

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
753 N. CALUMET AVE.
VALPARAISO, IN 46383

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WWW.FAITHVALPO.ORG

Embraced by God through Jesus Christ our Lord, we share this gospel of hope and healing within and throughout our community within and throughout our community



The Last Straw

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned-- every one-- to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:1-6)

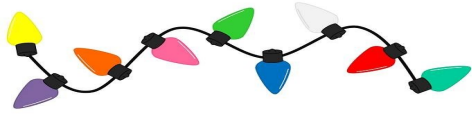
You hear the sound of little feet running and a loud crash from the living room. From the moment you woke up, you have barely had a moment where your children have not been fighting, tattling on a sibling, yelling at you, or having a meltdown. The school just called... Merry Christmas?

Have you ever had to deal with a difficult child? Does it sometimes feel like that last straw is about to break? You are not alone. Throughout the bible there are plenty of examples of challenging children: Cain and Able, Jacob and Esau, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and his brothers, Absalom and Solomon. During our Wednesday Night Advent Series, we will be talking about some the rebellious and challenging children just named and some of the situations in which their parents might have thought, "this is the last straw."

Unfortunately, the parents of these children were not without their flaws either. Neither was the fallen world into which these children were born. I suspect even the parents of the one truly perfect child in history, probably got frustrated and struggled in their role as parents. An unexpected pregnancy, an engagement that was nearly broken off, the whispers and rumors around town, and a difficult pregnant journey through sometimes treacherous territory to pay taxes to a nation that had captured and occupied their homeland. Having a child who really was always right. I doubt any of these were easy on Mary and Joseph. I wonder if they ever looked up to the heavens or at Jesus, and thought, "This is the last straw."

Of course, we could wonder the same thing about God our Savior, come to us in the flesh. What an act of patient love it must have been, to knowing and willingly, set aside heavenly glory, to reside in the tight quarters of a womb for 9 months, then to go through the birthing process to be born in what to most onlookers would have seemed unremarkable compared to any other messy birth. Being born among hay and animals, may not have been considered as odd or humiliating to many people back then, as we might make it today. Most standards of living back then would be considered primitive compared to our standards. However, take even our best then or now standards and compare them to the perfection of heaven, and Jesus came an infinitely long way to endure an unimaginable lot for us. I wonder what it was like for our heavenly Father to watch Jesus go through all that he did, only to be treated by many as if he were nothing special or worse. What was it like for the Heavenly Father to watch the way people treated Jesus growing up, or once he began his public ministry, and especially in those painful and bloody days that lead to the cross and Easter. Considering the Father's all-knowing nature and His infinity intimate connection to His Son, it is amazing that God came among us in the flesh at all, let alone that He did not wipe out humanity entirely saying, "This is the last straw." What wondrous love is this, that despite this being a world full of challenging and sinful children, "God so loved the world, He gave his only Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life!" What amazing grace that God took the journey from heaven to cradle to cross to grave, and then back to life and heaven again, all to forgive our sins and give us new life as Sons and Daughters of God. And so my fellow challenging children, may the love and grace of Jesus, cover you and those around you, this holiday season and forevermore.

Pastor Eric Schoeck



HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Linda Berner	December 1
Chris Chambers	December 3
Eric Berner	December 6
David Chambers	December 7
Christian Nicholson	December 8
Joseph Price	December 10
Eric Berner	December 16
Liam West	December 20
Margeaux Berner	December 20
Constance Underwood	December 20
Karl Berner	December 25

Happy Birthday Jesus! December 25

Please call the office at (219) 462-7684 to add a birthday to our list.

MICRO BREW CREW

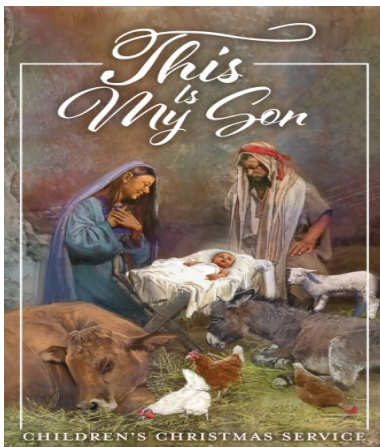
Micro Brew meets to enjoy fellowship over a freshly brewed cup of tea or coffee, as we are revived through the study of God's word as found in the Bible and some of our favorite devotionals. We would love to have you join us!

Micro Brew will not meet during December. Our last meeting for the year will be Monday, November 25. We will resume again in January.

BREW CREW

Brew Crew will be reading the book "The Case for Christmas" by Lee Strobel. Copies can be purchased from Paul Nord, who will lead the group in a discussion of the book and accompanying video. We will be meeting at 6:00pm at church on December 3 (Chapter 2), December 10 (Chapter 3) and December 17 (Chapter 4 and Conclusion). All are Welcome!

Disciples of Light is a small group for busy adults and busy families who want to make time for bible study. We will meet next on Friday, December 6 to watch and discuss *The Chosen* series (Season 2). This series is geared towards adults and children. Our meeting is in the church basement. Dinner begins at 5:00pm with the movie starting at 6:00pm. Please join us!



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM AND CHURCH GREENING

Please join us at church service on Sunday, **December 8** at 9:00am when our Sunday School children will present their Christmas Program.

After church please join us for the **Christmas Church Greening**, starting with a few carols followed by:

- Fellowship
- Snacks
- Decorating
- A Young-At-Heart Activity

Members are encouraged to bring Christmas snacks (crock-pot items or desserts) to share at the Greening.

SEWING SEEDS OF LOVE—HOLIDAY SALE

Be sure to check our annual sale for those homemade gifts. Cleaning cloths and large table runners have been added. We wish you all a Blessed Holiday season. —The sewing ladies.



EMOTIONAL CONTROL, SLEEP DEPRIVATION, STRESS REDUCTION and LACK OF FOCUS..... are phrases we often hear about and experience in daily life. The **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES** displayed on a table next to the Welcome Center provide opportunities for you to explore solutions and gain guidance in swapping unwanted habits for healthy new ones to build a better you. Please sign out one at a time and bring it back within two weeks. Enjoy these resources containing unexpected gems of insight waiting to assist you in positive directions on life's journey.

HELP DECORATE OUR SANCTUARY

If you would like to purchase a poinsettia and bring it to church to decorate for Christmas there is a sign up sheet in the Narthex. Photo to be included in next month's newsletter!



ADVENT SUPPERS

Come join us for food and fellowship prior to our Wednesday night Advent services in December. Table prayer is at 6:15pm. Dates are December 4, 11 and 18.



VOTER'S ASSEMBLY

On Sunday, November 10 at 11:30pm our annual Voter's Meeting was held. Those members of the congregation in attendance voted to approve the 2025 budget as well as new Board Member Jason Grubb. Members remaining on the board for another term include Bruce Lindner, Nathaniel Koehneke and Dave Pilz.

Jon Beagley will take over the Treasurer's role and Nathaniel Koehneke will serve as Bookkeeper.

Many thanks to Board member Dorothy Kehe who is stepping down, as well as Jay Gottleber who has served as Treasurer for the last few years. Thank you for your years of service, Dorothy and Jay.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

Are you interested in singing in the Church Christmas Choir? If so, please speak with Pastor Schoech.



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Church

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FAITH WORSHIP SCHEDULE

First Sunday in Advent, December 1, 9:00am Holy Communion
First Wednesday in Advent, December 4, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
Second Sunday in Advent, December 8, 9:00am Children's Program
Second Wednesday in Advent, December 11, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
Third Sunday in Advent, December 15, 9:00am Holy Communion
Third Wednesday in Advent, December 18, 7:00pm Evening Prayer
Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 22, 9:00am Word and Prayer
Christmas Eve, December 24, 7:00pm Service of Lessons and Carols
The Nativity of Our Lord, December 25, 9:00am Holy Communion
First Sunday after Christmas, December 29, 9:00am Holy Communion

