



# ***Celebrating Our Faith Journey 2026***

**A monthly publication of Faith Journey Lutheran Church West Fargo, ND**

April Greetings Faith Journey Family,

Under normal circumstances, this newsletter article would be devoted to Easter and resurrection. I guess in some ways it is, but in other ways it will seem less so.

When significant financial misconduct on the part of a former employee was discovered and reported to law enforcement, I pledged to provide timely and transparent updates as did our Church Council. This article is dedicated to keeping that pledge.

As you likely know, our former employee was indicted and arraigned in Federal Court at the end of January. Subsequent to the arraignment, we were assigned a Victim Services Advocate who is our primary communication contact. Two members of our Executive Committee and myself met virtually with the Victim Services Advocate, the U.S. Prosecuting Attorney, and the F.B.I. Agent who has been leading the investigation. At that meeting we were able to get a sense of the timeline moving forward and ask questions about the process moving forward. If you have questions about the content of that call, please reach out to me directly and I will do my best to respond as thoroughly as I can without compromising the work of law enforcement and the Federal Court. The trial date is currently set for September 15, 2026.

One of the things we have been asked to do by the U.S. Prosecuting Attorney is to craft a Victim Impact Statement. Some of the points that will be covered in that statement are relatively concrete in nature; others are more subjective and less concrete. To that end, we have emailed a survey tool to the congregation. Responses are anonymous, unless you choose to include your name, and will be compiled so that the substance of your thoughts can be included in the Victim Impact Statement which will be reviewed by our attorney prior to submission to the U.S. Attorney's Office. If you have not already completed the survey, please do so. If you need assistance accessing the survey, please reach out to Katie in the church office.

I have reviewed the surveys that have come in thus far and will continue to review responses as they are received. Some themes that have emerged are a continued desire for transparent communication, reassurance that checks and balances are in place, and periodic objective review of all finances and accounts. Updates will be provided at our next Congregational Meeting on April 26th.

Back to the themes of Easter and resurrection. During Holy Week we remember that Jesus was betrayed by someone close to him and suffered death on a cross. We have certainly felt the sting of betrayal and loss. We have wondered whether this would mean the death of Faith Journey as we have known it. On Easter Sunday we celebrate the power of new life and resurrection. Day by day we are experiencing new life emerging even from the ashes of betrayal and grief.

In God's peace,

Pastor Sue Koesterman

*Faith Journey Lutheran Church, ELCA*

127 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E

West Fargo, ND 58078

[skoesterman@growinfaith.org](mailto:skoesterman@growinfaith.org)

701-282-3309 (main office)

701-515-7762 (direct)

701-951-8911 (mobile)



# UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

## April Memory Café Schedule

April 1<sup>st</sup> 1:00pm – Education: Brain Healthy Snacks & Dementia Friendly Meal Prep with Nikki Johnson, NDSU Extension, Hope Lutheran South

April 8<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm – Patriotism, Reminiscing & Music with Jerry Barnum, Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead

April 15<sup>th</sup> – 1:00pm – Welcoming Spring: Spring Planting Activity, Hope Lutheran Church, South Campus

April 22<sup>nd</sup> - 9:30am – Moving Ahead Life After Loss Support Group, 1122 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N, Fargo

April 22<sup>nd</sup> – 1:00pm – Caregiver Café Support Group, 1122 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. N.



MEMORY  
CAFÉ

## Women's Night Out - Friday, April 17

Tickets are \$25 & or you can reserve a table of 7 for \$175. They will be on sale beginning Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. You can also purchase tickets in the church office during regular office hours. Please have the correct change or a check. Our speaker will be Natalie Dawn Hanson. The title of her talk will be "It's Personal". Only 126 will be sold! Get yours today!

The Menu will be:

Roasted Heirloom Tomatoes with Hand-Pulled Burrata & Aged Balsamic & Garden Basil Dressing

Savory Caramelized Onion & Gruyère Bread Pudding Muffin

Coq au Vin Bourguignon with Glazed Root Vegetables (*Chicken*)

Buttered Baby Potatoes

Silken Lemon Posset with Candied Citrus

*Women's  
Night  
Out*

When the Presbyterian Bell Choir approached us about the **Souper Bowl Challenge**, I had no idea how much fun, and how successful it would be! We received the results from the Presbyterian Churches, and we took First Place! We were presented with "The Golden Ladle" award during worship on March 1st, 2026.

FJLC had remarkable participation. Four separate collections were tabulated:

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FREE WILL OFFERING: \$438

SOUPER BOWL CHILI / SOUP COOK-OFF: \$190

NOISY OFFERING: \$706.69

SOUP DONATIONS: 454 CANS (349 pounds)

Each dollar (\$1,334.69) and can (454) counts as one point, for a grand total of 1,788.69 points!

The amazed looks on the faces at the Emergency Food Pantry was worth all the work organizing this fundraiser. Thank you to everyone that donated, and especially to those folks who helped with all the behind-the-scenes work, especially Tracy LeClair, Barb Werlinger, and Sarah Vigstol. I would also like to thank our eight amazing chefs in the Chili / Soup Cook-off:

Gold Medal (1st place) Carl Thomason, Ham and Bean

Silver Medal (2nd place) Brent Gillund, Clean Chili

Bronze Medal (3rd place) Sue Koesterman, White Chicken Chili

as well as Jane Whaley, Dan Knudsvig, Brenda Jo Gillund, Tracy Leclair, and Britni Wyum. I would love to see this as an annual event and would like to invite you to join this souper cause.



Summer Worship Schedule begins

May 24<sup>th</sup> with one service at

10am Sunday

We will be adding a Wednesday evening

Communion Service starting May 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

Plan to join us!!



# April

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

			<p><b>1</b></p> <p>9am Piecemakers</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>12noon Maundy Thursday Worship with Holy Communion 6:00pm Arts &amp; Environment Meeting 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship with Holy Communion including Communion milestone</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>Church Office Closed</b> 12noon Good Friday Worship 6:30pm Good Friday Worship</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>9:30am More than Manna</p>
 <p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Happy Easter! He has Risen!</b> 7am Trad. Worship with Holy Communion 9am Trad. Worship with Holy Communion 11am Cont. Worship with Holy Communion</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Church Office Closed</b> 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>No Bible Study 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>9am Piecemakers 9am Staff Meeting 5:30pm Faith Formation Meeting No Compass tonight</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>1:00pm Caring Ministry Team Meeting in the Fellowship Hall 6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p>
<p>Pastor Sue Out of the Office</p>						
<p><b>12</b></p> <p>Commissioning of Communion Deacons 9am Trad. Worship with Communion 10am Launch SS Fellowship Hall 11am Cont. Worship with Holy Communion 12:10-12:40pm Youth &amp; Parent Planning Meeting 3:30-5:00pm Youth 9 Square Kickoff</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>No Bible Study</b> 5:30pm Landscaping Team Meeting 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>9am Piecemakers 9am Staff Meeting 7:00pm Compass Fellowship Event</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice Women's Night Out Prep</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>6:00pm <b>Women's Night Out</b></p> 	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>9:30am More than Manna</p>
<p>Pastor Sue Out of the Office</p>						
<p><b>19</b></p> <p>9am Trad. Worship with Holy Communion 10am Launch SS 11am Cont. Worship with Holy Communion</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>No Bible Study 5:00pm Church Council 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>9am Piecemakers 9am Staff Meeting 7pm Compass</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>7am Kings Men @ Deaner's Diner 6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice</p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p><b>May Newsletter Deadline</b></p>
<p>Pastor Sue Out of the Office</p>						
<p><b>26</b></p> <p>9am Trad. Worship with Holy Communion – Choir Sings 10am Launch SS 11am Cont. Worship with Holy Communion 12noon Congregational Meeting 1:00pm Dakota Vocal Union Spring Concert setup 4:30pm Dakota Vocal Union Spring Concert</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>4:00pm Faith Foundation Meeting 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>10am Bible Study 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>9:00am Piecemakers 9:00am Staff Meeting 7:00pm Compass</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice</p>		



## Red Willow Bible Camp Opportunities

Summer is coming fast, & along with it comes Bible Camp! Our Youth can attend Red Willow Bible Camp where they will experience the love of God in the great outdoors along with friends & leaders who will help them to:

- Deepen their Christian faith
- Build meaningful relationships
- Create shared experiences with others
- Have life-changing fun!

Thanks to our Faith Foundation and Rachel CT Bible Camp Fund, cost is: \$100 per camper  
Additional confidential scholarships are available.

When registering: Identify as Faith Journey (West Fargo) Include scholarship code (youth board, email, or contact me)

### Camp Weeks for Faith Journey Youth will be:

**Compass Confirmation (Grades 5–9) June 21–26, 2026 OR August 9–14, 2026:**

Our Compass program asks students to attend one week of Bible Camp for two of the three summers they are in Compass Confirmation.

**High School Youth (Grades 9–12) July 19–24, 2026**

**Kindergarten–4th Grade (half and full week options) June 14–19, 2026 or July 5–10, 2026**

# Camp Wear Love

July 13–16, 2026

Monday–Thursday 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM

For Kids Kindergarten – Grade 5

Lead by Red Willow Bible Camp Staff

Free to All Participants!

(Thanks to a Faith Formation Scholarship)

Lunch will be included

(We will move indoors if needed for weather)

Register now!

Volunteers will be needed!

Volunteers (6th grade – 105 years old!)

Host homes for camp staff (July 12–16)

Talk to Maren with questions & to volunteer

Full Camp Experience

Games

Outdoor Camp Setup

Bible Time

Crafts

Tents & a Fire Ring



Youth: Parent meeting

### Youth & Parent Planning Meeting

Sunday, April 12 | 12:10–12:40 PM | Fellowship Hall

For middle school & high school youth AND parents. We'll discuss:

Summer youth programming

Initial planning for the 2027 ELCA National Youth Gathering (Minneapolis, July 2027)

Your participation is very important so we can begin planning!

## 9-Square Kickoff Sunday April 12 - 3:30–5:00 PM

Youth Grades 7 - 12

Help set up our new 9-Square game and play! We'll be outdoors, weather permitting.

If weather doesn't cooperate, we'll move inside for Gaga Ball, Board games, Bracelet

making, Devotions, Event brainstorming

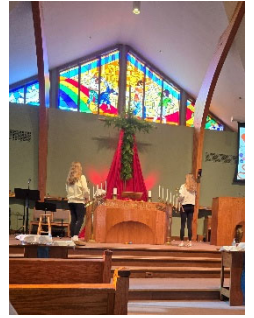
Bring your friends – YOU showing up makes it fun!



## Hello Faith Journey Community!



As we move from winter into spring, I'm grateful for the many ways our children and youth have been growing in faith and community. From our multi-church "After Dark" event that connected 50 middle and high school students, to the energy of our Launch kids singing on Palm Sunday, we continue to see strong relationships forming across generations. Youth-led Advent and Lenten meals with the help of generous donations from the congregation, creating fellowship while building leadership & service skills. We're also excited to put our new portable 9-Square-in-the-Air to use, bringing fun and connection to church gatherings & community events for all ages. A big thank you to the Kingsmen for choosing the creation of a youth room as the recipient of their Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast proceeds. Compass students who helped serve discovered that the Kingsmen are indeed a fun group! Thank You from our Youth to the Congregation for all the ingredients, soups, salads, and deserts that made our Advent & Lenten meals a low-cost, significant profit fund raiser for youth programming!



### Launch & Compass End-of-Year Celebration

May 19<sup>th</sup> 6–8 PM TUESDAY *Thunder Road*

We will again have unlimited wristbands (food not included). Launch students must be accompanied by an adult family member.

Parents & siblings—Please join us! You deserve some fun too!

## 1<sup>st</sup> Intergenerational Potluck & Power Hour!

May 17 - 12:15 PM Fellowship Hall

All ages invited!

Bring a dish that is a family favorite, culturally meaningful or something you love to share!

After lunch, we'll brainstorm about activities, groups, and learning opportunities for future Power Hour gatherings. The idea is to share time eating together, getting to know one another and then have time and space for gathering around an area of your interest on a monthly basis! So, if you have been wanting to get a faith-based book club, small bible study, craft group, community outings, or exercise group together this may be a great way to start! At our 1<sup>st</sup> gathering we can discuss ideal times to meet. Contact

Maren Kramer, Faith Formation Director for info. or to share ideas!

People have been incredibly generous through Sunday School (Launch) and Noisy Offering. From now until Rally Day next fall, we will be purchasing animals through ELCA World Hunger - God's Global Barnyard.

The animals we purchase will go to families and communities where hunger is significant, along with training on how to care for the animals and create sustainable nutrition through offspring.

This will be in addition to sponsoring our students in Africa. Next fall, we'll celebrate and see all the animals we've helped bring into God's Global Barnyard!



# WHO & HOW TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & CONCERNS

Faith Journey Lutheran Church

WIFI Guest: Faith-Guest Password: FaithJourney

Ministers: All members of Faith Journey Lutheran Church

Pastor: Sue Koesterman - [skoesterman@growinfaith.org](mailto:skoesterman@growinfaith.org)

Parish Business Manager: Katie Berg - [kberg@growinfaith.org](mailto:kberg@growinfaith.org)

Faith Formation Director: Maren Kramer - [mkramer@growinfaith.org](mailto:mkramer@growinfaith.org)

Executive Asst. for Finance & HR: Heather Reimer - [hreimer@growinfaith.org](mailto:hreimer@growinfaith.org)

Creative Worship Coordinator: Jane Whaley - [jwhaley@growinfaith.org](mailto:jwhaley@growinfaith.org)

Contemporary Worship Coordinator: Jamie Thompson

Church Council President: Ali Farstad – Olson

Church Council Vice President: Dan Knudsvig

Church Council Secretary: Katie Berg

Church Council Members: Trina Smaaladen, Brenda Jo Guilland, Ginny Jesser, Stephanie Rieniets, Jolanda Anderson, Susan Kaufman

Worship Sunday 9:00am Traditional *(September – May)*

11:00am Contemporary *(September – May)*

10:00am - Rotating Traditional & Contemporary *(May 24 – September 13)*

6:30pm – Wednesdays *(May 27 – August 26<sup>th</sup>)*

Launch Family Sunday School for 4 years - Grade 5

Sunday, 10:00am - Fellowship Hall (During the school year)

Compass Confirmation for Grades 6 - 8

Wednesdays, 7:00pm - Worship Center (During the school year)

Find us on our Website: [www.growinfaith.org](http://www.growinfaith.org)

Instagram: [faithjourneyWF](https://www.instagram.com/faithjourneyWF)

Facebook: [faithjourneyWF](https://www.facebook.com/faithjourneyWF)

Send bulletin and newsletter information to: Jolanda Anderson - [jolandaanderson@gmail.com](mailto:jolandaanderson@gmail.com)

Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 4:00pm

Friday – 9:00am – 12noon

## *Given in loving memory & in honor of members & friends of Faith Journey Lutheran Church*

### In Memory of:

Harvey Nelson

Roger Dubois

Arnold, Ida & Jerry Roth

Ed & Freda Hample

Joy Kahl

Marvel Mossestad

Jerry Roth

### Given by:

Candace Hejlik

Paul & Diane Newburgh

Pastor Judy Holmen

Jerry & Ellen Liddle

James Roth

Eric & Sara Rogne

Jerry & Ellen Liddle

Jerry & Ellen Liddle

James Roth

### Given to:

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund

General Fund



## *Laid in the arms of Jesus were the following members & friends of Faith Journey Lutheran Church*

Joy Kahl

Date of Death: 2/10/2026

Marvel Mossestad

3/17/2026