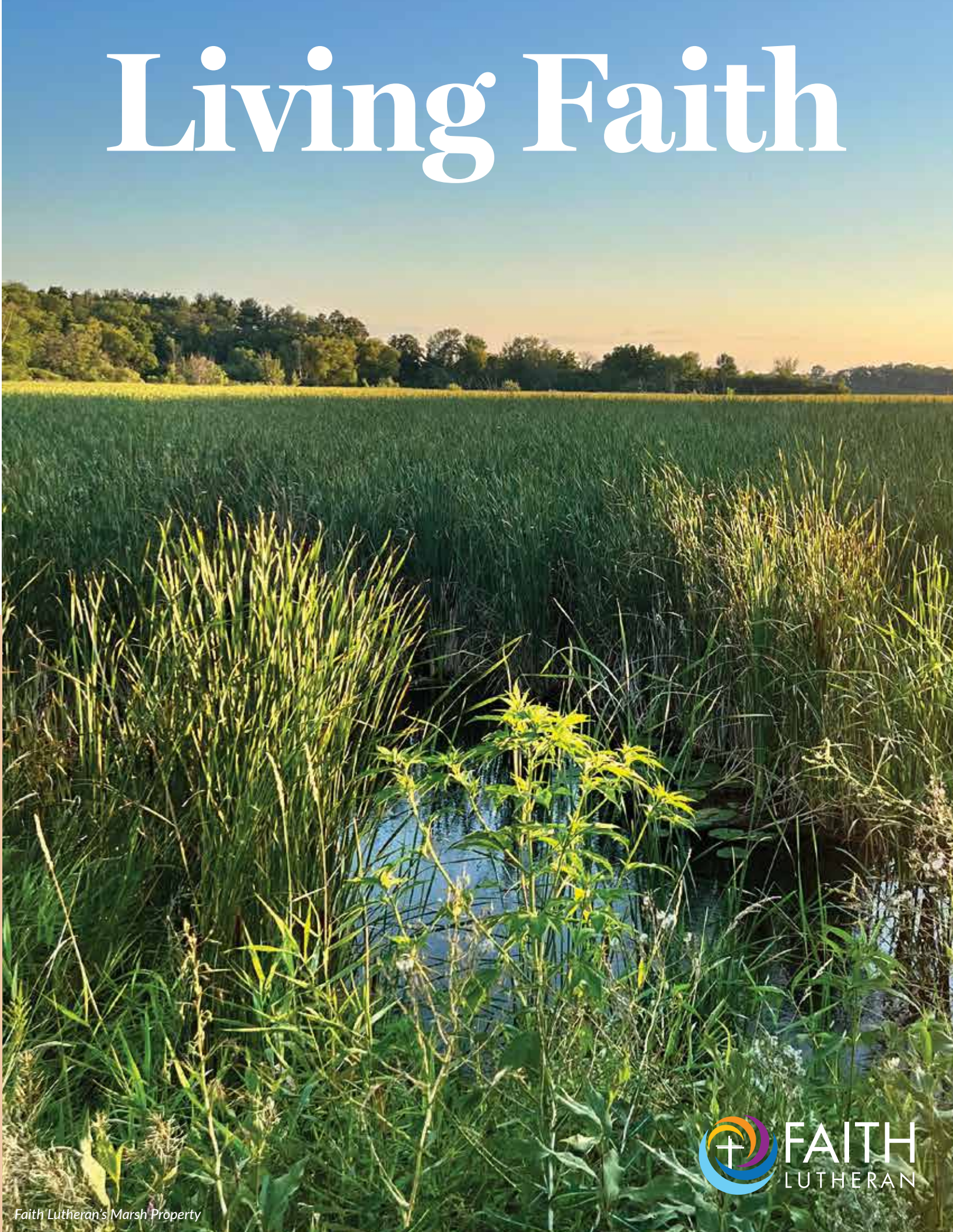


# Living Faith



## Fall Kick-Off September 8th

Worship at 9am (SPARK begins!)

Outdoor Activities at 10am

Glitter Ponies Pony Rides

Brunch with Sunny Days Comfort Foods Food Truck

Wheel of Prizes

Pie the Staff Fundraiser





# God Has Given All We Need

Last Summer, Faith's Congregational Council read Andy Root and Blair Bertrand's book, *When Church Stops Working*. The authors challenge the commonly-held belief that the most significant problem facing the church is that there is not enough: not enough people, not enough money, not enough influence, etc. They challenge, too, the idea that the solution for "not enough" is never-ending innovation. Instead they argue that the biggest challenge facing the church is that it's increasingly difficult to see and name the ways in which God is active in the world.

Root and Bertrand invite their readers to discern what they call a "watchword"—a statement of what God is up to in the congregation—in addition to the standard mission and vision statements. The idea is that the church's job is to wait to see what God is doing *first* and then to respond to God's action rather than falling into the trap of thinking it's the church's job to save the church (something that's actually Jesus' job).

Over the last year we watched and waited. We talked about the ways that God is calling us to be a hospitable place for Waconia and the surrounding communities through our properties. We talked about God calling us outside our walls, too. We talked about what it means to be called by God to minister in a quickly growing community. As we shared and listened to one another, we came to the conclusion that *God has given all we need*: all we need to reach out to Waconia, all we need to proclaim Christ in word and deed, all we need to be an open and hospitable community.

When this church was established, so the story goes, they named it Faith because "faith was all we had," and somehow in the beginning that was enough.

Today we have a lot more. We have many members with countless gifts. We have committed volunteers both to Faith and serving throughout the area. We have properties (including a cemetery and a marsh). We have a gifted staff. Our congregation has enough financial capacity to fund whatever we choose to do together. God has blessed this congregation abundantly. And the paradox is when you have a lot, it feels like you have a lot to lose. It feels like you need more.

And yet, faith remains the thing we need most because God has given us all we need for ministry. The question is, can we trust this promise, this watchword? Can we lean into reality? Can we move from anxiety about having enough, to trusting that if we're taking stock of what we've already been given that we'll discover abundance? Can we follow where God is leading?

I am confident we can. And we will. In this newsletter you'll see stories that amplify this new watchword: *God has given all we need*. And I invite you to watch with us—to look for God's generosity showing up amid this church as we discern how to respond together.

By Pastor Adam White



Can we move from anxiety about having enough, to trusting that if we're taking stock of what we've already been given that we'll discover abundance? Can we follow where God is leading?

## A TWO TON OFFERING

I was eating lunch with members of Redeemer Lutheran Church at Sammy's in Minneapolis. We were discussing ways that we could re-engage the partnership between our two congregations. Looking for a place to begin, we talked through our congregations' shared history, post-COVID leadership transitions, and the Wednesday night summer activities that both congregations had recently launched.

One of the Redeemer members mentioned that Redeemer was doing a clothing drive as a fundraiser in support of students attending MYLE (the ELCA Multicultural Youth Leadership Event, a four-day pre-event, which is part of the National Youth Gathering).

"I'm sure we can help with that," I replied.

And help we did. On Sunday, June 30th we delivered a U-Haul packed with clothing to Redeemer. In the end, the congregations' month-long clothing drive yielded 475 cubic feet of clothing weighing-in at nearly 4,000 lbs. In addition to the clothing going to support the Epilepsy Foundation, \$600 was raised to send Minneapolis Area Youth to MYLE.



Simply by assessing what we already had and what we no longer needed, we deepened a relationship with a ministry partner, and provided financial support for some of the 700+ students attending MYLE.

By Pastor Adam White



## Building on faith:

### A multi-use strategy for ministry

"We called it 'Faith' because that was all we had," is the story of Faith's humble beginnings as a congregation worshipping in the rented Izaak Walton League Clubhouse. This is no longer true of our congregation on this corner of Waconia. Through many people's gifts and hard work, God has blessed us with a beautiful building and grounds, the large marsh property across Waconia Parkway, and a spacious cemetery at Rutz Lake.

One of our 2024 goals is to create and develop a multi-use strategy for our building and multiple properties. We gathered a team and began discussing the properties: the histories, the challenges, and the opportunities. Currently, working groups focus on one aspect of the larger picture to research, invite more people into the conversation, and reach out to possible community partners. Our working groups are considering: the possibility of a daycare onsite at Faith, the possibilities for use and partnership with the marsh property, and how Faith can share our building with the community.

God has given all we need for ministry in this time. We invite you to pray for God's guidance as these working groups discern how best to use God's abundant gifts for ministry.

By Pastor Katie Jorgensen





# THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE A LOST BAG

Marta Beckett's bag wasn't at the baggage claim in Berlin. Her checked baggage included all her carefully curated outfits for the duration of Faith's Rejoice and Reform Choir tour. After the appropriate forms were filed, Marta boarded a bus for Wittenberg with only the clothes on her back, hoping she would be reunited with her luggage as soon as possible.

To check or not to check, that's the question. But packing light is never easy when you're on a week-and-a-half tour of Europe, especially when there are three scheduled choir performances. We know bags get lost. In 2023, 0.76 checked bags per hundred passengers were mishandled. Most eventually get found, but often not in time to avoid impacting the trip.

Marta was optimistic her reunion would come soon enough. But even when she'd had little more than an update overnight, she showed up at her first German breakfast with a smile and in a new outfit. Other participants on the trip who had been more successful at the luggage carousel were sharing. They were making sure Marta was clothed. This became a theme throughout the week.

When it became clear that the baggage was not coming quickly, the group's tour guide Christopher arranged for a friend to open his Wittenberg clothing boutique to address Marta's plight before church on Sunday.

Somehow, day after day, Marta was wearing new outfits despite her luggage's prolonged absence, but the available inventory was dwindling. By the tour's first day in Prague, it was clear that Marta's bag was in limbo and would not be reaching Marta before the group's return trip. On the group's walk to the bus that afternoon, a dress caught Marta's eye, but unfortunately there was no time to stop. The following day, after the morning walking tour (and a little detour), Marta found the shop again with the help of others. She purchased just enough to finish the tour in style.



In Matthew 25, Jesus says to the sheep, "I was naked, and you gave me clothing." And the sheep respond, "Lord... when was this again?" Jesus says, "just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Marta's bag was lost, but she had everything she needed because of the generosity and advocacy of members of the group. Everyone made sure that Marta was clothed—even if, at times, it meant literally taking the clothes off their own backs. When Marta found herself in need, God provided through the other participants of the tour.

Ask Marta, and she'll tell you: God has given all we need. We discover this when we are honest about what needs are present and work together to make sure those needs are met. And when we do this, we serve Jesus and the world.

By Pastor Adam White



## To Confirmation... *And Beyond!*

Over the last year, we had 20+ kids attend our high school youth group. A few were there almost every week; some were in an out with their sports and activities schedules; some regularly invited and brought their friends! We had a fabulous year talking about what it means to be a Christian, what the culture says Christianity is, exploring spiritual practices, and designing and leading youth led worship in May.

We've made some changes to the confirmation program, with the goal of supporting and expanding what we do for our high schoolers after they are confirmed. Last year Pastor Katie took over lead teaching for 8th grade, giving all our students a direct relationship with one of our pastors. This year, we're making some other structural changes to the timing of confirmation.

Confirmation Sunday this year is going to be October 27th, when we celebrate Reformation Sunday. This is one of the Sundays that Lutherans traditionally celebrate the affirmation of Baptism, aligning it with one of our major holidays. Also, instead of having a separate service - attended almost exclusively by confirmation families - we are going to embed confirmation within Sunday morning worship (at 8:30, 10, and 11:30). Our goal is that by moving the celebration of our teens affirming their baptismal promises into a Sunday morning service, it becomes a part of the worshiping life of the entire congregation.

We're also hoping that by ending in October, we can build on our successful youth group experience last year. We have students who attended a spring leadership retreat who are preparing to help lead activities at the 9th grade confirmation retreat in the fall. We have another group of students who attended a Gustavus leadership conference who are helping design both youth group for this year and portions of 9th grade confirmation itself so we can truly welcome all our high schoolers into youth group. We're providing our youth practical leadership training and opportunities to make ministry theirs, and we can't wait to see where God continues to lead us all.

**BURN** meets weekly for 90 minutes on Sunday nights from September 8 - October 6th.

Each meeting will have some instruction time, play time, and small group time.

**IGNITE** meets for 60 minutes on Wednesday nights beginning September 18th.

By Shane Marcus



## REALM DATABASE UPDATE:

### Time to 'clean the rolls'

"How many members do we have now?" is a common question for both new and longtime Faith members. Since I started at Faith in 2018, there has been a recurrent call to 'clean the rolls.' The time is now. We've gathered a team and laid out a plan with the staff and council. Our goal is to obtain a true sense of membership through data accuracy.

Faith's membership rolls have not been thoroughly examined in many years giving us an inflated sense of congregation size. Moving forward, this work will help

us be good stewards of our financial resources with our congregation-wide mailings, and provide us with reliable data for making informed decisions.

In this process, we will follow the Constitution and By-Laws which state that members commune once per year and give to Faith. We do not track communion, but we do track giving. Rather than a one-year lull in giving, we will reach out to those who haven't given in three years.

Action Item: if you receive a letter from Faith asking if you are still interested in membership, please respond.

By Pastor Katie Jorgensen







ELCA Youth Gathering, New Orleans

# Summer-y

Faith's Adventures Beyond our Walls



Bible Camp, Green Lake



Bible Camp, Green Lake



Summer Stretch, FMSC



Wednesday Summer Worship, Carlson's Lovable Llamas



Vacation Bible School, Scuba



Wednesday Summer Worship, The Burau's

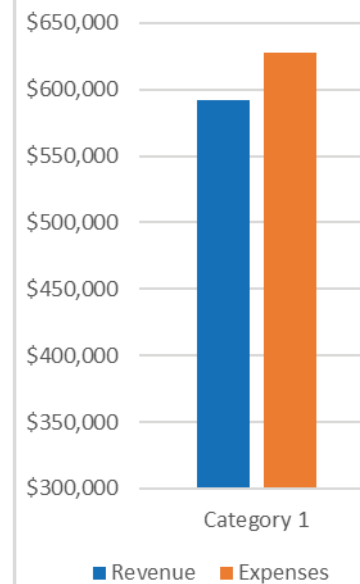


Rejoice & Reform Germany Choir Tour

## Financial Update

Note: Through July of the year: We've spent \$36,490 more than we've received. According to our budget projections, we've spent \$29,595 less than we planned to spend, and we've received \$4,164 less than we planned to receive.

2024 Total Revenue vs. Expenses



2024 Income vs. Spending



## Come Worship with us!

Sundays @ 9am (begins Sept. 8) & 10:30am (begins Sept. 15)

Prime Time Wednesdays @ 6pm (begins Sept. 11)

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# FAITH

# LUTHERAN