

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL

By: James Synatzske, Congregation President

January 17, 2017

The New Year has started off at an exciting, challenging and optimistic pace for Faith Lutheran Church.

At the Council meeting on January 16 we were reminded of the awesome goals set for so many of our wonderful ministries such as music, youth, college students, Faith School, Sunday School, Stephen ministry, ministering to absent members & shut-in members, community outreach, SAIL, LWML--WOW!! Isn't it great to be so busy working for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ?!!

Staff has scheduled a **Planning Meeting** for all of the Faith boards, committees and ministry groups set for **April 22, 2017**. The objectives of the meeting will be to set events on the church & school calendars for the period of June 2017 through May 2018; and to aid in preparing a strategic plan for the church and school. It was noted at the Council meeting that better coordination of upcoming dates and events will prompt our ministries to work together and compound the benefits of each respective event.

Plans are being made for our Council members to personally fund and provide a brown-bag carry-out hamburger supper for our Faith School parents. The meals will be made available for the parents when they pick up their children at the end of the day. A date has not yet been set.

One of our new and active members recently shared the magnificent idea that we should make a concerted effort to welcome and recognize new members of Faith Lutheran Church, and help them get more familiar with the church's activities, our governance, boards and our property/facilities. The Board of Evangelism is already brainstorming on how to put this into action ASAP.

You will be happy to know that 2016 ended on a financially upbeat note with December setting a record for monthly offerings in 2016 and coming within \$800 of a balanced budget for the month. Available cash was up slightly from the previous month, our expenses for the entire year ended up being about \$14,000 below budget; and Faith School showed a \$25,900 net income for 2016. The downside is that 2016 ended with a \$55,000 church-only deficit and our savings have taken a \$41,000 hit since last January due to the shortfall in our offerings throughout the year.

Our 2017 Faith Lutheran Church budget unanimously adopted in December trimmed almost \$29,000 from 2016's budgeted expenses; but based on our giving/offerings history in 2016 and a challenge to grow our personal giving by 15% in 2017 we are faced with the reality that our stewardship must improve this coming year. It has been estimated that "on average" we will need only a **\$15 per week increase per giving-unit to balance the 2017 budget**. The urgency of this improved stewardship is vividly evident when one realizes that we are sitting on about \$30,000 in our savings account; and we used about \$41,000 of our savings to pull us through 2016.

We must heed this stewardship call beginning now. The raw reality is that we could see our savings evaporate and still be short of meeting our 2017 budgeted expenses. Our congregation's POWERFUL showing of offerings and enhanced stewardship this past October & December is living proof that we can meet this glorious challenge with His Blessing and through His Abundant Grace.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7: *"⁶ The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully^a will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*