



LIFE OF FAITH

JULY 2026

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From our pastor....

I have never been to the Statue of Liberty. I have seen it from the shoreline, but I have never gotten close enough to read the inscriptions. There are two.

The first inscription is on the tablet that Lady Liberty holds in her hand. It reads: JULY IV, MDCCLXXVI. This year, our country commemorates the 250th anniversary of that date, when America's leaders declared independence from the British Empire.

The second inscription was added in 1903. On a plaque inside the pedestal are the words of Emma Lazarus' sonnet, "The New Colossus." Its most famous lines read: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

I have never been close enough to Lady Liberty to read those inscriptions for myself. But my ancestors have. They passed through Ellis Island on their journey into the Midwestern heartlands, committing their lives, and the lives of future generations, to the promise of a nation of immigrants and a democratic experiment in which all voices have value and all people are given agency in the work of governance.

This is a strange year to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the inception of our democracy. In such a year, the ELCA's social statement on faith and civic life helps us remain grounded in God's vision for an empowered people who uphold one another's dignity through our political processes. That is a vision not fully recognized in our current political moment.

It can feel as though Lady Liberty is far off in the distance, too far away for us to read the inscriptions. But maybe we can still hear them.

I realize that I tend to ground myself in music and song. This may be a peculiarity of mine, but I hope it is one that many of us share. A song for this year, this July, this 250th anniversary, might be "Huddled Masses" by Shaina Taub. A new edition of this ten-year-old song was recently released by a collective of Broadway artists: <https://youtu.be/dT2MCeZYwng?si=dIFSIXKGYi8-z1p3>. It is a powerful anthem for this country: a song of Lady Liberty herself that might guide us, even from a distance.

Yes, I realize that I am preaching to the choir in a lot of ways. But I think preaching to the choir is important and often undervalued. So I am going to keep preaching to the choir.

In Christ,
Pastor Aaron

From our president...



Hollyhocks! A simple word, an odd word- one of those things that you can reduce to nonsense in your mind if you repeat it enough, or wonder too hard from where it was derived. This week, to me, it is a word of natural wonder and joy.

Today at my neighbor's house surrounded by the remaining debris from the December storm, under the construction scaffolding reaching to the sky, is the most amazing stand of blooming Hollyhocks! Huge brilliant blooms

with indescribable shades of purple, lavender and violet shout from tall stalks reaching to the sky. Buds cluster above the blooms with the promise of new flowers yet to come. Nature is coloring outside the lines again. These beauties are not corralled in a garden bed. They have exploded across the border into the pathway, even leaping the forest floor to appear in the vegetable garden. Floral fantastic exuberance.

I am again reminded of the abundant beauty and complexity of Nature, grand and minute glories, bringing us moments of peace, fulfillment and most certainly, Hope.

Karl Kranz
Faith Council President.



All are invited
CHURCH PICNIC
JULY 5 AFTER CHURCH



Hamburgers, bratwurst and beverages will be provided

Please bring

- A salad or other side to share as you are able
- A chair or two
- Honoring 250 years of our immigrant nation, please bring a flag(s) that represents your immigrant ancestors



Faith Lutheran invites you to join in a one-time special offering to help create a dedicated pastor's office space as well as upgrade our electrical infrastructure required for insurance and a variety of other changes that will enhance our Fellowship Hall as a warm, welcoming space for ministry, fellowship, care and hospitality.

PROJECT DETAILS

- A dedicated pastor's office for care, conversation, prayer and support.
- A large deck with seating and access to Fellowship Hall for gathering and welcome.
- An expanded entry to create a more gracious entrance.
- New windows and overhead lighting to brighten the space for fellowship, service and ministry.

Estimated cost of the building project is \$115,485. Paint and electrical upgrades are estimated at \$22,500. We are grateful for the significant additional gift of volunteer labor from Faith members and friends.

The congregation has approved the project and authorized construction to begin as soon as possible. Faith has savings and investment funds available to begin the work and your generosity will help preserve financial reserves for the future.

WAYS TO GIVE

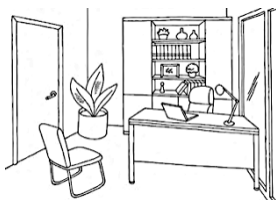
Please prayerfully consider a one-time gift on *Raise the Roof with Faith Sunday*. Your gift will help make this shared vision a reality and strengthen Faith's mission and ministry for years to come. Thank you for helping Raise the Roof with Faith, Hope and Love.

- **Bring your gift to worship** on Sunday, July 26
- **Give online** through the "Giving" tab at www.faithleavenworth.org
- **Use the Tithely App**
- **Mail your gift** to Faith Lutheran Church, PO Box 418, Leavenworth, WA 98826.



THANK YOU FOR HELPING RAISE THE ROOF WITH FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE!

SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING June 7, 2026



Meeting called to order by Council President Karl Kranz.

- Prayer by Pastor Aaron Musser.
- Karl discussed the recent information about our loss of insurance due to wildfire risk and the effect that our aging infrastructure has on new insurance.
- Pat Thirlby presented new office and entry plans. Questions answered and comments received.
- Greg Steeber presented the cost estimates for the project including the necessary upgrades to the electrical systems. Questions answered and comments received.
- Vote to approve the design plans passed unanimously.
- Vote to approve the spending of up to \$140,000 for the project passed unanimously.
- Don Haven discussed the *Raise the Roof with Faith* drive that will happen on July 26 to help replenish reserves.
- Closing prayer by Pastor Aaron.
- Meeting adjourned.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING June

Pastors Report

- Upper Valley Indivisible asked Pastor Aaron if Faith Lutheran wanted to be listed as a sponsor of the next talk on Christian Nationalism in Wenatchee on July 6. He said he would ask the council. The council unanimously said NO. This needs to be about community concern/collaboration rather than church against church. Pastor Debbie Sperry from First United Methodist has signed on and will be the point person in Wenatchee to invite more pastors to join in. Pastor Aaron's role remains as educator. There is also a national movement called 'Faith In Us' regarding the dangers of Christian Nationalism. Pastor Aaron still intends to complete his letter on the subject but needs more collaboration from other faith leaders in the Valley.
- The need for a new printer remains but for now needs to order more toner!
- A youth group from Billings, MT has asked to sleep overnight in the fellowship hall on July 23. Council agreed.
- Pastor Aaron will be gone July 8 – July 23, traveling to Palestine for a wedding and then to St. Olaf for a music/arts conference. Safe travels!!!

Treasurer's Report

- Contributions this past month were \$10,000. Monthly budget is \$13,800. YTD contributions are \$54,500. Annual budget is \$68,750.
- Expenses: no surprises this last month.
- Council approved renewing our Prost sponsorship for Oktoberfest.

Property Committee

- Narthex improvements - pine board from the downed tree for counter top is near completion
- Pastor's office plans are ready for permitting so construction will start soon
- Seeking new church insurance since our old policy was cancelled.

- A bid has been received for electrical upgrades required for fire insurance. This includes the installation of panic bars for exit doors from sanctuary and fellowship Hall required also in the City Code.

Earth Stewardship Committee

- Sponsored the showing of *The Icicle Calls Us Back* as well as an adult forum led by a LINK Transit representative
- It has been noted that the solar panels at Icicle River Middle School are now in disrepair. Faith was instrumental in their installation many years ago. How can we help restore?
- Looking into the possibility of installing an EV charger in the back of the church as part of the electrical upgrade.

Financial Stewardship Committee

- *Raise the Roof with Faith* Sunday is July 26. A special basket will be passed around for contributions for the new pastor's office; congregation approved \$140,000. After the service, there will be dessert & coffee next door.

Old Business

- Volunteers to serve as ambassadors are needed on Aug 8 & 9 at trail heads (8am-2pm) and river put-ins (11am-5pm). Talk to Greg S. if interested and able. Training is available via video.
- Church Picnic will be Sunday, July 5. Need two grills for hamburgers and bratwurst. Greg and/or Karl will purchase from Costco. Ask folks to bring salads. Beverages provided and BYOB. Bring flags to show our immigrant histories.

New Business

- Concern expressed about new blessing at end of service. No one-handed salutes! Pastor A will address this concern in the service.
- The lot next door to the little Benton St. house is coming up for sale for \$220,000. Entertain possibility?

Next Meeting: July 23 at Ellen's house (since the youth group will be in the fellowship hall)



Did you know

At the beginning of the school year, Cascade School District (CSD) developed a goal to reduce waste by switching to bulk cereal, bulk yogurt and a focus on giving up sporks.

Roughly 75,000+ single-use plastic items were saved in one school year, thousands of pounds of waste avoided over time and there was less trash hauling, plastic production and a healthier environment for students' future.



Every single day, the following were kept out of the landfill.....

- 75 plastic bowls
- 45+ yogurt containers
- 300 disposable sporks

Thank you students and staff of CSD for this impactful change!

DO YOU WANT TO BE A RECREATION AMBASSADOR?

The first opportunity to be a Recreation Ambassador is August 8 & 9, 2026. FLC will be volunteering at three different trailheads and/or river access locations. We need six people on both Saturday and Sunday who will divide into three groups of two and will help welcome and inform visitors to their location. The time commitment at the trailheads is from 8 am to 2 pm and at the river locations is from 11 am to 5 pm. We will be given t-shirts, caps and safety vests as well as a shade tent, 2 way radios and miscellaneous supplies. It is required to watch a training video before the shifts.

The Council voted to send the money that we make from this volunteer activity to the Tumani School in Tanzania to help them build a solar powered kitchen and water purification system.

If you are interested in volunteering as an Ambassador, please contact Greg Steeber. We hope that we will again serve as Oktoberfest Ambassadors this Fall so there will be additional opportunities.

AMBASSADOR DUTIES

- Guest Services: Welcoming guests to the area, answering area-specific and regional questions, and providing assistance to visitors.
- Outreach Patrols: An ongoing presence can deter unwanted behavior, so “making the rounds” at locations to interact with visitors is key.
- Reporting: Recreation Ambassadors will be required to gather information on the number of contacts they make, incidents of notable activity, and any other data useful to assess future needs.

Christian Nationalism Teach-in



Pastor Aaron will be a featured speaker at another teach-in on Christian nationalism:

Monday, July 6, 6:00 p.m. First United Methodist Church (FUMC), Wenatchee

He will be joined by Rev. Debbie Sperry of FUMC and other faith leaders.

Pastor Aaron will exam Christian Nationalism — what it teaches, how it’s spreading and why it matters for our civic life. Drawing on extensive research and his work within the faith community, he will explain how Christian Nationalism departs from mainstream Christian theology and why most Christian scholars and church leaders reject its interpretation of scripture.

This forum isn’t about criticizing anyone’s faith; it’s about understanding a political movement that is actively shaping public policy and decision making. The forum will explore how Christian Nationalism (and other labels like Christian statesmanship) challenges core civic values like separation of church and state, fair representation, checks and balances, freedom of religion and individual freedoms. When our community is informed, we’re better equipped to protect a welcoming, free and inclusive future for all.

Hosted by NCW Channel Z, First United Methodist Church Wenatchee, and Confluence Indivisible.

HANDBELLS AT FAITH LUTHERAN! by Tina Rieman



Yes, It's True

Thanks to the generosity of Barbara Rossing, Faith Lutheran has acquired the use of two octaves of English Handbells. Did you know there are an estimated 3000 to 5000 handbell choirs in the United States, many of them owned by churches? Pastor Aaron has indicated that he would be happy to have Barbara's handbells used here, possibly in a Christmas or Easter program and/or in an occasional worship service.

And This is Where You Come In

It is the hope there might be enough interest in the bells to form a small group to talk about when and how the bells might be used.

Someone Had to Take Charge

As a new attendee at Faith Lutheran, I learned about the bells from Barbara's husband Lauren, who knew I had been a member of the local Marlin Handbell Ringers for 45 years. Together with my husband Dick, we were passionate bell ringers. Somehow the question came up – did I want to be involved? The answer was a resounding yes!

So that's the handbell story up to now. I can only add that the tradition of bells in worship is a long and fascinating story, one that could help inspire us to use Barbara's bells here at Faith Lutheran.

Stay Tuned *(pun intended)*

You will be hearing more as plans fall into place. Please consider how you might be involved. It only takes one person to ring 1 or 2 bells. Two to ring 3 or 4 bells. Three to ring 5 or 6 bells. From there on we're only limited by the number of ringers and the time we have in our busy lives! And whatever we choose to do, it will not be a time-consuming project. Promise!

Questions now? Please contact me, Tina Rieman: 509 669-6086. Otherwise we'll touch base in August.



Immigration/Race Justice Group (I/RJG) as submitted by Alex Schmidt

Summary, June 15th, 2026

Present: Nine members were present with three guests, one of whom is the director of a local Folklorico Dance Studio

Mutual Support: *We toasted with margaritas Pr. Aaron's excellent presentation on "Christian Nationalism" to a full house at the Fire Hall.. We then turned our attention to mutual support.*

1. Administration/Education:

- a. Our current, accurate, and updated budget account was reviewed. The balance which includes recent checks to the CSD for their 6th grade retreat (\$2,300), \$221 for 3 CSD student fees, and \$350 for May 31st Adult Forum pupusas. The I/RJG was fortunate to receive generous donations from the Faith Lutheran Endowment Fund (\$1,000!), a sustaining I/RJG member, as well as a reimbursement from the Leavenworth City Grant for our support for the 6th grade retreat.
- b. **Recreation Ambassadors:** July 11,12. Here are the volunteers so far:
 - i. **Saturday, July 11th, (six needed for each day):** All 6 slots are filled!
 - ii. **Sunday, July 12th: we need 4 more.** Several members will continue checking with friends and groups.
- c. **NWIRP Immigrant Rights Project:**
 - i. The group reviewed the special Immigrant/Refugee Sunday service (May 31st) and the NWIRP Adult Forum. The service was excellent and appx. 40 individuals attended. The forum which was well received.
 - ii. **NWIRP** is preparing a **Webinar**, on how to keep your employees safe during an ICE raid, for businesses in the greater Wenatchee Valley. Date still pending.

2. Direct Support:

- a. The **director** of the dance studio spoke at length of the importance of Dance Folklorico for Cascade School District students which connects them with their culture, builds relationships, and encourages emotional wellbeing.
- b. She presented a number of opportunities for our possible support. For our July meeting, she and a member will present detailed options which we may be able to support.
- c. **English and Citizenship Classes** will begin again in October. Unfortunately, of the four students who began their citizenship classes, for various reasons, none finished the required materials.

3. Advocacy:

Information from WAISN was presented describing upcoming trainings and in person regional gatherings.

NEXT MEETINGS JULY 20TH, 6 p.m. and AUGUST 10TH. For details, contact Alex: 509.548.7012

Life of Faith...



Ordinary times....

The immense root ball from fallen tree is
GONE!



New cabinets built by Greg Harris are installed
with temporary top. The board cut from the
fallen tree will be installed for counter top when
fully dried.

Claire Seaman, director of the film
The Icicle Calls us Back, answers
questions after the Earth
Stewardship sponsored Movie Night
on June 26.





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 July 27 for the August issue.

