

Faith Lutheran News

Dust and Ashes

February, 2026 Page 1

Faith Lutheran Church

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Office Hours:

Contact Pastor for an appointment
Tuesday and Wednesday

Church Council

President: Kathleen Walsh
Vice President: Wayne Earthman
Treasurer: Susi Lewis

Financial Secretary: Loretta
Soracco

Secretary: Carol Lagomarsino
Worship & Music: Kaarn Egge
Westerhoff

Property Chairperson:
KC Anderson

Newsletter Editor: Kaarn Egge
Westerhoff

Congregational Meeting – February 1, 2026

Faith Lutheran Church will hold its Annual Congregational Meeting “Part 1” on Sunday, February 1, immediately following worship. The business will be to adopt the budget for 2026 and to elect a nominating committee that will bring council nominees to the Annual Meeting “Part 2” in May. Please plan to join us for this important time of looking forward.

Ash Wednesday – February 18, noon worship

The season of Lent, our 40-day journey with Jesus to the cross, begins on Wednesday, February 18, with Ash Wednesday worship service and imposition of ashes at 12:00 noon. Open Door United Church of Christ of Murphys will be joining us. If you can't make it to this service, there will be an Ash Wednesday service at Mountain Ranch Lutheran at 4:30 PM, or contact Pastor Karen to have ashes brought to you on Thursday or Friday, February 19 or 20.

Midweek Lenten Services and Soup Suppers: Wednesdays, 4:30 pm, beginning February 25

Conversations with Jesus. The Sunday lectionary for Lent in Year A reveals Jesus in conversation with both friends and adversaries. In our midweek Lenten services, we will join the conversation. How does each character inform our contemporary life of discipleship? How might Jesus respond to our own questions, confusions, and need for healing? Service of word, conversation, song, and prayer at 4:30 PM. Soup supper follows at about 5:15 pm. Please sign up in the narthex or let Kaarn know if you can provide soup or bread for one or more of the suppers.

Pastor's Message

*“No one has greater love than this,
to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:13)*

Dear Siblings in Christ,

With Valentine’s Day at its center, February is the month of love. The holiday focuses on romantic love; however, we celebrate *all* those whom we love – our families and friends, our community, and the world. We remember Jesus’ commands: to love one another as he has first loved us (John 15:12), and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). The Epiphany season is short this year, and so we will miss hearing Jesus’ even more challenging commands in the Sermon on the Mount: to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44). All of these

commands to love guide us in these days of political turmoil and trauma.

Lent begins just a few days after Valentine's Day, on Ash Wednesday, February 18, with a service at noon. The ashes on our forehead remind us of both our baptism and our mortality – we are beloved children of God, who has claimed us as his own and holds onto us in this life and the next. In this season, we accompany Jesus to the cross, as he enacts the greatest love of all, laying down his life for the world God loves so much. I hope many of you will join us for Ash Wednesday and midweek Lenten services.

We will be meeting as a congregation to approve the 2026 budget on February 1. Thank you for your faithful support of Christ's work through Faith Lutheran Church, in your giving and serving. You are a valentine to this community!

In Christ and his love,

Pastor Karen

Worship for February

Transfiguration Sunday, February 15. Time after Epiphany ends with Jesus on the mountain and the voice from heaven announcing again, "This is my Beloved Son."

Ash Wednesday, February 18. Service at noon, with confession and imposition of ashes – "Remember that you are dust."

Midweek Lenten services, beginning February 25, Wednesdays at 4:30 PM; services are followed by soup supper.

Looking ahead:

Daylight Savings Time begins – Sunday March 8. "Spring forward" one hour!

Conference 8 Assembly – Saturday March 14, at Emanuel Lutheran Church, Modesto. Pastor Karen is Dean of our Conference and will be chairing the meeting. All are welcome to attend!

Murphys Irish Day – Saturday March 21. We will offer parking and baked goods that day.

Holy Week – Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday, March 29; Maundy Thursday, April 2; Good Friday, April 3.

Easter Day – Sunday, April 5.

Bishop Jeff Johnson – Coming to visit us on Sunday, April 19.

Bible Study – Wednesdays at 3:00 PM,

Our weekly study looking at the lessons for the Sunday coming up will continue through February 11. What do we notice in our readings? What do we wonder about? This kind of study helps us to get more out of the readings as we hear them on Sunday... and your insights could make it into the sermon, so that you will be part of the ministry of proclaiming the good news of God in Jesus Christ! Join us any time.

No Bible study on February 18. Please join us for the Ash Wednesday service at noon. During Lent we will have midweek services Wednesdays at 4:30 PM, followed by simple soup supper, beginning on February 25. **No Bible study during Lent.**

Breakfast Fellowship – Tuesdays

You are invited to gather with Faith folks for breakfast each week, **Tuesdays at 8 AM, at Grounds**. Hope to see you there for this time of food, fellowship, and faith. Check with Rob if you are coming for the first time, because occasionally the schedule changes.

Murphys Food Pantry – Fill the Red Barrel

The first Sunday of each month is designated as “**Fill the Red Barrel**” Sunday. You are invited us to bring in food for the Pantry’s red barrel in the narthex or make an extra monetary donation to the Pantry (make checks to “Faith Lutheran Church” with “Murphys Food Pantry” in the memo). **February 1** will be Red Barrel Sunday this month. Thank you for your generosity toward this ministry of caring for our community. Together we are making a difference!

Food Pantry Ongoing Needs

Cereal, peanut butter, spaghetti noodles & sauce, tuna, chicken, soups, mac & cheese, noodles or rice mix, beans, corn, top ramen, granola bars, crackers.

Bishop Curry Issues Statement on ICE Shooting in Minneapolis

January 9, 2026

Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. (Isaiah 1:17).

Alongside our siblings in Christ in Minneapolis and throughout Minnesota and all who have been impacted by aggressive immigration enforcement and violence by federal law enforcement agents, I mourn the shocking shooting death of Renee Nicole Good by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent on Jan. 7, 2026. I join calls for a thorough investigation into this case, accountability for the shooting and a de-escalation of ICE enforcement across the United States. Alongside the Lutherans who have held vigils in Minneapolis and around the country, our church prays for God’s peace in this community and justice in this case.

The ELCA is committed to upholding and guaranteeing basic human rights for the safety of migrants and their families. Our church works toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the United States. We decry language that dehumanizes immigrants who are beloved children of God and escalates tensions between federal agents and communities. Surges of immigration enforcement and violent encounters like we are seeing in Minneapolis — as well as in Chicago; Atlanta; Los Angeles; Portland, Ore.; and Washington, D.C. — have indiscriminately targeted our neighbors, creating fear and uncertainty. This has created conditions where immigrants, those accompanying them and federal agents are all at risk.

ELCA social teaching provides guidance in complex situations: “Public safety depends upon trust in law enforcement to respect and protect the rights of all” ([“Gun-related Violence and Trauma”](#)). As a church, we are concerned by the trend of law enforcement and federal agents involved in immigration enforcement relying on the use of force in our communities without sufficient accountability or oversight.

God calls us to be witnesses to God’s presence, healing and hope. I invite ongoing prayers, vigils and advocacy for peace and justice, and I affirm the ELCA’s “pledge to continue our church’s historic leadership in caring for refugees and immigrants” ([For Peace in God’s World](#)).

In Christ,

The Rev. Yehiel Curry, Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

<https://www.elca.org/news-and-events/bishop-curry-issues-statement-on-ice-shooting-in-minneapolis>

February Birthdays

Ruth Ferguson	10 th	Leland Johnson	18 th
Mike White	28 th		

February AnniversaryBonnie and Gary Thomas 14thDan and Carol Lagomarsino 17th**March Birthdays**

KC Anderson	1 st	Mike Skenfield	18 th
Bonnie Thomas	31 st		

Happy Birthday

Sunday Date	February 1	February 8	February 15	February 22
Theme	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Transfiguration Sunday	First Sunday in Lent
Worship Assistant	Rob Westerhoff	Janet Skenfield	Liz Gilbert	KC Anderson
Altar Care	KC Anderson	Annette Stout	Carol Lagomarsino	Rob Westerhoff
Counters	Rob and Kaarn Westerhoff	KC Anderson/ Kathleen Walsh	Kathleen Walsh	Carol Lagomarsino/ Kaarn Westerhoff

Sunday Date	March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29
Theme	Second Sunday in Lent	Third Sunday in Lent	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Fifth Sunday in Lent	Palm Sunday
Reader/ Worship Assistant	Rob Westerhoff	KC Anderson	Janet Skenfield	Liz Gilbert	Robert Westerhoff
Altar Care	Annett Stout	Rob Westerhoff	Carol Lagomarsino	Annette Stout	KC Anderson
Counters	Kathleen Walsh	KC Anderson/ Kathleen Walsh	Kaarn and Rob Westerhoff	Carol Lagomarsino/Kaarn Westerhoff	Kaarn Westerhoff

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

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*Do justice, love kindness, and
walk humbly with the Lord.
Micah 6:8*