

**ATTENDANCE: Nov 24 – Nov 30**

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Sunday Worship .....             | 75  |
| Sunday School .....              | 25  |
| Mid-Week Studies                 |     |
| • Wed. Morning Bible Class ..... | 15  |
| • Thanksgiving Eve Vespers.....  | TBA |

**BUDGET Status: As of Nov 25**

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Weekly Budget Receipts.....                             | \$3,735.00   |
| Total Budget Receipts to date: .....                    | \$290,373.24 |
| Actual Budget Expenses: .....                           | \$230,654.67 |
| Over/ (Short) Anticipated: .....                        | \$59,718.57  |
| Ratio of Receipts to Expenses: .....                    | 125.9%       |
| Nov 24 Noisy Offering (\$47.10) . . Current total ..... | \$856.87     |

Noisy Offering recipients: *KARM, Paradox Teen Ctr, Free Medical Clinic , Faith Quilters, FLC LWM, Venezuela Lutheran Mission* in equal shares.

**OUR WORK FOR THE LORD – This Sunday**

|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>December 1</b>        |                   |
| <b>10:30am</b>           |                   |
| Elder of the Week .....  | Darrell Bultman   |
| Communion Usher(s) ..... | Margaret Woody    |
| A-V Technician.....      | Bret & Debra Cole |
| Lay Reader.....          | John Aperans      |
| Offering Reader.....     | Charlene Smith    |
| Offering Recorder.....   | Emma Clark        |

---

Thanks to everyone who came out to decorate the sanctuary for the season. It looks great.

---

**The Elders will meet this Monday, Dec 2, at 6:00pm.**

---

**FLC Voters Meeting will be next Sunday, Dec 8, immediately after the worship service.** The Voters Meeting will also be available on Zoom using the same link as the worship service. An agenda will be published before the meeting.

---

**Advent Suppers will start at 5:15pm in the Fellowship Hall. (We will sing carols from 5:00pm till suppertime).**

- **Dec 4** = Wed Bible Class has Beef Stew with sides and desserts
  - **Dec 11** = Elders serving Buddy's Bar-B-Q
  - **Dec 18** = BOD menu TBD
- 

**Advent Mid-Week Evening Prayer will be at 6:15pm in the Nave.** Our lessons will consider the Sainly Songs recorded by Luke: Zechariah's *Benedictus*, Mary's *Magnificat*, and the *Song of Simeon*.

---

**The Oak Ridge Christmas Parade** begins at 6:00pm Dec 14. Our church lawn is a great place to see the parade and parking is convenient.

---

We will be singing **Christmas carols for our shut-ins** starting at 1:00pm on Saturday Dec 14. Meet at church to organize carpools.

---

**The Women's Prayer Group** will meet on Dec 16 at 10:00am and will feature a brunch. All women of Faith are invited to attend and enjoy the food and fellowship.

---

The **Wednesday evening Bible Class** is studying the book *Seculosity* by David Zahl. Everyone is welcome. Wednesdays at 5:45pm in the Fellowship Hall.

---

**Midnight Mass at Wartburg** The Hymn, *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* (LSB 359) reminds us that Christ was born "when half-spent was the night." Appropriately, then join us at St. Paul's in Wartburg at 11:30pm Christmas Eve to celebrate this event with the Divine Service and holy communion.

---

**High quality FLC logo polo shirts and jackets** are available to purchase. If you are interested, check the narthex bulletin board or see Ken Kaiser

---

# December 2024

✠ Holy Communion is celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month and feast days.

**Church Office Hours:**  
 Mon & Tues.....9:30am – Noon  
 Thurs & Fri .....9:30am - Noon

Sermons can be found at [facebook.com/faithoakridge](https://facebook.com/faithoakridge)  
 Recordings are available through the church office

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday  | Wednesday  | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday                        |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Advent 1</b> <b>1</b><br>9:00 – Sunday School<br>10:30 – Divine Service ✠                        | <b>2</b><br>6:00pm – Elders Meet                          | <b>3</b><br>10:00am – Staff Meeting<br>10:00am – Men’s Prayer grp<br>5:45pm – Adult Information  | <b>4</b><br>10:00am – Bible Class<br>5:00pm – Carol Sing<br>5:15pm – Advent Dinner<br>6:15 – <b>Advent Vespers</b><br>7:00pm – Choir practice  | <b>5</b><br>10:00am – Zoom Bible Class<br>7:00pm – Zoom Bible Class  | <b>6</b><br>Pastor Lefort’s Day Off               | <b>7</b>                        |
| <b>Advent 2</b> <b>8</b><br>9:00 – Sunday School<br>10:30 – Matins<br>11:30 – <b>Voters Meeting</b> | <b>9</b>  | <b>10</b><br>10:00am – Staff Meeting<br>5:45pm – Adult Information                               | <b>11</b><br>10:00am – Bible Class<br>5:00pm – Carol Sing<br>5:15pm – Advent Dinner<br>6:15 – <b>Advent Vespers</b><br>7:00pm – Choir practice | <b>12</b><br>10:00am – Zoom Bible Class<br>7:00pm – Zoom Bible Class | <b>13</b><br>Pastor Lefort’s Day Off              | <b>14</b>                       |
| <b>Advent 3</b> <b>15</b><br>9:00 – Sunday School<br>10:30 – Divine Service ✠                       | <b>16</b><br>10:00am – <b>Women’s Prayer group brunch</b> | <b>17</b><br>10:00am – Staff Meeting<br>10:00am – Men’s Prayer grp<br>5:45pm – Adult Information | <b>18</b><br>10:00am – Bible Class<br>5:00pm – Carol Sing<br>5:15pm – Advent Dinner<br>6:15 – <b>Advent Vespers</b><br>7:00pm – Choir practice | <b>19</b><br>10:00am – Zoom Bible Class<br>7:00pm – Zoom Bible Class | <b>20</b><br>Pastor Lefort’s Day Off              | <b>21</b>                       |
| <b>Advent 4</b> <b>22</b><br>9:00 – Sunday School<br>10:30 – Matins                                 | <b>23</b>   | <b>Christmas Eve</b> <b>24</b><br>7:00pm – Festival of the Nativity of Our Lord                  | <b>Christmas</b> <b>25</b><br>10:30am – Festival of the Nativity of Our Lord   | <b>St. Stephen</b> <b>26</b><br>Church office closed                 | <b>St. John</b> <b>27</b><br>Church office closed | <b>Holy Innocents</b> <b>28</b> |



## BIRTHDAYS

- Dec 1 - Patti Cates
- Dec 2 - Mary Johnson
- Dec 4 - Shirley Kaiser
- Dec 7 - Alan Kerekes
- Dec 8 - Bret Cole
- Dec 10 - Bob Fellows
- Dec 14 - Mollie Krehnke
- Dec 15 - LB Crowley
- Dec 16 - Shirley Lee
- Dec 16 - Polli Gehrs
- Dec 19 - Ron Wilson
- Dec 19 - Ruben Popa
- Dec 29 - Linda Debner



- ♥ Dec 3 - John and Nancy Kuehl (53 yrs)
- ♥ Dec 19 - Jim and Alane Evers (60 yrs)
- ♥ Dec 24 - David and Mollie Krehnke (32 yrs)

### Agnus Day



# Faith in Action

## December 2024

### The Synoptic Gospels

“Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

*Matthew 13:52*

If you ever read the Gospels closely, you might notice that they often hit the same stories about Jesus, but they tell them just a little bit differently. The resurrection, for example, appears in all four Gospels, but every Gospel writer presents the resurrection in different ways: emphasizing different events, and even omitting certain details, all in order to say something about Jesus. Or, the question of “where does Jesus come from?”: every Gospel answers it differently. Matthew shows us Joseph’s inner conflict as he deals with Mary’s virgin birth. In Luke, we see the prophecies and fulfillments of the births of John and Jesus. John paints a picture of the Son begotten of the Father from eternity. And finally, Mark doesn’t even give us a origin story for Jesus—John appears, preaching in the desert, and then Jesus’ ministry begins!

These differences shouldn’t bother us. Each of the Gospels reports the words and works of Jesus faithfully. When we see differences between them, they’re just telling the same events in a different way. Jesus said and did what he said and did, and the Gospels make no errors in their reporting of those things! But when they told the story, they did it differently for their various times and audiences.

But isn’t history just that—history? Well, no. Think of it this way. Say you’re telling a story about a hike you went on. You tell the story to two different people: one person is into photography, another is a leader in a local Scouting troop. When talking to the photographer, you might talk about the time of day, the lighting, the best spots to take a photo. But when you talk to the scout leader, you might talk instead about what it was like getting to the trailhead, the difficulty of the terrain, and how good the views were. There’s definitely some overlap, but you have different goals with each person. The Gospels work the same way. All of them center on one thing: The death and resurrection of Jesus, with a ministry beforehand that helps us to understand this event. The differences in how the Gospel writers report on his earthly ministry help us to understand what they wanted to emphasize to us about his crucifixion and resurrection. The above quote from Matthew is about the Gospel writers: they, having been trained for the kingdom of heaven, bring out treasure new and old from Jesus’ ministry for the hearers of the Gospel!

Of the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the ‘Synoptic Gospels.’ ‘Synoptic’ means “taking the same point of view.” Think ‘synthetic’ (when you put different

*Message from Pastor, continued*

materials together) and ‘optic’ (like eyes). These three Gospels are called ‘the synoptics’ because they have a lot of overlap; they tell a lot of the same stories in similar, but slightly different ways. John is different, so today, we’ll just talk about the three synoptic Gospels.

Matthew was likely the first one to be written down (other pastors may say differently; that’s okay! But this is what I teach). It’s a very Jewish Gospel: St. Matthew was one of Jesus’ 12 disciples, and for him, it’s all about Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. He cites prophecies. He presents Jesus as a new Israel in some places, and as a new Moses in others. All of this, combined with his lack of interest in the Gentile mission, suggests that it was written before many Gentiles had come into the Church. Matthew organizes his Gospel around five discourses, or sermons, from Jesus; and the neat way that he’s organized everything makes it seem like an early Church catechism. Matthew’s Gospel was for Jewish Christians, teaching them to find the basics of the faith in both the Old Testament and the life of Jesus, and teaching them how to understand the Old Testament in light of its fulfillment in Christ. In a way, Matthew understood that he was writing a new chapter in the Jewish story, that put all of the Jewish story that came before in a new perspective.

Mark came next. St. Mark was a disciple of Peter’s, and he puts together in his Gospel what he learned from 1) Matthew’s Gospel, 2) Peter, and 3) his own encounters with Jesus. His Gospel was definitely written after the Gentile mission went into full swing. If you know where to look, you’ll find that Mark’s Gospel centers on bringing people, especially Gentiles and including the unclean, from the four corners of the earth to Jesus. He is both deeply theological and deeply personal. You’ll find all of the deep themes of John here in Mark as well, but where John gives us Jesus’ long, difficult-to-understand passages about his place in the world of the Father, Mark takes Matthew’s stories and gives them a vividness that make Jesus seem more human than any other Gospel, and also emphasizes things from each story that help us to see how they point to the Church’s sacramental life.

Last of the synoptics was Luke. St. Luke was a disciple of St. Paul, and he presents an “orderly account” (1:3) that brings together 1) Matthew and 2) Mark’s Gospels, as well as what he’s learned from 3) Paul and 4) interviews with St. Mary. This Gospel is the first of a two-parter (a double album?) which is why you’ll sometimes see people refer to Luke and Acts as if they were one book, Luke-Acts. Think of it as discs 1 (Luke) and 2 (Acts) of Led Zeppelin’s *Physical Graffiti*. Luke-Acts was completed during (or soon after) Paul’s house arrest in Rome from 58-60, making it the last of the synoptics to be written.

Each Gospel offers something different, and so each year our lectionary (the assigned readings for church each Sunday) takes us through one of the synoptic Gospels at a time. This year the readings will take us through Luke. We’ll talk more about Luke next month. In the meantime, as we prepare for Christmas, we will be going through a very important element of Luke this Advent as part of our midweek services: the canticles, or songs, of Luke’s Gospel.

In the Peace ✝ of Christ,  
Pastor Lefort

**OUR WORK FOR THE LORD – Dec 2024**

|   |
|---|
| <b>December 8 – Advent 2</b>            |
| <b>10:30am</b>                          |
| Elder of the Week..... Merry Ann Hansen |
| Communion Elder..... N/A                |
| Communion Usher..... N/A                |
| A-V Technician..... Ruben Popa          |
| Lay Reader..... Shirley Levenhagen      |
| Offering Reader..... Charlene Smith     |
| Offering Recorder..... Emma Clark       |

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <b>December 15 – Advent 3</b>       |
| <b>10:30am</b>                      |
| Elder of the Week..... John Canik   |
| Communion Elder..... John Canik     |
| Communion Usher..... Luke Bertels   |
| A-V Technician..... Ken Kaiser      |
| Lay Reader..... Carol Noe           |
| Offering Reader..... Charlene Smith |
| Offering Recorder..... Emma Clark   |

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <b>December 22 – Advent 4</b>       |
| <b>10:30am</b>                      |
| Elder of the Week..... Jane Miniard |
| Communion Elder..... N/A            |
| Communion Usher..... N/A            |
| A-V Technician..... Ruben Popa      |
| Lay Reader..... Merry Ann Hansen    |
| Offering Reader..... Charlene Smith |
| Offering Recorder..... Emma Clark   |

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <b>December 29 – Christmas 1</b>    |
| <b>10:30am</b>                      |
| Elder of the Week..... Alan Kerekes |
| Communion Elder..... Alan Kerekes   |
| Communion Usher..... Sharon Downes  |
| A-V Technician..... Ruben Popa      |
| Lay Reader..... Margaret Woody      |
| Offering Reader..... Charlene Smith |
| Offering Recorder..... Emma Clark   |

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| <b>December 24 – Christmas Eve</b>    |
| <b>10:30am</b>                        |
| Elder of the Week..... N/A            |
| Communion Elder..... N/A              |
| Communion Usher..... N/A              |
| A-V Technician..... Bret & Debra Cole |

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| <b>December 25 – Christmas Day</b> |
| <b>10:30am</b>                     |
| Elder of the Day..... Curt Goff    |
| Communion Elder..... Curt Goff     |
| Communion Usher..... John Aperans  |
| A-V Technician..... Ken Kaiser     |

|                                       |
|---------------------------------------|
| <b>December 31 – New Year’s Eve</b>   |
| <b>7:00pm</b>                         |
| A-V Technician..... Bret & Debra Cole |

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |
|  |