



Life of Faith

SEPTEMBER 2025

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Pastor Aaron Musser: 509 548 7010



*From Paul, called by God's will to be an apostle of Jesus Christ...
grace and peace from our Loving God and our Savior Jesus Christ.
(1 Corinthians 1:1a, 3)*

The apostle Paul was well accustomed to writing letters to churches that he was far away from. I am less practiced in this, but I share Paul's enthusiasm and excitement as I think about the month to come and the beginning of our life together.

Right now, my excitement about moving to Leavenworth and serving as your pastor is being channeled into many projects: packing boxes, wrapping up my work at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries Center in northern Illinois, and participating in some final music-making with choirs and community groups. Alongside the joy and energy of this season, there is also the natural nervousness that comes with transition: wanting to make a good impression and hoping that the ministry we share will be meaningful and relevant for the community.

Perhaps this is why Paul had such a gift for writing to churches from afar: he knew how to speak directly into that mix of joy and nervous energy. His words ring true for me in this moment — **grace and peace** from our Loving God and our Savior Jesus Christ.

In times of change, this is what we need most — grace and peace. I pray that our first days together will be filled with both, and that they will accompany the great excitement and energy of our shared ministry for years to come.

Pastor Aaron



SEPTEMBER WORSHIP

August 31: Pastor Barbara Rossing

September 7: Pastor Barbara Rossing, Season of Creation, Low-E Sunday (see pg. 3)

September 14: First Sunday with our new pastor, Aaron Musser

September 21: Pastor Aaron Musser

September 28: Worship, Installation of Pastor Musser followed by a forum with Bishop Manlove and potluck (details below)

Special thanks to Pastor Barbara Rossing for her faithful leadership and worship planning during our interim time between pastors. Thanks also to Pastor John Schramm together with Pastor Alex Schmidt and Carl Florea for pastoral presence and guidance during this time.



Pastor Aaron Musser will be installed as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church Leavenworth by Bishop Meggan Manlove during morning worship on September 28. Local clergy from our synod will be present and the service will be followed by a forum led by Bishop Manlove centering on *Church Together* and potluck luncheon.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend this festive time in the life of our church!



WEEKLY HAPPENINGS / MONTHLY MEETINGS

BOOK GROUP: Each Tuesday, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Current book is *Jesus and John Wayne* by Kristin Kobes Du Mez. Contact Margaret Neighbors (509) 387-0883 for information.

SAIL: (Staying Active and Independent for Life) Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall. All seniors 65 and older are welcome to join this free program. Contact Connie Thomassen (509) 470-8212 for information.

QUILT TYING: Each Tuesday from 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

CHURCH COUNCIL: September 25, 6:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

IMMIGRATION/RACE & JUSTICE: September 16, 6:00 p.m. Contact Alex 509-548-7012 for details.

EARTH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: August 26, Low-E Sunday, September 7

Season of Creation by Pastor Barbara Rossing
September 1 - October 4
September 7, Low-E Sunday



The global church invites us to pray for the “Peace of Creation,” joining with siblings around the world. Early risers are invited to start the day September 1 with a 6 a.m. online global prayer service to watch on youtube. Here is the link: <https://seasonofcreation.org/>.

The Season of Creation will end October 4, St. Francis Day, with the blessing of animals—which Faith will observe Sunday October 5.

Faith Lutheran Earth Stewardship Group invites everyone to kick off the Season of Creation by walking, biking, car-pooling, e-biking, or driving an electric or hybrid car to church, Sunday, September 7. Let’s make this Season of Creation fun and life-giving!

Here is news from Lutheran World Federation:

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and other faith communities invite the global Christian community to come together in prayer, reflection and action for the annual Season of Creation observed for a month each year. This ecumenical celebration invites Christians of all traditions to unity in their shared calling to care for God’s creation, our common home.

This year’s theme, “Peace with Creation”, calls believers to reflect on the deep interconnectedness between humanity and the Earth, and to respond to the urgent need for ecological healing and justice. The chosen symbol for 2025 is the “Garden of Peace”, inspired by the prophetic vision in Isaiah 32:14-18, which foresees a world in harmony with nature where justice and peace flourish.

“Creation cries out in suffering,” says LWF General Secretary Rev. Dr. Anne Burghardt. “We acknowledge the urgent call to action and we acknowledge that we can only respond to it on the basis of faith. The Season of Creation is a source of strength and communion, encouraging us truly ‘to hope and act with creation.’”



Church Council August 2025



Treasurer's Report:

- Council approved moving \$10,000 into a CD and \$10,000 into property account to gain more interest
- No change in Restricted Funds
- Contributions in July short of budgeted \$13,000. Income from Benton and Tumwater rentals helps achieve \$6,000 net monthly profit
- No out-of-the-ordinary expenses

Pastor's Report:

- How can we best follow-up with visitors?
- Could we partner with the confirmation group at Celebration Lutheran in East Wenatchee to help with our young people?
- Preachers: Don Haven on August 31. Barbara Rossing, September 7
- A Low-E Sunday is planned for September 7 to begin the *Season of Creation* focus
- Recommend using the Holden Prayer more often
- Bishop Manlove is coming to install Pastor Aaron on September 28. Request that she lead an adult forum after a celebratory potluck
- Living Lutheran subscription drive? Tabled this in favor of getting one or two print copies for the church for folks who might want to read it – also available online
- Need a new person to print copies of the monthly newsletter
- Church-wide Johnson Amendment: pastors and religious leaders may not endorse political candidates but CAN advocate on issues
- Barbara will serve as pastor at Holden from September 12 - 24

Property Committee:

- The shrubbery in the front yard of the Tumwater parsonage front yard has been neglected and has been condemned by members that know these things. Mitigation efforts (weed pulling) are in process. Recommended that we move towards creating a Xeriscape. There may be grants available to assist with this.
- Greg Harris and Pete offered to help Greg Steeber move furniture to the parsonage.
- New flooring in the Fellowship Hall has been ordered and installation planned after August 28. They will install the vinyl on one visit and the carpet on the next so that we can move things from one side to the other. We will need to remove and replace baseboard.
- A plan is posted for a possible pastor's office addition. A 13'3" by 12' is recommended.
- The renters of the Tumwater parsonage left the home in good order and it is now vacant. The damage deposit will be refunded after reviewing utility bills which included a higher than normal water bill due to an irrigation leak.

Worship Committee: Waiting for Pastor Aaron to arrive to set a date and plan

Old Business:

- Dinners for 5 or 6: Ellen is interested in helping to plan and schedule – Hurrah!
- Adult forum champion: Ask Pastor Aaron to lead.
- Change the Constitution to allow the Council to approve up to \$10,000 (or a percentage of the annual budget) for expenditures above the yearly budget without a congregational meeting: Hold off discussing this until after the Synod has their constitutional review. [Constitutional changes must have 2 congregational meetings more than 60 days between.]

New Business:

- Create a *Pastor's Guide to Faith Lutheran*. The council requests that each committee write a summary of their work that includes: members, purpose, tasks, roles of its members.
- The suggestion to host Tanzanian visitor, Pastor Wilson, has been tabled so we can focus on our new pastor's arrival. Pastor Rossing is in touch with Heidi Cryer about this.
- The Chamber of Commerce applications for being Oktober Fest ambassadors is opening soon. Greg S. will look into it and sign Faith up for the first two weekends.
- Voted to waive non-member fee for Connie Thomassen for using the fellowship hall for Sail class (she no longer is a member.)
- New project, long overdue: A registry of official acts of Faith Lutheran – births, deaths, baptisms, confirmations, weddings. We need to start formally collecting data.
- New project: collect members'/friends' wishes for funeral service – hymns, readings, service (ex. Compline).
- Keep posted as to Aaron's arrival – September 8 or 9 – and gather a crew at Tumwater to help unload. Make a 'Welcome Pastor Aaron' sign to hang on the house. Cake?
- There will be a potluck after the September 28 service and installation!

Organizational Improvement Topic to work on this month:

- Faith Lutheran has been great on short-term projects but lacks a strategic plan, goals for 5 years, 10 years, etc. Under Pastor Miseal's guidance, we did one long ago, time for a new one. Let's have a council retreat with the new pastor and do some long-term planning. At the Guild?

Next Council Meeting: September 25, 2025, 6:00 p.m.



Bishop Eaton Sends Letter to President Trump and Congress Addressing Situation in Gaza August 14, 2025

CHICAGO — ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton has issued a letter to President Donald Trump and members of Congress expressing support of “our Jewish-American and Israeli siblings who have suffered because of the Oct. 7 attacks,” yet voicing “profound horror regarding the catastrophe in Gaza and the wider crisis in the Holy Land.”

“The lives of 2.1 million Palestinians in Gaza depend in part on the decisions you will make in the coming weeks and months,” Eaton wrote.

“For the love of God, the sake of our shared humanity and the future of our Palestinian siblings of all faiths, your swift action may be the best and perhaps only way to stop the Israeli government from continuing its war and genocide in Gaza, and to plant seeds of peace and well-being for all in the Holy Land.”

Read the letter.



**Evangelical
Lutheran**
Church in America

New Faith and Civic Life Social Statement

By Lisa Therrell

The 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly approved a new social statement, “Faith and Civic Life:

Seeking the Well-being of All.” [Civic Life and Faith](#) Lutheran Social Statements help guide and frame our public discourse on many topics. See all ELCA [Social Statements](#) at this link. This 51 page social statement is very helpful in describing how to faithfully engage with society and the political process at all levels, as well as affirming our constitutional separation of church and state.

The statement frames our civic engagement through the words of the Lord’s Prayer, “Your will be done on earth as in heaven.” The statement goes on to describe *shalom* as being God’s purpose for the well-being of all creation. This means that our activity is accountable to God’s power and purpose.

The social statement discusses systemic sin, when our practices, institutions, and systems, including those of the church, are not used for the common good of all neighbors. God is revealed to us in both Law (God’s directives) and Gospel (God’s grace revealed in Christ). We live in the “now, but not yet” of God’s reign.

The Lutheran Confessions lead us to value government and cooperate when appropriate, but we stand ready to question and resist the misuse of political authority when necessary. Through the lens of God’s power and purpose, we value mutual self-determination as opposed to individualism. The first three words of our constitution, “we the people,” emphasizes our national intention towards mutual self-determination. The statement reminds us that our constitution forbids religious tests for U.S. officeholders, and the First Amendment is neutral towards religion, favoring religious freedom for every person in this country. “...the church and church-related organizations should work with

governmental and other civic agents to address the needs of society and creation, which the U.S. Constitution describes as “promoting the general welfare.” The ELCA calls for respectful engagement with others, distinguishing between fact and falsehoods, and limiting the role of money in unduly influencing political outcomes.

“The ELCA affirms healthy forms of patriotism. It opposes unhealthy, distorted forms of patriotism that divide a country and endanger it, including religious nationalism.” Christian nationalism subverts the constitutional sovereignty of “we the people” and crosses over into idolatry.

Christian nationalism is defined in the glossary as “a cultural framework that idealizes and advocates fusion of highly selected Christian beliefs with U.S. civic life. This nationalistic ideology holds, among other things, that the U.S. Constitution was divinely inspired, that Christianity should be a privileged religion in the United States, and that this nation holds a uniquely privileged status in God’s eyes. Proponents range from those who believe the U.S. legally should be declared a Christian nation (approximately 21% of the U.S. population) to those involved in more virulent strains that are openly racist, patriarchal, and antidemocratic.”

The social statement also acknowledges our U.S. government’s relationship with our unincorporated territories and the District of Columbia as being complex and problematic, stemming from a legacy of colonialism, exploitation, lack of self-determination, and racism. The ELCA also laments the past and continuing mistreatment of indigenous peoples within our borders.

This is a simplified overview of this meaty document, which is well worth a read.

Immigration / Race and Justice Group (as received from Alex Schmidt) *Summary, August 13th, 2025*

Present: Six of our nine members were able to be present. We also had some **Special Guests: Trudy and Terry Leverenz** who were with our I/RJG since the beginning in 2013.

Mutual Support: *Given all the turmoil and unsettledness of current events, ample time was taken for supporting each other, speaking of self-care, and sharing our concerns.*

1. Administration/Education:

- a. **Current balance** was reviewed. Account has been reconciled and all checks are accounted for. A grateful reminder that **we have distributed \$4,889** thus far for 2025. Donations have been **\$4,650** for this year.
- b. **WAISN Deportation Defense** convening/training will be Sept. 11, 12. Folks are encouraged to register and participate as much as possible. Several will be out of town.
- c. **NWIRP Annual Gathering**, September 17th at Icicle Ridge Winery.

2. Direct Support:

- a. **ESL Books** will be subsidized \$4 each for the upcoming classes.
- b. One of our members informed us that the Guatemalan single mom whom we assisted with rent last month has found employment in a local packing shed beginning in mid-August.
- c. Another indicated that another single mom whom we assisted previously has now a SSN, work permit, will soon begin school at WVC. She also invited the group to the monthly Rural Peoples' Voice (RPV) dinner meetings and learn more about securing volunteers for local community elected leadership positions as well as Community Based Organizing
- d. The group was informed that given the difficult situations and policies regarding our community members w/o status there has been a significant increase in WA state of mental health issues, domestic violence, and suicides especially among agricultural workers.
- e. **Updated Community Resource List** in Spanish and English has been provided by Jill and will be included in our Family Safety and Security packet.

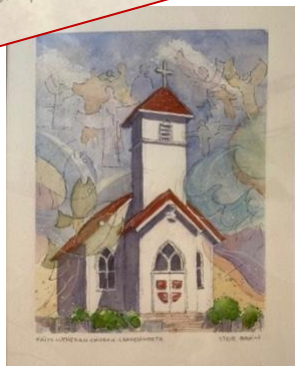
3. Advocacy: Nothing to report.

4. Next meetings: Tuesday, Sept. 16th, beginning in October, we'll be meeting on the 3rd Monday of each month: Oct. 20th, Nov. 17th, and Dec. 15th. Call Alex for details: 509.548.7012

A note of interest from Alex Schmidt.....

From time to time I am asked about ongoing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within our state and county. Below is a recent report from WA Immigration Solidarity Network (WAISN) covering the dates of June 16-30. It has much valuable information on not only the types of activities but also the "kinds" of individuals involved, plus a map and several accounts of what occurred—and more. Remember, these are not just numbers, but community members, families, and individuals whose lives have been traumatized. This is only for June 16-30. Click on the various categories to enlarge them: <https://www.facebook.com/WAISNorg/posts/pfbid02x9HZAMATDsypBdAn1g1i166cHe7pPsdDDbSttP2oVwm2zi6ETcsPsmV11J7si5YPI>

I'D LIKE TO GIVE THIS DRAWING TO THE CHURCH. IT WAS A JOY TO WORSHIP WITH YOU ALL IN THE BEAUTIFUL SANCTUARY PAINTED BY MY MENTOR.



Thank you, Steve!

Steve Broin is an artist living in Mérida, Yucatan. He is a friend of the Grunewald Guild as well as several members of Faith. He worshiped with us recently and subsequently gifted us with this wonderful drawing of our sanctuary highlighting our murals in the background. (Learn more about Steve's work at: <https://www.stevebroin.com/about>)

Special thanks to Pat and Rick Thirlby for their generous offer to provide framing for this amazing gift!



To Karl Kranz at the birth of first grandchild, Robin on August 18.



Some words of caution.....

A few months ago, scam text messages were received by some Faith Lutheran members, supposedly from Pastor Barbara Rossing asking to buy gift cards. IT WAS NOT FROM PASTOR ROSSING.

Now, this week, someone has scammed Lisa Therrell's email, asking you to accept a meeting invitation or invitation to a party. PLEASE DO NOT CLICK ON THE LINK. It is someone impersonating Lisa.

We want to trust our Faith Lutheran family, yes. But don't be too trusting of emails that may be "phishing."

No pastor will ever send a text message asking you to buy gift cards.

Faith Lutheran Church: 1982 – 2009

This is the fifth and last in a series of articles telling the history of Faith Lutheran Church, Leavenworth



1982 – 1984 The ordination and installation services for Pr. Gary Rothenberger took place at Grace Lutheran, Cashmere, on October 17, 1982. Pr. Rothenberger graduated from the University of South Dakota and Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. He served two years in the Army and has had practical experience in the building trade. He came to Faith from an interim pastorate in Moses Lake. His wife, Laura, was a Learning Disability teacher. They have a son, Andrew and daughter, Katherine who was born during the Cashmere/Leavenworth years.

In the fall of 1983, Adult Classes were held with Dr. Frederick (“Fritz”) Norstad’s “Slide Lectures on Awe and Wonder” as well as other individuals who led discussions and shared talents. Text Study with the Pastor was held at noon on Thursdays preceded by a sack lunch. A new cross was installed on the belfry and a beautiful new front door, designed by Rich Caemmerer and built by Reed Carlson.

In 1984, Faith separated from Grace in Cashmere when it voted to become an independent parish.

In these years, Faith members sold lefse at the town’s Autum Leaf Festival. Members spent many summer days / evenings making lefse to freeze in advance of the festival. The Lefse Booth was a very lively spot and a successful fund-raising effort. It was also a time when the American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW) participated in the “Community Cupboard” at the Methodist Church as a service to migrants and unemployed families. There was much gained in the ecumenical understanding and cooperation.

1985 – 1991 Carl Florea became pastor in 1985. Pr. Florea grew up in Ephrata so coming back to Washington seemed right. He graduated from Luther Seminary in MN and had assignments in Montana, Louisiana, Spokane and Deer Park before coming to Faith. He brought his wife Debbie and three young sons Nathan, Micah and Aaron. Pr. Florea also brought an understanding of social issues in America and the world and how he perceived the role of Christians in them. He led the congregation in the development of a sense of nurturing and caring which would flow into the community. Under his leadership, Faith became one of only two congregations at the time to be a Reconciling in Christ congregation – accepting all people regardless of their sexual orientation.

Pr. Florea was known for excellent preaching. Everyone was in awe of his ability to memorize the Gospel message each Sunday. After leaving FLC as pastor, but not as a member, Carl stayed in Leavenworth as the Director of MEND, which includes the Community Cupboard and S.H.A.R.E. and made it into a larger and more viable ministry until 2007 when he took a similar job on Bainbridge Island, WA.

1992 – 1997 Michael Staudinger became the next pastor. Music and youth were important to Pr. Staudinger. He hired Rhona Baron as Choir Director who led a wonderful music ministry for over eleven years. During his tenure, Pr. Staudinger married Lisa and they had a son while here and another after they left. There was a growth spurt during his years which brought more young people into the congregation. He enjoyed working with the youth and hiking to commune with nature. He was also instrumental in forming the Upper Wenatchee Valley Habitat for Humanity affiliate. In 1993, the church’s murals were designed by local artist Rich Caemmerer and painted by members of Faith Lutheran. In 1997, Pr. Staudinger accepted a call to another church.

1997 – 1999 Except for an interim pastor for six months, Faith was without a pastor for two years. Three pastors in the congregation - Prs. Carl Florea, Bill Lehmann and John Schramm – took turns leading the congregation without compensation. The funds saved were used to start the *Shalom Cross Cultural Ministries* (see information under the Pr. Alexander F. Schmidt).

1999 – 2009 Pastor Alexander F. Schmidt (Pr. Alex) became pastor in September 1999. At the age of five, Pr. Alex and his family (his father, mother and two older sisters) moved to the Upper Valley from Germany. Pr. Alex attended Osborn Elementary, Peshastin-Dryden Junior High and High School. During this time, he and his family were parishioners at Faith. Shortly before becoming pastor of Faith, Pr. Alex and Stacey Barnhill were married in the church. Pr. Alex has three adult children and Stacey has one daughter, Grace, who was eight when they moved here.

With the funds saved during the interim years of 1997-1999, *Shalom Cross-Cultural Ministries* was begun in 2001. At first the ministry focused on Anti-Racism training and then expanded to include a weekly Free Clinic (now under MEND), ESL and Citizenship Classes. Some of the other accomplishments during Pr. Alex's time have been the development of a new mission statement, a monthly book study in addition to the weekly book study and mid-week bible study groups, revitalization of the Sunday School program (from 3-4 children to as many as 30), revitalization of the high school youth program and updating of the Sanctuary and more. A Property Development Committee was created which was instrumental in purchasing the property next door for future church use (currently being rented), building a handicap ramp, remodeling the bathrooms to include handicap accessibility, adding a storage room and repainting the Fellowship Hall and Church.

This ends the history compiled for Faith Lutheran's 100th anniversary celebration in 2009. Pastor Alex retired in 2016, Pastor Nancy Gradwohl served 2018 – 2022 and Pastor Eva Jensen served 2023 - 2024. Pastor Aaron Musser begins serving in 2025.



Ordination "Watch Party"

Our Faith Lutheran community gathered on August 22 to witness via zoom the ordination of Aaron Musser in Milwaukee, WI

FROM THE NORTHWEST INTERMOUNTAIN SYNOD (NWIMS)....



NWIMS ANNOUNCES TRIP TO TANZANIAN COMPANION SYNOD UKD IN 2026

Have you ever wondered where the money we give to the Ulanga Kilombero Diocese (UKD) goes to support? Have you wanted to go see, first hand, why we support the hospital and school a half a world away, in Tanzania? Or where is Tanzania, for that matter? If this questions, or some similar have been ones you have asked yourself, now is the time to act. Our synod will be sending up to 20 travelers with two leaders to Tanzania in June 2026. I had the awesome experience to travel there, with my grandson in July 2025. It was truly an experience we will never forget. The people there are so filled with joy and we felt so welcomed. We are now part of their family as they are part of our family. It was wonderful to walk Bega Kwa Bega with them as they worshiped (3 plus hours long, but it went fast), worked and shopped. I invite you to prayerfully consider filling out an application and joining Cory English and me next summer on a visit to our brothers and sisters in the UKD.

Janet Boyer



Mission Statement

As disciples in Christ, we are called to incarnate the gracious, healing and reconciling presence of God through sacramental worship, congregational nurture and ministries of peace, mercy and justice for all Creation.

Vision Statement

Living in God's amazing grace, we envision Faith Lutheran Church as a diverse beacon of hope, healing and reconciliation in a broken world.

Faith Lutheran Church is a Reconciling In Christ (RIC) congregation

We provide a safe and healing environment where people of any race, sexual orientation, gender identity, social or economic status can be nourished in their journey of faith.



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Thanks to all who contributed articles and general interest information for this newsletter! Please forward contributions to Mary Steeber at mary.steeber@gmail.com by September 26 for the October issue.

