



## The Newsletter of Faith Lutheran Church

9608 US 301 North, Parrish Florida 34219  
website: [faithlutheranfl.com](http://faithlutheranfl.com) Phone: (941) 776-1395  
email: [office@faithlutheranfl.com](mailto:office@faithlutheranfl.com)

### January, 2025

Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year. Around this time every year there are magazine articles and tv specials trying to explain why we celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Most of these will follow the logic that was first mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by a Dionysius bar-Salibi, that the birth of Christ was moved from being celebrated on Jan 6<sup>th</sup> to December 23<sup>th</sup> to coincide with the pagan Sol Invictus holiday.

Given that this is first mentioned over 1000 years after Jesus actual birth, there is very little to recommend it. Especially since in the late 1800s biblical scholars (who did not believe that the bible was the inspired word of God, but rather man's ignorant ideas about God), used this idea in support of the new study of comparative religions, which tries to see how all religions have a common theme and they are all equally valid. Besides which, early Christians were very careful to distinguish themselves from any other religion and would never think of trying to connect themselves to false beliefs. They were willing to die for the truth and would not compromise on any issue of faith.

There is however are much more Biblical and reverent explanations for the date being Dec 25. The first is that there was an understanding among Rabbis, around 200 years before Jesus was born that great men were born in and around the Passover. One Rabbi, Eliezer says that almost everything of significance related to YHWH. He believed that the world was created in the month of Nisan, which would normally be March by our counting. He also believed that all of the Patriarch were born in that month, that Issac was born in that month, even on the date of the Passover which wouldn't happen for another 400 more years or so. And finally, to our point he believed that the Israelites' future redemption would come in the same time, the month of Nisan.

Later Christian authors wrote in a similar vein. Tertullian of Carthage in the 200s and Augustine in the 400s believed that Jesus suffered and died on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, which would be the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar. His death was more important than his Birth in the early church and for us as well. The day He died our debt was paid and we were given the gift of salvation to all who believe.

Since His death was only made possible first by His human life, the two events, conception and death have often been linked together. We can see this even in some later artwork.



Here we have detail from a painting by Mater Bertram's 14<sup>th</sup> century Annunciation scene. It shows the baby Jesus traveling from heaven to earth on the back of a cross. The idea being that the human body corresponds to the grave; the divine nature of Christ is buried in the body of mankind, so that He might truly die in our place as both God and man, being then buried, so that He might rise again, therefore bringing redemption to all people, not just the Israelites. So by this reasoning Jesus was conceived on the same day that He died 33 years later. Since the date of the Passover in the year that Jesus died has been fairly consistently set as the 25<sup>th</sup> of March,

nine months later would be Dec 25<sup>th</sup>.

Another respectful attempt at trying to ascertain the Birthdate of Jesus comes from the Birth of John the Baptist. His father Zechariah, part of the division of Levites known as Abijah, was serving in the Temple, offering incense when he was greeted by the Angel (Lk 11-17). John was conceived soon after. We know that Mary was visited by the Angel Gabriel and told that her cousin Elizabeth was now 6 months pregnant (Lk 1:26-38). If we could determine the time of year that the division of Abijah was serving in the Temple, we could determine the time of John's conception, and birth and then determine Jesus'. From 1 Chronicles 24 we know the order of service of the divisions and Zechariah's was the 8<sup>th</sup>. There were 24 divisions and each division served for a full week twice a year.

Since they served twice a year and the Jewish calendar is lunar rather than solar, the dates would vary from year to year. Therefore, there is no way to be absolutely certain when Zechariah was in the Temple offering incense. There is one date however that works very well with our current date of Dec 25<sup>th</sup> and it makes sense Biblically. Luke 1:10 that the whole multitude of people were outside the Temple praying as Zechariah was inside praying. This leads us to believe that he was serving during one of the great festivals of the Jewish faith that required the whole nation to gather together. These festivals were Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. The only feast that year that happened at the same time as Zechariah was service would have been the Feast of Tabernacles, which happened in late September and early October. This would then have John being born in late June early July. So that would put Jesus' conception in late March early April. This would then match with a December birthdate for Jesus.

All of this is speculation, admittedly it is speculation based on what Scripture actually says, but speculation none the less. As you know I am not a fan of speculation when it comes to the Word of God, so why have I spent so much time on this issue.

Two reasons; first- it is clear from the Bible and history that the birthday of Jesus was not determined by Christians to replace a pagan holiday. We can ignore all the magazine and tv shows that lean in this direction. We never want to cloud our faith with doubt about its origins. They have nothing to do with trying to replace one myth with another, but solely with proclaiming the Truth about God our Savior.

Second, I really wanted to show that the date of Jesus birth is not important. The fact that He was born is much more important, so that it might lead to his death. Good Friday and Easter are the central celebrations of the Christian faith. In them we find the hope of our salvation. But they could not happen if Jesus had not been born a man, so his birth is important as well, but only to confirm His ability to die. The early church was much more focused on His death and resurrection than they were about His birth. His death is connected to Passover, which is clearly the main event in the Old Testament as it is a forerunner to the Crucifixion.

Christmas is a wonderful time and we do not need to have any doubt about what we are celebrating. It really doesn't matter what day of what month Jesus was born since it was not clearly reported in the scriptures. But who we celebrate is important and that is why as one bumper sticker says "Jesus is the reason for the season". Keep Christ in Christ-mas, He came to this earth for you to save you and give you hope and peace. That is always worth celebrating. Joy to the World, the Lord has come. Amen.

Rev. Patrick Poock



shutterstock.com - 2274092763



### Adult Catechism Classes

for people interested in becoming members of Faith or members who want to review their leanings of the Small Catechism. Plans are to begin the classes in February. You are asked to choose Sundays or Wednesdays to attend the classes. Please sign up on the blue table if you are interested.

**Reminder:** A wedding shower will be held following the 10:30 Divine Service on January 12, 2025, in the Great Hall. Everyone is welcome to join in showering Erin and Alec with blessings and love. This will be in place of regular coffee bites. Please sign up, if you plan on attending.



**Church Directories** are available for the asking. See Margaret or Julie.

## LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION



Our first LWML meeting and Bible Study of the New Year will be Friday, January 10, 2025. All ladies of the church are invited to attend.

All who attended our December meeting when we packed Christmas gift bags for our homebound and were able to get a variety of cookies to take home from the cookie walk, truly enjoyed their morning. Thank you to all who attended and helped make it a great way to spend time getting in the Christmas spirit.

LWML will begin collecting for Kids Closet in January and continue through March. We are collecting for Redlands Christian Migrant Association.

They are in need of jackets, sweaters, socks, and underwear for ages newborn to 5 years. You can find more information on the LWML table in the Narthex.

Sunday and Wednesday January 26 and January 29, 2025, will be LWML Sunday at Faith.

LWML ladies will be dressed in purple and we will be handing out M & M's (Mission Mites) to remind everyone of our ongoing missions project.

**Our next Bible Study and meeting will be on Friday, February 10, 2025. Following our meeting, at 11:00, we will be packing seeds for HOPE SEEDS. All church Members and Friends are invited to join us for this outreach mission project.**

**A sandwich luncheon will be provided & hosted by Judy Sattanno following the packing of seeds. Please sign up on the LWML table if you plan on joining us.**

*Opportunities for you to grow and become involved...*

## Pastor Poock's Bible Classes



### **Bible Study**

Our **Sunday Bible Class** meets at **9:15 am** in the Great Hall led by Pastor Poock. We are discussing the Book of Hebrews and you can ask questions too! The offerings received at this time go to benefit pastoral students at the Concordia Seminary.

Pastor also meets on **Wednesdays at 3:30 pm** prior to the 5:00 Divine Worship and at **6:30 pm** following the Divine Service. They are currently studying the book of **Genesis**.

**Adult Catechism** will begin for anyone wanting to become a member of Faith or anyone who just wants to revisit the teachings of the small catechism.

This will begin in February. Please sign up on the blue table if you are interested.

## NEED A FRIEND/ BE A FRIEND!

*I was in prison and you came to me (Matt. 25:36b). And when did we see you sick or in prison. (Matt. 25:39) Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me. (Matt. 25:40)*

Have the events of the past few months made you feel like you are in a prison? Have you felt lonely, just wanting to hear a friendly voice and know someone cares? If you would like to receive a friendly phone call a few times a week, just to say 'hi', 'I care about you'. 'How are you doing?' then give your name and phone number to Ann Colton 941-685-3858.



**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CHURCH COUNCIL  
DECEMBER 10, 2024**

**Present: President Glen Collier, VP Greg Wissner, Treasurer Barbara Wikel, Financial Secretary John Niemi; Recording Secretary Jean Roehrs, Altar Guild Eloise Schwarz, Elder Tony Bowen, and Pastor Pooch. Absent: Trustee David Benson.**

**The President called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. A quorum was established. Pastor opened the meeting with a devotion from the Advent Devotion Booklet based on The Great I Am. He offered prayer for members in need.**

**The minutes of Nov.12, 2024 were approved as printed.**

**Financial Secretary and Treasurer's reports were filed. There has been a \$40,000 short fall with expenses up and donations down. Tony MOVED that expenses and income be published in the monthly newsletter. Motion seconded and carried with all voting yes. Further discussion called for more Evangelism, a plan for the future, and a method to establish counting the membership. John will work on creating an accurate membership record.**

**PASTOR: He reported visiting hospice and other home-bound members. Some have been "lost" following the hurricanes either changing location or moving to be with family. He teaches religion and civics to the homeschool children. There will be a wedding at the 10:30 service next Sunday. The church will match the Christmas donations to our service members. When asked about having VBS this summer, Pastor said that he had no objection if we have the necessary volunteers.**

**PRESIDENT: No report. VP: No report.**

**ELDERS: Deferred to later.**

**LWML: Will be packing Christmas gift bags for homebound members.**

**Trustee Report: Projects underway include interior painting and the removal and repair of mold in the roof/steeple area. A mold/mildew removal company will be contacted.**

**ALTAR GUILD: Distributed a yearly calendar for 2025. Eloise and Jean will meet with Margaret and incorporate this calendar with the one Jean had sent out.**

CONTINUED

**NEW BUSINESS**

**VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT:** Barbara proposed that we need to stress the need for volunteers, specifically with Outreach, Website, Bible Studies, Grief Share, and Home School assistants, just to name a few. She suggested posting needs in the newsletter and in the narthex. She also thought posting Bible and confirmation classes online would be beneficial. Pastor said this would require assistance with someone with such experience.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**NARTHEX DOOR COVERINGS, EXTERIOR:** Deferred until Dave is available.

**CONGREGATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** Tony, Greg, and Larry will provide oversight. **NEW BUSINESS**

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:** It was proposed that a packet highlighting the activities of the various organizations for the past year be available to the membership and not included in the meeting itself. Agreed by consensus.

**VICARAGE APPLICATION FOR 2025:** Tony reported he has already contacted the district office, and they were supportive. He will proceed with completing the application and submitting it to synod.

The meeting closed at 7:30 pm followed by prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jean E Roehrs*

Jean E Roehrs, Recording Secretary

*The one who gets wisdom loves life;  
the one who cherishes understanding  
will soon prosper*

*Proverbs 19:8*



**FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH  
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
DECEMBER 8, 2024**

**Council Members Present:** President Glen Collier, VP Greg Wissner, Treasurer Barbara Wikel, Financial Secretary John Niemi, Recording Secretary Jean Roehrs, Elder Tony Bowen, and Pastor Poock. **Absent:** Trustee David Benson due to a family emergency. There were 62 in attendance, establishing a quorum.

The President called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. Pastor offered prayer.

**President' Report:** Glen stressed the valuable contributions of volunteers, listing the many opportunities available and encouraging the membership to join in. He also asked if we were inviting others to worship. We should reflect on God's word and pray for nonbelievers.

**Pastor:** Lots of good things have been happening. He pointed out the improvements made to the electric sign and the addition of the cross, made by Dave Benson. We've had baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and nine funerals. We have welcomed 25 new members seeking the pure word of God. He is teaching religion and civics to the homeschoolers. He has spent 19 years in the Reserves and will retire in another 4 years.

**Minutes:** Jean reported that the minutes of Dec. 2023 and June 2024 Membership meetings were reviewed by the Council and printed in the monthly newsletters. No additions or corrections were received.

**Election:** The candidate for office was Larry Colson for Financial Secretary. The president called the question: he was **elected unanimously**.

**Financial Secretary and Treasurer's Reports:** Income for 2023 and projected income for 2024 has declined. The budget reflects income equal to the past 2 years. Expenses are projected to increase due to the cost of utilities, insurance, and out-sourced services. It also reflects a 5% salary increase. Jack Conte **MOVED** adopting the 2025 budget as presented. Motion seconded and carried by voice vote. A question was posed as to whether the congregation contributed all the funds sent to the quarterly charities. An additional \$5,000 is added to the amount contributed by the congregation.

**Trustee:** On Dave's behalf some of his many projects were highlighted, especially the addition of storage cabinets in the various meeting rooms, roof replacement, tree removal, landscaping, and sign improvement.

continued



**Elder:** Head Elder Tony Bowen invited Mert Janovec to report on the Grief Share program. He reported that they have served over 100 people. Another session will be held after Easter. Facilitators are needed to assist with the sessions. Tony listed the quarterly charities for 2024. Bridging Freedom, the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter charity, offers housing, counseling, and assistance to girls rescued from human trafficking. They provide 30 beds; there are only 48 beds in the entire county. The 2025 mission recipients haven't been selected yet.

**LWML:** Marilyn Howard reported on the activities of Woman in Mission. The group meets the second Friday of the month, Sept. through May. Locally they support Hope Seeds, Project Heart with hygiene kits for homeless school children in Manatee Co., and Redlands Christian Migrant Association Preschool with school supplies and items for their kids closet. They also collect Mites for district and national mission grants and pack and deliver Christmas gift bags for the church's homebound members.

**Communication/Outreach:** Vacant. One duty of this position is maintaining the Facebook page and publicity.

**Fellowship:** Margaret Greenslade and Monica Carezza coordinate activities. They received a round of thanks.

#### NEW BUSINESS

**Vicar:** The Elders proposed that Faith participate in the Synod program for the 2025-26 school year. Students spend 2 years in the classroom, 1 year in vicarage, and then a year in the classroom, again. The cost varies depending on the vicar's age, marital status, and/or children. Pastor highlighted that the purpose is not necessarily to assist him or the church; rather to provide a training for the vicar dealing with all aspects of serving a congregation. He spoke of how valuable his vicarage was to him and that he would very much like to be involved with training future pastors. On behalf of the Board of Elders, Tony MOVED that Faith apply for a vicar for the 2025-2026 school year. A vote was taken by ballot. Tellers were John Niemi and Barbara Wikel. The vote was 43 yes, 6 no. Motion carried. The application will be sent to the district. If approved, it will be sent on to synod. There are usually more requests than there are vicars available for placement.

Pastor closed the meeting with prayer. Meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

*Jean E Roehrs, Recording Secretary*



## HAPPENINGS AT FAITH

### ALTAR GUILD

Fresh Flowers always add a nice touch to our altar, so if you have an anniversary, birthday, or special event to celebrate or if you would like to donate in memory of a loved one, the flower calendar on the bulletin board in the Narthex, makes it easy to sign up. There are written directions that will help and answer your concerns.



**We want to thank ELLENTON FLORIST 941-962-9098 for the beautiful Altar displays.**

### WOMEN OF FAITH



Women of Faith will begin the New Year, hopefully, with 3 new volunteers meeting on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 9—11:30 am. Many hands make light work. If you're considering helping, join this training session and sew at home or cut and tie at our regular meeting.  
Marjorie Weiss 941-757-7307

### FOOD BARREL DONATIONS



We have an opportunity to help others that are less fortunate through our Food Barrel donations. Items of priority this month are: **toilet tissue, canned fruit, bottles of fruit juice and toiletries.**

**Thank you** for helping this most worthy cause, and to Larry Colton for taking the items to the Methodist Church in Parrish.

**Remember to check out the LWML table for information on the KID'S CLOSET to help out Redlands Christian Migrant Association with clothing for children newborn to 5 years of age.**

## This Month's Privileged Servants

*"Serve the Lord with Gladness" (Psalm 100:2)*



### Altar Guild

**Sundays, 8:00 am /Sunday 10:30 am**

Jan. 5 Martha Riedl / Pat Barlow  
 Jan. 12 Meta Green / Cindy Nuetzel  
 Jan. 19 Monica Carezza / Nancy Niemi  
 Jan. 26 Martha Riedl / Alec Carpp & Erin Henderson

**Wednesdays, 5pm**

Jan. 1 **NO SERVICE**  
 Jan. 8 Eloise Schwarz  
 Jan. 15 Gwyn Pooch  
 Jan. 22 Karen Hill & Robin Parkin  
 Jan. 29 Eloise Schwarz

### Elders

**Sundays, 8:00 am**

January 5 Tom Weiss  
 January 12 Dennis Steinke  
 January 19 Tom Weiss  
 January 26 Dennis Steinke

**Sundays, 10:30 am**

Jack Conte  
 Tom Barlow  
 Jack Conte  
 Tom Barlow

**Assistant**

Caleb Pooch  
 Alex Boettcher  
 Caleb Pooch  
 Alex Boettcher

**Wednesdays, 5 pm**

**Assistant**

January 1 **NO Divine Service**  
 January 8 Tony Bowen Carl Schwarz  
 January 15 Tony Bowen Curt McCarty  
 January 22 Tony Bowen Dave Barber  
 January 29 Tony Bowen Carl Schwarz

### **Offering Counters**

January 2 John Niemi, Carol Schreiber, Tom Barlow  
 January 9 John Niemi, Judy Sattanno, Stu Lindberg  
 January 16 Marilyn Howard, Bonnie Wright, Marti Katterhenry  
 January 23 Larry Colton, Nancy Kendall, Jean Roehrs  
 January 30 Judy Sattanno, Nancy Kendall, Marti Katterhenry

## Happy Birthday

- 3 Jonathan Koehler
- 3 Marjorie Weiss
- 5 Roy Heflin
- 7 Jack Dressel
- 9 Diane Durham
- 10 Donna Koenig
- 10 Silas Pooch
- 15 James Koehler
- 17 Debra Haney
- 17 William Vlasak
- 18 Deanna Roberts
- 19 Renee Cole
- 20 Aaron Boettcher
- 21 Lisa Boettcher
- 24 Francis Bendana
- 24 Elena McAnally
- 25 Gene Hemingway
- 26 Norm Bothun
- 27 Dave Underwood
- 30 Sue Koehler



Special Birthday wishes to  
Donna Koenig on her 91st and  
Gene Hemingway on his 90th  
Birthday Celebration!



happy anniversary

- 5 Jeff & Robin Snell (45 years)
- 6 Dave & Susie Cashon (36 years)
- 18 Paul & Kristine Bearse (28 years)
- 24 David & Susan Barber (55 years)
- 25 James & Sheila Smith (51 years)





## FELLOWSHIP NEWS:

Sunday morning Coffee Bites continues to have some delicious goodies following the 10:30 am Divine Service. There is also a lot of fellowship happening and what a joy it is to see folks hanging around enjoying this time of fellowship.



If you are interested in volunteering to help with Coffee Bites (3 dozen cookies or 2 dozen pastries), please let Monica or Margaret know or call the Church Office at 941-776-1395 to be added to the volunteer Coffee Bite list.

To those of you who help Fellowship out with your Free Will offerings at the coffee bar, thank you. That money helps Faith purchase coffee and paper products for our Coffee Bites. It is greatly appreciated.

Fellowship is most grateful to the Altar Guild, Council, Board of Elders, LWML and Volunteers for their contributions and hard work setting up and serving our Wednesday Advent Meals. This is a task of love for all our members who enjoy this evening of food and fellowship.



### *Prayer Requests*

The psalmist writes *The Lord has heard my pleas; the Lord accepts my prayer (Psalm 6:9 ESV). The Lord hears our pleas and will accept our prayers, also. Please make your prayer needs known to the church office or to the prayer chairman and your requests/needs will be shared with the Prayer Partners who have joined the Faith Prayer Ministry. To be a member of this vital ministry send an email to [jroehrs27@gmail.com](mailto:jroehrs27@gmail.com) and prayer request will be sent to you via email. Thank you.*

### PRAYER PARTNERS:

Concerned that you don't know how to pray or your prayers aren't effective? Max Lacado wrote that it isn't the strength of the person praying but the strength of the one being prayed to. With God, all things are possible. If you would like to receive prayer requests via email for members and their loved ones in need, email your address to Jean at [jroehrs27@gmail.com](mailto:jroehrs27@gmail.com) and as she receives prayer requests, they will be sent out. If you have a prayer need but no email, please call Jean Roehrs at 941-567-8681







### Volunteer Opportunities:

Outreach - Creates opportunities to connect with people outside the church and share our faith, contact Glen Collier, [gcollier3903@gmail.com](mailto:gcollier3903@gmail.com)

Website - Enhances and maintains our current website, contact Glen Collier, [gcollier3903@gmail.com](mailto:gcollier3903@gmail.com)

Audio/Video - Records Bible Studies to upload to website, contact Glen Collier, [gcollier3903@gmail.com](mailto:gcollier3903@gmail.com)

GriefShare Facilitator - Facilitates GriefShare sessions. Training is provided, contact Mert Janovec, [mert.ignite@yahoo.com](mailto:mert.ignite@yahoo.com)

Home School assistant - Provide assistance for the children at our Home School, contact [revpooock@gmail.com](mailto:revpooock@gmail.com)

### Also needed to help Margaret out:

**Volunteer/s to handle 2025 Lenten Meal planning,**

**Military Gift Giving for 2025,**

**Advent 2025 Meal planning.**

**Give Margaret a call at the office 941-776-1395 and we can talk about it. Of course I would be around to assist in any way I can.**

