Welcome to

Faith Lutheran Church

**Sunday, December 18, 2016**

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**4515 Dobie Road**

**Okemos, MI 48864**

**517-349-0620**

**Pastor Ellen Schoepf**

**prellen@faithlutheranokemos.org**

**Righteousness Fulfilled**

There are still places where teenage girls and women are tortured or murdered for actual or suspected infidelity, which is seen as an insult to family honor. Likewise, Mary’s pregnancy posed danger to her and shame to Joseph. As a righteous man faithful to God’s law, Joseph “planned to dismiss her quietly” (Matt. 1:19). It was the lenient alternative to stoning.

But then Joseph, like his namesake ancestor, had a dream. An angel’s words opened up righteousness to an unthinkably wide and loving sweep: “Do not be afraid” (Matt. 1:20). Welcome Mary home as your wife. The child is to be called Jesus (“The Lord saves”). Emmanuel, God-with-us. And he will save his people from their sins. Righteousness combined with unexpected action: at the beginning, as Jesus was being knit together in Mary’s womb, Joseph embraced both mother and child as family.

How much sin and violence comes from trying to avoid shame? Shame walls us off and tells us we don’t belong. Even if we don’t face honor killing, we know what it is to feel alone, despised, helpless. Jesus saves by coming to be with us not where we wish we were, but exactly where we don’t want to be. We are no longer alone but loved. Shame’s power is destroyed.

Jesus persistently gathered to himself the shunned and condemned, endangered and afraid. Crucified outside city walls, he was one with them from the beginning to the end. He took their part—our part—by the very way he was conceived and born.

Righteousness that is cherished yet open to dreams and messengers from God may look like it is overturned when it is really being fulfilled. Saved in the womb by a mother and earthly father who accepted God’s unlikely call to a different kind of righteousness, Jesus’ own living out of this righteousness eventually sent him to the cross, where death itself was destroyed.

**Sunday, December 18, 2016**

4 Advent

**Introduction to the day**

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew’s account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, “O come, O come, Emmanuel,” a beloved hymn based on ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday in Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

*If hearing assistance is needed, please ask an usher for a personal PA receiver.*

*The ushers also have large print copies of today’s worship folder available.*

*If it will be difficult for you to stand along with the congregation during*

*any part of the worship service, please feel free to remain seated.*

*There is a nursery available during the worship service for those who wish*

*to use it. It is located at the end of the hall beyond the coat racks.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*We cordially greet all who have come to worship today.*

*Please register your attendance and join us in fellowship after the service.*

Prayer Requests

Temple Talk Nate Nelson

PRELUDE

*The pre-service music signals the beginning of the worship service. Silence during the*

*pre-service music enables worshipers to prepare for worship through quiet meditation.*

“Carol of the Bells” Faith Bells (Leontovych)

**Gathering**

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

*The assembly stands*

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,

who comes to wake us from sleep,

who leads us into the light of grace.

**Amen.**

Let us prepare the way of the Lord

by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

God of all time,

**we confess that we have not prepared**

**for your merciful reign among us.**

**We ignore our neighbors in need**

**and fail in the labor of justice and peace.**

**In your mercy forgive us.**

**Grant us wisdom to welcome your light**

**and to seek the things that will endure**

**until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.**

Comfort, O comfort my people,

says your God.

In ☩ Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven

and all things are made new.

Rejoice in this good news!

**Amen.**

**Gathering Song*#8 Presbyterian Hymnal (pub. 1990)***



**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Kyrie**

**CANDLE LIGHTING LITANY**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

In your Son, Emmanuel,

You have shown us your light

And saved us from the power of sin.

Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Increase our longing for your presence,

That at the celebration of your Son’s birth

His Spirit might dwell anew in our midst,

For he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

**Amen.**

We light the fourth Advent candle, as we sing verses 1-4 of Hymn #253 “He Came Down”



**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Word**

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.*

**First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16**

*An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking refuge in Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign of Immanuel that is the only source of true safety: God is with us!*

A reading from Isaiah.

10The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, 11Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. 12But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. 13Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 14Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. 15He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7**

*Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter’s opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God’s gospel. The gospel’s content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul’s mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.*

A reading from Romans.

1Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,  
  7To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:   
  Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The word of the Lord**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation**

*****The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.*

**Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25**

*Matthew’s story of Jesus’ birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means “God saves.”*

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

18Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:  
 23“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
  and they shall name him Emmanuel,”  
which means, “God is with us.”24When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Children’s message**

**Sermon**

*The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.*

**Hymn of the Day**

***O Little Town of Bethlehem ELW #279***

*Please use the hymnal in your seat.*

**Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

As we anticipate the fullness of the presence of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need.

*Prayers of intercession are prayed.*

*To each petition, the assembly responds:*

let us pray.

**Have mercy, O God.**

*The presiding minister concludes the*

*prayers, and the assembly responds:*

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.

**Amen.**

**Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Meal**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**Offering**

Chancel choir O Come, Lord Jesus, Come (Angerman)

*The assembly stands*

**Offering Prayer**

Savior of the nations, come.

Make your home here in us.

Feed us with your love,

that our faith shine ever new

and our lives reveal your light.

**Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Preface**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,

through whom you will also make all things new

in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, Holy, Holy**



**Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope,

we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.

When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.

At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love

and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

**Amen**

**Lord’s Prayer**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit,

let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those**

**who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial**

**and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours,**

**now and forever. Amen.**

**Invitation to Communion**

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.

Share in the feast of salvation.

*The assembly is seated*

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

WE WELCOME ALL GUESTS worshiping with us today and invite all baptized Christians to come to the Lord’s table. Children who have not yet received First Communion instruction are invited to come forward with their families to receive a blessing. There will be one chalice (cup) of wine, as well trays of individual cups. In the center of each tray, there are a few glasses filled with white grape juice for those who prefer juice rather than wine.

**Communion Song**

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**congregational sonG**

***The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came ELW #265***

*Please use the hymnal in your seat.*

**congregational sonG**

***Come Now, O Prince of Peace ELW #247***

*Please use the hymnal in your seat.*

**Prayer after Communion**

God for whom we wait,

you come to us

in the broken bread and the cup we share.

Make us ready always

to welcome Christ into our hearts,

and send us forth to be your people in the world,

announcing your coming among us

in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Sending**

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**Blessing**

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you

and scatter the darkness from before your path.

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,

bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**Sending Song**

***Fling Wide the Door ELW #259***

*Please use the hymnal in your seat.*

**Dismissal**

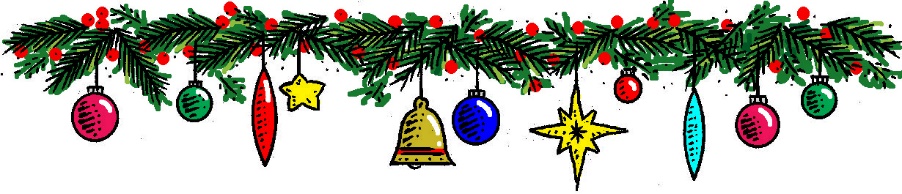
Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

“Lift Up Your Heads” arr. Robert Powell

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Amid this sometimes crazy season, quiet my heart, Lord. Help me find Christmas peace in you.

**Winter Break Schedule**

There are No Adult or Children Sunday School Classes scheduled for December 18, 25 and January 1st. Children’s Classes will resume at 9:00am on Sunday, January 8th.

**Christmas Eve Services**

4:00 p.m. Family/Candlelight Service

10:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

Pastor Ellen Schoepf prellen@faithlutheranokemos.org

Secretary Katie Love klove@faithlutheranokemos.org

Director of Christian Education Melinda Schultz

Director of Music Debra Borton-McDonough

Organist/Pianist Bruce Williams

December 11, 2016 Attendance : 109

Serving Faith December 18

Acolyte Clayton Wenzel

Altar Care Karen Whitmeyer, Heidi Bowers & Brielle Bowers

Communion Assistants Clayton Wenzel

Mike Eschelbach

Heidi Nussdorfer

Greeters Doug & Linda Hirt

Lay Assistants Mike Eschelbach

Readers Heidi Nussdorfer

Ushers Ken & Karen Whitmyer and Family

Nursery Connie Nelson

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

FaithFamily&Friends3

**December 18th, 2016**

*Log onto Faith’s website www.faithlutheranokemos.org 24/7 for updates*

**DEADLINES**

Sunday worship folder announcements⎯Tuesday of each week

Submit to Katie at klove@faithlutheranokemos.org

***January Faith Family News newsletter*⎯**

**Please submit by Monday December 19th**

Submit to Katie at klove@faithlutheranokemos.org

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Please lift up in prayer this week:

🕆 Members—Max Ambs, Lowell Barricklow, Ellen Milne, Harry Nawrock

and the Barry family.

🕆 Friends and family—

Pat Belonga, Chris Cotter, Lil Jennings, Terrie Becker, Allie, Heather,

Al, Lilly, Sai Eshwar Lingamgunta, Jenn Leitch, Jeanne and Leonard, Tom

Brown, Susan Heft, Pat Hillberg & Family, Dennis Cobler, John Joseph

Lanzetta and Bethany Robison. Please pray for Erika Engel, her brother David

and mother Edwina Engel upon the death of Erika’s brother Jerry.

🕆 Our mission partner congregation⎯Lansing Redeemer Lutheran Church

🕆 Those in military service⎯Jon Schoepf, Lani Yearicks,

Melody and Adam Wright and Joe Galvin.

🕆 Samaritas children who seek adoption— Giovanni, Jessica, LeeAnn and

Valerie. Pray for each to be adopted and for Jesus to be their lifelong friend.

**NORTH/WEST LOWER MICHIGAN SYNOD PRAYER PARTNER**

As Jesus calls us to be one, even as he and the Father are one, please include

Pastor Kiersten Priddy and the congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church of Battle Creek, Michigan in your prayers of intercession this week.

**ALTAR FLOWER DEDICATIONS**

The flowers on the altar are given to the glory of God by…

Vase 1: Lil Jennings in memory of Dick Jennings and celebration of what would have been his 90th birthday.

Vase 2: Steinke/Ballegeer family in memory of Beth's sister Christine Boeger.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

**Weekly Offering 12/11/16**  Year-to-date as of 09/30/2016

December 11th reporting will be included Income $219,713.88

in the December 25th Bulletin. Expenses 228,998.75

Net Income (-9284.87)

THIS WEEK’S CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

**Invite your friends and neighbors to Christmas at Faith! Pick up postcards in the narthex.**

10:00 a.m. Worship

11:30 a.m. Listening Post in Library

6:00 p.m. Loaves & Fishes

Monday, December 19th

**January Newsletter Deadline**

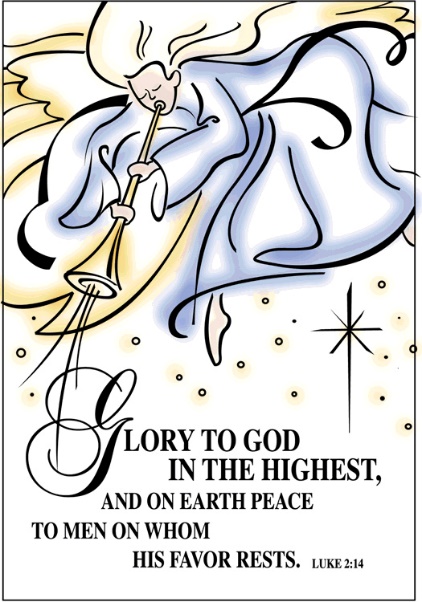
6:30 p.m. Council Members and spouses to Pastor Ellen’s home for dinner & meeting.

Tuesday, December 20th

Worship folder announcements deadline

12:00 p.m. Lectionary study in Pastor Ellen’s office

6:30 p.m. Evangelism and Outreach Meeting



Wednesday, December 21st

7:30 a.m. Men’s Study

9:30 a.m. Quilting and Samaritas

7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir

Thursday, December 22nd

Friday, December 23rd

Saturday, December 24th

Noon-1pm Caroling at Medi Lodge Campus

2815 Northwind Dr, East Lansing, MI 48823

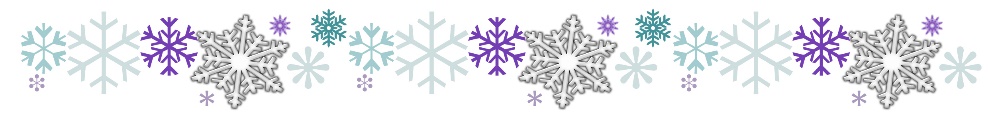
**Christmas Eve Services**

**4:00pm: Family Candlelight Service**

**10:00pm: Candlelight Service**

Sunday, December 25th

10:00 am Worship: Lessons & Carols



As Winter Weather approaches please note that if OKEMOS SCHOOLS are Cancelled the Church office will be closed. If Events or Services are cancelled it will be announced on Facebook and the website and emailed, if possible.



The church offices will be closed on Monday, December 26th and Monday, January 2nd.

 Just a friendly reminder that January Newsletter information is due tomorrow, Monday, December 19th. Pictures of past events would be wonderful! Email to [klove@faithlutheranokemos.org](mailto:klove@faithlutheranokemos.org).

Thanks!! Katie

UPCOMING MEETINGS & STUDIES

**Annual Meeting- Sunday, January 22nd**

This year’s annual meeting will take place Sunday, January 22nd following the worship service. Committee annual reports are due to the church office by Monday, January 9th. RIC will be hosting a lunch following the meeting.

**CAREGIVERS SUPPORT Group Meeting**

Join us at 11:30am for a light lunch and discussion. All are Welcome!

Thursday, January 12th: Angie Cantlon form CareLinc Medical Equipment will speak on how the Durable Medical Equipment World works. There is more offered then just a wheelchair and a walker!

Thursday, February 9th : Michelle Traill – Crosser from Caring Transitions will be speaking about downsizing.

Thursday, March 9th: Mike Harrison, Life & Business Coach. From Spectator to Spectacular: Living the Life YOU Want.

**Book Study: Shalom Church**

This book study is being rescheduled to the Spring.

**Thursday Evening Worship Service**

The Worship Committee has decided to experiment by adding a second worship service to our weekly schedule.  This service will NOT take place on Sundays.  It WILL take place on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM.  This service will be more intimate, less formal, and more contemplative.  The first gathering of this alternative worship service take place on Thursday evening, January 12.  Join us if you are able.  Please speak to Pastor Ellen if you have any questions.

**Adult Sunday School**

Class will resume on Sunday, February 5th at 9:00am in the library. We will be studying Walter Brueggemann’s book “Embracing the Prophets”

Walter, arguable America’s leading Old Testament scholar and theologian, takes us on a wild ride through the poetic prophecy of Hebrew Scripture, identifying cultural contexts, putting a framework to Israel’s history, and, most significantly -and at times challengingly! - drawing connections between Israel’s sociological, economic and spiritual status and that of America today.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & STUDIES

**Water In Tanzania** - Tula Ngasala is one of our members and she is working on her Environmental Engineering degree at MSU.  During this time, she has also been working on developing water projects in her home country of Tanzania.  Working with Engineers Without Borders and WEES (another non-profit organization), she was able to construct a much needed well at her father's home congregation in Tanzania.  This well serves people in the surrounding community.  Now she is developing and working on a water project in another part of her home country.  On **Sunday, January 8**, during the morning worship service, Tula will be sharing information about these water projects and the way her faith informs her work.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

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**Help Decorate the Sharing Tree**

**Not with Ornaments and Tinsel....**

**.....but with baby items!!!**

Visit the Sharing Tree in the coffee fellowship area and select a paper “ornament” or two. On each ornament a specific layette item is indicated.  Take the ornament home, so it can be a reminder of what to purchase. *(Only new baby items, please.)*  Bring your unwrapped, layette items and tuck them into the Sharing Tree branches.  Your gifts will be given to Shared Pregnancy of Lansing, an organization that offers emotional and spiritual support to new moms.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED CONT.

**GREEN TEAM TIP OF THE MONTH**

Green Team tips for the holiday season:

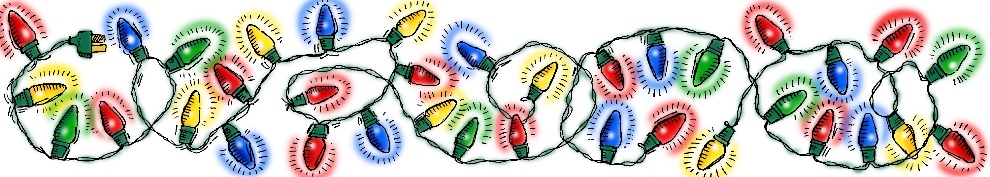
Recycle or reuse your wrapping paper & cardboard boxes

Switch older Christmas lights to LED's

Look for environmentally-friendly and sustainable Christmas gifts

Take your own mug when going to your favorite coffee shop

Recycle your live trees- look for free township drop off locations

Buy our Faith reusable grocery bags to use for all your Christmas shopping!

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**THANK YOU!!**Thank you to all who participated with the Bake Sale, either by preparing items or by purchasing items. We made $155.05 for the Youth Group.

**Thrivent Action Teams are needed!!!**  
Please apply to help your youth group in a one-time fundraiser, service activity or educational event that can be completed within 90 days. Here are some suggestions for your Thrivent Action Teams: March Madness Meal and Quiche Meal, to name a few. Use this link to get started: <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/> Please talk to Melinda if you have any questions.

**\*\*\*\*RESCHEDULED\*\*\* FOR October 20th, 2017 – 6:00-9:00pm**

The Youth, with the assistance of the Music Program, will be hosting a fun evening which will include entertainment, dinner, and multiple opportunities to win some great items. Please join us for this special event. Tickets will go on sale in September.

**DONATIONS NEEDED** – While you are out shopping and preparing for this Christmas season, please keep our auction in your mind. Ask your vendors and those people who you get services from for a donation to our auction. It only takes a quick ask, and many are happy to oblige as it also brings in new customers. Things you can ask for or may have access to: Sports tickets, haircuts, massages, dry cleaners, vacation home, artwork, jewelry, oil changes, pet grooming, restaurant gift cards, sports memorabilia, landscaping, house cleaning, etc.

**Important Dates in January and February**4th - Trinity & Confirmation Resumes, 6:00-8:00pm

4th - 1st Communion Classes begin, 6:00-8:00pm

8th - Youth Group Outing, TBD

13th-14th Confirmation Lock-in, 6:00pm – 10:00am

**15th -** **NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**

22nd - Confirmation Review, 1:00-4:00pm

29th - Children sing during service.

**Feb. 5th - 1st Communion Sunday**

**19th - NO SUNDAY SCHOOL**

24th-26th Youth Weekend, 5:00pm – 3:00pm

28th - Shrove Supper, 5:30-7:00pm

**READ THROUGH THE BIBLE IN 2017**

Do you need a New Year’s resolution that will grow your faith and knowledge of the Bible? **Join us as we read through the entire Bible in 2017**. Readings for the entire month will be posted in the Newsletter. Daily readings will be printed in the worship bulletin and on the website calendar.

**PICK UP a reading guide in the narthex**





To make disciples for Jesus Christ. . .

. . .we **Gather** in faith for worship, prayer,

study and fellowship

. . .we **Equip** the people of God with a faith

that works in real life

. . .we **Serve** the world in the name of Jesus Christ