

FOCUS ON FAITH



From the Pastor's Study

2017 - welcome! May the year 2017 evolve full of God's blessings. It is for sure going to be the year we will all remember as the "500. Anniversary of the Reformation". A number of great events are being planned in the Bay Area to help us commemorate and celebrate this truly amazing anniversary together. And 2017 also offers each of us the perfect occasion to reflect our own Lutheran identity.

I just finished reading a book on Martin Luther hot off the press by German author Heinz Schilling as I decided to focus my personal study time during this year on the reflection on Luther's life and theology. I feel I can use a refresher, but also as the world around us is changing at an incredible pace and many of our ways of being the church need reformation, God's Word and our Lutheran reading of it may still be the strongest tools we have as we go forward - just like 500 years ago.

The Reformation goes on. 1531 was but one step. Each generation has to own God's promises and call anew. And now it is up to us to listen to God's Word and find out, what it means for us to be his people in this ever changing time and place. Who knows what 2017 will bring. However, we are baptised.

God's love for us is unconditional and irrevocable and has been made visible in our baptism. Martin Luther drove that certainty home again and again. Our baptism is where God will start with us each new day of the coming year. And each new day he will equip us for the journey: "I (God) will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." (Ezekiel 36:26)

God's blessings for 2017! May we grow with God in faith and love.

PastorThomas



Inside this issue

From the Parish Nurse.....	2
M & M's at Faith.....	3
Services at Faith	3
Good Food Box.....	4
Birthdays	4
Upcoming Events.....	5
What Does That Mean?.....	6
East West Outreach.....	7
Little Luther's	7
The Last Word	8



A very Merry Christmas to All
and a Happy, Healthy 2017!

From the Parish Nurse

The Impact of Spirituality on Heart Health

What is the first thing you think of when someone says that you should exercise to keep your heart healthy? Probably physical exercise. Would you ever think that spiritual exercise would be good for a healthy heart? The following will discuss both ways to keep our hearts healthy.

Emotions affect our health. There is a great deal of information in the media and in medical journals about the proper care of our hearts with exercise, diet, weight control, smoking cessation, and medication. There are also hundreds of references in the Bible to the heart in both the Old and New Testaments. If the heart is 'broken' physically or spiritually, an individual can become depressed, withdrawn, or even die.

It is not known how spirituality is related to our health, but body, mind, and spirit seem to be connected. Research has proven that there is a definite relationship between one's emotional state and the physical health of the heart. It has been shown that aspects of life such as positive beliefs, comfort and strength gained from religion, meditation and prayer can contribute to healing and a sense of well-being. These things will not cure an illness but they may help us to feel better, prevent more health problems and help us to cope better with illness, stress, or death.

One definition of spirituality suggests it is the way we find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in our lives. There are many ways to do this: through religion, art, music or a connection with nature; also through our values and principles. A psychiatrist suggests that "love is the basic need of human nature.... without it life is disrupted emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically."



Spirituality and gratitude are associated with well-being. One research study suggests that a thankful outlook (gratitude) could lead to better outcomes in heart failure patients. Patients with higher gratitude scores were associated with better moods, higher sleep quality, belief in ability to deal with situations, and less inflammation. Inflammation often worsens heart failure. If an individual was in a depressive state, the gratitude scores were much lower.

In today's high tech world many people have lost their personal connection with family, friends and neighbours. Fear, mistrust, and time constraints cause people to distance themselves from others and forget the 'lonely' hearts in our society. Giving and receiving forgiveness is good medicine.

We need to learn to be more Christ-like and demonstrate kindness and respect towards all people. We need to mend broken relationships and offer forgiveness towards those for whom we have had bad feelings. We need to use the talents that God has given us to serve others. When we do this our health is affected in a positive way. In order to love others we must first love and accept ourselves – our faults and our weaknesses. When we release our anger and negativity, we will strengthen our hearts and our spirits will become energized and full of joy. Spiritual people make healthier choices.



In the Bible God gives us many guidelines on the value of spiritual exercise. The following are just a couple of verses that describe how we can heal our hearts.

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. Instead be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you." Ephesian 4:31-32. "Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony." Colossians 3:14

In conclusion, there is a positive relationship between religious and spiritual practices and better health outcomes. Physical guidelines to improve heart health include exercises, eating well, managing stress effectively and not smoking. Spiritual exercises are part of giving our heart a total workout. These include receiving God's love, loving and serving others as well as God, and forgiveness.

As a parish nurse I do my best to empower the members of our congregation to nurture their physical, emotional, and spiritual lives, to keep their physical bodies healthy. As the holiday season approaches consider your heart, how you are feeling, and how you can feel better and be healed.

References: familydoctor.org; American Psychological Association – "Spirituality in Clinical Practice" 2015; Christian Broadcast Network; faithandhealthconnection.org

Submitted by Bonnie Hofer, Parish Nurse

25 Years Ordination Pastor Thomas

It came as a wonderful surprise, when Gail Bennie invited me to come forward for a special announcement on Advent First. I was joined by Cathy Calvin and Marilyn Josefsson, who presented me with a beautiful stole and warm greetings on behalf of the people of Faith in celebration of my 25. ordination anniversary. The stole was hand woven by Marilyn Josefsson and came with a short written reflection on her work. Thank you all for this amazing gift and for all the time, consideration and appreciation that went into it!



Grace Concert

Grace Lutheran, Hamilton generously hosted a Benefit Concert and Silent Auction in support of the St. John's / Faith refugee sponsorship last November. We are grateful to the wonderful singers of Villanella, the players of Rosewood Consort and their director Stéphane Potvin. A special thank you goes to oboist Islay-May Renwick & guitarist James Renwick as well as to Boris Brott for his guest appearance and his quite humorous rendition of Mozart's Horn Concerto nr. 4. Last, but certainly not least we thank Pastor Loretta of Grace Lutheran and her staff of amazing volunteers, without whom this event could never have taken place!

Advent and Christmas Services at Faith

Advent 2—December 4	Service with Holy Communion Congregational Tree— Trimming
Advent 3—December 11	Service with Holy Communion
Advent 4—December 18	Service with Holy Communion
Saturday December 24	Christmas Eve—7:00 pm Service with Holy Communion
Sunday December 25	Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion 10:30 am
Sunday January 1	Service with Holy Communion Pastor Dechert preaching



The M & M's At Faith

What's Happening!.....

Prayer Shawl Meeting

The next Prayer shawl gatherings is Tuesday January 10th, from 1:30 to 3:00 pm. Join us for a time of reflection and fellowship. Meetings will also be held Tuesday, February 14th and Tuesday, March 14th. All are welcome.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will take place in January with St. John's Lutheran Women's Group. Look in the bulletin for the date.

Mitten Tree

Remember to contribute to the mitten tree in the Narthex until Advent 4. Donations of mittens, hats, scarves, for all ages and new toys for toddlers to age 14 are most welcome. These will be distributed before Christmas.

Advent Bazaar

Many thanks go to out to the women (and men) who baked, crafted, helped set up or clean up or helped in any way to make our Advent Bazaar a real success. A job very well done!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrating in December...

December 1 Dorothy Christie
 December 3 Stan Frost
 December 3 Haley Ahlang
 December 4 Marge Kerwin
 December 5 Betty Fallis
 December 8 Ken Ahlang
 December 9 Sam Pergentile
 December 15 Charlene Bernhardt
 December 18 Katie Kildau-Bock
 December 27 Scott Turpin
 December 30 Jordan Bostrom

Celebrating in January...

January 2 Nathan Culleton
 January 3 Holly Lymburner
 January 4 Luther Malapela
 January 17 Alice Bauman
 January 18 Bernice Orr
 January 22 Rose Frost
 January 23 Grant Bernhardt

Celebrating in February...

February 3 Alisa Sawh
 February 6 Ruth White
 February 11 Fiona Ahlang
 February 21 Gail Bennie

Birthday Sunday Celebration will be held in the new year (date to be announced)

We wish all of the above a VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY and God's Blessings for many, many more!



Good Food Box Program

The GOOD FOOD BOX will take place on Tuesday, December 6th, Tuesday, January 3rd and Tuesday, February 7th.

	Good Food Boxes			Donated to St. Matthew's	
	Regular Bxs	Subsidized Bxs	Donated Bxs Including St. Matthew's	in lbs	Total Bxs
January	31	8	24	738	63
February	38	10	25	587	73
March	37	11	12	238	60
April	39	12	10	238	61
May	38	13	13	230	64
June	43	13	16	300	72
Sept	68	12	13	322	68
Oct	72	13	17	421	72
Nov	70	11	20	431	70
Dec					
Totals	436	103	150	3505	603

Above is the activity of the Bartonville Good Food Box Ministry for January to November 2016. Each box costs \$15 to purchase and will have approximately \$25 worth of fresh fruit and vegetables. The subsidized boxes are ones that members have provided \$3 toward the purchase price. Donated boxes have been paid for by donations received and are given to those in extreme need, including the Native Centre for Abused Women & Children and St. Matthew's House. We have volunteers and donors from both churches and the community for which we are most grateful.

We ask for your continued support of this ministry both in financially and in prayer. Donations are always welcomed throughout the year.

Donations to the Bartonville Good Box are made through:

**Faith Lutheran Church or
 The Church of the Nativity.**

Cheques are to be made payable to: Faith Lutheran Church.

Thank you again to all our donors and volunteers.

Remember in your prayers these members of Faith:

Alice Bauman	Ray Bekiaris	Pastor Dechert
Harold Farwell	Mabel Gregory	Mary Lemp
Elaine Lymburner	Herta Turnevicius	Orell Setterlund
Rudolph Jaundoo	Katie Kildau-Bock	Vic & Norma Braybrook
Evy Ahlang	Stan Frost	Elsie Zwick

"Bless our sick today so that they may bear their illness and restore them quickly to health. Bless those who have grown old in your service and give them courage and strength in their faith. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen"

We also remember our refugee families, Zahra (mother), Amal, Jihan, Juhianah (daughters) Akram (son), Mohamed (oldest son) and Miriam and Nadia and Sarah (daughters) and pray that they are safe where they are now and God grant them safe passage to Canada, and to Hamilton soon.

Upcoming Events –at Faith and in the Community

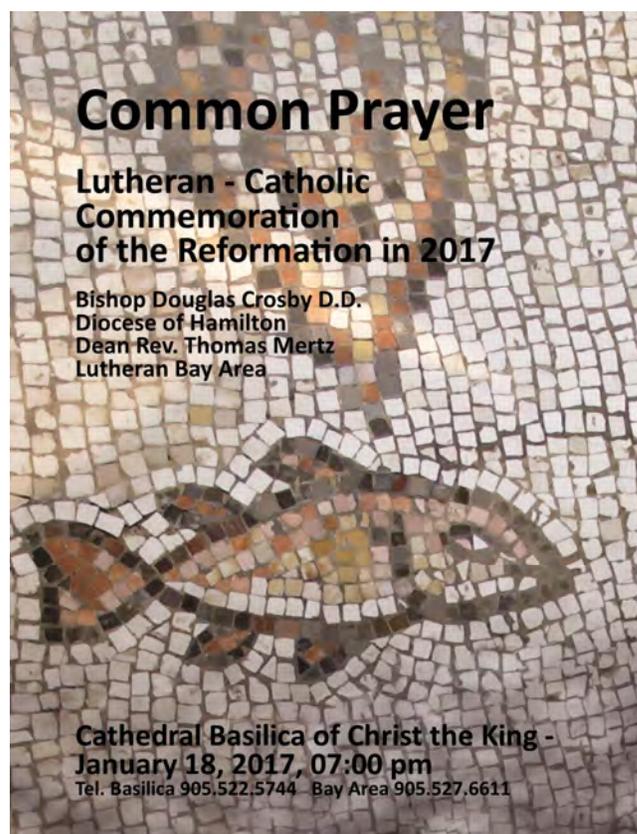
Calendar Dates of upcoming events related to our Church and Community

Dec 5 – Dofasco Male/Female Chorus concert and refreshments 7:30 pm
Dec 6— St. John’s Lutheran Women Christmas Program—1:30 pm
Dec 6— Messy Church—St. John’s 5—7 pm
Dec 9— Friday Night Nibbles Christmas—6:00pm
Dec 13—Transfiguration Women’s Christmas Event “Christmas Gifts” - 2:00pm
Jan 06—St. John’s Movie Night—7:00 pm
Jan 10—Prayer Shawl Meeting 1:30—3:00pm
Jan 13—Friday Night Nibbles—6:00pm
Jan 18—Ecumenical Service - Christ the King Basilica 7:00pm
Jan 25—Hot Lunch 11:30-12:30pm
Jan 28—St. John’s Men’s Breakfast—8:30am
Jan 28—St. John’s Bibles and Bagels—9:00am
Feb 12—Friday Night Nibbles—6:00pm
Feb 14—Prayer Shawl—1:30-3:00pm
Feb 19—Lunch and Learn—Health and Wellness

Participate in your Church Life

500 Anniversary (see poster)

In commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation the congregations of the Lutheran Bay Area and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton are invited to join in an ecumenical service at Cathedral Basilica of Christ the King, Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 07:00. This service – during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - will be officiated by Bishop Dr. Douglas Crosby and Dean Thomas Mertz.



“What does That Mean?” - Letter and Spirit



Martin Luther came to understand the Word of God revealed in Holy Scriptures as the exclusive source and foundation of a Christian’s faith.

In teaching about the Bible he used the expression “Sola Scriptura,” scriptures alone, to remind us that God’s word is the one measuring stick for our faith, our Christian life and the teachings of the church.

Luther also coined “Solus Christus,” Christ alone, to help us see that the Gospel of Christ Jesus is the spiritual and theological centre of the Bible. It means that the Good News of God’s love and salvation in Jesus Christ sets the framework for our understanding of the whole rest of the biblical message. The Gospel of Jesus is the only pair of glasses through which to read the Bible, understand the will of God and live a godly life.



The Gospel shared in the Bible is God’s word and truth. However we read and hear this word through the writings of men, children of their own time and place; justified in God, but nonetheless sinners, apt to failing and wandering as all mortals do.

Luther distinguished between the divine, eternal spirit and the human fallible word, through which God’s message of grace and salvation comes to us.

Through Martin Luther’s teaching Lutheran churches have come to acknowledge the writings of the Bible as historical documents, reflecting on the life and faith of people in a different cultural and historical place while also believing Holy Scriptures to reveal God’s truth for his people through the ages.

Invitation from St. John’s to join them at these events:

Movie Night

Friday, January 6, 2017
7:00 p.m.

“The Good Lie”

Starring Reese Witherspoon

Bibles and Bagels

The women of our two congregations are invited to come together at St. John’s Saturday, January 28, 2017 for their monthly “Bibles and Bagels” at 09:00 am: “What is so great about Grace?” by Philip Yancy. For more information please contact Janet Weingartner through the St. John’s church office (905-527-6611).

Mens’ Breakfast

Please join us for the Mens’ Breakfast at St. John’s Saturday, January 28, 2017; 08:30 am. Pastor Thomas will give a presentation on Martin Luther’s theology.

Annual Meeting

Hard to believe, but it is already time again for our annual congregational meeting (ACM)! The gathering will be held Sunday, January 29 following worship (10:30 a.m.) and luncheon.

There are few moments in the course of a year when a congregation gathers together for a congregational covenant-making moment. The ACM is one of those moments, so we encourage all to come and join in. The meeting is where we share stories, affirm faith and make commitments that will take us into the future. If you are a voting member this is your chance to have an impact on the elections of new council members.

Please join us for worship, luncheon and the annual meeting.

EAST WEST COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Many thanks to everyone that come out to the Holiday Hot Lunch. It was our best event with ninety one tickets sold. The Ancaster Swing Ban was enjoyed by all and is already booked for 2017. New to this year was our first silent auction. Small but mighty \$416.00 was raised for the wooden bed reconstruction in the Bartonville Neighbourhood Community Garden home to twelve gardening families. New this year is the 1000 litre water barrels. We hope to save even more water using this large barrel collection method to be hooked up in the early spring.

The Friday Night Nibbles event will meet December 9 at six pm. for our first Christmas Party. This is a free event. Put on your party hats and join us if you are able. Next Nibbles January 13 and February 12, weather permitting.

Next Hot Lunch January 28 and February 22. Great fun community events. Join us!

Thanks.
Edda Jaenisch



Reformation Challenge and “Little Luther”

Help provide scholarships for schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) carries out its ministry in the midst of the conflict in Palestine/Israel. The church is committed to a hopeful, sustainable and peaceful future for the whole community. ELCJHL schools welcome children of all faiths, primarily Christian and Muslim. The schools provide education, job skills and leadership formation.



The ELCIC and Canadian Lutheran World Relief support many projects with the ELCJHL ministries, including the schools. A scholarship of \$1400 will allow a student to attend school for one year. As with all schools, steady enrollment of students paying tuition helps the ELCJHL schools to be sustainable and effective. (from ELCIC website)

We sell “Little Luther” figures by Playmobil for \$ 7.50 each after Sunday services. The proceeds of the sale will go to support scholarships for students in Palestine and the Holy Land.

The Last Word

Seasons by Jill Lemmin

There comes a season in our lives
when we look at what we've
done...
and wonder how we'll be received
when this race on earth is won.
We start to look at life through
faith
and we search to know God's
plan...
material things begin to fade,
when we place our trust in Him.
We long to make a difference
and find reason for our birth...
we can't rely on earthly things
to determine our self worth.
I'm thankful for this season
that has given me such peace...
God has taught me who I am
and I'm happy being "me."



Pastor Thomas and
Pastor Daniela Mertz

Honorary Pastor:
The Rev. Charles Dechert

OUR VISION

Faith Lutheran Church is the heart of a spiritual, healthy, and vibrant community. All are welcome

OUR MISSION

The mission of Faith Lutheran Church is to provide an inclusive Christ-centered home serving the needs of our environment, the spiritual growth, physical health, and well-being of our neighbour and ourselves.

Focus on FAITH is published under the auspices of the Church Council. The Pastors, editor and Chair of Council serve as the editorial board. Submissions will be edited for clarity, positivism, adherence to our mission statement, constitution and the love of Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Please make all submissions to calvin1980@bell.net.

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