

Worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m.



FAITH TALKS

The Official Newsletter of Faith Lutheran Church of Chico, CA

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About the Cover

Faith Lutheran will be hosting Safe Space Winter Shelter on site in the fellowship hall from Sunday, January 26th to Sunday, February 9th. This low barrier shelter, which rotates between churches, is essential for those who have no place to take shelter during the coldest months of the year.

Pictured on the cover from left to right are Esther, Judy, Mary, Emily, and Candy who are making a meal for the guests. Call the office and ask what volunteer options there are this year!

Worship, Music, Events

Choir and Handbells on Break

Well done, Choir! Well done, Bells! This Christmas was special and a big, big part of that was thanks to your musical offerings. Enjoy the break! We'll reconvene in late January. Luke Nicolay, Dir. Worship and Music, will announce the return dates for these music groups in the E-blast and on social media. Stay tuned!



Kate Ory Preaching Sunday, January 12th

Kate Ory will be preaching on the Baptism of Jesus on Sunday, January 12th. She will be exploring how God doesn't remove the hard things from our lives, but walks with us through them.

Kate



Lent Brainstorming, Sun. Jan. 19th, 11am

If you feel inspired by the liturgy, music, and art during worship and have wondered, "how does this all get planned, and who does it?", then we have an invitation for you! Come and see what brainstorming is like! Pr. Ben will prepare a summary of the scriptures we will be reading in worship throughout the season of Lent, along with themes and images that connect them. Everyone in the congregation is invited to brainstorm how to bring those scriptures to life through our worship, art, fellowship, and acts of service. Meet us in the sanctuary on January 19th after worship!



Funeral for Suzanne Hanson, Sat. Jan. 25, 11am

A funeral for our beloved sister in Christ, Suzanne Hanson, will take place Saturday, January 25th at 11am, here at Faith Lutheran Church: 667 E. 1st Ave. in Chico, California. For the past three years, Suzanne had stage four cancer. Rather than sharing her condition with others, she chose to live her final years to the fullest, traveling with friends and family. Last year she made the pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Faith Lutheran. Suzanne was raised in Faith Lutheran. She devoted her life to caring for animals as a veterinarian, most recently at Valley Oak Veterinary Center in Chico. Her final weeks were spent with her brother, sister, and three cats by her side. The day before she died, Pastor Ben was able to offer her prayers and anointing to prepare her for her reunion with Jesus.

Rancho Santa Marta Meeting, Sat. Jan 22, 7pm

We invite you to learn more at our informational meeting to be held on January 22nd at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall at church. More on page 10.

Safe Space Winter Shelter, Jan. 26-Feb. 9

Faith Lutheran Church is grateful to host Safe Space Winter Shelter from Sunday, January 26th (after worship) to Sunday, February 9th. This low barrier shelter takes place in the Fellowship Hall each year. We host a few dozen guests who receive a hot meal and a warm place to sleep during the coldest weeks of the year.



Above: Synergism Choir serving a meal for Safe Space guests. Below: Bonnie and Glenn, snowshoeing HARD!

Faith's Annual Snowshoe Trip

People of all ages are welcome to attend our annual snowshoe trip at the end of January or beginning of February! Because the weather is so changeable, we'll wait until there is a Saturday with good weather forecasted 10 days out, and then we'll announce the date. We will meet at 8:30am in Faith's back parking lot to carpool to the Jonesville Sno-Park. No prior snowshoe experience is necessary. Bring warm clothing in layers, water, and a lunch. If you would like snowshoes rented, please let Pastor Ben or the office know. We appreciate \$20 contributions for the rental of snowshoes.





Family Life

by Josh Edwards, Dir. Children + Youth Ministries

I've had such a warm welcome since joining as the Director of Children & Youth Ministry! It's been great getting to know everyone, meeting with volunteers, and chatting with kids and their families. We've been busy brainstorming ways to make our youth ministry even better!

Building a Super Squad

We're creating a team of awesome volunteers to help with Sunday School on a rotating basis. This keeps everyone fresh and excited about helping out!

New Curriculum Fun

We're using a new curriculum from Sparks Digital—it's got all the lesson plans and Bible stories that match the scriptures adults hear ready to go, making it easy for our Youth Leaders and families to stay informed about what kids are learning each week.

Family Fun Packet

I've put together a Family Welcome Packet with everything you need—upcoming events, daily scripture, activities, and a "Talk It Out" section with questions to chat about at home. It's all about making learning fun and engaging for the whole family!

Exciting Changes for January!

We're making some fun updates to Sunday School to make it even better:

Extended Sunday School Time

Sunday School will now run through the entire worship service, with an extra 15-20 minutes of supervised care afterward. This will:

- Give kids more time to dig into their lessons, do crafts, play games, and sing songs.
- Let kids hang out with their friends and have some fun!
- Allow parents to enjoy coffee hours without rushing to pick up their kids.
- Parents can choose to have their kids stay in Sunday School during Communion if they prefer.



Welcome Table

We're setting up a new Welcome Table, staffed by volunteers and older kids. This will:

- Help new families sign up for Sunday School.
- Provide family-specific resources and info.
- Be a friendly first point of contact for new families joining us at Faith Lutheran.

"Procare" App Check-In

We're using a new app called Procare for a smooth, secure check-in process:

- Track attendance each week.
- Make pick-up safe by requiring ID from guardians.
- Collect important info like allergies or special needs.
- Enable quick communication with you in case of emergencies.

Setting Up a Youth Group!

In mid-January, I'll be meeting with Jr High and High School students to set up a youth group for their age group, along with planning some fun activities and scheduling a regular meeting day. I can't wait to get this started and create opportunities for our older kids to connect and grow together!

I'm so excited about these changes and how they'll help our kids, families, and church community grow. If you have any questions or thoughts, just let me know. See you soon!

Josh Edwards, Dir. Children + Youth





Pastor's Article

by Pr. Ben Colahan

In these cold and wet winter months, John the Baptist's instructions in Luke 3:11 become particularly poignant: "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise." People of Faith, I am continually amazed by your generosity and service to those most in need, both in our community and around the world. Just in December, I counted ten ministries that you carried out to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

#1) In direct response to John the Baptist's call to share extra coats, you collectively donated over one hundred coats to the 6th Street Center for Youth, which provides a safe place where youth experiencing homelessness can acquire the skills, resources and opportunity they need to transition into healthy independent living and adulthood. But you wanted to do even more for 6th Street.



#2) Through a silent auction, you raised over \$400 dollars to support 6th Street's services.

#3) Through our Giving Tree, you provided 40 beautifully wrapped gifts for 20 children in need at Citrus and Rosedale Elementary, plus gift cards for 6 families. You also provided gift cards for the women of the Mercy House, a partnership between Faith Lutheran and Chico Housing Action Team, that has transformed my mother's house into a home for four women with long-term medical needs who have no other place to live.

#4) Every week, two of you meet with the women of the Mercy House to give them support and encouragement. (See Roses, pg. 11 to read thank-yous from the residents.)

#5) On the 1st Tuesday of the month, just like every month, you made dinner for over 120 people at the Torres Shelter. And you invited the congregation to learn how to do it with you. If you'd like to learn how to cook meals for the Torres Shelter, Elise Gladu has invited you to join her on January 7th as she does it. Please reach out either to her directly, or to the office for more information.

#6) On the 1st and 3rd Friday of the month, like every month, you handed out over 300 free boxes of groceries in our parking lot food bank. You did this in partnership with the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. Some of you handed out those boxes directly, but all of you supported this ministry by your generous giving to Faith. Your financial support allows us to maintain the parking lot to handle both the fully loaded semi-truck that delivers the groceries, and hundreds of cars that come through to pick them up.



#7) This month you become the commissary kitchen for Church of the Homeless Jesus, a ministry that brings the Good News of Jesus to the homeless and hungry. COHJ serves hot breakfast along with a message of hope and salvation on Sunday mornings at the 20th street park where all the soccer fields are. They are serving 250 breakfast sandwiches to over 100 people on Sunday mornings, along with a full worship service that includes preaching and music. They were recently gifted a food truck which will help their food preparation. City code requires that all food trucks be affiliated with a licensed commercial kitchen, hence the ask to affiliate with our kitchen. What this means is every couple of weeks they need to fill their water tank with the water in our kitchen, and empty their water down our drain. It is a benefit to people working to help the lost dedicate their lives to Jesus, and a small cost to the church, but it is you who pays to maintain our commercial status and water bill. You make this partnership possible.

#8) In December, you agreed to host Safe Space Winter Shelter, a low-barrier shelter that allow families and their pets to sleep in our fellowship hall, Jan. 26-Feb. 8. Many of you have signed up to cook meals for these guests. All of you supported this ministry by your generous giving to Faith. The council calculated that it costs Faith about \$100/week in PG&E bills to host Safe Space. We gladly pay this cost to carry out the Biblical command to care for our neighbors. You make it possible.

#9) It is not only our neighbors here in Chico for whom you have cared, but those around the world. Through purchasing crafts made by Christians living around Bethlehem, you were able to send \$1,623 to families who had lost their livelihood due to the violence in Gaza.

#10) And finally, this December, you restarted our decades-long ministry to Rancho Santa Marta, a school and orphanage for special needs children in Baja, Mexico. You shared what a difference this ministry makes not only in the lives of its students, but also in the lives of those of us who go and do manual labor for the school. You invited us to consider joining the mission trip on June 7-15th.

If you would like more information about how to be involved with any of these ministries, let us know. We'll put you in touch with the right people. These are just the ministries this month that I know of. Thank you for taking seriously our calling as followers of Jesus to care for our neighbors in need. You are my continual inspiration for what it means to live out Christ's love. I am honored to serve as your pastor.

Your brother in Christ. Pastor Ben



President's Article

by Council President Jill Bentler

Happy New Year! Forgive me for expressing the obvious, but it's hard to believe we are ringing in 2025 and at the same time we are halfway through our church council year. I feel very blessed to be a part of this council and thankful for all that they are willing to do. For the hard work they put into making decisions, for their heart for our ministries and for their love of Faith Lutheran.

So what exactly does the council do? At the bare minimum we meet monthly for about two hours to discuss the issues and decisions facing the church. Sometimes we have urgent matters to discuss, such as pressing needs like replacing aging air conditioners or making big changes like building a new bathroom. Sometimes our goal is to better understand the ministries working at our church and hearing from the folks that run them. Our meetings always include prayer, celebrations, appreciations, and snacks. Our goal most of the time is just doing our best to keep the ship on course.

The funny thing about our ship though is that it has been steadily growing over the past several years! Have you noticed how much fuller our Sunday services feel? This is a good problem to have but it isn't easily remedied by just adding in a few extra chairs. In response to this growth our council has recently begun reading a book together titled; *The In-Between Church: Navigating Size Transitions in Congregations*. As we work through this text in the coming months we hope to find wisdom to help us navigate these new waters. As our congregation grows and changes we intend to be able to respond to those changes with knowledge and confidence.

As we move into our second half of the church year there is another change on my mind. Many of our council members have been on the council for several years and some are more recent additions. Every year we have members that need to leave council due to the other obligations in their lives. Over the next couple of months I ask that you prayerfully consider if you could be someone to help us with steering the ship. Reach out to a current council member and ask them what their experience has been like. Perhaps you are just what we need.

I've had people thank me for taking on a hard job and I respond honestly that it's not as hard as it seems and the benefits outweigh any of the hard parts. I am blessed to be surrounded by good people who want what is best for Faith Lutheran. I have made new friends and gotten to know so many people and have finally been able to match names and faces! Being on council hasn't been a burden, it has truly been a gift. It would be my great pleasure to share that gift with you.

Jill Bentler, Council Pres

Rancho Santa Marta



From June 7th to June 15th, Faith Lutheran Church will be participating in a mission trip to Rancho Santa Marta, located approx. 120 miles south of the border on the Baja. Join us for this wonderful week spent in fellowship and partnership with RSM. Our tasks for the week often include roofing, cement work, painting, sewing, peach orchard work, bucking hay and general construction. More information about the trip and paperwork that needs to be completed will be provided at the January 22 Informational Meeting.

Cost to attend \$350 per person (includes meals, transport, cost of work projects while on the ranch)

Scholarship may be available if needed

Deposit of \$100 will hold your spot

We are limited to 40 guests

High schoolers may attend with parent permission; junior highs may attend if accompanied by a parent

We invite you to learn more at our informational meeting to be held on January 22nd at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall at church.

For questions, contact Contact Karen Avis by calling the office.



Roses

to whom we give thanks



The organizers of the Advent Workshop (Elise Gladu, Sue Reed, Jill Bentler, and Elaine Lund), and each person who contributed to making cookies, cleanup, setup, hanging of the greens, and all number of things in between!

Nola Dosch, Stephen Kathriner, and Peter Miller for hosting GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays and providing resources and support to those struggling with a lost loved one this season.

Kate Ory for organizing the 6th Street Center for Youth coat drive, and Jenny James for hosting the silent auction to raise money for this drive.

Musicians: Margaret McMillan and Linda Zimbelman, the De Colores Orchestra, Shelly Fairchild and the strings group, our Choir and Handbell Choir for singing and playing on Christmas Eve and during Advent, our children's choir and the grown-ups teaching them, Jeff Cooper at St. John's Episcopal in Chico and the St. John's Choir for their collaboration of Lessons and Carols, and our carolers.

Dawn Stafford for organizing the poinsettia pickups & dropoffs.

Council and parishioners for bringing the staff delicious meals and healthy snacks to keep us powered up this Advent.

Josh Edwards, our new Director of Children and Youth Ministries who started just in time for our busy season, and who has taken a swift, passionate investment in family life here at Faith

Bob and Leslie with Chico Housing Action Team for their presentation to the congregation.

Bob Bay, Rick Bentler, and Joel Zimbelman for replacing countless lights, and a faucet.



Bonnie Pulliam and Doug De Soto for their continued ministry at Mercy House. *"I just wanted to send a thank you from all of us for the gift cards. Please pass it on to the donors. It's a big help."* --Terry, MH Resident. *"This is Myrna from Mercy House, just wanted to thank you for the gift cards for Christmas from your church. God bless you all."* --Myrna, MH Resident.

Kate Ory and Malinda Ard for hosting Dungeons & Dragons: Snowed Inn!

Every souper-duper soup and bread bringer for our Advent Holden services.

Bill Kees for hosting Ember Days.

Poinsettia Dedications

Joel and Linda Zimbelman for
 our parents **Ernie and Dorothy Zimbelman**, and **Jim and Elaine Waples**;
 and our children and grandchildren: **Lexie, Rhys, Lauren, Brandon, Lina, and Niko.**

Jill and Rick Bentler in memory of
Jill's mom, Joan Bachus

Marnie Smith and Eileen Wayne in remembrance of
 those who have passed in the **Wayne-Dailey family**,
 parents **Marci Miller and Richard Porter**,
Roy Kitchens,
 and all those who have died due to addiction or suicide



Carol Grandy in remembrance of
Doris Grandy

Suzie Ernest in remembrance of
Paul Ernest

Dave and Molly Barnum for
our wonderful family



Karen and Dax Kimmelshue in memory of
 our parents **Ed & Ruby Kimmelshue**, and **Keith & Anneliese Williams**
 and in celebration of
 our grandchildren **Ruby, Isaac & Shane Lilly**

Joyce Stephenson in remembrance of
Suzanne Hanson

Cyndi Bailey for
Louis and Kathy Himelhoch, and **Emma and Bob Bailey**

Vickie James for
Aunt Jeanette

Bill and Carolyn Kees in remembrance of
 our parents, **Selma, Roy, Lena and Bill**



Financial Report

by Mark Kimmelshue, Treasurer

Faith Lutheran Church General Fund Finances as of 11/30/24

	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Percent Of Budget
TOTAL INCOME	\$196,176.75	\$184,105.27	93.85%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$245,965.57	\$198,769.40	80.81%
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(\$49,788.82)	(\$14,664.13)	
Beginning General Fund Balance as of 7/1/2024		\$16,135.61	
Net Revenue through 11/30/24		(\$14,664.13)	
Ending General Fund Balance		\$1,471.48	

As you can see above, the this year's budget is getting extremely tight. This should fix itself in December as year end giving takes place. We all can help support Faith Lutheran to spread the Gospel by giving a little more This Christmas season.

Thank You All for your continued support.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact:

Mark Kimmelshue

530-520-8228

kimmelshue@armcorice.com

In December, the council has a dinner together instead of a traditional meeting. Therefore, there are no council minutes in this month's edition of *Faith Talks*. Stay tuned for February's edition to read January's minutes.

Service & Outreach

The Rancho Santa Marta mission trip is being planned! Learn more on Jan 22 at 7pm in the Fellowship Hall

Several bags of canned goods were dropped off at the Chico Food Pantry via our Blue Bags collection



We're gearing up to host Safe Space from Jan. 26-Feb. 9. Help is welcome! You can help with intake, cooking, companionship, laundry, and lots of things in between.



Rosedale Elementary School

Thanks to your generosity, and the organization of our church's Giving Tree, 20 Rosedale Elementary children (about 6 families) got sets of clothes and a set of toys thanks to our giving tree donors! On top of that, about 6 families also received Winco gift cards. Our three residents at the Mercy House received gift cards as well.



3 and a half carloads of coats were delivered to 6th Street Center for Youth



Over \$400 was raised at the Silent Auction for 6th Street Center for Youth!

Through purchasing crafts made by Christians living around Bethlehem, we were able to send \$1,623 to families who had lost their livelihood due to the violence in Gaza.



Night Hike, Peregrine Disc Golf



Christmas Eve Strings, Choir



Children's Choir

Christmas Carolers



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Pastor Ben Colahan | Office Mgr. Michael Nicholson | Dir. Worship & Music
Luke Nicolay | Dir. Youth & Children's Ministries Josh Edwards | Bookkeeper
Jeanette Joslyn | Financial Secretary Lynette Stensrud | President Jill Bentler
VP Steve Hall | Treasurer Mark Kimmelshue | Secretary Alyssa Manes
Council Members at Large: Elaine Lund, Mary Schweder, Leanne Chrisman,
Elise Gladu, Candy Munson, Kathleen Pappani, Dawn Stafford

A COMMUNITY REFLECTING GOD'S LOVE WITH A PLACE AT THE TABLE FOR EVERYONE

Office Hours: Monday-Friday from 10A-4:30P

Website: chicofaithlutheran.org

Email: office@chicofaithlutheran.org

Phone: (530) 895-3754

