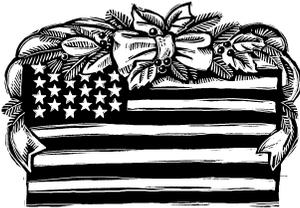


Faith Lutheran Church, Swanburg

10973 County Rd.1,
Pine River, MN 56474
Address Service Requested



**Remember Those
in the Military
United We Stand**

"We Serve God by Serving Others"

Faith Lutheran Church, Swanburg

10973 Co, Rd, 1

Pine River MN 56474

Church (218) 543-4878

email: faith@uslink.net

Web Site: www.churchinthewoods.com

Web Master: Loni Porta

Editor: Janis Allen

CHURCH in the WOODS

Newsletter

Catch the Spirit, come worship with us!

Bring Christmas Outside

The first colored electric Christmas lights on outdoor evergreen trees appeared in Denver in 1914. The tradition began thanks to a sick boy bedridden in the top floor of his home. Ten-year-old David Sturgeon couldn't see his family's Christmas tree downstairs so his grandfather, a pioneering electrician, painted some light bulbs red and green and strung them on a tree outside David's window. Not only did the lights brighten what would be David's last holiday, but residents throughout the city came by to admire the display. Just as David's innovative grandfather brought light into the boy's dark times and joy to the whole community, God revealed the true light by sending Jesus into our dark world. For "the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5)

Blue

It's the color you often see Mary wearing in artist's renderings of Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. Blue. It's the liturgical color for the season of Advent. Blue. It's a color that symbolizes hope. That's why it's the color for Advent, the season when we await the coming Messiah with sure and certain hope that he will arrive. And arrive he does!

God entered the world in a new way in Jesus, and through Jesus' death and resurrection, God made a way for all of creation to be made right with God.

Post-resurrection, Jesus keeps coming to us over and over again: when we pray together, when we care for others, when we gather for worship, when we receive him in the bread and wine of Holy Communion.

As we celebrate Jesus coming among us at Christmas, we will celebrate Holy Communion at every Christmas Eve and Christmas Day worship service. He didn't just come 2000+ years ago. He comes to us today!

A Friend is one who sees our good and bad points yet likes us the way we are and lets us know they do.

Christmas Reminders

May the Christmas gifts remind you of God's greatest gift – His begotten son.

May the Christmas candles remind you of Him who is the light of the world.

May the Christmas tree remind you of an other tree on which he died for you.

May the Christmas cheer remind you of him who said, "Be of good cheer."

May the Christmas feast remind you of him who is the bread of life.

May the Christmas snow remind you of the cleansing power of Christ.

May the Christmas bells remind you of the glorious proclamation of his birth.

May the Christmas carols remind you of his glad tidings which we are to proclaim to all mankind.

May the Christmas season remind you in every way of Jesus Christ your King.

Wondrous Joy of Christmastide

Oh, wondrous joy of Christmastide, the essence of God's love, to send into a weary world his son from heaven above. The shepherds heard the news that night from angel hosts on high, and making haste to Bethlehem, found where the young child lie.

There in a humble manger stall, they saw the newborn king; with joyful hearts they worshiped him, who would salvation bring.

So wondrous was the Christmastide when love came down to reign, and glad hearts joined in chorus with the angel's sweet refrain.

Oh, may the peace and hope and joy God gave to mankind then, abide within your heart today as Christmas comes again.

~Beverly J. Anderson

Please continue to pray for these persons who have ongoing health problems: **Pat Welf, Don Peterson, Brian Busby, Bub Moser, Carol Carlson, Dave Bollie, Danny Raph, Donna Bollie, Annette Petschl, Ronnie & Gene Buchite.**

Hope Anderson fell and broke her hip and is doing well in rehab at the Good Samaritan Home in Pine River, room 210. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery.

Tim Petschl, son of Duke and Annette Petschl, has two pressure sores on his foot. Tim is a quadriplegic and doctors did surgery on his foot to clean out the sores. Please keep Tim in your thoughts and prayers that this is all that needs to be done.

Donna Bollie had back surgery five months ago and her back is not healing. An MRI and other tests are scheduled to try to determine the cause. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

Chet Durm has been hospitalized with pneumonia. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery.

Financial Report: October 1-31, 2018

General Fund Income: \$2,796.71
General Fund Expense: -1,889.06
\$ 907.65

Anniversaries

December

02 – Mike & Ramona O'Brien

Church Needs List:

White vinegar
Paper towels
Mouse traps
Toilet bowl cleaner

Birthdays

December

02—Samantha Raph
06 – Kevin Swanson
07 – Katelyn Peterson
10 – Daniel Anderson
11 – Ben Kline
17 – Alyssa Goldenstein Wisnure
18 – Robert Annable
23 – Charlene Raph
25 – Jesus
27 – Sue Feierabend
27 – James Peterson

Raise Your Voice—



Join the Choir!

Hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. The Faith choir has a lovely anthem for the second Sunday in Advent, "Is Your Heart Prepared For A King." Our Christmas songs are coming along nicely and we're excited to sing them for you on Christmas Eve. You won't want to miss it.

And we are planning a Christmas caroling outing this year, too. Everyone is invited to join us. Stay tuned for the date and time.

See you in church!
In harmony, JMB


DECORATE
the Church

On Sat, Dec. 8th, at 10 am, we are gathering at church to put up the Christmas decorations. It goes quickly if there's lots of help. So please, come and help decorate. The more the merrier!



October 21, 2018

Present: Bob Bergman, Bill Korman, Loni Porta, Tracy Raph, Bonnie Schlapkohl, Shari Curell

Absent: N/A

Secretary's Report: There are not any available minutes for the September council meeting. Secretary Bunny Geiger passed away.

1. Council members appointed chair positions: President: Loni Porta, Vice President: Bill Korman, Secretary: Shari Curell, Treasurer: Bob Bergman.
2. Barn yard ornaments are in, Tracy will get tree set up after Thanksgiving.
3. Treasurer Bob requested approval to talk with an Accountant regarding W2 -1099 etc...Bill made a motion to approve, Bonnie second. Accepted
4. Discussion on how to handle Lenten services, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services without a pastor.
5. Ham Bingo night on March 26 with a free will offering. Easter is April 21.
6. Constitution: It was discussed to remove consecutive terms as a stipulation and up to 6 members and treasurer from the Constitution for the Council. This was decided because of the lower attendance.

Treasurer's Report: Bob presented treasurers report. Bill motioned to accept Tracy second. Accepted.

Old Business:

1. Pastoral:
 - i. Our Saviors in Pequot is divided as to whether to partner with another Parish.
 - ii. Pastor Degner is still interested ~ Council discussed and felt this would not be the best option for our congregation at this time.
 - iii. Pastor Jonathan Langer - is no longer interested.

iv. SAM - Synodically Authorized Minister - could be a possibility. Maple Hill currently is using someone from SAM.

2. Giving plan ~ Giving Ministry form will be passed out to the Congregation for input as to Charities/Groups they would like to support. We are looking for feed back for the direction of our Benevolence giving.

3. Growing our congregation: Doing a fun activity once a quarter: Game night, Block party, Mystery dinner, caroling and cider, cookie exchange, turkey bowling (next year).

Respectfully submitted by: Shari Curell, Council Secretary

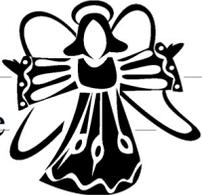


The Swanburg Church Circle Christmas party is Tuesday, December 18th at 1 pm, at church. Please bring an hors d'oeuvre to share and a "white elephant" gift to exchange (something you have at home you don't use but is too good to throw away). It's always a good time for fellowship and especially so at Christmas. So please, come and join us, and bring a friend! All are welcome.

Vulnerable love

God throws open the door of this world — and enters as a baby. As the most vulnerable imaginable. Because he wants unimaginable intimacy with you. What religion ever had a god that wanted such intimacy with us that he came with such vulnerability to us? What God ever came so tender we could touch him? So fragile that we could break him? So vulnerable that his bare, beating heart could be hurt? Only the One who loves you to death.

—Ann Voskamp, *The Greatest Gift*

Advent Candle  Presentations

- December 2: Tom & Jo Swoverland
- December 9: Al & Carol Buchite
- December 16: Bob & Julie Bergman
- December 23: Keith & Carol Moser
- December 24: Tracy & Danette Raph family



Would you like to remember or honor a loved one this year with a Poinsettia? This year the colors available are red, white, pink, marble and jingle bells. The cost is \$9.00.

Call or email the office (218.543.4878 or faith@uslink.net) with your order. Or better yet, sign up at church by **December 16**. Please be sure to include the color, your name, and who it is in memory or honor of. The plants may be paid for at church or by mail and picked up following the Christmas Eve Service. Or, you can ask someone to pick them up for you.



Christmas Eve Candlelight/Carol Service will be held at 4:30 on Christmas Eve at Faith. Holy Communion will be served.

It's Here! God's Global Barnyard

As members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we believe that God is calling us into the world – together. And with generous, loving hands, we can make a difference.

Last year our church participated enthusiastically in the ELCA Good Gift's "God's Global Barnyard" fundraiser, purchasing animals in honor or memory of another, or as a Christmas gift in another's name, or "just because," and we plan to do that again.

Like last year, we will have a Christmas tree in the fellowship hall with ornaments representing the type of gift you are choosing. You can choose an ornament, pay for your ornament, and this church will send it according to your instructions.

What's great about this? This is one opportunity for you to provide critical support to people so desperately needing it.

Where your money goes

Every project in every community starts with listening. The ELCA believes that our congregations, companion churches and partners know their communities best. That's why *they* identify the needs and priorities in their communities, as well as the solutions they believe will make the biggest impact.

Your donation will be used where it is needed most within the wider category of each gift you've selected. This allows our church to stay adaptive, flexible and effective in the work that we do. Because the ELCA seeks to honor your generosity and keep administrative costs low, they do not track individual financial gifts to specific families or locations in the U.S. or abroad. More than 90 percent of your gifts directly support ELCA programs. Less than 10 percent is used for administration and fundraising.

"Beautiful music...is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us."
—Martin Luther

‘Twas the Night Before Christmas

.....Mom Style (For all you moms that are feeling overworked and under appreciated!)

‘Twas the night before Christmas, when all thru the abode. Only one creature was stirring, and she was cleaning the commode. The children were finally sleeping, all snug in their beds, while visions of Nintendo 64 and Barbie, flipped through their heads. The dad was snoring in front of the TV, with a half-constructed bicycle propped on his knee. So only the mom heard the reindeer hooves clatter, which made her sigh, “Now what is the matter?” with toilet bowl brush still clutched in her hand, she descended the stairs, and saw the old man. He was covered with ashes and soot, which fell with a shrug “Oh, great,” muttered the mom, “Now I have to clean the rug.”

“HO! HO! HO!” cried Santa, “I’m glad you’re awake” “Your gift was especially difficult to make.” “Thanks, Santa, but all I want is time alone.” “Exactly!” he chuckled, “So, I’ve made you a clone” “A clone?” she muttered. “What good is that?” “Run along Santa, I’ve no time for chit chat.” Then out walked the clone-the mother’s twin, same hair, same eyes, same double chin. “She’ll cook, she’ll dust, she’ll mop every mess. You’ll relax, take it easy, watch “the Young and the Restless”

“Fantastic!” the mom cheered. “My dream has come true!” “I’ll shop, I’ll read, I’ll sleep the night through!” From the room above, the youngest did fret. “Mommy?! Come quickly, I’m scared and I’m wet.” The clone replied, “I’m coming Sweetheart.” “Hey” the mom smiled, “she sure knows her part.” The clone changed the small one and hummed her a tune, as she bundled the child in a blanket cocoon. “You’re the best mommy ever. I really love you.” The clone smiled and sighed, “And I love you, too.”

The mom frowned and said, “sorry, no deal. That’s my child’s love she is trying to steal.” Smiling wisely Santa said, “To me it is clear, only one loving mother is needed here.” The mom kissed her child and tucked her in bed. “Thank you, Santa, for clearing my head. I sometimes forget, it won’t be very long, when they’ll be too old for my cradle and song.” The clock on the mantle began to chime.

Santa whispered to the clone, “It works every time.” With the clone by his side said, “Goodnight, Merry Christmas, dear mom. You will be all right.”

Sometimes we need reminding of what life is all about. Especially at times during the holiday season, when all we seem to do is clean and bake and shop, and, and, and...! You get the picture, I’m sure. So stop for a moment and hug that little one so special, whether they are 2 or 22. For they are the Gift that God gave us in life, and what a gift to be treasured, far above any other!

Children’s Community Shop Day at Grace United Methodist Church

Saturday, December 1: 10:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Children ages 2-12 shop for mom. Dad, grandparents and siblings. All gifts are \$1 including gift wrap! Shopping assistants will be available to help children.

Parents are treated with coffee and cookies while they wait for their little shoppers to finish. All gifts are new/gently used items from friends of Grace United Methodist Church: 2 miles South of Pequot Lakes on Patriot Ave.

A Christmas Cantata

“Tonight, Heaven Touches Earth” will be performed by the Grace United Methodist Church choir with members from the community.

Friday, December 14th 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 15th at 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, December 16th at 2:00 p.m.

All performances are at Grace United Methodist Church, 29318 Patriot Ave., Pequot Lakes, MN
Admission is free!



**Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas from
Alaska!**

Dorothy Potz

One Last Onion

Huckleberry Hound's lazy drawl drifted into my kitchen that Saturday morning in the winter of 1959. His antics would keep my two young children occupied while I cooked some oatmeal for breakfast. The television was a poor babysitter, but what other option did I have? My husband had left us. We got no support from him, financial or otherwise. We'd lost everything we owned in a fire and had to start over from scratch. There wasn't much assistance for single mothers back then, so the free entertainment the television offered was a big help.

I opened the cupboard to see what I could make for dinner later. Not much. Some nights I felt like I was trying to conjure a meal out of nothing. I cooked little more than beans, spaghetti, macaroni and tuna casserole. "Looks like beans again," I said, taking the lone bag off the shelf. We enjoyed them as long as something gave them flavor: beans with ham hock, beans with ground beef. Tonight, though, all I had was a single onion.

One onion. How had it come to this? We were surviving, but barely. I was angry with God. I couldn't help it. Can't you see we're struggling, Lord? Can't you show us you care?

I had just finished washing the oatmeal pot when there was a knock at the door. It was Theresa from across the street. We weren't the only family in the neighborhood scraping by. Theresa and her husband were too, with four little girls to raise. Even so, on weekdays, she'd take my son to school with her kids and watch him in the afternoons until I got home from my job as a switchboard operator. I didn't know what I'd do without her.

"Could I borrow an onion?" Theresa asked. "I'm making beans for dinner and I've run out." I can't spare it, I thought. I could say I was out as well. But I didn't. She'd done so much for me. "Sure, Theresa, I just happen to have one," I said. As I reached into the cupboard, a Bible verse came to mind: "Whatsoever you shall give in my name, it shall be returned to you one hundredfold." Ha. When did I ever get a hundredfold anything? Okay

God, I thought, handing over my last onion, I'm giving in your name. Let's see if you're true to your word. It wasn't a prayer, it was a frustrated challenge.

No onions appeared in the laundry room or tumbled out of the cupboards after Theresa left. I went to the living room to do some cleaning. Another knock at the door. Theresa again? No. A Watkins salesman was standing there. Watkins men were a familiar sight, going door to door selling household items, spices and other things I couldn't afford. "You're wasting your time here," I told the man. "I'm sorry but I just can't buy anything."

He looked around my sparse living room, "I understand," he said. "You have a nice day, ma'am." He turned to leave, then stopped, reaching into his bag. "Here, try this," he said. He held out a small envelope.

I pushed it right back. "I really can't afford anything," I said firmly. "It's a free sample," he said. "We just want to see if people like it." "Well, if there's no charge... You have a nice day too." The Watkins man walked down the block. I held up the envelope to read the label.

I didn't know it, but better times were ahead. Soon I'd meet a man who would become my husband for the next 50 years. My kids would go on to have families of their own. We'd be well cared for. All I knew right then was that we'd enjoy our beans that night. Flavored with hundreds of dehydrated onion flakes. Compliments of the Watkins man.

Many happy returns



Somehow, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others,
Is the joy that comes back to you.
And the more you spend in blessing
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing
Returns to you glad. —John Greenleaf Whittier

Explanation of God

This is written by an 8-year-old named Danny Dutton, who lives in Chula Vista, CA he wrote it for his third grade homework assignment, to ‘explain God.’

One of God’s main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn’t make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn’t have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers.

God’s second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn’t have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps him pretty busy. So you shouldn’t go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad’s head asking for something they said you couldn’t have.

Atheists are people who don’t believe in God. I don’t think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren’t any who come to our church.

Jesus is God’s son. He used to do all the hard work, like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn’t want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn’t know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K. And God did not let Jesus stay in the grave, but raised him from the dead.

His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn’t have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps

his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God, like a secretary, only more important.

You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time. You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there’s anybody you want to make happy, it’s God!

Don’t skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn’t come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don’t believe in God, besides being an atheist you will be very lonely, because your parents can’t go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know he’s around you when you’re scared, in the dark or when you can’t swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

But... you shouldn’t just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases. And...that’s why I believe in God.

The perfect gift

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry said, “Love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction.” At Christmas we celebrate God coming to earth to look outward with us in the same direction, from our perspective and experience. Jesus was an ordinary person: He learned to talk and walk like any toddler, learned a trade from his father and acquired the habits of faith from his family. In adulthood, Jesus experienced life as we all do: the challenge of hard work, grief at a loved one’s death, heartache over oppression and the world’s great needs — but also joy in celebration, fellowship with neighbors and deep friendship. God personally knows our every experience, emotion and need — because Jesus, while fully divine, lived as a full human being. He has gazed at the world, life and even death from our direction, giving us the perfect Christmas gift: love.

His phone rang in church by accident during prayers. The pastor scolded him. The worshippers admonished him after prayers for interrupting the silence. His wife kept on lecturing him on his carelessness all the way home. You could see shame, embarrassment, and humiliation on his face. He never stepped foot in the church again.

That evening, he went to a bar. He was still nervous and trembling. He spilled his drink on the table by accident. The waiter apologized and gave him a napkin to clean himself. The janitor mopped the floor. The female manager offered him a complimentary drink. She also gave him a huge hug and a kiss while saying, "Don't worry man. Who doesn't make mistakes?" He has never stopped going to that bar since then.

Lesson: sometimes our attitude as believers drives souls away from church. Our attitude breaks our relationships, destroys our families. You can make a difference by how you treat other people, especially when they make mistakes. Stay blessed, family and friends.

Traveling on my Knees

Last night I took a journey to a land across the sea;
I didn't go by boat or plane I traveled on my knees.
I saw so many people there in deepest depths of sin;
And Jesus told me I should go, that there were souls
to win.

But I said, "Jesus, I can't go and work with such as these." He answered quickly, "Yes, you can by traveling on your knees." He said, "You pray, I'll meet the needs, you call and I will hear; Be anxious over all lost souls of those both far and near."

And so I tried it, knelt in prayer, Gave up some hours of ease. I felt the Lord right by my side while traveling on my knees.

As I prayed on and saw souls saved and twisted bodies healed; and saw God's workers' strength renewed while laboring in the field. I said, "Yes, Lord, I have a job this then I'd ever please; I'll gladly go and heed they call by traveling on my knees.

Dividing Souls

On the outskirts of a small town, there was a big, old pecan tree just inside the cemetery fence. One day two boys filled up a bucketful of nuts and sat down by the tree, out of sight, and began dividing the nuts.

"One for you, one for me, one for you, one for me," said one boy. Several dropped and rolled down toward the fence.

Another boy came riding along the road on his bicycle. As he passed, he thought he heard voices from inside the cemetery. He slowed down to investigate. Sure enough, heard, "one for you, one for me, one for you, one for me..."

He just knew what it was. He jumped back on his bike and rode off. Just around the bend he met an old man with a cane, hobbling along.

"Come here quick," said the boy, you won't believe what I heard! Satan and the Lord are down at the cemetery dividing up the souls!"

The man said, "beat it kid, can't you see it's hard for me to walk." When the boy insisted though, the man hobbled slowly to the cemetery.

Standing by the fence they heard, "one for you, one for me. One for you, one for me". The old man whispered, "boy, you've been tellin' me the truth. Let's see if we can see the lord..."

Shaking with fear, they peered through the fence, yet were still unable to see anything. The old man and the boy gripped the wrought iron bars of the fence tighter and tighter as they tried to get a glimpse of the Lord.

At last they heard, "one for you, one for me. That's all. Now let's go get those nuts by the fence and we'll be done..."

They say the old man had the lead for a good half-mile before the kid on the bike passed him.

December

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
Deacon: Shari Curell (Bill Korman first Sunday) Altar: Carol Buchite Ushers: Bill Korman Coffee Time: Stephanie Bright						1 
2 Advent I Worship Schedule 9:30 Worship Holy Communion Hunger Offering	3 A.A., Alanon 7 pm Crosslake Lutheran Church, Crosslake	4	5 Choir Practice 5:00	6	7 Remember Pearl Harbor!	8 Decorate the Church 10:00 a.m. Helpers needed!
9 Advent II Choir sings Worship Schedule 9:30 Worship Coffee Time	10 A.A., Alanon 7 pm Crosslake Lutheran Church, Crosslake	11	12 Choir Practice 5:00	13	14	15 
16 Advent III Worship Schedule 9:30 Worship Council Meets	17 A.A., Alanon 7 pm Crosslake Lutheran Church, Crosslake	18 Church Christmas Party 1:00 p.m. Bring snack & gift to share	19 Choir Practice 5:00	20	21	22 Newsletter Deadline!!
23 Advent IV Choir sings Worship Schedule 9:30 Worship	24 Christmas Eve Worship 4:30 with Holy Communion A.A., Alanon 7 pm	25 	26 Choir Practice 5:00	27 Senior Foot Care 10:30-1:30 at The Warehouse in Pine River. 2:00 pm Newsletter Assembly	28	29
30 Worship Schedule 9:30 Worship	31 New Year's Eve! A.A., Alanon 7 pm Crosslake Lutheran Church, Crosslake					

2018