

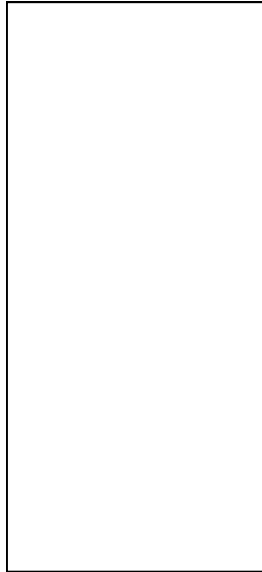
Weekly Worship: Saturday at 5:00 pm, In Person & Live Stream Online, and Sunday at 9:00 am, In Person.  
 Easter Sunday worship at 8 am and 10:30 am, with breakfast at 9:00 am and an egg hunt at 9:30 am. Online Worship  
 updates will be posted on [www.faithlutheraneldridge.com](http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com) and on our Facebook page.  
 Sunday School and adult faith formation on Sundays at 10:15 am.

**Faith Lutheran Church**

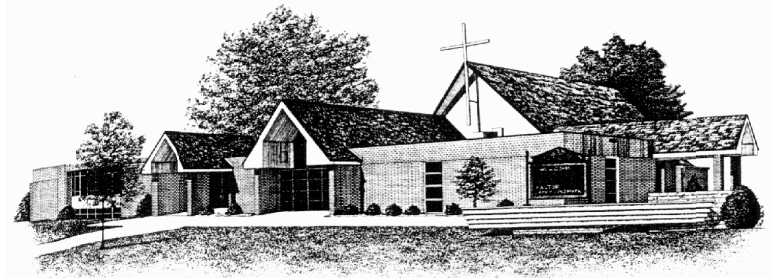
500 W. LeClaire Road  
 Eldridge, IA 52748

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



**Faith Lutheran Church**



**AMBASSADOR**

**March 2024**

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

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

[www.faithlutheraneldridge.com](http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com)  
[faitheldridge@netins.net](mailto:faitheldridge@netins.net)



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



Dear Friends in Christ,

Throughout the season of Lent, we have been working our way through our Lenten series, *The Seed of Joy*, as we have considered where and from whom we can find joy not only in the glorious times of life, but also in the times of struggle. Where does

our strength come from? Where do we find hope when things feel hopeless? How can we trust God's promises to provide when God feels so far away?

Often, it is hard to find that joy within us until we can look at the ways in which God has intervened in the past, look at the places where God has shown up where we least expected it, look at the ways in which God has answered our myriad of prayers in a variety of ways. Sometimes, we need to hear stories from others of where God has shown up in their lives as well, as those stories can help us to see our circumstances in a different light.

As I have been contemplating all of this and more, I would like to share a story of where God has shown up in a very hard place through this congregation. It is a story that warms my heart when I think of it, and when I consider how God has put everything into place, I am amazed at God's timing, and I am filled with the joy of God's promises anew.

A number of years ago, a family gifted Faith Lutheran Church with two cemetery plots at Davenport Memorial Park. While the Congregation Council at that time had discussed what to do with them, and it seems, decided to sell them, nothing had ever been done with them. Over the summer, Myron Scheibe was going through the safe deposit box at the bank, and he came across the deeds to these plots. After some investigation to be sure that we had all of the information on them, we found that, sure enough, these plots belonged to Faith, and we should probably do something with them.

At the Congregation Council meeting on August 24, 2023, the information about the plots was shared with the Congregation Council, and it was decided that we would like to sell the plots for a minimum price of \$2,000 per plot. In the midst of the discussion, it was made clear that the goal was to sell the plots to someone connected to the congregation, if at all possible, and to sell them to someone who needed them and might not be able to afford a place for burial otherwise. We also agreed to make Chambers Funeral Home aware of the plots so that if they became aware of someone in need of a place to be buried, we could help them with our plots.

The following morning, as I arrived at church, there was a phone call from a young lady by the name of Nicole. She had been a teenager when I was one of the pastors at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Indianola. Nicole was calling because her father, Brian, had just been diagnosed with aggressive lung cancer, and she knew that he would not live long, likely less than a year. She wanted to know if I would be willing to do the

committal service for her dad at Davenport Memorial Park as I had done for both of her father's parents when they died in 2017.

You see, Don (Doc) and Jan Fuller had been faithful members at Redeemer for a very long time; however, they were also charter members of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church in Eldridge before moving to Indianola in 1963. Doc and Jan had travelled with one of their sons to be here when I was installed as Senior Pastor because they were so glad that I was going to serve a congregation they loved. When they both died a week-and-a-half apart in February and March of 2017, their desire was to be buried at Davenport Memorial Park near family, and I was asked to do the committal service.

Nicole was now asking for the same for her father. Brian had been baptized here at Faith on January 1, 1961, and the family was hoping that the pastor from here who had also been their pastor would be willing to once again do the committal service. However, as we were conversing about the strain that all of this was putting on Nicole, her sister, Jamie, and their families, Nicole mentioned that, while Brian wanted to be buried at Davenport Memorial near his parents, they did not have a plot, and she had no idea how her family would be able to afford one. She and her sister are young adults, and for a variety of reasons, Brian did not have much more than what he needed to live. Nicole was a little frantic because she really did not know what she would do.

I took a deep breath in that moment because I knew that God's hand was at work in the midst of this. I told Nicole that, literally the night before, the Congregation Council had decided to sell two plots for \$2,000 apiece, and I asked her if she could afford that. She said that she absolutely could, and that would be such a relief. After having a quick conversation with Mike Garner and Myron Scheibe to be sure that this transaction was an acceptable use of this plot, it was agreed among the three of us that this was exactly how the Congregation Council would want these plots to be used, and so we made arrangements to transfer the deed of one of the plots to Nicole for use for her father.

Brian died this past Friday morning, and his burial will be at Davenport Memorial Park on Good Friday, March 29. While I grieve Brian's death, I also feel that seed of joy within me, and I experience the seed of joy within Nicole as we have chatted in these last days because we know that God has shown up in the worst of all of this and has brought good and comfort. As we bury Brian on Good Friday, we will remember the sacrifice that Christ made for us when he was buried in that empty tomb nearly 2000 years ago for our sake, and we will hold onto the Easter joy that will be just around the corner, trusting that the promise of the resurrection is for Brian and for us all.

May this story bring you hope and joy as you prepare for this Holy Week and Easter.

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Carrie*

Ephesians 4:2: Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing one another in love.

Does the month of March come roaring in like a lion and go out like a lamb? Or, does it come in like a lamb and go out like a lion? March weather can be fierce or gentle. Jesus' power is just as mighty as it is tender. His love is strong and fierce, yet tender and gentle at the same time. How can this be? I remember seeing a poster that read, "Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength." - St. Francis de Sales. That sounds like a description of Jesus' love and power. My prayer is that we will be humble, gentle, patient, and kind with each other while also being strong, fierce, and mighty in our love of God throughout the changeable month of March and into the future.

Join me in thanking:

- The Powells for hanging the purple drape on the cross.
- Fellowship Team for planning, grilling burgers, and providing a fun event for about 74 people attending Cheeseburger in Paradise. Thanks to all who attended. We had a wonderful turnout. This event encourages relationships between all age groups.
- All who bought Sub Sandwiches and Chex mix supporting our high school Youth Trip to New Orleans this summer for the ELCA Youth Event, and also to Capriotti's for donating ingredients and to Thrivent Action Grant. About \$1000 was netted toward the trip.
- All who donated cans of soup for our Souper Bowl for the North Scott Food Pantry. We added 57 cans (26 lbs) to help feed our neighbors in our community.
- Meal Ministry Team for making and serving the Congregational Pancake Breakfast on Feb. 11. This intergenerational fellowship helps our Faith Formation and creates meaningful connections and conversations.
- Our Confirmation students for serving the Ash Wednesday soup supper meal. It is good to meet together and share a meal. It helps build and strengthen relationships in our Faith community.

The regular council meeting was held on Thursday, February 15. Highlights included:

- Welcoming our new council members. Thank you for serving!
- Great news of January giving propelling our mission and ministry into the new year!
- Approved Tyler Stanton for Mutual Ministry Team
- Scheduled the Council Retreat in April
- Moving forward with the Sanctuary Update capital campaign
- Purchased a Family Farm, one month of Seminary Class, and various Barnyard animals with Christmas Offering totaling \$1367.25.
- Decided on Special Easter Offering to Humble Dwellings locally and ELCA Disaster Response where needed most.
- New photo directory coming in 2024.



## 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:

**Week 3(March 6):** Liberating Joy—Embodied Prayer

**Week 4 (March 13):** Transformative Joy—Praying the News

**Week 5 (March 20):** 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 joy that is richer and more nuanced than sheer happiness.





## Holy Week Schedule

On **Palm Sunday, Saturday, March 23, 5:00 pm** and **Sunday, March 24, 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 22, from 9:00 am to noon and on Saturday, March 23, from 2:00-4:00 pm for those worshipping at home.

Our **Maundy Thursday** service on **Thursday, March 28, at 7:00 pm**, will include the celebration of First Communion for several of our children.

On **Good Friday, March 29**, we will gather for a Service of Light and Darkness at **7:00 pm**.

Join our **Easter Vigil** service on **Saturday, March 30 at 5:00 pm**.

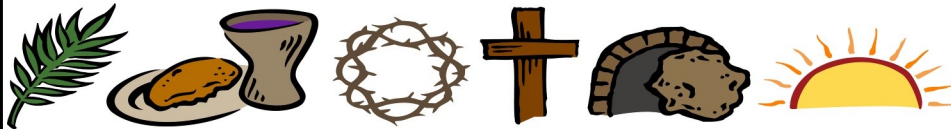
### Easter Sunday, March 31

**8:00 am** – Easter Worship Service

**9:00 am**—Easter Breakfast in Fellowship Hall

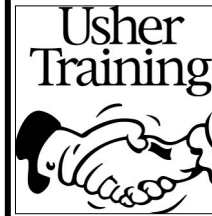
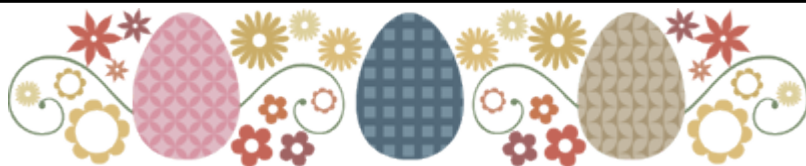
**9:30 am**—Easter Egg hunt on the front lawn

**10:30 pm** –Easter Worship Service



Join us as we celebrate the truth that “Christ Is Risen! He Is Risen Indeed!”

The youth who are going to New Orleans for the ELCA Youth Gathering in July and their families will serve breakfast on **Easter morning, March 31, from 9:00-10:15 am**. A free will offering will be collected to help with the costs of the trip.



### 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 3, @ 10:15 am** in the Sanctuary. Please plan to attend!

**Contact Tom Bauer for more information.**



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 \$14.00 to help offset the cost of the plants. **Please indicate ‘flowers’ on your envelope so we know how to allocate the funds.** Names received by **March 24** will be published in the Easter worship bulletin.


















This year Daylight Savings Time starts on Sunday, March 10th. Please remember to set your clocks forward an hour when you go to bed on Saturday night (March 9th.)



## Cinnamon Roll Sunday

Youth who will be attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this July of will be making and selling cinnamon rolls the weekend of March 23 & 24 to help raise funds for their trip. You can purchase these delicious rolls in person around worship March 23 & 24, or pre-order by signing up online (link found on our website and on Facebook) or on the sheet in the gathering space. **Cost is \$3/2 rolls, \$8/6 rolls, and \$15/dozen.** Along with baked rolls, we will have the option to purchase unbaked rolls by the dozen.

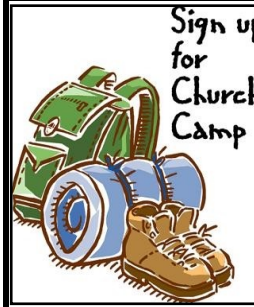
**Thank you for supporting our youth!**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Key:</b> (FH) - Fellowship Hall (MP) Multipurpose Room (GS) Gathering Space					<b>1</b> 9:30am Food Pantry 	<b>2</b> 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>3</b> 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship 10:15 am Usher Training 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 1 <sup>st</sup> Communion Class	<b>4</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 6:00 pm Lions Club Mtg	<b>5</b> 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:15 pm Resounding Joy 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm VFW (FH) 6:30 pm Jubilation	<b>6</b> 5:00 pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation Service Project/Mentor Night 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	<b>7</b> 6:30 pm Team Night	<b>8</b> 9:30 am Food Pantry 	<b>9</b> 5:00 pm Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>10</b> 9:00 am Jubilation Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship 10:15 am Sunday School	<b>11</b> <i>Office Closed</i> 6:00 pm Lions Club Exec Mtg.	<b>12</b> <i>Office Hours: 9-12</i> 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:15 pm Resounding Joy 5:30 pm Food Pantry 	<b>13</b> <i>Office Hours: 9-12</i> 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service	<b>14</b> <i>Office Hours: 9-12</i> <b>15</b> <i>Team Reports Due</i>	<b>15</b> <i>Office Hours: 9-12</i> 9:30 am Food Pantry 	<b>16</b> 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>17</b> 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am Fellowship & Sunday School 12:00 pm Girl Scouts (FH)	<b>18</b> <i>Office Closed</i> EARLY AMBASSADOR DEADLINE DUE TO HOLY WEEK 	<b>19</b> 9:00 am Quilting 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:15 pm Resounding Joy 5:30 pm Food Pantry 6:30 pm Executive Mtg	<b>20</b> 5:00 pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 6:00 pm People of Praise 7:00 pm Worship Service 7:30 pm High School Youth	<b>21</b> 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting 6:30 pm WOF Bible Study 	<b>22</b> 9:30 am Food Pantry  2:00 pm Youth Cinnamon Roll Bake (FH)	<b>23</b> 9:00 am Youth Cinnamon Roll Bake (FH) 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 
<b>24 PALM SUNDAY</b> 9:00 am Worship in Sanctuary 10:15 am 1st Communion, Fellowship, Sunday School	<b>25</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	<b>26</b> 1:00 pm Bible Study 5:30 pm Food Pantry 	<b>27</b> 5:00 pm Confirmation Meal 5:30 pm Confirmation 7:00 pm High School Youth	<b>28 MAUNDY THURSDAY</b> 9:00 am Ambassador Folding  7:00 pm Worship Service	<b>29 GOOD FRIDAY</b> <i>Food Pantry Closed</i> 7:00 pm Worship Service	<b>30 EASTER VIGIL</b> <b>NOISY OFFERING</b> 5:00 pm Worship in Sanctuary & Online 6:00 pm Private Event (FH) 
<b>31 EASTER SUNDAY</b> <b>NOISY OFFERING</b> <u>See Page 6 for complete Easter Sunday schedule</u>						



## Cheeseburger In Paradise

Thank you to all who helped plan, decorate, manage, serve, clean up and attend the Cheeseburger in Paradise party last month. It was a fun event! Check out our Facebook page for more fun photos!



## Summer Camp Registration is Here!!

It is time to register for camp for this summer, and I hope that many of you will want to join us for **Week 6 of camp at Lutheran Lakeside, July 21-26**, "the best week ever."

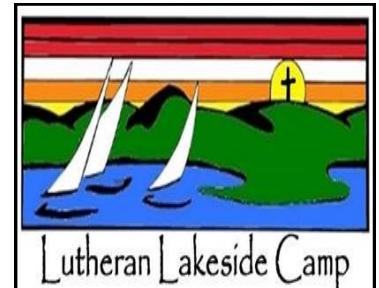
Children in **grades 3-5** will register for **Cultivator Camp**. Youth in **grades 6-8** will register for

**TrailBlazer Camp**. Youth in **grades 9-12** will register for **Voyager Camp**. When you register your child(ren), **please use the discount code FLeldridgecamp24** to reduce the registration fee by the \$150 that Faith will pay for camp. Also, if you have more than one child who will be attending camp, there is a \$15 discount for each child after the first.

If you are an adult who would like to spend a week at camp on the **adult mission trip**, you will register for **Mission Trip**. Please use the **discount code FLeldridgemission24** to cover the cost of your registration.

If you have a child in **grades 1-2** who would like to go to camp, you can register them for **Adventurer Day Camp**. However, to do this, a parent needs to also register for the adult mission trip so that your child can stay with you in the evening and overnight. If you decide to do this, please talk with me as **the church will cover \$75 of the registration**, and I will help you to get the discount code for that.

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



## Easter Egg Hunt



We invite your family to participate an egg hunt on the church lawn at **9:30am on Easter Sunday**. Bring your basket, or we will provide bags. We will celebrate the good news of Jesus' resurrection together.

Easter Egg Hunt

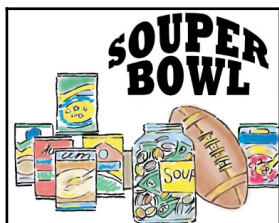
# YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

The chart on the next page shows the average weekly giving in 2022 vs 2023. 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 grew from 221 in 2022 to 235 in 2023. 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 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.  
Joan Hennigan, Council President



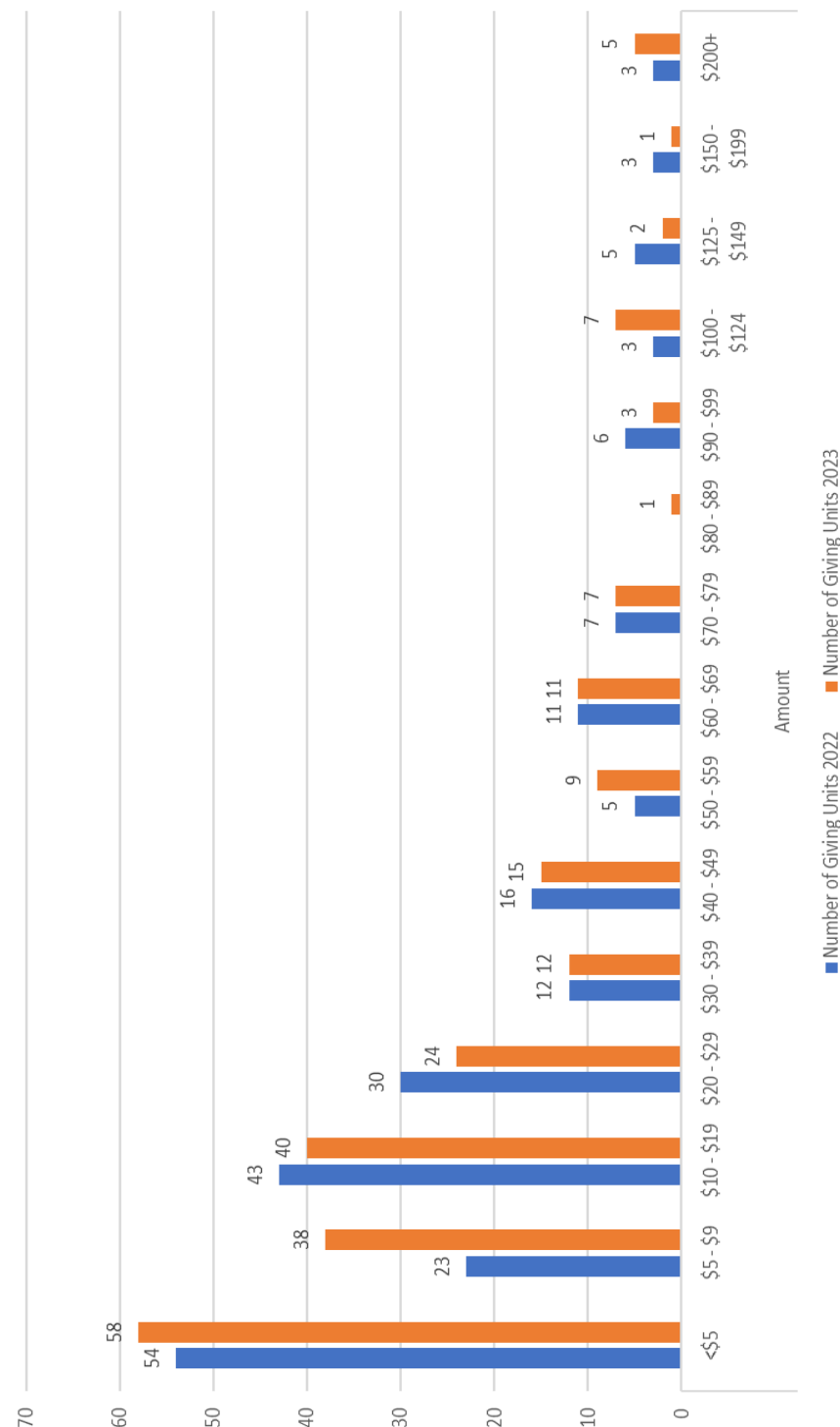
## RESULTS of the Souper Bowl Challenge

KC Chiefs	22 items
SF 49ers	25 items
50 Yard Line	10 items
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>57 items = 57 lbs!</u></b>



Thank you for helping us collect items for the NS Food Pantry through this fun challenge! ~ *Service in the World Team*

Average Weekly Offering 2022-2023





## FAITH LUTHERAN FINANCES

	JANUARY	YEAR-TO-DATE
INCOME*	\$42,662.84	\$42,662.84
EXPENSES	\$29,765.46	\$29,765.46

\* Monthly Income Needed to Meet Budget



### New Church Photo Directory

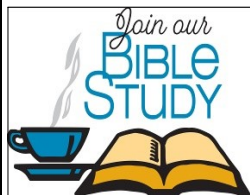
Photos for a new church directory will be taken April 16-20 with a Fall 2024 delivery. A free directory and 8x10 photo will be given to each family who has their photo taken for the directory. You can bring family, friends, and pets! No obligation to buy photos. Sign up early to get the spot of your choice. Sign Up online at [www.ucdir.com](http://www.ucdir.com) The Church Code is **IA300**, and the password is **photos**. Call Joan Hennigan or Pam Engelbrecht for help or more info.



### With Appreciation...

**Thank you** to our February Ambassador Folding Crew: Sue Casel, Tom Bauer, Pam Englebrecht, Carol Marten, Tammy Neff, and Carol Strobbe.

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



### 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.



**We still 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](http://www.faithlutheraneldridge.com).

**Thank you for your help!**



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
Gary King	March 11	Sara Nissen	March 23
Cynthia Slama	March 12	Ida Bell	March 25
		Mike Smith	March 28

### Food Panty Needs

Food Pantry Needs for the month of March  
Hamburger Helper and side dishes (boxed potatoes, pasta or rice mixes etc.)



Our Special Easter Offering will be split evenly between Humble Dwellings and ELCA Disaster Response where needed most.



### MISSIONARY SPONSORSHIP

Thank you to **Tom & Pam Carlson** for sponsoring Compassion Child **Denisse Grefa** in March. Thank you to **Joan & Denny Hennigan** for sponsoring the **Bencke family** and Compassion Child **John** in March. 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!**