

Living Faith



GROUNDING

This is a disorienting season in the world and the church. It is a time when much seems rootless and unsettled. We know that change is inevitable and often difficult, and yet, as the author of Ecclesiastes reminds us, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven."

Amidst such a season, how can we remain grounded?

God created the world in such a way to teach us about cycles, systems, ebbs and flows, death and resurrection. These patterns are all around us, inscribed in the dirt, water, fire, and the flora and fauna with whom we share a home. As creatures made from earth, we are inextricably bound up with it.

Martin Luther once asked, “Who can fathom how from the barren earth God creates so many kinds of flowers and such lovely colors and such sweet scent, as no painter or alchemist could make?” And yet, so much of what we do as individuals and congregations is separated from the natural world.

I read an article the other day, and the author suggested that it might be good for his readers to “touch some grass.” I love the expression. This turn of phrase has become a popular way to encourage people to go outside while implying they may be a little disconnected from reality due to overexposure to things like social media.

Sometimes you just need to take off your shoes, and wriggle your toes in the turf, touching something real. You need to feel your body in connection to creation—to wonder together, what soils do we come from? To plug back into this beloved creation of which we are a part.

Throughout this summer our worship series will invite us to “touch some grass”—to ground ourselves in relationship to God’s good creation and to find our footing amidst the patterns that surround us. Using the elements from above, below, and around us, we will explore Biblical stories of creation, connectedness, and care.

We will get outside, put our hands into the dirt and our feet in the water. We’ll visit our swamp, our graveyard, and our neighboring lake, exploring the earth entrusted to our congregation. We’ll engage all five senses as we wonder and play together.

This summer, we invite you to root down, look up, and learn what it might mean for you and our Faith community to be **GROUNDED** in God’s creation.

By Pastor Adam White



Wednesday Summer Worship at 6pm

Each Wednesday, we will have worship, food, and an activity, whether we are at Faith or another location. Just as our faith is not confined to the church building or property, we’re taking the **GROUNDED** Faith Summer Tour into our community and the surrounding area.

What to expect?

Worship will be simple with music, scripture, sermon, and prayer. Food will vary each week between food trucks, grilling, and bring your own picnic. Activities will change depending on our location and the theme for the week. Food and activities will be announced in worship, on our website and socials.



Waconia –

Its Land & Lake

Thousands of years ago, the land around Waconia was shaped by the retreat of massive glaciers. As they melted, they left behind fertile soils, rolling hills, and hundreds of lakes. One of the most prominent was Lake Waconia.

The land around the lake was dominated by dense hardwood forests of oak, elm, maple, and cottonwood. This land, which was on the western edge of the Big Woods that covered much of eastern Minnesota, was home to abundant wildlife. The Dakota people, particularly the Mdewakanton subtribe, found this location ideal and established a village about three miles south of Lake Waconia.

The lake provided year-round fish and seasonal waterfowl, while the surrounding woods offered deer, berries, and maple sap. Just to the west, the great prairie began (think Norwood Young America), offering open areas for temporary dwellings and planting. The Dakota lived in close relationship with this land, calling the lake “Meday Wa Ko Ni Ya,” meaning “lake of the fountain” or “out of the water comes life,” a name that reflects the lake’s spiritual and life-sustaining importance for the Dakota.

The Treaty of Mendota in 1851 forced the Dakota to cede their lands and move westward, opening the area to Euro-American settlement. The first wave of settlers arrived in the early 1850s. Ludwig Sudheimer and Michael Scheidnager were among the first to build homes in what would become the town of Waconia, which was officially mapped in 1857. That same year, German immigrants began arriving in large numbers, followed later by Bohemians, Swedes, and Swiss. By 1858, most of the land along the lakeshore had European settlers.



Dakota Dwelling



Plat of Waconia

Farming quickly became central to the community, thanks to the fertile soil left by the glaciers. Wheat, corn, and other crops thrived, and nearby sawmills, gristmills, sorghum presses, and cigar factories turned raw goods into tradeable products. Just east of Waconia, Andrew Peterson claimed land to grow apples, pears, plums, grapes, and cherries. The experimental horticulture occurring on his land and the diaries he kept turned the farm into a cultural landmark. The lake also played an important economic role through fishing and an ice harvesting industry that supplied millions of pounds of ice to the Twin Cities area until refrigeration took over in the 1930s.

But it was tourism that distinguished Waconia from other small agricultural towns. In 1884, Lambert Naegele purchased the island in Lake Waconia and began transforming it into a lakeside resort. He named it Coney Island of the West, evoking the famous New York destination. Naegele built a hotel, cottages, a boathouse, and named the streets after German authors like Goethe and Schiller. Later, Reinhold Zeglin took over and expanded the island's offerings with bowling alleys, pavilions, and Sunday concerts.

Visitors from Minneapolis and beyond travelled to Waconia via two railroad lines, the Great Northern and the Minneapolis Prairie Line. Before the advent of automobiles, these trains provided quick and convenient access to the town. Then, a passenger steamship provided the final leg of the journey across the lake to the island.

The town grew alongside the island's popularity. Hotels like the North Star and Lake House hosted visitors for weekends or entire summers. The area also attracted permanent residents like Emile Amblard, a French winemaker who fell in love with the lake and never left. Due to the town's popularity, the Minnesota Gophers football team even held practices on the island—until local tavern owners tired of the players' rowdy behavior. Waconia's prominence as a tourist destination declined in the early 20th century when automobiles made the resort areas of northern Minnesota more accessible.

Today, Waconia's identity is still tied to the lake and the land that first drew the Dakota and early settlers. The lake, which is the second largest in the Twin Cities area, now has a regional park on its eastern shore, and local farms cultivate soybeans, grapes, and other crops. Come August, roadside stands offer sweet corn and other local produce.

When Coney Island was in its heyday, Waconia was known as the "Paradise of the Northwest." Today, someone fishing on the lake or sipping a glass of Marquette at a local winery could easily tell you: not much has changed.

By Mike Melchert



Andrew Peterson, Farmer



Coney Island Hotel

**Mike gathered most of the information for this article in Waconia Paradise of the Northwest - The Lake and Its Island (1986, Waconia Heritage Association), which his father, Paul Melchert, helped write.*



Sabbatical:

a time for remembering God's goodness, restoring patterns of rest, and exploring paths of renewal

By the grace of God and the generosity of Faith Lutheran, I am excited about my sabbatical! As stipulated in my letter of call, I was eligible to apply for a sabbatical after five years of service. Six and a half years in, I'm blessed that the council enthusiastically approved my sabbatical for this summer: it will begin on May 12 and end on August 11. I look forward to returning refreshed and reenergized for the ways God continues to call us to be a church together. Also – in accordance with my letter of call – I am committed to serving at least another year at Faith once my sabbatical ends.

My sabbatical is structured around three themes: Remember, Restore, and Renew.

Remember – The spiritual practice of remembering God's activity and God's faithfulness in our lives sustains us in moments of challenge and change. God's constancy in the past becomes our confidence in God's presence now, and into the future. During my sabbatical, I will visit places significant to my faith journey and call to ministry, including: Spirit in the Pines Camp; Chelan, WA; and Duluth, MN.

Restore – The spiritual practice of keeping the sabbath is God's restorative work of taking Pharaoh's slavery and economy (the need to produce, produce, produce) out of God's people. Grounded in our identity as God's beloved children, we are restored to right relationship with God and work. During my sabbatical, I will be trying various practices of contemplation and renewal to sustain me for a life of ministry. This will include periods of silence, spiritual direction, and other devotional practices.

Renew – The spiritual practice of renewal leans into God's ongoing creativity and God's omnipresence that meets us in all aspects of our lives. During my sabbatical, I will try out different activities and hobbies, rediscovering new ways to encounter God's life-giving, sustaining, and creative nature. I hope to try a pottery class, do some creative writing, and check out what else community education has to offer.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!
Psalm 27:13-14

By Pastor Katie Jorgensen



Updates from the Property & Facilities Teams

Faith volunteers and leadership continue to explore opportunities to enhance our role in the community and utilize our properties and facilities for both ministry and outreach. Here is a snapshot of current considerations:

Daycare Exploration: Determining need and scope.

Waconia is growing and parts of our building are unused during the week. This working group is exploring the need, possibilities, building codes, and other factors to consider regarding a possible daycare at Faith.

Marsh Property: Looking for partnership opportunities.

Faith Lutheran owns forty acres of marshland across Waconia Parkway from the church property, and the vision would be for it to serve the community in partnership with other organizations. We are in conversation with the city of Waconia about this possibility.

Rutz Lake Cemetery: Planning for the future.

The Rutz Lake Cemetery is a beautiful and important asset for Faith Lutheran, and for anyone who wants to be buried near Waconia as other local cemeteries are full or for members only. Some of the land is currently rented for agriculture and will eventually need to be surveyed and plotted. Conversations have begun about the possibilities of green burials.

Facility Use: Community engagement.

Faith has a variety of great spaces that would be ideal for family, business, or community group meetings and events. We have information about space rental, policies, and pricing on the website. The goal of this subgroup is to explore ways to make this space more attractive to local groups and to raise the visibility of this option in the community.

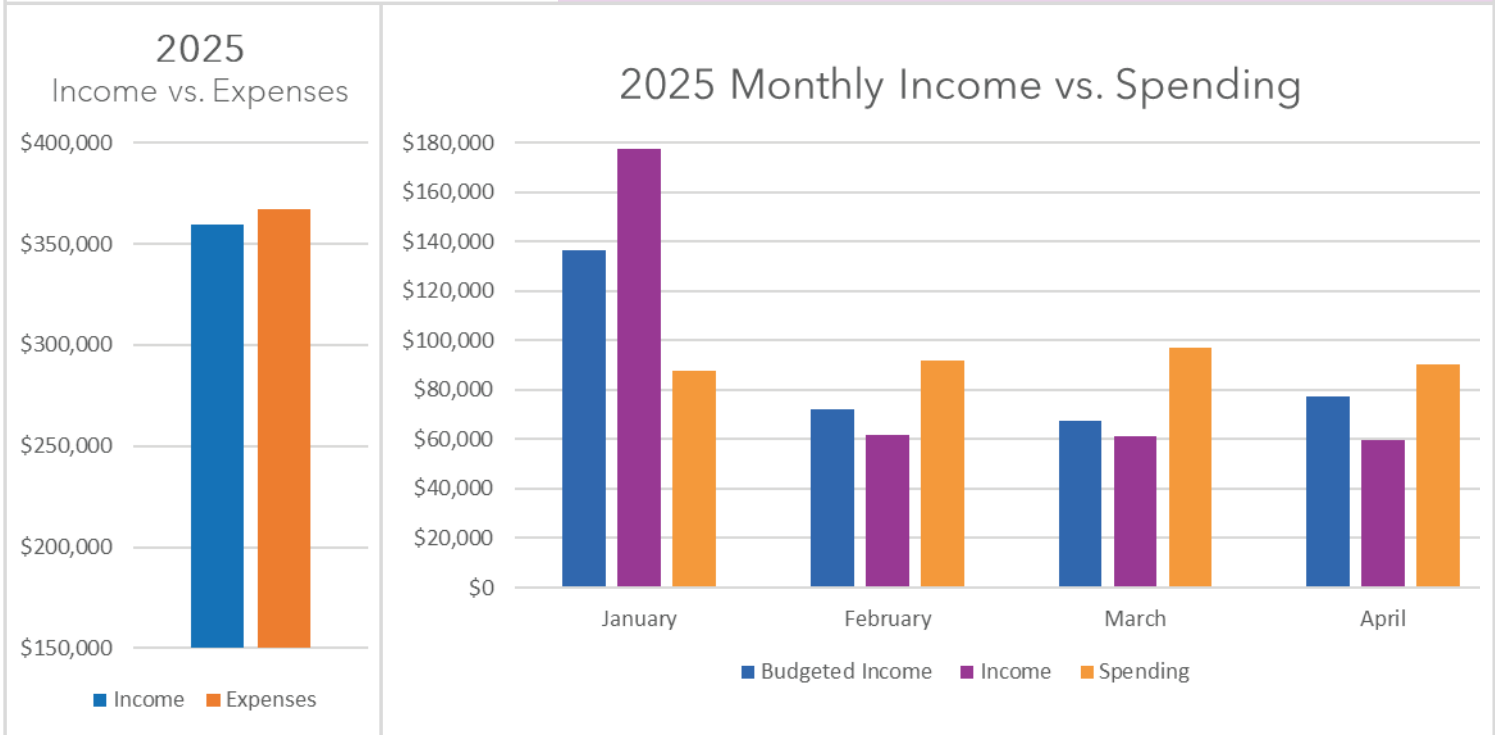
Looking Ahead: Strategic vision.

As Faith Lutheran moves forward with these conversations and explorations, the focus remains on community engagement, long-term sustainability, and aligning property use with the church's mission. Please pray for these working groups to discern how God is calling us to steward all that God has given.

Next Steps: Watch for a congregation-wide survey coming this fall to help us understand what the people of Faith Lutheran value and find energizing.

Financial Update

Note: Through the first four months of the year, we've spent \$3,025 less than we planned to spend, and we've received \$6,938 more than we planned to receive.



Come Worship with us!

Summer Sundays @ 9am

Summer Wednesdays @ 6pm

www.waconiafaithlutheran.com // @f

952-442-2101



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Pastor Katie Jorgensen

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WELCOME NEW STAFF TO FAITH



Kim Sop started with Faith on Tuesday, February 25, in a part-time role as Bookkeeper. A long-time member, Kim comes to Faith with an extensive background in banking, including experience as an Audit Specialist. In her new role, Kim will manage Faith's financial records.



Tara Koosmann began her new roll on Monday, March 3, as the Office Manager. A long-time member of Faith, Tara comes to Faith with a strong background in office administration, project management, and volunteer coordination. For the past nine years, Tara has worked as the Secretary at Southview Elementary in Waconia. In her new role, Tara will manage the operations of the church office, facilities, vendor relationships, communications, and provide financial oversight.



FAITH
LUTHERAN
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FAITH SUMMER TOUR **GROUND**

Join us on Wednesdays at 6pm beginning June 4
for worship, food, activities, and connection.

- June 4 Faith Lutheran // Earth
- June 11 Faith Lutheran Fire Pit // Fire
- June 18 Carlson's Llovable Llamas Farm // Fauna
- June 25 Paradise Commons // Water Below
- July 9 Faith Lutheran // Wind
- July 16 Lea Ann & Gary Burau's Home // Flora
- July 23 Faith Lutheran // Water Above
- July 30 Rutz Lake Cemetery // Dirt
- August 6 Schram Vineyards // Seasons

Check our website and socials for food and activity for each date.

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT *invitation*

Calling all leaders—whether you're a leader of a group, choir, Bible study, or ministry partner team! You're invited to a special Leadership Summit with Pastor Adam, Brooke Struck (Communications), and Tara Koosmann (Office Manager). Together, we'll explore how we can better support you and strengthen communication across our ministries. This is also a time to equip and empower you with tools and ideas to help your group grow and connect more effectively—with each other and with the congregation.

Please call the office or register online for one of the following sessions. We look forward to gathering with you for this important and inspiring conversation!

Sunday, July 13, 2025 from 10:15-11:15am
or
Tuesday, July 15, 2025 from 5-6pm

Register online under Events