



1402 East Avenue C, Bismarck, ND 58501

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After Hours Emergency Line: 701-595-0223

www.faithbismarck.com

News and Views

September 2026

Volume 2026, Issue 8

MISSION STATEMENT

"We are building a welcoming, nurturing faith community guided by Jesus to share the Gospel."

Rally Week 2026

"Shine Like the Son"

Wednesday, September 9th

Sunday, September 13th

Join us for the first week of Church School and Confirmation! Register your Church School (Age 3-5th Grade) and Confirmation (6th Grade-9th Grade) Age children using our Google Forms, and view the Church School Handbook, at faithbismarck.com/forms



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH CLERGY

Pastor Derek Harkins
(Fridays off)

Pastor Sylvia Bull
(Fridays off)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY:

8:30am & 11am

WEDNESDAY:

7:00pm

LIVESTREAM AT

SUN 8:30am &

WED 7:00pm

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday

8:00 AM - 12 PM

1:00 PM - 5 PM

Friday: 8:00 AM - Noon

**Pastoral Care
Emergency Number
701-595-0223**

Answering machine is available evenings and weekends when the office is not staffed.

Office is not open during the lunch hour.

REGULAR

WORSHIP HOURS

We will be returning to our Regular Worship Hours starting September 13!

Wednesday: 7:00 pm (Livestream)

Sunday: 8:30 am (Livestream) & 11:00 am

FLC Executive Team

Amy Steiner, Chair

Gail Skaley, Vice-Chair

Ryan Sprynczynatyk, Vice-Chair

Pat Groce, Secretary

Billie Ann Caya, Treasurer

Pastoral Ministries

Funerals:

Sandra Darling

Baptisms:

Marcella Kay Sherwin

Isabella Wolf

Elizabeth Wren Lien



FINANCIAL UPDATE

July General Fund:

Revenues: \$47,268.77

Expenditures: \$54,854.15

2026 Year-to Date:

Revenues: \$345,264.26

Expenditures: \$393,604.73



The deadline to submit information to the News and Views newsletter is the 10th of each month prior to the next newsletter. The church bulletin deadline is at noon on Tuesday for the coming Sunday bulletin. Articles, schedules, etc., can be sent to: communications.bisfaith@gmail.com For additional information, call the church office at 701-223-2236

Church Memorials

For **Capital Improvements**, in memory of Sandra Darling.

For **Library Fund**, in memory of Sandra Darling.

For **Endowment Fund**, in memory of Sandra Darling.

For **General Fund**, in memory of Sandra Darling.

Details can be found in the Memorial Book in the Gathering Place.



Library Link

by LeAnn Severson

I recently acquired two books published by the Germans from Russia chapter in Minnesota, entitled HOLLYHOCKS and GRASSHOPPERS and WATERMELONS and THISTLES. These books are anthologies of essays by people who share their memories of growing up German in Russia and America, primarily in Minnesota and North and South Dakota. The authors' experiences span decades and include memories of good times and hard times, Christmas services in a country church, going to town on Saturday night, and the deliciousness of the ethnic food, to name a few.

I found the book easy to read, and it invoked many memories of my own growing up with similar traditions. I have donated the books to our church library, and they are now available for checkout.

Men of Faith

Men of Faith....Welcome back after a 3-month summer (but not from the heat) hiatus. We will start our monthly meetings with a **presentation from Sarah Matthews**, who represents the **Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library**, in which she will speak about the **services and opportunities** that they offer. Make sure to mark **9 AM, Thursday, 3-September-2026** on your calendar. Remember, treats might be offered.

*Volunteer at the
Rice Pudding
Booth!*

September 18 & 19
Downtown Street
Fair



Look next to the
Coffee Fellowship
table for Volunteer
Sign-Ups for our
Rice Pudding
Booth! Help us
continue the
tradition!



Join Our Church Family!

If you are interested in becoming a new member, please **contact the church office** to let us know! We will host our **New Member Orientation in October** and officially welcome our newest members during our **New Member Services on Wednesday, October 21, and Sunday, October 25**, during Reformation Week.

LYO Fall Youth Event

The LYO Board invites all **6th–12th grade youth** to join them on **October 16–18, 2026**, for a fall faith formation experience filled with phenomenal speakers, informative breakout sessions, and of course...tons of fun! The **Middle School Event runs Oct. 16 (1:00 PM) to Oct. 17 (2:30 PM)**, and the **High School Event runs Oct. 17 (6:00 PM) to Oct. 18 (2:30 PM)** at the **Baymont Inn in Mandan, ND**. Be on the look out for links to register online through us at faithbismarck.com/forms coming soon!

PIE AND COFFEE DAY



OCT
24
9AM–2PM



1402 E Ave C
Bismarck, ND 58503

Save the Date for pie, baked goods, crafts and White Elephant Sale. More info coming soon!



STAFF EMAILS

Need to reach one of our staff?
Emails can be found below!

Faith Lutheran's General Email

faith.bisfaith@gmail.com

Derek Harkins

Senior Pastor
derek.bisfaith@gmail.com

Sylvia Bull

Associate Pastor
sylvia.bisfaith@gmail.com

Cheryl Johnson

Office Manager and Financials
cheryl.bisfaith@gmail.com

Alex Johnson

Temporary Communications Assistant
communications.bisfaith@gmail.com

Kenny Opsal

Director of Education and Youth
kenny.bisfaith@midconetwork.com

Pastor Sylvia's Parables



"The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace." - Numbers 6:24-26

In this last newsletter article that I will write as your associate pastor, I wanted to take this opportunity to share a few important details and boundaries around the end of a call and to share my gratitude for our nearly 10 years of ministry together.

When you voted to extend me a call to serve as your pastor back in 2017, you called me to exercise the ministry of Word and Sacrament in your midst. That has meant that you called me to preach and teach, to administer the sacraments of baptism and communion, to lead worship, to provide pastoral care, to officiate at weddings and funerals, and to lead in various other ways in our common life together. When my call ends, so too will my authorization to perform these acts of ministry on your behalf and in your midst. This is true at the conclusion of every call, and it is no less true for me, even though I will not be immediately taking another pastoral call or moving away from the area.

My last day here at FLC is set for September 27. After that date, I will be officially "On Leave from Call," which is a status that needs to be approved by our Bishop and Synod Council here in Western North Dakota. I can remain on that status, with annual renewal, for up to six years for the purpose of growing and taking care of our family before taking a new call.

During this time when I am on leave from call, I will no longer be available to perform pastoral ministries like baptisms, weddings, and funerals for members and friends of Faith Lutheran Church. That ministry belongs to your called pastors - Pastor Derek and whoever God is preparing to serve next in your midst. As part of honoring the end of my call here and the new call that you will be extending to your next pastor, I will not be worshipping here at FLC. This is a known best practice throughout the Church, which is important for me to adhere to. My membership will be transferred from Faith to another church in the area. I will not be answering phone calls, texts, or emails related to the ministry of FLC.

My role will shift from being your pastor to being your neighbor. If you see my family or me out in the community, please still say hello! I will be glad to see you! But also know

that I won't be available to talk about church-related matters, because that responsibility and ministry belong to your called pastors.

I hope to see you in worship over the next few weeks to say goodbye. My last Wednesday in worship will be Wednesday, September 23, and my last Sunday in worship will be Sunday, September 27. It has been a tremendous privilege to be part of this community of faith these last 9+ years, to share in your lives and faith journeys, and to steward this ministry God has entrusted to us alongside you. I came in as a brand-new pastor, and you welcomed me and helped me learn and grow. I would not be the person or the leader I am today without your guidance, faithfulness, and partnership. I will carry this congregation forever with me in my heart, even as the Spirit calls in us new directions.

One of the things I have treasured most about this community is how, despite the many and diverse pastors who have served here over our 80-year history, I have never heard pastors compared to one another. Instead, I have heard them celebrated for their unique gifts and contributions. This was truly a gift to me when I started here - that I was allowed to be who I was and to grow into who I could be, without trying to fill someone else's shoes. I hope and trust that you will honor that tradition as you welcome whomever it will be who will come to serve here next. It is one of the many things that makes this community so wonderful!

Thank you for your welcome, trust, grace, faithfulness, and presence over our ministry together. My prayer is that you will experience God continuing to sustain and uphold you during this season of transition, ever calling and beckoning you forward into a future filled with the hope and abundance of life in God's Kingdom. May you continue to live together in your call to be a welcoming, nurturing faith community guided by Jesus to share the Gospel. It has been and will forever remain a privilege to have served in your midst.

With love and in Christ,
Pastor Sylvia



Shoulders of Faith

One of the earliest celebrations of Labor Day in North Dakota was in Fargo on Monday September 7, 1891. The Fargo Daily Argus reported on the Labor Day Ball, which went past midnight. One of the speakers was Governor Andrew Burke. He said, "The very foundations of society are upborne (supported) upon the shoulders of the laboring man."

Those men built the railroads, mined coal, laid brick, and worked in meat packing plants. Women worked in canneries, textile mills, shoe and clothing factories. The owners of those businesses became wealthy while their employees worked long hours in unsafe conditions. Workers formed trade unions to improve working conditions and improve their lives. In the early 1900s, they worked to obtain fair wages, safety in the workplace, and shorter hours. Their successful efforts were the foundation of the benefits we have today.

There was a time in my life when I regarded some professions as less than worthy. I overcame that prejudice by understanding that all work is important. Watching the shoulders of the laboring man is something I have learned to enjoy. I see those shoulders wherever I go. We work for ourselves. We work for our families. And we work to make life better for others. I watch you, the members of Faith Lutheran, labor to help others. Your shoulders have made our community and beyond a better place.

Goodbye for now, and remember to always take time to talk to the cows.

Bennett R. Kubischta
August 12, 2026, 8:08 am

Godspeed our Friend

Time marches on at a constant pace, and in that march, changes occur. Changes during the march of time brought Pastor Sylvia Bull to us. And now, in her march through time, she is leaving us. Pastor Sylvia came to Faith Lutheran with exuberance. That energy, excitement, and cheerfulness she brought on day one continued through the years to her final day serving Faith.

In her journey of roles at Faith Lutheran, she has been a mentor, a friend, a sister, a daughter, and a mother. Sylvia has held our hands in times of sorrow and sang with happiness for us in times of joy. She listened to our deepest thoughts and replied with care and guidance. Now it is time to say thank you. It is time to give her hugs and tears of love. Godspeed to you, Pastor Sylvia, on your new adventure through the march of time.

Bennett R. Kubischta
August 20, 2026, 7:47am

Leadership & Staff Updates

We have quite a few changes coming up in the next few months! We will be welcoming Pastor Derek back from sabbatical on September 1st. We hope he enjoyed a time of rest and reflection as he returns to lead us through a transition period for our church.

As many of you know, I am pregnant and due in mid-September! Currently, my plan is to start an approximately three-month maternity leave on Friday, September 4th, but, as many of you know, sometimes babies have a mind of their own on when they are ready to come. Matthew and I greatly appreciate all the love and support we have felt from all of you throughout my pregnancy, and look forward to raising our family here at Faith Lutheran! While I am gone, Cheryl's son, Alex Johnson, will be taking over the newsletter, bulletins, and slides. He will still have access to the communications.bisfaith@gmail.com email, so you can still send announcements to that email address! The rest of the staff will be covering my other duties, so we all appreciate your patience as everyone adjusts to extra responsibilities!

See you soon!

Caitlin McCleary

Farewell/"See You Soon" for Dmytro Somkin, Music Coordinator

Our Music Coordinator, Dmytro "Dima" Somkin, will have his last day with us for a while on Sunday, September 13. Due to challenges and limitations within the US immigration system, in order to maintain legal status and the ability to work, Dmytro and his family must leave the US this month and attempt to re-apply for residency under a different visa type. Our hope is that this time of separation will only be for a few months while his new application is processed and approved, at which point they would be able to return to Bismarck and Faith Lutheran. Your prayers and support during this challenging time mean the world.



Dmytro, son Adrian (3), wife Kseniia,
& daughter Ariana (1)

Join us during worship on Wednesday, September 9 and Sunday, September 13 to say "farewell and Godspeed" to Dmytro and to thank him for the beautiful music he has shared with us over the past year. Between services on that Sunday, we will also have cake and a time of fellowship to honor him, send him with our blessings, and say "see you soon."

Welcome, Alex!

My name is Alex Johnson, and I was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I am currently pursuing a degree in biblical studies online through Grand Canyon University. In my free time, I enjoy drawing, photography, graphic design, and playing pickleball with my friends. I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve Faith Lutheran and look forward to working with everyone. God Bless!



Church School News



It is a brand new school year, and we are excited to announce many things. First, we have a new theme this year: Shine like the Son. Second, we are thankful to have Amy Steiner back as the Sunday leader and to have Olivia Erbele as the Wednesday night leader. Olivia will also take over for Shanna Brady as the Chair of the Education Committee starting in January. Everyone, please thank Shanna for her many years of faithful leadership on Wednesdays and as the leader of the committee. Our first quarter donations will go to Cure International. Cure operates a network of charitable children's hospitals providing free surgical and spiritual care to pediatric patients with treatable physical disabilities in developing countries. Also, we are finalizing the classroom assignments, so if anyone is interested in helping with church school, please contact Kenny.

Youth News

We had a great retreat this summer here in Bismarck. We had many volunteers (youth and adults) volunteer for various projects throughout the city! Thanks to Pastor Sylvia for helping us this week as well. When Pastor Derek returns in September, we will finalize the details for our summer trip in 2027 to Minneapolis and the ELCA Youth Gathering. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Kenny for more information. We have already sent information through the blast system and letters to eligible homes.

September Acolyte Schedule

Sunday (Sept 13, 20, 27)

8:30 - Open

11:00 - Hadley, Collins, & Lincoln
Steiner

Wednesday (Sept 9, 16, 23, 30)

7:00 - Tallon Call / Trigg Call / Bridger
Franklund

Tech Assistant - Harper Franklund

Confirmation News

We are excited to continue our confirmation program in grades 6-9. Grades 6 and 7 will continue working on rotating years of study with the Old and New Testaments. Grades 8 and 9 will continue working with the pastors.

Rice Pudding History

The Rice Pudding fundraiser began as a pipe dream of Gloria Olson. She brought forward this idea to the Property Board and developed the recipe along with Donna Gilbertson.

Larry Larson designed the booth and together with Darol Brasgalla, the booth was built in Darol's garage. A church member paid for the supplies needed for construction. This original booth was all wood and could easily be disassembled into manageable pieces.

The first day to sell the pudding was September 17, 1994 at the Folkfest event in downtown Bismarck. The wooden booth has seen some changes over the years -- new paint and tent screened sides replaced the wood. Here is a partial list of missions where the funds were shared throughout the years:

Local: Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center

Camp of the Cross

Lutheran Social Services ND

Western ND Ministry Trust Fund

Heaven's Helpers

Dream Center

Bridges of Hope

Faith Lutheran Church:

Donations for: Fellowship Hall chairs; computers; HVAC system; hymnals; nativity stable; baptismal chests; capital improvements; church directory; Pumpkin Patch; oven; gift cards; vacuum cleaner

MISSION Focus



SEPTEMBER: LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF KITS

Throughout the year, our Quilters collect items to put in Personal Care, School, and Baby Kits, sent to people in need around the world through Lutheran World Relief. Full lists are available on the Concierge Table and under our Serve tab on our website, but they are currently in need of shirts and T-shirts (sizes 6 to 24 months), jackets, and hooded sweatshirts for their baby kits. For their personal care kits, they are looking for towels (no larger than 27" x 52") and metal nail clippers. Thank you for your generosity!

If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you... you should open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Deut. 15:7-8

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:00 Quilting 2:00 Crafts 7:00 WELCA Gathering 7:00 Scouts	2 10:00 Bible Study 7:00 Worship	3 9:00 Esther Circle 9:00 Men of Faith	4 8:00 NA	5
6 9:30 Worship	7 Labor Day Church office Closed 7:00 AA	8 9:00 Quilting 2:00 Crafts 6:00 Elementary Comm. 7:00 Scouts	9 Rally Day 10:00 Bible Study 5:30 Handbells 5:30 Blast Meal 6:00 Church School & Confirmation Opening Meeting 7:00 Worship	10 Newsletter Deadline 2:00 Knit & Crochet Group 7:00 Ruth Circle	11 8:00 NA	12
13 Rally Day 8:30 Worship 9:45 Church School 11:00 Worship 4:00 Cub Scouts	14 7:00 AA	15 9:00 Quilting 2:00 Crafts 5:00 HR Committee 7:00 Scouts	16 3 rd Grade Acolyte Training Giving of Bibles 10:00 Bible Study 5:30 Handbells 6:00 Church School & Confirmation 7:00 Worship	17	18 Downtowner's Street Fair 8:00 NA	19 Downtowner's Street Fair
20 3 rd Grade Acolyte Training Giving of Bibles 8:30 Worship 9:45 Church School 11:00 Worship	21 3:00 Worship & Music 7:00 AA	22 9:00 Quilting 2:00 Crafts 6:00 Compass Group 7:00 Executive Comm. 7:00 Scouts	23 10:00 Bible Study 5:30 Handbells 6:00 3 rd Grade P/S 6:00 Church School & Confirmation 7:00 Worship	24 6:00 Knit & Crochet Group	25 8:00 NA	26
27 8:30 Worship 9:45 3 rd Grade P/S 9:45 Church School 11:00 Worship 4:00 Cub Scouts	28 4:30 Altar Guild 7:00 AA	29 9:00 Quilting 2:00 Crafts 7:00 Scouts	30 10:00 Bible Study 5:30 Handbells 6:00 3 rd Grade P/S 6:00 Church School & Confirmation 7:00 Worship			

Faith Lutheran Church
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Bismarck, ND 58501-4398
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Faith Lutheran Church September 2026 News and Views



We are starting preparations for the **2027 ELCA Youth Gathering** next summer! Youth going into 8th grade through 12th grade in September 2026 are invited to travel with us to **Minneapolis from about June 27-July 2, 2027** for a few days of worship, service and fun with other ELCA youth from across the country! Approximate cost per person will be \$1500, but we fundraise to cover most of the cost. If you are interested, **please call the front office at (701) 223-2236 to give your name, and bring a \$250 deposit by September**

30, 2026. Please make checks out to Faith Lutheran Church with NYG Deposit in the memo line. For cash and mailed checks, please remember to indicate the participant's name. You can contact Kenny for more information and potential scholarships if cost is prohibitive. More information can be found at elca.org/gathering