

Faith Lutheran News

Pentecost Season

July and August, 2025 Page 1

Faith Lutheran Church

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Faith Lutheran Church, Murphys

Pastor Karen Johnson

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Office Phone number

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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

Pastor's Message

*"Noah opened the window of the ark... he sent out the dove from the ark;
and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak
was a freshly plucked olive leaf..." (Genesis 8:6, 10-11)*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the three Sierra Pacific Synod Assembly Regional Gatherings was held in Fresno on May 31, and Rob, Kaarn, and I attended. The keynote speaker was the Rev. Beth Horsch of the Center for Church Innovation, an ecumenical ministry formed to strengthen and revitalize congregations. She reminded us of the story of the Great Flood and how Noah had built a window in the ark. When the rains had stopped, he opened the window and first sent out a raven and then a dove. When the dove returned with the olive leaf in its beak, Noah knew that the waters had subsided and he would soon be exiting the ark into a new life.

Just as the ark was a miracle, Pastor Horsch reminded us that "each church is a miracle." She asked what "window" we could open in *our* congregation, and what the Spirit (sometimes in the form of a dove!) might be bringing to us as a sign of new life to come? She encouraged us to look for signs in the community around us, to engage in discovery and listening for where God is already at work, and to discern how we might join in that holy work *in the community*.

For the past six months I have been visiting members of the congregation in their homes to hear how things are going in their lives and in their spirits, and how they feel about Faith Lutheran Church, especially what they would like to see us doing as a congregation. These visits have been really enjoyable for me, and there are still a few of you that I haven't caught up with yet.

There have been various suggestions for activities, as I shared in my Annual Report in May, but not much energy to step up and take charge. There are (legitimate) concerns that we are so small, and we don't have the people to take on anything else. As I look back on the notes I've taken in my visits, I wonder if I should have been asking different questions, like: Is your spirit being fed through Faith Lutheran? If so, in what ways, and if not, why not? And what does it mean to you for us to be a church?

Recently I listened to a podcast from Luther Seminary that asked: "has religion become obsolete?" It gave a review of all the cultural changes in the last 50 years that are working against the "traditional church" model (which is what we are as Faith Lutheran Church). The speaker was suggesting that traditional church "forms" don't fit with the culture anymore; hence, traditional religion has become obsolete. **However** obsolete doesn't mean *extinct*, and he gave the example of

vinyl records, which are mostly obsolete in this age of music streaming, but are still available and sought out by aficionados who value what they say is the better sound experience of vinyl. Obsolete religion may mean *small but fully committed communities following Jesus* in faith active in love. This may indeed be the future we can expect and need to live into. I would love to hear your thoughts about all these things!

I will be away on vacation for a week in July and another nine days in August, plus a one-day Deans Retreat in August. Thank you to everyone stepping up to lead in worship and “take care of business” in my absence. May each of you find rest in God’s mercy and renewal in Christ’s grace in these long summer days.

In Christ and his love,

Pastor Karen



Council Installation

Pastor installed the council members: Kathleen Walsh as President, Wayne Earthman as Vice President, KC Anderson as Property and Maintenance, Susie Lewis as Treasurer, Carol Lagomarsino Secretary, Kaarn Egge as Worship and Music

July 4th Barbeque at the Murphys Senior Center

A free Fourth of July BBQ will be held at noon on July 4 at the Senior Center, with hamburgers, hot dogs, and salads provided. Please stop by or call to **RSVP by Thursday July 3, 209-728-1672.**

Worship in July and August

We are in the Time after Pentecost, the “long green season” of growing in faith and discipleship, with challenging teachings and parables from Jesus. We will have lay-led services for two Sundays when Pastor Karen is away, with Kaarn Egge preaching on July 27, and Rob Westerhoff preaching on August 10. No Zoom link those days.

Bible Study “Pericope” not “periscope”

Our Bible study for the summer is a “pericope” (*per-ih-cuh-pee*) study, looking at the lessons for the Sunday coming up. What do we notice in our readings? What do we wonder about? What delights us or concerns us? 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! You are invited to join anytime and be a part of this weekly dive into the scriptures.

Wednesdays at 3:00 PM in the narthex.

No meeting July 30, August 6, and August 13 (Pr. Karen on vacation).

Murphys Senior Center News

I have been attending the MSC Board meeting for the last few months and want to inform you as to all the programs available at the Senior Center during the week.

Classes include; low impact aerobics, chair exercise, chair fitness (not sure of the difference), strength training, line dancing (one of Kaarn’s favorites), device class (phones, tables & computers), and craft and cooking classes. Most of these are available weekly or periodically.

Activities include: Monday games – canasta, mahjong, water color painting (Kaarn’s favorite, and she is very good), Mexican train (domino game), needle arts, pinochle, and care givers support. They also have the Thursday lunches for a minimal fee, the food pantry most week days and the meal in a bag.

On July 4th the MSC provides free hot dog lunch to all comers at noon on the deck; everyone is invited.

Another thing in the works is using the fellowship in the evenings for “community groups” people with like interests to plan and go on field trips like Stockton Ports baseball game, fishing, whatever. the groups will plan the event and pay any expenses. This has been done in the past and it was successful.

If any of these things interest you as a participant or volunteer helper, contact the Senior Center directly to get more information. Senior Center number is (209) 728-1672

Rob Westerhoff

New Bell Tower

Thank you to K.C. Anderson and team for putting up the new bell tower! We are ringing it once again each Sunday. *Glory to God in the highest!*

Breakfast Fellowship – Tuesdays 8 AM

You are invited to gather with Faith folks for breakfast each week, **Tuesdays at 8 AM**, even-numbered days at **Grounds** and odd-numbered days at the **Murphys Hotel**. 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.

Synod Assembly Business Meeting Recap

“Do Not Lose Heart”

The Sierra Pacific Synod held its Business Meeting Assembly on June 14 by Zoom. Thank you to Rob Westerhoff and Pastor Karen, who attended as the voting members from Faith. It was a full and meaningful gathering.

Resolutions Passed

[Resolution 2025-01 — Regarding Sierra Pacific Synod Compensation Guidelines](#): Motion Carries

[Resolution 2025-02 — Regarding Indian Boarding Schools](#): Motion Carries

[Resolution 2025-03 — Regarding ELCA Participation in National Legal Actions](#): Motion Carries

Elections

Synod Secretary: Jeffrey Pennington

Synod Council At-Large Member, Person of Color: Teresa A. Larson

Synod Council At-Large Member: The Rev. Daniel Buringrud

Synod Council, Primary Language Other Than English: *To be appointed by Synod Council*

Synod Council Youth Member: Eliana Basil

Additional Actions

The Assembly **upheld** the Synod Council’s decision regarding the *Preservation Appeal* by Shepherd of the Hills, Tiburon.

We were greeted by Kristen Opalinski, our church-wide representative and ELCA Manager for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations, who reminded us of the strength we have as church together.

We heard updates from the Synod Giving Team and learned how to become a [Mustard Seed Giver](#) through monthly generosity. We celebrated [lay summer course opportunities](#), lifted up ways to [support Candidacy](#), and honored congregational anniversaries.

We gave thanks for our deans and Synod Council members completing their terms, received news of a successful synod audit, and concluded with a moment of remembrance for Rostered Leaders in Memoriam.



Murphys Food Pantry Fill the Red Barrel July 6 and August 3

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

“Meal-in-a-Bag” Program for Senior Center

We are invited to fill a bag with the following items for a sustainable “shelf food” meal, “5-Can Chili”: 1 can black beans, 1 can kidney beans, 1 can pinto or refried beans, 1 can tomato sauce, 1 can diced tomatoes, 1 packet chili mix.

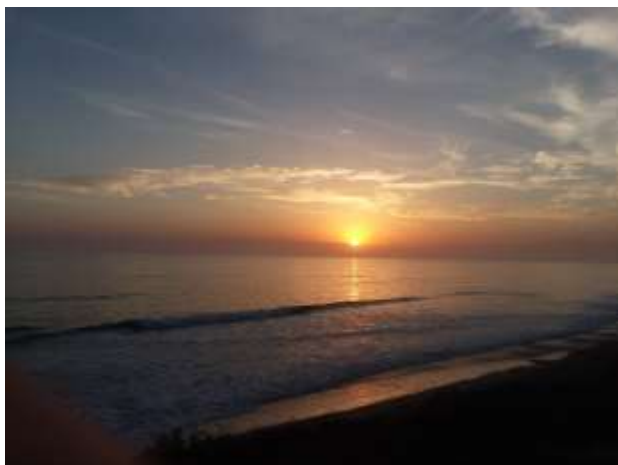
Interested in The Helping in Worship?

Our worship services have many opportunities for leadership and assistance; perhaps you would like to help. Especially needed are helpers for altar care (setting up communion), counting offerings, and providing fellowship. Training is available. If you are interested, please talk to Kaarn or Pastor. Thank you to those helping already, and to Kaarn Westerhoff for coordinating our worship helpers.

Summer Council Meetings

Tuesday, July 15, 3:00 PM, in the narthex.

Tuesday, August 19, 3:00 PM



Happy Summer Vacation

Happy Birthday

July Birthdays

Liz Armstrong	2 nd	Isaak Walsh	29 th
Vickie Burita	3 rd		

July Anniversary

Pastor Karen and David Johnson	17 th
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August Birthdays

Pastor Karen	27 th
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Sunday Date	July 6	July 13	July 18	July 27
Theme	Third Sunday in Easter	Fourth Sunday in Easter	Fifth Sunday in Easter	Sixth Sunday in Easter
Reader/Worship Assistant	Janet Skenfield	KC Anderson	Liz Gilbert/KC Anderson	Robert Westerhoff
Altar Care	Annett Stout	Kaarn Westerhoff	Kathy Walsh	
Counters	Kathleen Walsh	Rob Westerhoff	KC Anderson/Kathleen Walsh	Kaarn and Rob Westerhoff

Thanks for serving

Sunday Date	August 3	August 10	August 17	August 24	August 31
Reader/Worship Assistant	Janet Skenfield	Kaarn Westerhoff	Liz Gilbert/KC Anderson	Robert Westerhoff	Kathleen Walsh
Altar Care	KC Anderson		Carol Lagomarsino	Kathleen Walsh	Kaarn Westerhoff
Counters	Rob and Kaarn Westerhoff	KC Anderson	Kathleen Walsh	Carol Lagomarsino	Rob and Kaarn Westerhoff

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