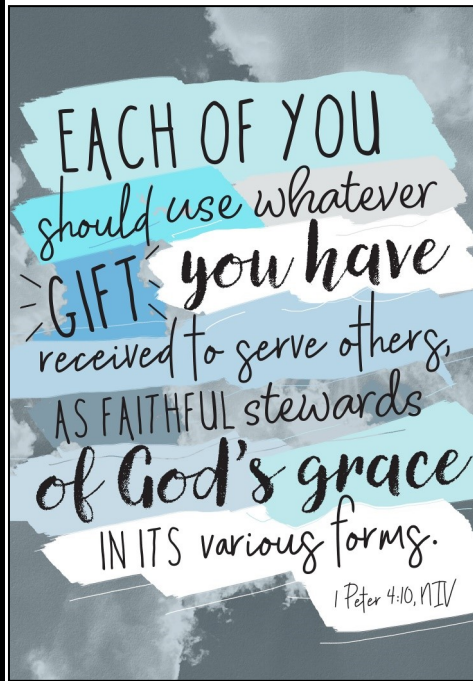
Adults are invited to join us for the adult mission trip to do work around the camp that week as well, so if that is something that would interest you, please let Pastor Carrie know.

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!

1 Peter 4:10: Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.



Are you using your spiritual gifts? God calls us to be generous in all areas of our lives and invites us to explore the many opportunities to share ourselves through our time and talents. We are called to share our time, talent and treasure because God owns it all. We are caretakers of what God has given us by grace. A disciple prays, reads scripture, worships, gives, serves, shares. Giving is an important part of being and growing in relationship with Jesus.

Stewardship Team

Joan Hennigan
Stewardship Team Leader



The **2024 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.

FAITH LUTHERAN FINANCES

	DECEMBER	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME*	\$58,698.50	\$374,048.63
EXPENSES	\$41,109.12	\$353,443.67



Our Christmas Offering of \$2,734.50 was evenly divided between ELCA Good Gifts and Rick's Ray of Hope.

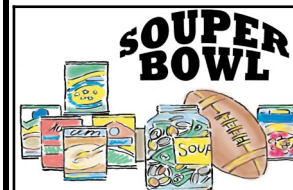
Service in the World Events

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. We raised a total of \$1449 towards the purchase of many goats, pigs, chickens, bees, clean water, vaccinations and much more. Thank you for your generosity during the Christmas season!

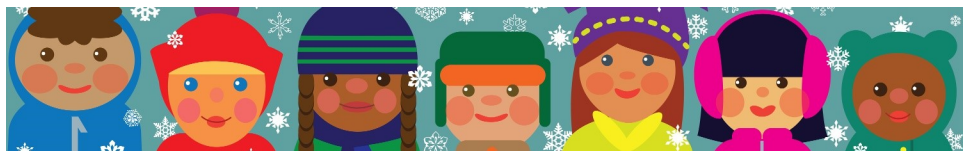
Compassion Children and Missionary Sponsorships

Our thanks to everyone who has sponsored our Compassion children, John and Denisse, as well as our missionary team, the Bencke family, during the past year. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Our Compassion children receive support in the form of nutrition supplementation, education assistance, medical checkups and loving Christian care. There are opportunities now available to sponsor an upcoming month for 2024. The sign up form is on the bulletin board and on our website. Thank you for your past and future support.



Souper Bowl Event

Root for your favorite team and support the North Scott Food Pantry by dropping off your canned soup donations Feb. 1st-11th. Place your cans on the side of the football field designated for your favorite team.



With Appreciation...

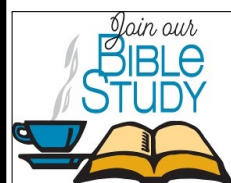


Thank you to our January Ambassador Folding Crew: Sue Casel, Darlene John, Tammy Neff, and Carol Marten.

Thank you to our Carol Marten and Sue Sissel for folding all of the January bulletins. The help was very much appreciated!



During the Saturday, January 6 worship service, we welcomed to our Faith family through the waters of holy baptism, Lana Nicole Flenker, the daughter of Grant and Haley Flenker. Lana's sponsors are Nick Flenker and Brittany Whitmore.



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. **Note: We will not hold bible study on January 2 due to the holidays.**



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.faithlutheraneldridge.com.

Thank you for your help!



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

Fred Jansen	February 2	Dale Dammann	February 13
Sue Hillman	February 2	Jean Keppy	February 14
Bill Wittkowski	February 3	Dennis Mohr	February 14
Kathryn Zelinko	February 11	Duane Miller	February 19
Carolyn Hulsen	February 12	Janet Bowman	February 20
Karen Schmitt	February 13	David Golinghorst	February 24

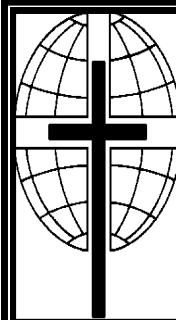


Don & Delores Rathjen
February 15, 1958



Food Panty Needs

Food Pantry Needs for the month of February are crackers and pasta.



MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to **Rhonda Webber** and **Chris Schroeder** for sponsoring the Bencke family and Compassion children John and Denisse in January. Thank you to **Joan and Denny Hennigan** for sponsoring the Bencke family and Compassion children John and Denisse in February. There are many sponsorship opportunities available in 2024.

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!**