

Celebrating Our Faith Journey 2026

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

November Greetings, Faith Journey Family!

November is the month in which, however briefly, we turn our attention to giving thanks. I say "briefly" because it seems like Thanksgiving gets lost between Halloween hype and Christmas pressure and expectation. Thanksgiving barely gets a nod and sometimes feels to me more like Black Friday Eve than a stand-alone holiday worthy of more than just a brief pause for a turkey induced food coma.

Now that I've vented.... I really do have a serious point to make. Taking time to give thanks is a biblical virtue. The scriptures, especially the book of Psalms, are filled with examples of why, when, and how to give thanks.

- *Why? Because God is good and worthy of praise and thanks.*
- *When? At all times and in all places.*
- *How? In whatever way feels authentic to you.*

But I'm not only making a biblical/theological point.

Research has shown that people who are able to name the good things in their lives and express thanks for them are more content with their lives, less prone to chronic unresolved anxiety and depression, and are more resilient in the midst of health challenges, economic challenges, and grief.

So, I have a challenge for you. Keep a gratitude journal for 30 days. Each day write down at least one thing you are thankful for. Or, if you are not the journaling type, write one word in your calendar or day planner each day. Then share what you are thankful for with at least one other person.

In gratitude,

Pastor Sue

Pastor Sue Koesterman
Faith Journey Lutheran Church, ELCA
127 2nd Ave E
West Fargo, ND 58078
skoesterman@growinfaith.org

701-282-3309 (main office)
701-515-7762 (direct)
701-951-8911 (mobile)



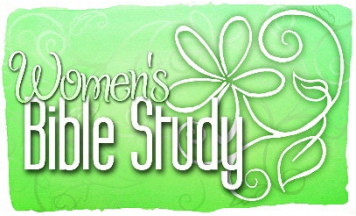
UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



November Memory Café Schedule - 3910 25th St. South, Fargo
Nov. 4 – 1pm – Caregiver Appreciation Celebration at Hope Lutheran Church, South Fargo
Nov. 11 – 1pm – Veterans Day Celebration with Moorhead High School Appollo Strings
Nov. 18 – 1pm – Education: Making Travel Easier: Tips for Traveling with Dementia
Nov. 25 – 9:30am – Moving Ahead: Life After Loss at Memory Café
Nov. 25 – 1:00pm – Caregiver Cafe

It hurts to lose someone.
GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences. You don't have to go through the grieving process alone. We want to help you on your journey toward recovery. We meet Thursdays at 6:30pm at Faith Journey Lutheran Church. Please call Pastor Sue @701-282-3309, Phyllis 701-239-6064, Bonnie @ 701-318-0949 for more information.





A Women's Bible Study will be held on Thursday, November 19th. This study will meet at 7:00am on the 3rd Thursday of each month at Deaner's Diner. We will be using the ELCA Women's Gathering Book as our basis. Talk to Pastor Sue for more information.



New Members received through Holy Baptism in October 2026

Kimberlyn Kay Figureroa	Granddaughter of Dean & Kimberly Gullingsrud
Isla Rose Wyum	Evan & Hailey Wyum

Members & Friends welcomed into the arms of our Lord

Lloyd Anderson	9/23/2026	Member	Service at West Funeral Home
Mike Carriveau	9/23/2026	Non-Member	Service at Faith Journey





We will be hosting "Surviving the Holidays" a simple, two-hour event designed to give grieving individuals encouragement and practical strategies for navigating the season. The event will be held on Tuesday, November 17th at 6:30 in a classroom downstairs at Faith Journey Lutheran Church.

Christmas Program Sunday Dec. 13,2026

- 10 a.m. Sunday Service
- We are going to make a program about what the animals saw along the way as Mary & Joseph Traveled from Bethlehem and in the manger
- We'll need to practice, sing
- Make Christmas Cookies for the Celebration with the whole Congregation.





Our faith family here at Faith Journey Lutheran Church has been saving our "NOISY OFFERING" in worship and in Family Sunday School to support the children we sponsor in Tanzania and now to buy the gift of animals through the ELCA' s program of Good Gifts and God's Global Barnyard.

We are blessed by participating in the ELCA's God's Global Barnyard ministry. Through gifts of animals such as goats, chickens, pigs, and cows, families around the world receive more than livestock. These animals provide nutritious food through milk, eggs, and meat, helping families improve their health and food security.

Animals can also create income and opportunities. Families may sell eggs, milk, wool, or offspring at local markets, allowing them to earn money for necessities such as school fees, medical care, and household needs. As herds and flocks grow, families can become more self-sufficient and build a stronger future for generations to come.

They gain reliable sources of food, opportunities to earn income, and resources to help provide education and a brighter future for their children.

Our Sunday School have the experience of knowing we are impacting other young children and people in other parts of the world in a very concrete way. It helps us understand the bond and connection of being "One Body" with all Christians around the world, living out one faith with purpose and action.

For our congregation, this ministry is a powerful reminder that God calls us to care for our neighbors near and far. It strengthens our faith, encourages generosity, and helps us share Christ's love in tangible ways. Together, we are making a difference and helping families build healthier, more hopeful lives while living out our mission to serve God's world.

For ourselves, supporting God's Global Barnyard is a meaningful way to put our faith into action. It reminds us that God's love reaches across the world and that even a simple gift can bring hope, dignity, and lasting change to our neighbors. Through our generosity, we are helping families thrive while sharing Christ's compassion in a practical and life-changing way.

This year we will decorate our Church Christmas Tree and Narthex with reminders of the animals we have purchased, our bond with the recipients of these animals, and God's ability to use us to bring transformation to lives of others and ourselves—all by living and acknowledging our connection and calling as "One Body of Christ" intertwined with each other around the world. Come celebrate with us on Wednesday, November 18, 2026 from 6-8 pm making Christmas Tree Decorations, cards to send to our Homebound members , and if you feel called, bring something for Cully's Cabin at Sanford Children's Hospital.

Blessings on this Fall Season,

Maren Kramer
Faith Formation Director
Faith Journey Lutheran Church
mkramer@growinfaith.org 701-369-2464

November Confirmation Schedule

- Tonight Nov. 4, 2026: Martin Luther: The Heretic's Trial. Maren is on Vacation
- November 11, 2026: NO CONFIRMATION, Church is closed for Veteran's Day
- November 18, 2026: Service & Fellow ship Event: Making Christmas Tree Decorations, Cards for those who can't get out to church and "shower" of new items for Cully's Cabin at Sandford.(Required)
- November 25, 2026: NO CONFIRMATION (Thanksgiving)

December Confirmation Schedule

• December 2, 2026	Advent Services
• December 9, 2026	Advent Services
• December 16, 2026	Advent Services
• December 23, 2026	NO CONFIRMATION
• December 30, 2026	NO CONFIRMATION



Power Hour in December will be on Sunday, December 6, 2026. Join us for a friendly potluck meal and then Lefse making for those that want to learn and those that love making it. 12:15-4pm. We will sell the lefse at church the Day of our Christmas Program Worship on December 13, 2026. Proceeds will go towards Youth attending the ELCA National Youth Gathering this summer and those who wish to raise funds for attending the Fall ELCA Eastern North Dakota Synod Youth Retreat in September 2027.

Vaccinations: focus on measles
Judy Jabs
October 2026

One of the missions of the Caring Ministry team is to inform the congregation of the trending illnesses happening in the community and the country at large. We live in a mobile world, travelers to and from other countries as well as traveling to and from all states assure virus transmission.

Again, the most prevalent trend in our country is the outbreak of measles at an alarming rate. In 2000, measles had been "eliminated" from the US by the CDC. Now, only twenty-six years later, we have the latest 2026 update from the CDC on October 16 of confirmed cases totaling 4400 nationally.

The measles virus is the most dangerous and easily transmitted disease in the world. All it takes is one person traveling unaware that they may have the disease because the rash has not yet developed. The outcome could be disastrous for the unvaccinated. Measles has no cure, has serious side effects, and can be prevented by vaccine. One person infected with measles can generate up to eighteen secondary infections.

Why the outbreak again of measle? There are clusters of outbreaks and, once again, people are being hospitalized and deaths have occurred. Much of the outbreak can be attributed to vaccine hesitancy, online misinformation, unverified narratives, or preference for natural immunity, and a reduction in "Herd Immunity."

Herd immunity is defined as a high enough percentage of vaccinated persons so that a contagion is unable to find a "host" to spread the disease. To achieve herd immunity, 95% is the target number of the eligible population to have receive the vaccine. Doctor Anthony Komaroff, editor of the Harvard Health Letter writes "It is simply untrue that the measles vaccine is not safe."

The autism myth has been debunked. The British medical journal, "The Lancet" which had first printed the material retracted the material 12 years later. Johns Hopkins studied sixteen well-conducted, large population-based studies done by different investigators in different countries and all found no relationship between MMR vaccines and autism. These are just couple of the reputable agencies reporting the data.

Vaccines have transformed global health and stand as the most lifesaving innovation in medical history. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that they prevent at least 2–3 million deaths each year. Even so, WHO reported an estimated 95,000 measles deaths worldwide in 2024.

What are the symptoms? Symptoms occur between 1-2 weeks after the encounter. It begins with a fever, cough, runny nose, and red watery eyes. Two-three days later white spots appear in the mouth and the significant rash begins. The virus can be transmitted from four days before the onset of the rash to four days after the rash erupts.

In a previous letter to the congregation, Jenean Baumann listed ten reasons to get vaccinated; this applies to vaccines for all diseases and is the same today. While there are some exceptions to certain individuals getting the vaccines, this list applies to almost everyone. And if you were born before 1957, you most likely do not need the measles vaccine due to natural immunity.



1. Vaccine preventive diseases have not gone away.
2. Vaccines will help keep you healthy.
3. Vaccines are just as important to your overall health as diet and exercise.
4. Vaccination can mean the difference between life and death.
5. Vaccines are safe.
6. Vaccines do not cause the disease that they are designed to prevent.
7. Young and healthy people can get very sick too.
8. Vaccine preventable disease is expensive to individuals, family, and society.
9. When you get sick, others around you may be at risk.
10. Your family and co-workers, friends, all need you.

As you do your health care visits with your primary care provider, discuss your vaccination updates. If you have children, The American Academy of Physicians has available vaccine schedules. The vaccination data from kindergarteners has trended downward. Minneapolis Star reports that the school-year vaccination rate was 95.2% in 2019 and was 92.4% in 2025-2026 well below the herd immunity mark of 95%. This was just for measles. Other childhood vaccinations have followed the same downward trend.

"The fact that we are deploying federal disease detectives to investigate measles outbreaks in 2026 is extraordinary. This is a disease we know how to prevent" John Brownstein, an epidemiologist and chief innovation officer at Boston Children's Hospital quotes in response to an outbreak and deaths in Pennsylvania.

Medical experts are concerned about these outbreaks and what other once controlled diseases may return. MMR vaccine took care of mumps, rubella, and measles. Whooping cough, polio, diphtheria, chicken pox, and scarlet fever vaccines have prevented us from these diseases.

"We all have a right to decide whether to protect ourselves—if that is the only issue. But vaccines protect not only you but also your family, friends, and colleagues. Getting a vaccine is about protecting them too. Protecting just ourselves may be at our own discretion but protecting them is not."

Anthony Komaroff, MD Editor in Chief, Harvard Health Letter

Sources: World Health Organization, Harvard Health Letter
June 1, 2025, CDC www.cdc.gov/measles/about/questions.html Boston Children's Hospital
Minneapolis Star Tribune

Intergenerational Fellowship and Service Activity Night
Wednesday, November 18, 2026 6-8 pm

Join Arts & Environment, Faith Formation, Community Impact Ministry Teams, Confirmation & Sunday School Families in a night of Fellowship and service! It's a night for all generations to enjoy time together! Check out the Newsletter article about ELCA's Good Gifts and God's Global Barnyard Programs for more information on this year's Church Christmas Tree of Giving Theme.

- Make God's Global Barnyard-inspired Christmas Tree Decorations to decorate our church Tree
- Color cards and write notes to our Homebound Church Members
- Participate in our "Shower" for Cully's Cabin at the Sanford Children's Hospital (a play and therapeutic room for pediatric patients, their siblings, and young visitors) by donating new Rattles, Teething Items, Barbie's, Matchbox

God's Global Barnyard: Faith in Action



Events at Bethany for November:

"Veterans Day - A Salute to Service" Program

- **Wednesday, November 11th - 1:45 PM - Bethany on 42nd (Chapel)**
- **Wednesday, November 11th - 3:15 PM - Bethany on University (Chapel)**

Join us for our "Veterans Day - A Salute to Service" programs as we take time to honor and recognize the veterans in our Bethany community. We look forward to coming together for this special occasion and showing our appreciation for those who have served our country.

Live Music Entertainment

- Tuesday, November 17th - 3:00 PM - Bethany on 42nd (Chapel) - "Golden Notes"

Join us for an afternoon of live music with "Golden Notes"! We're excited to enjoy this musical performance and spend time together as a community.

- Tuesday, November 17th - 3:00 PM - Bethany on University (Chapel) - "Carolyn Cadwell - Music & More"

Enjoy an afternoon of live entertainment with Carolyn Cadwell and her "Music & More" program. We invite everyone to join us for this special musical gathering at Bethany.

"Thankful Together" - Thanksgiving Social

- Thursday, November 26th - 3:30 PM - Bethany on University (Community Life)
- Thursday, November 26th - 6:30 PM - Bethany on 42nd (Meadowlark)

Celebrate the season with our "Thankful Together" Thanksgiving Social! Join us as we take time to enjoy the season of gratitude and connect with others in our Bethany community. We're excited to share this special time together!





November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Fall Back! **1** All Saints Sunday 9am Trad. Service with Holy Communion Commissioning of Communion Deacons at both services 10am Family SS 11am Cont. Service with Holy Communion 12:15pm Power Hour	**2** 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA	**3** **10am Bible Study** **5:15pm Bible Study** 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir	**4** **9am Plecemakers** 9am Staff Meeting **5:30pm Faith Formation Mtg** 6:15pm Confirmation Meal **7pm Confirmation**	**5** 9am Faith Foundation Seminars 11am Faith & Conviction Mtg 6pm Arts & Enviro Team Meeting 6:30pm GriefShare 6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice	**6** Concert dress rehearsal	**7** **2:00pm Windswept Concert – Mandie & Jared Hoeft**
8 9am Trad. Service with Holy Communion 10am Family SS 11am Cont. Service with Holy Communion **12:15pm Stewardship Meeting** 3pm Dakota Vocal Union Concert	**9** 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA	**10** **10am Bible Study** **5:15pm Bible Study** **5:30pm Landscaping Mtg** 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir	**11** **Office Closed** **No Confirmation** 	**12** **9am Faith Foundation Seminars** **1:00pm Caring Ministry Mtg** **6:30pm GriefShare** 6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice	**13**	**14** **9:30am More than Manna**
15 9am Trad. Service Holy Communion 10am Family SS 11am Cont. Service Holy Communion **11:00 AM SPUDS & SPLITS & BAKE SALE** **3:00pm Youth Group**	**16** **5:30pm Council Mtg** 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA	**17** **10am Bible Study** **5:15pm Bible Study** 6:30pm Choir	**18** **9am Plecemakers** 9am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Congregational Christmas Fellowship Event	**19** **7am Women's Bible Study – Deaner's Diner** **9am Faith Foundation Seminars** 11am Faith & Conviction Mtg **5:30pm All Teams Mtg/Potluck** **6:30pm GriefShare** 6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union practice	**20**	**21**
22 9am Trad. Service with Holy Communion **10am Family SS** 11am Cont. Service with Holy Communion	**23** 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA	**24** **10am Bible Study** **5:15pm Bible Study** 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232	**25** **9am Plecemakers** 9am Staff Meeting **6:30pm Thanksgiving Eve Worship with Holy Communion**	**26** Church Office Closed 	**27** Church Office Closed **9:30am More than Manna**	**28**
29 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9am Trad. Service with Holy Communion 11am Cont. Service with Holy Communion	**30** 6:30pm Boy Scout Troop #213 7pm AA	**1** **10am Bible Study** **5:15pm Bible Study** 6pm Cub Scout Pack 232 6:30pm Choir	**2** 9am Piecemakers 9am Staff Meeting 5:30pm Advent Supper 5:30pm Faith Formation Mtg. 6:30pm Advent Service	**3** 11am Faith & Conviction Mtg 1pm Retired Rostered Ministers Open House @ EaND Synod **6pm Arts & Environment Mtg** 6:30pm GriefShare 6:45pm Dakota Vocal Union Practice	**4** 1pm Christmas Coffee/Tea Set up	**5** 8am Christmas Coffee/Tea



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

In Memory of:	Given by:	Given to:
Jerry Roth	General Fund	James Roth
Lloyd Iverson	Fred & Paul Kaufman	Worship Enhancement
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Kevin & Alicia Fitz
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Shawn Borud-Tweiten
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Fred & Paula Kaufman
Lloyd Iverson	Worship Enhancement	Annette & Steve Porter
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Doris Rost
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Annette & Steve Porter
Doug Elewbeaker	General Fund	James Roth
Mike Carriveau	Furniture Mission	Rachel Thorson
Agnes Evenrude Molgard	General Fund	James Roth
Terry Potter	Kings Men	E.B. & S.A. Rogne
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Judy Dallmann
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Roger & Mary Jean Olson
Terry Potter	Kings Men	H.M. Thompson
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Mike & Janice Hammerstrom
Terry Potter	Kings Men	Denise & Gene Doeling



Looking to get more involved with your Faith Journey Lutheran Church Family? There are many opportunities to volunteer including, serving on the church council, joining one of the many teams, ushering, greeting, reading or serving communion. If you would like more information on the many ways you can help, please talk to a council member or Pastor Sue. We would love to add you to the list!

*****If you are interested in helping in the front office on Mondays, please contact Katie**

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS!

As the holiday season approaches, invite your friends and neighbors to escape the hustle and bustle and join you for worship with your community of faith.

Holiday Worship Schedule:

Wednesday, November 25th	Thanksgiving Eve Service at 6:30pm. Pie social to follow.
Wednesday Advent worship at 6:30pm	December 2 December 9 December 16
Sunday, December 13th	ONE service at 10:00am Sunday School Christmas program Choir
Monday, December 21st	Blue Christmas Service at 6:30pm
Thursday, December 24th	Christmas Eve Services at 3:00 and 6:30pm
Friday, December 25th	Christmas Day Service at 10:00am
Sunday, December 27th	Worship at 9:00 and 11:00am





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
Parish Business Manager: Katie Berg - kberg@growinfaith.org
Faith Formation Director: Maren Kramer - mkramer@growinfaith.org
Executive Asst. for Finance & HR: Heather Reimer - hreimer@growinfaith.org
Creative Worship Coordinator: Jane Whaley - jwhaley@growinfaith.org
Contemporary Worship Coordinator: Jamie Thompson
Church Council President: Dan Knudsvig
Church Council Vice President/s: Susan Kaufman & Roger Hansen
Church Council Secretary: Brenda Jo Guilland
Church Council Members: Luke Evans, Brenda Jo Guilland, Ginny Jesser, Stephanie Rieniets, Jolanda Anderson, Chris Smaaladen, Evert Van Engelenhoven
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)*
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*
Instagram: *faithjourneyWF*
Facebook: *faithjourneyWF*
Send bulletin and newsletter information to: Jolanda Anderson - jolandaanderson@gmail.com
Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 4:00pm
Friday – 9:00am – 12noon

The Calling of Matthew



"For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
Matthew 9:13 (NIV)

Based on Matthew 9:9-13 (NIV)

Z	G	U	C	Q	R	R	B	H	Z	V	X	S	C	R
F	J	U	S	E	C	G	I	S	X	T	K	U	N	E
N	Q	B	N	A	N	O	E	G	U	H	O	T	O	N
R	I	N	I	I	C	L	L	D	H	K	S	P	J	U
C	I	T	T	Q	P	R	F	L	P	T	W	I	D	P
D	M	T	E	I	Y	S	I	A	E	R	E	U	C	D
D	I	A	C	A	Q	E	H	F	K	C	L	O	M	K
S	H	S	T	S	C	V	B	E	I	G	T	W	U	Y
U	I	O	Q	T	R	H	Z	O	A	C	O	O	T	S
D	Q	K	U	O	H	T	E	G	O	L	E	V	R	W
Q	E	X	T	S	P	E	W	R	L	T	T	L	K	S
H	N	C	S	C	E	A	W	O	H	S	H	H	H	A
P	O	B	T	N	W	G	F	K	W	C	B	U	Y	W
D	V	T	H	Q	A	S	I	N	N	E	R	S	G	A
M	E	R	C	Y	D	M	U	R	T	O	K	R	G	R

DISCIPLES	MATTHEW	DOCTOR	COLLECTORS
SACRIFICE	DINNER	HEALTHY	TEACHER
MERCY	SITTING	BOOTH	SINNERS
RIGHTEOUS	FOLLOW	HOUSE	SICK

