



Life of Faith

FEBRUARY 2026

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From our pastor...

“What do your two tattoos mean?” somebody asked me recently. So I told the story of the first one: I had just finished my senior year of college, after singing with the St. Olaf Choir for three years, and we were wrapping up a choir tour through Norway as the “cherry on top” of my undergrad experience. Our choir robes had an embroidered cross insignia on the right side of the chest—and the day before our last concert, I got that same symbol tattooed in the same spot, as a way of saying: I want to carry this experience with me wherever I go.

“And the second tattoo?” they asked.

“It doesn’t really have a story,” I said. “I just wanted something pretty, and I let the tattoo artist make something up.”

Since that conversation, I’ve been thinking about these tattoos. Even though one of them has a meaningful story and the other doesn’t, I’m delighted by both of them. In fact, there’s something even more whimsical about the second tattoo that makes me love it even more.

The image of God that I’m carrying with me this month is God as tattoo artist — a God who inscribes in us deeply meaningful moments, and also moments of “frivolous” beauty. A God who takes delight in the act of creating, and who calls it all good. When we’re tempted to rank one kind of story or one kind of life as more important than another, that isn’t how God thinks.

Fr. Gregory Boyle writes about this in his book *Tattoos on the Heart*. Boyle writes from his years of ministry with families and “homies” (gang-involved people) around Dolores Mission and Homeboy Industries. Again and again, he pushes back against what he calls the “lurking suspicion” that some people matter more than others. In Boyle’s telling, God’s posture toward us is not disgust but delight — and that delight isn’t reserved for the impressive, the productive, or the polished. It’s for all of God’s creation.

I offer this as an image of God to carry with you this month: a God who continues to etch all kinds of delight into your own heart. From the deeply meaningful to the frivolously whimsical.

Pr. Aaron

From our president...

This month I would like to celebrate the meek, the mild, the unseen prime movers at our church. Like Northern Lights dancing above the overcast, they are invisible to most, seen only now and then, but magnificent in their actions.

Did you ever wonder why there are always paper towels to dry your hands in the bathroom? How about the 'never empty' toilet paper rolls? The ready dishwasher, the pounds of Seattle's Best coffee filling the cupboard for use at Coffee Hour. New shrubs appear magically in the church yard, piles of yard debris quietly vanish without fanfare. Mysterious snowblower tracks are seen in the fresh snow when the assigned sidewalk clearer arrives for duty only to find the work is done.

Sometimes the clouds clear, the Northern Lights dance to delight us, the hidden heroes of Faith are seen! A squad of lumberjacks turning downed pine debris into useful chips, logs into firewood, a human angel seen filling the Little Pantry after dark.

Except for Lisa Therrell, I will name no names as I know loud thanks are not what you seek, Lisa was one of you whom I often found serving quietly and constantly.

Know that I appreciate each of your quiet but mighty efforts for Faith and the world.

Bless You

Karl Kranz
Faith Lutheran Council President



EVENTS

Click here for weekly and other February events

<https://mailchi.mp/faithleavenworth/happenings-20260124?e=08f44d7e8b>

Save the date....

Adult Forum February 1 after worship. Pastor Aaron visited Minneapolis with about 800 multifaith clergy last week and will share more about his experience.

Super Bowl Party - February 8 / 3:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall. Families and all others are welcome to come watch and cheer together. Bring friends! There will be food but if you have a favorite for the occasion, it will add to the festivity!

Hosted by Intergenerational Ministries Committee



MARDI GRAS Party - February 17, 5:30 - 7:30 pm.

This is the last day of Epiphany and the day before Ash Wednesday. All are invited to a Mardi Gras gathering to enjoy festive live entertainment and hearty feasting to "eat up the last of the fat" before the season of Lenten disciplines begin the next day. New Orleans style Gumbo provided with side dishes being potluck.

Please sign the sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall if you are planning to come so we can plan food quantity. Thank you!



Do you know anyone interested in providing an hour of childcare/Sunday school every Sunday for pay?

Contact Mara Merritt at maramerritt@yahoo.com

Church Council January 2026

Pastors report

- Pr. Aaron is working on worship planning well in advance of the season. He is making personal visits to shut ins and arranging coverage for a Feb 8th absence. He will be attending gatherings on the west side and is also working to rebuild the Upper Valley Pastor's group.

Treasurer's Report

- December was a phenomenal giving month with \$55,000 in donations. See Resolution #1 below addressing the need to transfer funds from low interest checking to CDs.
- The 2026 budget reviewed. After discussion, amendments include increased funds for youth and confirmation programs. The budget includes the expected increase in the cost of Quickbooks and reflects the plan to incrementally increase our giving to the Synod over the next 5 years to 10% annually. At that time, our total benevolences should approach 13-14% of our annual income. See Resolution #2
- There is now a budget category for donations designated for the new Pastor's office. \$1500 received, \$3,000 additional promised so far.

Property Committee

- Storage area reorganization has been accomplished, allowing more organized storage in the west storage area. Some children chairs can be surplussed. The large kid's furniture will remain. Stacey and Mara are improving the youth area.
- The windstorm damage at the Benton Street parsonage is mostly mitigated. The electrical service was damaged and has been repaired. The costs were lower than the deductible amount so an insurance claim was not made. Our renter was out of town and repairs were complete by the time he returned. Brush has been chipped, rounds turned into firewood and distributed to church and community members. There was discussion about the best use for the remaining logs, each of which are 8-10 feet long, 30 plus inches in diameter and about 2500 lbs. each.
- The Fellowship Hall overhead lighting renovation is the next planned project. Architectural discussions will start soon about the new Pr.'s office.

Earth Stewardship Committee

- There was a successful movie presentation with 21 viewers and another Earth Stewardship movie is planned for March 6 at 6:30 PM.
- Barbara Rossing and Jim Martin Schramm spoke about presenting a climate related resolution to our church and the Synod, see Resolution #3 below.
- This committee helped support 3 Kings Day, supplying funds for compostable plates and flatware and staff for the event.

Financial Stewardship Committee

- This newly formed group has met to begin the development of the committee and to do preliminary work on the budget. Members of the committee include: Pr Aaron, Greg Steeber, Don Haven, and Karl Kranz.

Endowment Committee

- Due to the untimely passing of Lisa Therrell, there is an open position on this committee, to be discussed at the annual meeting.

Nominating Committee

- The nominating committee has secured commitments from church council members willing to serve another term and have identified a candidate for the vacant position. John Schramm will be stepping down after decades of service, leaving an opening on the committee.

Old Business

- Dinners for 5 or 6, forming groups now, next step will be to turn the suggested groups over to the hosts for scheduling.

New Business

- Climate change resolution for Synod Council vote
- Mardi Gras planning

Resolution #1

Proposal to move church funds from the checking account to Certificates of Deposit (CDs). The treasurer shall move \$20,000 from checking to a 3 month term CD and \$20,000 from checking to a 7 month term CD, both at Cashmere Valley Bank. Accepted signatures - Greg Steeber, Karl Kranz, Kelly Hassinger.

Motion by Greg Steeber, 2nd by Greg Harris, vote- unanimous approval with quorum present.

Resolution #2

Shall the Council adopt the proposed 2026 Budget with above minor modifications for presentation to the congregation at the Annual Meeting?

Motion to approve by Heidi Krumland, 2nd by Greg Harris

Vote- unanimous approval by Council

Resolution #3

Shall this Council present the climate related resolution drawn up by Prs. Barbara Rossing and Jim Martin Schramm to the congregation at Faith Lutheran's Annual Meeting for adoption and forwarding to the NWIM Synod Council?

Motion to approve by Greg Steeber, 2nd by Greg Harris

Vote-Unanimous approval with quorum present

Next Meeting; February 26, 6:00 PM

*Thank you Faith members for participating
in Dia de los Reyes*

Karl Kranz, Barbara Rossing, Aaron Musser,
Judy Hewett-Harris, Greg Harris,
Karen Francis-White, Alex Schmidt,
Christine Morgan, David Morgan, Amelia
Morgan, Norma Gallegos, Leesa Broker, Zeke
Reister, Brisa Peacock



Earth Stewardship group



What can I do as an individual to help address Climate Change? This question was brought to the Earth Stewardship Group recently by a member of Faith. “I want to do something. I am even willing to make sacrifices if needed, but I just don’t know what actions I can take that will help make a difference”.

Climate Change is a huge global issue that seems overwhelming at times and is beyond the ability of any one of us to address. The good news is that although there are many challenges to overcome, we are not alone! And indeed, effective solutions to the global Climate Change crisis are best addressed by the collective actions of all of us, with the leadership of global organizations working together with governments around the world to enact policies, legislation and incentives that will turn the tide. Nevertheless, there are actions that each of us can take to effect the changes that are needed.

With this in mind, Faith’s Earth Stewardship Group will take on the challenge of identifying and highlighting answers to this question by presenting one or two actions we can take in each monthly newsletter going forward. In doing so, wherever possible, we will draw on the experience of people from our group, our Congregation and our community at large to describe real actions that can make real impacts.



Idea #1: Vote Like Your Planet Depends On It by Greg Harris

Vote for climate-conscious representatives in every election up and down the ballot. Write to your representatives and urge them to commit to setting science-based targets to reduce emissions, implement well thought-out plans for addressing climate change, and shift to a clean-energy, sustainable economy.

Idea #2: Sustainable Travel Ideas

by Heather Murphy

Like most people in Leavenworth, we are life long nature lovers. To be more attentive to the planet, last fall, Patrick and I decided to lower our Carbon Footprint for travel in Scotland and Ireland. Rather than renting a car, we shifted to trains, buses, foot ferries, and more walking. It was rather fun. We got to hear from locals about their areas on public transit. As an artist, I had more time to sketch. Instead of driving, we got to enjoy the scenery and stretch our legs. I felt energized upon arrival (compared to my getting cranky on long drives over narrow windy roads, maybe taking wrong turns along the way). Overall this was a cheaper mode of transport.

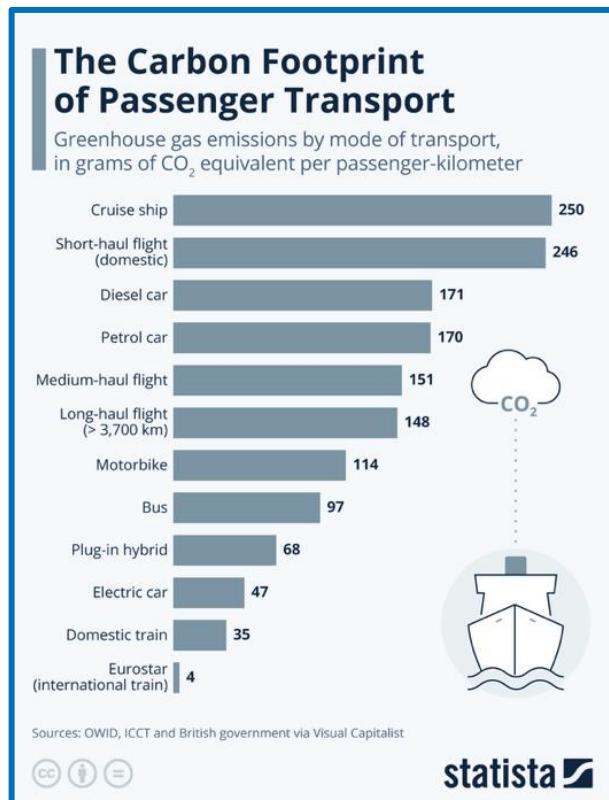
The trains in both Scotland and Ireland were efficient, some were electric. The local buses dropped us off at trailheads and pathways. We were foot passengers on ferries. Please see our train and bus photos (with Pat Murphy and birder friend Janet Millard).

When in more remote areas we hired a driver/taxi to access areas we couldn't walk to. This helped support the local economies and gave us interesting stories from local drivers.

We planned our trip with hiking and birding in mind. We selected local inns and B&Bs which were situated with walking paths outside their doors. Using local lodgings helps small villages' economies.



The Carbon Footprint graph shows the Greenhouse Gas Emissions for various forms of travel. Trains are the best on the environment. Short flights are the worst choices. Petroleum powered vehicles have a high impact.



Check out more Energy Saving Travel ideas:
<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/active-travel>

What can we do to help?

- Walk, bicycle, public transport, electric vehicles.
- Use local lodgings, drivers, and buy local food.

Immigration/Race Justice Group (I/RJG) *as submitted by Alex Schmidt*
Summary, January 19th, 2026 at a member's home

Present: Five of our seven members were able to attend. Guest: Pr. Aaron Musser

Mutual Support: The focus this month was not just our personal stories but also how are we coping with the current political situation.

1. Administration/Education:

1. Our current revised, updated, and correct account balance was reviewed. We also went over recent donations and expenditures.
2. Dia de los Reyes information table/display was creatively set up and hosted by two of our members. Only one person stopped by. Printed banner and flyers can be used another time.
3. City of Lwth grant facilitator will be needing our 2026 Lwth receipts which already are being saved.
4. Anti-Racism training; Alex met again with Pr. Perchlik at Cascade United Universalist Fellowship, (Wen.) and will meet with their Social Ministry committee on Feb. 3 regarding a workshop in March.
5. FLC 2025 Annual Report was read and briefly discussed.

2. Direct Support:

1. The mother and two children that I/RJG helped travel to Mexico to see their deported father will be returning Jan. 21st. We will visit her after she returns.
2. Driver's Ed Applications: One Cascade immigrant senior has been granted \$400 for Driver's Ed. Since that family has experienced a recent family death, we will check to see if they are in need of additional assistance.
3. One of our members indicated that Melia Singer (CSD teacher) has posted a calendar for our involvement in AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) tutoring seniors as they submit applications for scholarships. Volunteer forms:
<https://www.cascadesd.org/page/volunteer-program>
4. Currently our weekly English class has appx. 20 students and Citizenship has 4.

3. Advocacy:

1. Pr. Aaron shared with the group his upcoming trip Jan 21 to Minneapolis (Clergy organizing re: ICE occupation) and an Intersectional Ministries gathering of the ELCA in February.
2. We will have our Signal Group "test" sometime this week to check our response times for Community Rapid Response actions.

Next meetings: Third Monday of each month: Feb. 16th, and March 16th

The “Stewardship of Stuff”: What Does This Mean?

by Cindy Carroll

At a recent meeting of the FLC Altar Guild, there was conversation around how the duties of the Guild fit into the larger ministry of the church. *The Stewardship of Stuff* surfaced as a possible understanding of the role. Pastor Cindy Carroll digs deeper and writes here about what this might mean, or not....

On January 11, Faith Lutheran Church hosted a “get rid of stuff” Sunday. Items that had accumulated in the Fellowship Hall storage over the years—such as an artistically designed liturgical calendar, a small wrought iron lamp, painting easels, books, candlesticks and a stack of approximately 100 Lutheran World Relief cardboard coin banks adorned with cows, chickens, goats, and sheep—were displayed for anyone who wished to take them. Any items left unclaimed that Sunday were relocated elsewhere.

This event illustrates what “stewardship of stuff” can look like in a culture of abundance. When there is plenty of space to keep things that are not currently in use, these items can become invisible and eventually forgotten. It leads one to wonder why people rent storage units for belongings that become “invisible” and “forgotten.”

A key aspect of the “stewardship of stuff” is passing along things that once held value, giving others the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate them anew.

What Is Stewardship?

One definition of stewardship is the conscious practice of taking responsibility for something that does not solely belong to you, managing it so that it continues to serve life beyond your own use. Stewardship is more than just ownership or maintenance; it involves care guided by accountability, with the awareness that today’s actions shape what others will inherit. Stewardship means balancing use with preservation, power with humility, and authority with service—it is a philosophy and a way of life centered on fostering human unity.

Building on this, another perspective notes that stewardship is not passive. It is about actively engaging with the world and making things flourish, not just maintaining them.

How Does “Stuff” Foster Ministry and Unity?

The “stuff” used for ministry and sharing God’s love helps foster human unity and supports spiritual growth and our relationship with Jesus. The stewardship of such items is essential for ministries like music and worship, the property committee, the free little pantry, SAIL, quilt makers, altar guild, fellowship and coffee hours, and administration.

Understanding the Value of “Stuff”

Discussing “stuff” can be tricky. While the term is synonymous with “things,” it often implies items that are or have become unimportant or nonessentials – with no value in your world. When people refer to “just stuff,” they often mean things that are not memorable or important.

However, for those experiencing poverty or disasters, “stuff” can mean everything you have and need to survive. In contrast, most people reading this have an abundance of items that help keep life organized, comfortable, beautiful, or nostalgic. This reality shapes our approach to the “stewardship of stuff.”

The Hidden Work of Stewardship

Many worshippers may not realize the range of items required to create a meaningful worship experience. Consider, for example:

- Who sets out the paraments and selects their colors?
- Where are all these items stored and who keeps them clean?
- Who pours the communion wine into the cups and prepares the bread for Holy Eucharist and cleans up afterward?
- Who ensures the water in the Baptismal font is fresh?
- Who prepares bulletins and selects hymns?
- How does the church support its musicians and where are their instruments kept?
- Who replaces candles at the prayer table and dusts the window sills and cleans the floors?
- Who maintains the microphones and recording equipment?
- Who makes and stores the coffee and coffee pot and brings treats for fellowship?
- Who cleans the refrigerator and the bathrooms?
- Who arranges tables and chairs and stores them?
- Who creates the quilts for Lutheran World Relief, and where is their “stuff” kept?

Reflecting on the Label “Stewardship of Stuff”

This reflection is intended to prompt deeper thought: If we dismiss the tools of faith and ministry as “just stuff,” perhaps we need to reconsider our theological understanding of what these items mean. Some things are essential and necessary to our identity as Christians and Lutherans—followers of Jesus who seek spiritual growth and a more active discipleship in our communities and the world.

Is there a better word than “stuff” to describe the things that fulfill this mission?

The answer remains open for reflection.



Our Life of Faith...



Barbara Rossing and Jim Martin-Schramm present on Climate Change... "Not too Late"!



Storm clean-up continues..

Mardi Gras 2025!



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 February 23 for the March issue.