

NOVEMBER 2023

# Faith Family News

PASTOR'S CORNER

By Pastor Bruce Thorsen

*Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving and the courts with praise; give thanks and bless God's holy name. Psalm 100:4 NRSVU*

This year, we are combining Stewardship and Thanksgiving Sunday. In the end, it is all about being thankful for all that God has given us to take care of. The Psalmist tells us to enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving and praise. We can first think of entering our sanctuary with thanksgiving and praise. But it does not end there. This is an attitude that we are called to have when we enter and when we are sent.

God has asked us to take care of ourselves, others, and all of creation. You see everything belongs to God and we are the caretakers. On November 19 we are being called to remember all that we have to be thankful for and what we are committing to use here at Faith through our time, talent, and treasure. Since they are all God's, we need to ask God about how we should commit the gifts that we have been given for use here at Faith.

On November 5, we will hear from members on how they are thankful for Faith Lutheran Church; what Faith means to them; and how it has enriched their lives as a child of God.

On November 12, we will be hearing from three groups about how we reach out to the community in thanksgiving. Part of our thankfulness is sharing the gifts with others. This part of fulfilling the two great commandments to love God and neighbor.

November 19 is where we, as individuals within this beloved community of Faith Lutheran Church in Okemos, will have an opportunity to ask God how God wants us to use the gifts we have been given here at Faith and through Faith to others. When you sign the pledge/commitment card, it is a promise between you and God. Sometimes our gifts of time, talent, and treasure change throughout the year and we and God understand that.

So often, we have thought about stewardship as the church just asking for money again. I would ask you to think about stewardship as how God asks us to use the gifts that God has given us for supporting the work of the kingdom. As Christians, we are called to believe that we do not own anything, but instead that God does.

Enter in this time of commitment with thanksgiving and praise. The Psalmist also tells us to make a joyful noise in thanksgiving and praise. Set aside November 19 as a time that we enter worship with an attitude of thanksgiving for all the time, talent, and treasure that God has entrusted to us.

Pastor Bruce – the office of Transitional Pastor of Faith/Okemos is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.





*"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?" —Psalm 22:1*

Dear Church,

As Lutherans, we are accustomed to holding tension between two truths. Thus the ELCA denounces the egregious acts of Hamas, acts that have led to unspeakable loss of life and hope. At the same time the ELCA denounces the indiscriminate retaliation of Israel against the Palestinian people, both Christian and Muslim.

For the past week we have borne witness to the horrors of the escalating crisis between Israel and Hamas. We also watch a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza as Israel blocks food, water, fuel and medical supplies and as airstrikes continue to cause unbearable civilian casualties ahead of a just-announced ground assault. We see Israelis and families around the world in the agonizing wait for word about the fate of loved ones killed or taken hostage by Hamas. We are in anguish, grieving and praying for all people who are living in trauma, fear and uncertainty.

Among us are Palestinian Lutherans who are fearful for their families, their communities and their homeland. In our communities we have Jewish and Muslim neighbors, who are also facing the horrors of this crisis and its impact on their loved ones.

It is difficult to find words that suffice in the complexity of this moment, and in the web of relationships that bind us together, as church, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land and our interreligious partners. Yet God has called us to be a people who stand with others amid suffering.

We must also call a thing a thing. The power exerted against all Palestinian people — through the occupation, the expansion of settlements and the escalating violence — must be called out as a root cause of what we are witnessing. We are committed to our long-standing accompaniment of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

The God who liberates us calls us to be a liberating witness. May it be so.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton  
Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

# STEWARDSHIP

The Mystery Stewardship Person has some additional thoughts ...

Here we are, in November, and we are about to fill out our Pledge Cards and Time & Talent offerings for 2024. This old member remembers doing this every year ... sometimes with prayer and careful thought. In other years, we'd lost the forms and then remembered that pledges were due "this morning." Could we give a little more than last year? Maybe we had to cut back a little because of job issues, the cost of living, or the old car was on its last legs. Hopefully, someone else could cover for us. Maybe later in the year we could bounce back. Maybe even skip pledging this year altogether?

Oh yes, the pledges. If the Financial Secretary thought all the pledges that were likely to show up were in, the totals came to those trying to build a budget. The total pledges never came close to what we needed. But, the new budget was blessed by Council, balanced by a generous estimate of "loose offerings," "growth," and a rarely listed "budget gap." At the annual congregational meeting in February, now two months into a new year, someone would ask about the "gap." Often, it was Buck Weaver, a wonderful man, whose wife was in the Dobie Road facility and passed away last year I think – he would ask a very, very simple question. There was scrambling, and head scratching would go on trying to answer his question. Wow, how we miss Buck! And, if we were lucky, the Time & Talent forms may have gotten to the Committee Chairs by tax time, or never! Somehow, we still had ushers, readers, choir members, quilters, and Church School teachers! We would ask for people to staff prayer chains, volunteers for the Loaves & Fishes homeless shelter, Council candidates, and sometimes lawn mowers. The Head Usher still had to ask friends and neighbors to help each Sunday.

Can this year be a little different? Yep! Hopefully, lots of pledges are prayed about, many Time & Talent forms that have more checkmarks and greater resolve to mean what we promise. Yep! We can do this. You know Pastor Bruce has just settled in here, is learning our history and present, assumes the best about us as a congregation, hopes to lead an exciting, growing, healthy, and financially sound place in Meridian Township, just like Bishop Satterlee promised him! It is pretty simple, if each of us does our duties as a God-serving member. Think about THAT!

Please don't lose your forms. It's almost time to send them in.

**Pledge Cards** were sent via the U.S. Postal Service last week. Please let Connie know if you haven't received yours.

Completed cards should be brought to Stewardship Sunday on November 19<sup>th</sup>. If you are not able to be in worship on November 19<sup>th</sup>, feel free to drop your card in the Offering basket at any Service after that.

You can also mail your card to:

Faith Lutheran Church  
c/o Financial Secretary  
4515 Dobie Road  
Okemos, MI 48864

Feel free to contact Connie at the office if you have any questions – 517.349.0620.

## CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATES

In September, we asked for updates to the church directory. Now, we are asking that **by January 7**, you submit a picture of your household/family. Our goal will be to have it completed by the annual meeting and have some hard copies available as well as accessing it online. Thanks!

## WANTED ... USHERS

A few of your duties would be to pass out bulletins and greet people, fill out the usher's report, direct people for communion, and collect the Offering. All are welcome from high school on up. Training will be provided (TBA). Please contact Brenda Kopf – call or text 517-927-1800 or email [biktchr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:biktchr@sbcglobal.net).

# YOUTH NEWS

## CHARGE

Trip to Great Wolf Lodge -- November 10-12

Thank you so much for providing scholarships for the youth attending CHARGE next month!! We still have the cost of the hotel to cover, and I am going to change the cards to smaller amounts, so you do not feel that you need to donate so much. **We appreciate any amount you can help with.**

The cards are on the poster board in the Narthex. If you want to help, please take the card from the poster board in the Narthex, attach the money to it, and put it in the offering with CHARGE on the check. Please see Pastor or Pam with any questions.

## Confirmation

- November 5: 11:30 am–1:30 pm / Class with Mentors
  - Who is Martin Luther?
  - Activity with Pam
  - Confession and Forgiveness
- November 19 – 11:30 am – 1:30 pm Class / Advent and Christmas
  - Activity with Pam
- December 3 - 11:30 am – 1:30 pm / Class with Mentors
  - Meal/Activity craft and visit to Nursing Home
  - If you cannot attend, please let Pastor Bruce know, and we will schedule a make up time.

Fall Cleanup for the outside property will be Sunday, Nov. 5, after service, and will include cake refreshments. Please join us if you can. Bring your gloves, shovels, hedge trimmers, tree branch pruners, and rakes. An extra wheelbarrow would be great, too. The Rain Date will be Sunday, Nov. 12. Any questions, see Bob Nelson or Rick Beaderstadt. Thank you.

## A Sustainable Micro Pantry

As part of our Faith Church community, the Micro Pantry committee assures you that we are mindful of all the good works happening at Faith Lutheran Church ... and that each of these endeavors requires financial support. With this in mind, the pantry committee created a budget to serve as a spending guideline.

Ten items have been eliminated from our product list and will no longer be purchased. We anticipate reducing our spending by \$500 monthly. Rest assured that the list of 28 items being distributed daily is still amazing!

We began tracking donated products in July, and we know that the Okemos community is very generous. In 3 months, we have collected over 650 pounds of food. A great visual of that is to imagine over 650 cans of food! The pantries would not be possible without the dedicated volunteers who fill the pantries daily.

Many, many thanks to these individuals. Very importantly, thank you, for your continued support of the Micro Pantries. We are grateful for donated products and financial contributions.



The Caring Committee has partnered with Bring Smiles to Seniors card program. Bring Smiles to Seniors supports over 700 facilities nationwide (over 80 in Michigan) with Thinking of You cards. Handmade cards are received throughout the year, and many need a positive caring sentence or two written inside. This is a quick way to make someone's day and all it costs is time (but they would happily take your monetary

support). Pick up a packet of cards located in the basket near the steps. Once completed, please return to the "Done" basket. Please see information in the narthex about this wonderful program that brings joy to many of our elderly!

Thank you! *From the Caring Committee*

## **A New Challenge**

**A wonderful opportunity has presented itself to our Micro-Pantry. A generous, anonymous, donor has offered to match any donations up to \$1000 during November to the Micro Pantry Fund. If you would like to meet this challenge to help keep our Micro Pantries Food Budget funded, please make your check to Faith Lutheran with "Micro Pantry Challenge" on the Memo line.**

## **A Call to Arms**

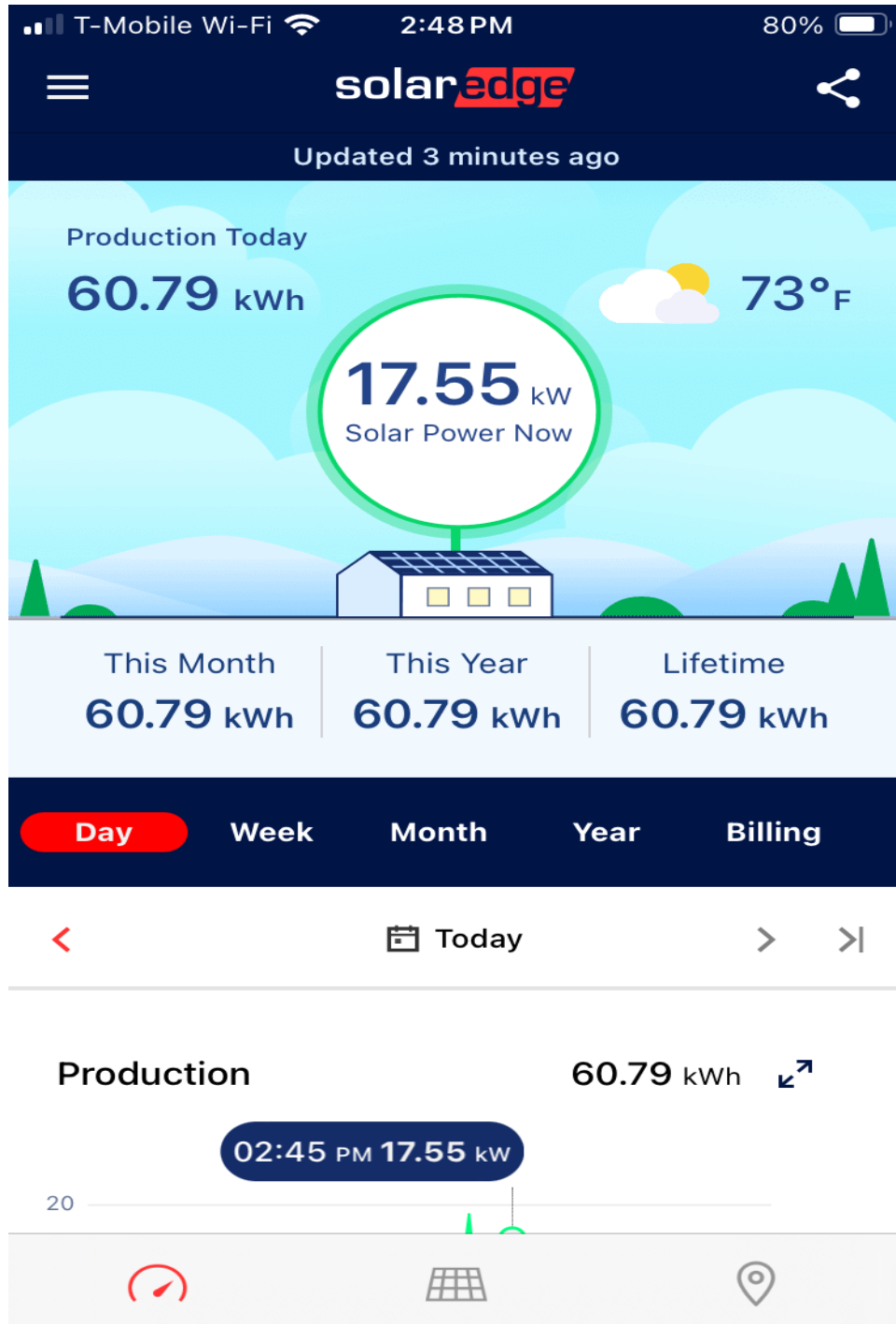
The Micro-Pantry Box Brigade will be experiencing at least one opening coming up in late November and would like to have a trainee ready to step in. Find out how easy it is.

As a member of the elite Box Brigade, you simply fill a couple of boxes with pantry products from the cupboards in the church foyer. On the assigned shift either Midday or Early Evening, the Brigadier replenishes each of our two micro-pantries with the products. This entire project takes about 45 minutes total, once per week. Personalized training is provided. For further information, please contact Cecelia Kramer at 517-349-3297.



# Solar Panels

The Green Team is proud to announce the solar panels are finally operational! We are working with the solar panel company, and our Tech department, to come up with a monitor to display the usage in the Narthex. We will have more information as it becomes available.



# PRAYER list

God our champion, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Draw near to all who suffer especially: Gene Miller, Joyce Thorsen, Alice Hendrickson, Chip Pittman, Trudy Cook, Harry Nawrock, Lois Neves, Mara Lusic, Charlotte Rasmussen, Dale Halverson, Helen Brinkman, Bob Shorman, Joy Costar, Marilyn Hogan, Todd Barricklow, Eric and Karen Casler, Kenley and Allyson, and Andy Brandt. Be their rest and comfort. **Amen**

## Musical Murder Mystery

The Membership Development Committee is planning for a night at the theater on December 2nd. We will be going to the Williamston Theater to see Murder for Two—a comic, musical murder mystery. Be watching for that sign up, as well.

**Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex.**

**Everyone is  
Invited**

**Wednesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>  
at FLC, 11:45 - 1:00  
Hosted by Cecelia Kramer**



This is an opportunity for fellowship and food. If you would like to host a month, please let Bob Nelson or Tammy Heilman know. Hosting would involve providing sandwiches, drinks, set up, and clean up. For anyone attending, please feel free to bring a salad or dessert. You can also bring your own lunch if you wish. We hope you can join us. Come and go as you need to during lunch.