

# Share the Faith Newsletter

# February 2018

Faith Lutheran Church  
3455 Stone Street, Port Huron, MI 48060  
810-985-5733  
www.faithporthuron.org

Pastor	Mark Huff
Deacon	Jeff Strock
Deacon Student	Sean Burke
Dir. of Family Life	Hannah Walsh
Youth Director	John Smith
Ministry Assistant	Stacey Weiss
Interim Organist	Harry Krause
Choir Director	Jean Langolf
Praise Team	Ryan Porte
Maintenance	Shane Smith Archer Seavolt

## FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Our Mission:** Embracing and connecting all to the life, family, and calling of Christ.

**Vision Statement:** Become a diverse and growing family of disciples intentionally committed to sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, nurturing spiritual maturity, and serving our neighbor.

### Core Values

**Bible Centered-** We believe in the authority, inerrancy, and relevance of the Bible and are committed to the regular study of God's Word.

**Outreach Oriented-** We believe all people are God's children who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Worship & Praise Motivated-** We are committed to God's Word and Sacrament through praise and worship, celebrating God's blessings to us in word and song.

**Children, Youth, and Family Focused-** We believe in the development of families and individuals through all stages of life centered in Jesus Christ.

**Prayer Reliant-** We rely upon God working through prayer.

**Stewardship Dedicated-** We believe in a lifestyle of faithfully sharing of God-given resources of time, talents, and treasures.

## What's Inside?

What's Happening Celebrations	1
Operating Budget	2
Council Corner	3-8
Official Acts	8
Stewardship	9-10
FLY	11
Information/Announcements	12
Community Events	13
Pastor's Point	14-17



## What's Happening this Month:

Food Pantry	Feb. 3, 8:00am
Prayer Shawl Meeting	Feb. 6 & 20, 10:00am
Elders Meeting	Feb. 12, 7:00pm
Council Meeting	Feb. 19, 7:00pm
Fidelis Guild	Feb. 12, 7:00pm

### Pastor Huff's Contact Information

Pastor can be reached at 513-284-2696

[pastor@faithporthuron.org](mailto:pastor@faithporthuron.org)

Pastor's day off is Friday

Private Confession / Absolution available  
by appointment

## BULLETIN & NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please have all newsletter items in by noon on the 26th of each month except February (deadline is the 24th).

You can call, email, or deliver the announcements. If you email please put "Bulletin Announcement" or "Newsletter" on the subject line. If you deliver the announcement to the office, you can put it in the box on secretary's desk labeled "Sunday Bulletin" or "Newsletter". (Note: If you need your information in both the Bulletin and the Newsletter, please put a copy in each box). Please put your name and contact information on the announcement so you can be reached if there are any questions.

With God's Blessings  
**Happy Birthday  
 February**



- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 William McNalley | 12 Sandra Plotter        |
| 2 Eileen Moore     | 13 Amy Busen             |
| Erna Reed          | 15 Riley Alexander       |
| 3 Alycia Shagena   | Mark Huff                |
| 4 Katherine Gay    | 16 Laurie Schutt         |
| Michael Helmreich  | 17 Patricia Hudgens      |
| 6 Tina Rivera      | 18 Lynette Page          |
| 8 Edith Burns      | 21 Jason Fisher          |
| Jeffrey Schutt Jr. | 22 Pastor Tim Eichberger |
| 9 Michael Young    | Karen Orrell             |
| 10 Dianne Becker   | 23 Austin Warshefski     |
| 11 Amelia Suiter   | 27 Joe McGuffin          |
| 12 Kegan Finn      | 28 Cameron Colgan        |
| Kathryn Ledtke     | Matt Walters             |

With God's Blessings  
**Happy Anniversary  
 February**



Date		Years
4	Matt & Jane Boyd	29
	Don & Trish Hudgens	51
24	Vernon & Denise Dencklau	28
28	James & Maureen Wolford	37

"A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person."

**OPERATING BUDGET**

**Operating Budget – Actual Income vs. Actual Expenses**

Offerings Budgeted for January 2018	\$	34,163
Offerings Received for Month to 1/29/2018	\$	5,963
<b>Needed Weekly - \$6,731</b>	<b>Rec'd - \$16,866</b>	<b>avg. \$7,455</b>
Regular Offerings	\$	5,260
Bldg Fund	\$	703
Expenses Budgeted Yr to Date (to month end)	\$	40,707
Actual Expenses Yr to Date to 1/29/2018	\$	36,053
All Income Received Yr to Date	\$	38,275
<i>Actual Expense vs. Income</i>	\$	2,222
Dedicated Accounts Balance	\$	63,485
Bank Accounts	\$	91,130
<b>Total Fund Balance All Accounts/Equity</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b><u>27,645</u></b>

# COUNCIL CORNER



## Faith Lutheran Church Voters' Meeting Minutes December 3, 2017

### AGENDA:

Opening Prayer.  
Approval of June 25, 2017 Voters' Meeting Minutes.  
Official Acts.  
Treasurer's Duties and Responsibilities.  
Approval of 2018 Budget.  
Adjournment.  
Closing Prayer.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Ray Finkel called meeting to order at 12:10 pm. Dave Weaver opened with prayer. 59 voting members present (sign-in sheet).

**APPROVAL OF JUNE 25, 2017 VOTERS' MEETING MINUTES:** Copies of June 25, 2017 Voters' Meeting Minutes distributed and reviewed. **MILLARD BECKER MOTIONED TO ACCEPT JUNE 25, 2017 VOTERS' MEETING MINUTES; MARGE MILTING SUPPORTED.** Motion carried.

**OFFICIAL ACTS:** (from power point slides dated 11/30/17)  
Transfer In: Denny and Karen Orrell. Hannah Walsh. Robert and Diane Dutton.  
Transfer Out: Don and Carol Schultz.  
Re-affirmation of faith: Paul Hill.  
Deaths: Deborah Woods. Margie Rilling. Janie Miller.  
Baptisms: Ellie Harper Rosche. Carter Branch. Benjamin McNalley. Anna Christine Helmreich. Magdalene Rose Huff.  
Weddings: Brian Rowbotham and Rebecca Price. Sean Burke and Patricia Wodwoski.

### **TREASURER'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Ray explained that the treasurer's duties and responsibilities changed with the addition of a bookkeeper. Council is proposing a change to the Constitution to better reflect those duties and responsibilities (shown on-screen). **MIKE ZWENG MOTIONED TO ACCEPT PROPOSED STATEMENT OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES; KATHY WEAVER SUPPORTED.** Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF 2018 BUDGET:** Proposed budget shown on-screen. Similar to 2017 Budget. Ray explained some changes. Question asked on keeping Youth Worker. Diana Purdy answered on behalf of Board of Family Life. Board very happy with what the

Youth Worker has accomplished and hope to keep him. Ray explained that we added a Family Life Minister to full-time staff, not a dedicated Youth Worker. It is hoped that she can get other projects underway such as Cradle Roll and Small Groups.

National Youth Gathering budget expense questioned and explained.

It looks like we'll carry a surplus into 2018 which will offset a potential deficit. Question asked whether Council is comfortable with proposed budget; Ray answered yes.

**MARK WARSINSKI MOTIONED TO ACCEPT PROPOSED 2018 BUDGET WITH ADDITION OF \$1500 FOR DISTRICT CONVENTION. DAVE WEAVER SUPPORTED. Motion carried.**

**ADJOURNMENT:** Meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm. **CLOSING PRAYER:** Pastor Huff closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted: Jane Noble

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Faith Lutheran Church  
**Council Meeting Minutes December 18, 2017**

**PRESENT:** Ray Finkel (Chair), Ryan Porte (Vice-Chair), Laura Wiley (Treasurer), Jane Noble (Secretary), Dave Weaver (Elders), Mary Lou Fraley (Trustees), Linda Morrison (Family Life), Curt Jevens (Stewardship), Julie Mallon (Outreach), Pastor Huff, Wendy Morden (Bookkeeper), Hannah Walsh (Director of Family Life and Youth). **GUEST:** Bob Edmondson.

**ABSENT:** None.

Ray called meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Devotions and opening prayer: Julie, Matthew 2:6.

**REPORTS:**

**TREASURER AND BOOKKEEPER:** -Wendy will call Shepherd's Staff for help in closing books for year. -Dave pointed out Praise Team line in budget is incorrect, needs to be corrected. -Payments into Workmen's Comp in 2016 incorrect; Wendy working on correcting. Will be reflected in 2018. -Negative amount showing in one of memorial funds; Wendy will figure out and email us.

Reviewed 11/20/17 Council Meeting Minutes; file as written. Error in October 16, 2017 Council Meeting minutes; change the year 2018 to 2017 in regards to Hannah's housing allowance.

**MARY LOU FRALEY MOTIONS TO APPROVE 2018 HOUSING ALLOWANCES FOR HANNAH WALSH IN THE AMOUNT OF \$340/PAYCHECK OR \$8840/YEAR**

AND FOR PASTOR HUFF IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,000/PAYCHECK OR \$26,000/YEAR. RYAN PORTE SUPPORTED. Motion carries.

ELDERS: No formal report. -Elders did approve transfer out request for Dave Murphy to St. Matthew/Lexington. -Also, Elders request Council have a planning meeting early in 2018 to look at 5-year goals. -Elders worked on statement for congregation regarding communion assistance. It will go in newsletter.

TRUSTEES: No formal report. -Having a new phone system installed, hopefully done by year-end. System will include headset for secretary. -Pastor noted some outlets on north side of gym not working; Mary Lou will look into this.

OUTREACH: No formal report. -Board finished Angel Tree and shut-in basket projects. -304 served at food giveaway in December. -February's local mission is Blue Water Rescue Mission; Board will put together hygiene kits. Mary Lou suggested asking congregation to purchase items for kits, if they are interested. Hannah will help Julie ask for Thrivent dollars.

STEWARDSHIP: No formal report.

FAMILY LIFE: Written report. No questions.

DIRECTOR OF FAMILY LIFE AND YOUTH: Written report. -Board excited to receive over \$1000 from Kiwanis' Polar Bear Plunge for help in youth activities. -New Cradle Roll class starts 1/14/18.

PASTOR: Written report. -Brought up need for nomination for Circuit Visitor; recommends Pastor Herrod/Algonac or Pastor Doroh. MARY LOU FRALEY MOTIONED TO NOMINATE BOTH PASTOR HERROD AND PASTOR DOROH FOR CIRCUIT VISITOR. DAVE WEAVER SUPPORTED. Motion carried.

#### OFFICIAL ACTS:

Deaths: Janie Miller, November 23, 2017. Funeral November 27, 2017.

Transfer Out: Dave Murphy to St. Matthew/Lexington.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Devotions. Jan – Jane. Feb – Hannah. Mar – Laura. Apr – Pastor. May – Mary Lou. Jun – Dave. July – Linda.

Coffee Hour. Jan – Outreach. Feb - \_\_\_\_\_. Mar - \_\_\_\_\_. Apr - \_\_\_\_\_. May – Fidelis Guild.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Security Update. Concerns discussed.  
2018 Budget. Nothing new to discuss.

Church Directory. Received Lifetouch mailer. Consider at later date.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm. Closing prayer: Pastor.

Next meeting: 1/15/18 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Noble

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Faith Lutheran Church  
**Council Meeting Minutes January 15, 2018**

**PRESENT:** Ray Finkel (Chair), Ryan Porte (Vice-Chair), Laura Wiley (Treasurer), Jane Noble (Secretary), Bryce Rosche (Elders), Mary Lou Fraley (Trustees), Diana Purdy (Family Life), Curt Jevens (Stewardship), Julie Mallon (Outreach), Pastor Huff, Wendy Morden (Bookkeeper) and Hannah Walsh (Director of Family Life and Youth).

**ABSENT:** None.

Ray called meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Devotions and opening prayer: Jane Noble.

**REPORTS:**

**TREASURER AND BOOKKEEPER:** Written. -Quote for buyout on postage machine (not being used) is \$2142. Balance due is \$2130. No benefit in a buyout. Mary Lou: might as well hang onto it. Wendy can't find a copy of the lease; she will call and get a copy. -John Smith has been underpaid. Wendy will figure out how much is owed and get John paid up. -Regarding negative amount showing in one of the memorial funds, 2 pieces of equipment were both taken from that line. Mary Lou advised moving one to another memorial fund to fix error.

December 18, 2017 Council Meeting Minutes: file as written.

**ELDERS:** Written. -Safety/security concerns big portion of last meeting. Outlined 8 steps Elders will take right away. -Diana mentioned "ALICE" training offered by Capt. Joe Platzer of the Port Huron Police Department. Suggested participation by Faith. Gave information to Bryce to evaluate. -Mary Lou has asked for a quote on installing working security cameras; she will get back to us when she has a quote.

**TRUSTEES:** No formal report. -New phones to be installed Wednesday or Thursday of this week. Staff to be instructed in use. -Dealing with flood damage on north side of building. -Bryce asked if Trustees could develop an evacuation plan for building? Mary Lou: For starters, Ryan will try to draw a map of building.

OUTREACH: Written. -Working on getting business cards printed. -Food Pantry fed 203 people at 1/6/18 food giveaway, including 37 new families. -Hunter House (our January mission) is still looking for cleaning volunteers. -Board collecting supplies for hygiene bags for Blue Water Rescue Mission (February mission). -LoAnn Watson wants to join Board. DIANA PURDY MOTIONED TO APPOINT LOANN WATSON TO BOARD OF OUTREACH; MARY LOU FRALEY SUPPORTED. Motion carried.

STEWARDSHIP: No formal report. -Regarding an endowment fund, \$25,000 would be needed to establish fund. Could work with "In Faith" through Thrivent; they would set up and manage the fund. -Hope to set up some estate planning meetings.

FAMILY LIFE: Written. -Diana has spent time on acquiring new, more attractive luminaries. Bob Morrison has made some sturdy, reusable luminaries for Faith. Asked Mary Lou about the number needed.

DIRECTOR OF FAMILY LIFE AND YOUTH: Written. -Spring Hill Retreat for 6th-12<sup>th</sup> grade is 2/2 – 2/4. -A Cradle Roll class is underway. -Working on results from Small Group Survey that was in the bulletin for several weeks. -Working on dates and a theme for VBS this summer.

PASTOR: Written. -Lent begins Wednesday, February 14. Lenten/Easter theme this year is "Blessed be the Name of the Lord" based on readings from the book of Job. -No consolidation of music ministry responsibilities at this time; Elders will re-evaluate in six months.

#### OFFICIAL ACTS:

None to report.

#### OLD BUSINESS:

Devotions. Feb-Hannah. Mar-Laura. Apr-Pastor. May-Mary Lou. June-Dave. July-Linda.

Coffee. Feb-Family Life. Mar-Elders. Apr-Council. May-Fidelis Guild.

Church Directory. Discussed producing a picture directory in-house. Laura and Diana will look into a couple of ideas and report back in February.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

Elections. Council members and Boards should talk to people now about joining Council or a Board.

Goals. Bryce suggested a meeting to re-set goals.

Lenten Dinners. Ash Wednesday, 2/14 – Family Life. 2/21 – Elders. 2/28 –

Outreach/Stewardship. 3/7 - \_\_\_\_\_. 3/14 - \_\_\_\_\_. 3/21 - \_\_\_\_\_.

Oversight Committee. Needs to meet. Comprised of Family Life Chair, Elder Chair, Chairman of Congregation and Vice-Chairman of Congregation. Meeting to be 2/14 at 5:30 pm.

Received Fidelis Guild Annual Report.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm. Closing Prayer: Diana.

Next meeting: February 19, 2018 at 7 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Noble

### **Communion Assistants**

Recently the question was raised, “Who may assist the pastor with the distribution of communion?” In our setting, because their general role is to assist the pastor in carrying out his pastoral duties, the Elders help with the distribution of communion. In addition, the deacons, who have a similar role, may also assist. At times, though, due to schedule conflicts and availability, we ask past elders to help distribute the elements. Finally, we recently established a role called Worship Assistant that falls under the oversight of the pastor and Elders. Worship Assistants are men that the current board of Elders is training to raise up as future Elders. Part of that training involves assistance at communion. All of our practices regarding communion distribution are guided by the Biblical understanding that any baptized and confirmed male member of our congregation who is in good standing may assist with the distribution of communion if requested by the pastor and Elders. If you have any questions about this, or any of our practices, please speak with Pastor Huff.



## **OFFICIAL ACTS**

New Member

Helen Perkens

Affirmation of Faith

January 21, 2018



## STEWARDSHIP SCHEDULE

<p><b><u>Altar Guild</u></b>            Housekeeping      Rachel Miller            Early Service      Rachel Miller            Late Service      Tracy Porte</p> <p><b><u>Elders</u></b>      <b><u>8:15</u></b>      <b><u>11:00</u></b>            4      Phil Luhmann      Joseph Piechotte            11      Phil Luhmann      Joseph Piechotte            18      Bryce Rosche      Joseph Piechotte            25      Bryce Rosche      Michael Zweng</p> <p><b><u>Lay Readers</u></b>   <b><u>8:15</u></b>      <b><u>11:00</u></b>            4      Diana Purdy      Barb Adler            11      Pam Baerwolf      Rachel Miller            18            25      Korisa Johnson</p> <p><b><u>Ushers</u></b>   <b><u>8:15</u></b>      <b><u>11:00</u></b>            Dave Weaver      Curt Jevens            Don Hudgens      Jane Noble            Pam Naplin      Larry Horvath            Emma Purdy      Mike Young</p>	<p><b><u>Counters</u></b>            4      Mallon/Stevens            11      Boyd/Koglin            18      Paris/Watson            25      Moore/Stevens</p> <p><b><u>Nursery</u></b>            4      Megan Wiley            11      Megan Wiley            18      Megan Wiley            25      Megan Wiley</p> <p><b><u>Greeters</u></b>   <b><u>8:15</u></b>      <b><u>11:00</u></b>            4      Dru Warsinksi      Mike &amp; Sally Young            11           Mike &amp; Sally Young            18      Dru Warsinksi      Mike &amp; Sally Young            25           Mike &amp; Sally Young</p> <p><b><u>Acolytes</u></b>   <b><u>8:15</u></b>      <b><u>11:00</u></b>            4            11      Joey Smith      Madelyn Smith            18      Mara Strock      Austin Warshefski            25      Aidan Burke      Maddi Boyle</p>
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### Studies in Stewardship

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless. But it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the Small Catechism informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, family. We don't particularly

struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the church.

So, what is our duty as members of the church with regard to giving? The Table of Duties, again, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer, a member of the church who receives instruction, St. Paul taught: “Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor” (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord’s blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the church, He has the local congregation in mind. For “the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are these: to give regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It’s that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

## **FLY Focus**

### **February Confirmation Student Highlight:**

**Evan Leathorn**

How long have you been coming to church at Faith?

**Evan: 14 years**

What is one of your favorite memories of being at Faith?

**Evan: "VBS as a kid was always fun"**

What are some of your hobbies?

**Evan: Watching TV, playing video games, and playing guitar and keyboard**

How can the church pray for you this month?

**Evan: Band concerts coming up**

Is there anything else that you would like the church to know about you?

**Evan: I am almost 6 feet tall.**



## **HAPPENING THIS MONTH**

### **February 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> – SpringHill Winter Retreat**

### **February 11<sup>th</sup> – 2pm-3pm – Reducing the Risk**

- If you work with children or youth in any way or are interested in volunteering for Vacation Bible School this summer you will need to have taken this course within the last 3 years. Forms can be picked up in the office.

### **February 14<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday**

- Lent begins on Feb. 14 which means that Lenten dinners also begin again. Each Wednesday night during Lent there is a meal from 5:30-6, class from 6-7, and worship at 7:15. The Board of Family Life and FLY will be hosting the first dinner. The meal will be Walking Tacos.
- Don't forget to pick up your Lenten devotions at the Welcome Center. There are devotions for kids with a craft, teens, and adults.

### **February 16<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> – Mid-Winter Break**

- Port Huron Schools have school off during that time. We will not have Sunday School for children and youth. There will still be Adult Bible Study that day.



# INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Food Pantry

Next date:  
February 3  
March 3  
April 7

Giveaways begin at 8:00 a.m.



## **BOTTLES FOR BABIES**

The Fidelis Guild is again sponsoring "Bottles for Babies". Please pick up a bottle in the Narthex and fill it with change or bills. The last day to return the bottles will be February 25th. Blue Water Pregnancy Care Center does not receive any federal or state funding, so these gifts are an important source of funding for this important ministry.



## **Fidelis Guild "Women In Mission & Service"**

Come join us for our next meeting on Monday, January 8, at 7 p.m. in the Friendship Room. We will have a fun night featuring a "To Tell the Truth" activity and enjoy some winter-time refreshments.

It will be a night of food, fun, and fellowship. Reconnect with your church friends and develop new ones. We hope to see all the women of Faith there!

## **Mexicali 2018**

Meetings for the 2018 annual Mexicali Mission trip began in January on Sundays at 1:30pm at Trinity Lutheran Church in Utica, MI. All ages are welcome from 8th grade+. Paperwork can be found at [www.octaneministry.com](http://www.octaneministry.com).



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

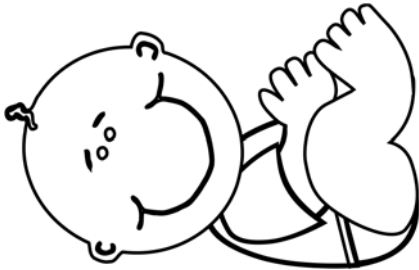
### **BLUE WATER PREGNANCY CARE CENTER**

Annual Ministry Dinner  
Tuesday, March 6  
5:30pm-6:30pm

Solitude Lakes Golf Course & Banquet Center  
5810 Flinchbaugh Rd  
Kimball, MI

Dinner is complimentary but financial gift  
accepted.

RSVP 810.985.4673



### **IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Mom 2 Mom Sale  
Saturday, Feb. 24  
9:00am-12:00pm \$1.00

415 North 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
St. Clair, MI

Table rental \$20.00

### **BRIDGE BUILDERS COUNSELING & MENTORING**

Grief Support  
Bridging the Gap  
From Heartbreak to Hope Workshops

February 6 – March 13  
Tuesday afternoons  
1:00pm-2:30pm

Understanding what's normal for grief makes it easier to navigate the healing process. What will this look like? Healing means returning to a place of wholeness and normal functioning once again. And, even though it might not feel like it right now, healing is possible. Information is the roadmap. Support is the compass. Hope is the fuel that gets you there.

To sign up please call 810.987.8772  
or email [bridgebuilder.office@gmail.com](mailto:bridgebuilder.office@gmail.com)

### **ALICE Security Training**

The Port Huron Police Department is holding a violent intruder/security training seminar on Saturday, February 17 from 8:00am-12:00pm at the city building in the council room.

This training may increase Faith's odds of staff and congregational member survival during a violent intruder event. ALICE goes beyond lockdown methods by providing individuals with a new set of skills that will greatly increase their odds of survival during an active shooter situation.

There is no cost for this training and attendance is not limited. There is a sign-up sheet in the office if you would like to participate.

## PASTOR'S POINT

Dear Friends in Christ,

Periodically I run across something in my reading that I think is so good that I want to share with you. This month that's what I'm going to do. Below is an article that you can find on [www.steadfastlutherans.org](http://www.steadfastlutherans.org) written by Pastor Andrew Richard, who serves in the Iowa East District at St. Silas Lutheran Church. It's the third article in a series of articles he wrote about his and his family's year without television. I share it not because I necessarily think that we should give up television, but more for what he has to say about television as a "catechism of the emotions." Like I did, I'm sure that as you read it you will find some good "food for thought." As we enter the Lenten season in February, maybe you'll consider fasting from TV as part of your Lenten discipline. I haven't made my mind up about mine yet – but now I'm seriously considering it!

God's blessings and love to each of you!

Pastor Huff

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Well, having taken to heart the paternal warnings of the Church Fathers, and having preached against the folly of the screen, it remained for me to see exactly what life without television would be like. I had some misgivings, not the least of which were the niggling speculations about the addictive cliff-hangers from which I had abruptly walked away. "What happens to the characters?"

The first thing I noticed about life without television was that my evenings were less predictable, which I did not like. It had become habit to do a few set chores, then sit down and watch a couple episodes of a show. I found myself doing the few set chores, and then, not knowing what else to do, continuing on with chores until it was time to go to bed.

During the day wasn't much better. The children were quite upset with the change. They never watched more than an hour of TV each day (unless we had a family movie night), usually less than an hour, and sometimes none. Yet after we cut out television they wouldn't stop begging, "Can we watch TV? Will you put this or that show on?" For as little TV as they watched before, I hadn't realized how addicted they were to the screen!

Between the hectic evenings and the whining children, I wondered if this had been a good move or not. "Yes, it's a good thing," I kept telling myself. "It might be hard, but it is good for our family, and it will become normal soon enough." And sure enough, it did.

It took a couple of weeks before my wife and I realized that our leisure time in the evening had turned into a flurry of housework. Our home certainly wasn't hurting because of it, though we missed sitting down and enjoying a story.

And so we turned to reading: I read aloud, and my wife worked on some of her hobbies. We quickly read through *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. There were some other books, and then *Paradise Lost*. Here were good stories: stories that didn't rely on catering to the passions or manipulating the emotions or sucking us in with overly-contrived suspense; stories of substance, with good and evil, and right and wrong (according to the right standard of right and wrong!).

We also amped up reading together as a family. I had already begun the practice of reading a good book out loud after supper. We started spending more time on that, and also took to reading at other times: a fairy tale here, a fable or two there, and many, many storybooks from the library.

It took about two months for the children to stop asking to watch TV, though even four or five months after we had stopped they would occasionally ask. One day my wife came up with a brilliant response. One of my daughters asked, "When can we watch TV?" and my wife said, in a silly voice and with a sweeping gesture, "NEVER!" The children thought that was a riot. For a while afterwards they kept asking that question, "When can we watch TV?" not because they wanted to watch TV, but because they wanted to hear and see Mommy's humorous response. Eventually they stopped asking entirely.

With the difficulties thus being overcome, then came full enjoyment of all the benefits. The chief benefit of giving up television has been an overwhelming clarity: clarity of thought and expression, clarity about what is good and true. I'll take these two in turn.

First, clarity of thought and expression. There is a certain way the world talks and reasons, an idiotic idiom that it employs, a snicker and a connotation to everything, and a general abuse and misuse of the English language. I had not realized how watching and listening to such things acts like a shroud on the mind!

Now certainly, replacing television with good literature will give clarity to thought and expression. But even before I had replaced television with anything but chores the fog began to lift. Scoffers tell us that religion is the opiate of the masses. That's simply not true. Television is the opiate of the masses.

Second, ceasing to watch television led to a clarity about what is good and true. This one, I suppose, is no wonder. TV is the world's catechism. Daily partaking of two diametrically opposed catechisms does not lead to clarity, but confusion. It's not that I assented to the tenets of worldliness. It's that my emotions had been programmed to sympathize with the wrong things.

This deserves further explanation. Television is not a catechism like Luther's *Small Catechism*. It does not ask questions verbally and call for the "proper" verbal response. Television does not catechize the reason nearly as well as it catechizes the emotions.

For instance, I do not condone cohabitation before marriage. God's Word is clear that such a thing is not pleasing in the sight of God, and is a violation of the Sixth Commandment. Why, then, was my heart glad when two characters, who had long been dancing around each other with romantic interest, finally confessed their love and then moved in together without so much as a thought of marriage? I should have cringed at such behavior! Or why was my heart sad when one of them left the house in a rage, saying it's all over? Was it not their lot to come to an unhappy end for violating God's Law? So why was I sympathizing? And why was my heart comforted when they made up later with implied fornication?

Television catechizes the emotions much more than the reason, and it's easy to let our guard down. It's easy to say, "I know that's wrong; that's not what I believe," while at the same time feeling joy at sin and sadness at sin's punishment. And this leads to grievous consequences in Christian life. Why don't Christian parents confront their children with their sins? Why aren't we Christians as bold in our confession as we ought to be? Why do we always feel the need to begin denunciation of sin with a winding, "understanding" prologue? In part because everyone's emotions have been programmed to react in reverse of what they should! We can "know" the right answer, and say it over and over again by rote. But as long as we sympathize with the wrong things, as long as our emotions are the world's emotions and not the Church's emotions, we're going to be living double lives.

Let me tell you, abstaining from the world's catechism has led to immense clarity about what is good and true. And I'll add that the liturgy does an amazing job of catechizing the emotions properly, when it doesn't have something like television competing with it. Emotional catechesis is important. Our emotions are just as fallen as the rest of us, and must be taught how they should feel. Sending our emotions down the tube's dark tunnels is only going to further disorder them, whereas the liturgy rightly orders the emotions. Much more could be said about this, but I'll leave it at that for now.

Besides the chief benefit of clarity, there's also the obvious benefit of having more time on your hands. Instead of television, I've read many of the classics: the Iliad and Odyssey, Herodotus' Histories, plays by Sophocles and Euripides and Shakespeare, plus a good amount of poetry. After reading Paradise Lost out loud I started writing poetry. I've been brushing up on Greek, and I learned Latin. I've been translating quite a bit, and also writing more than I ever had before. Nor is any of this tiresome. It was more tiresome sitting in front of the television!

I never found out how the cliff-hangers of the old TV shows resolved. I stopped caring a while ago.