

# Arms of Faith

January 2024

Dear Faithfuls,

Let's celebrate 2023! Here's what happened through the last 12 months:

January 2023 average worship attendance was 80 people. November average worship attendance (at this time, it's still December 2023) was 89 worshippers. That's an increase of 11% in eleven months! Something is happening at Faith Church!

Grandparents and grandchildren enjoyed three Sundays of fun, food and crafts: a Fun in the Sun day in August, a Halloween party at the end of October, and an Advent craft Sunday (to which the whole congregation was invited) at the beginning of December. We are seeing grandchildren having fun *at church* with their grandparents.

The tremendous growth of the monthly Clothing Giveaway. In November, over 100 people came for clothing, housewares, toys and free new underwear. Plus, people are hearing about our mission and bringing clothes for the closet. We have received a \$10,000 Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation grant and a \$1,500 grant from the Papillion Junior Women's Club.

We are Discovering our Future. Three gatherings were held to celebrate our past, assess the present and embrace our future. Currently, six people are working with all the information gathered at these events to hear God's call for our Lifework Statement. (Yep – we won't have a mission statement, which is rather corporate; we'll have a Lifework Statement to guide us in ministry and mission.) Please pray for these six faithful people as they listen for God's direction.

After COVID put the kibosh on the Harvest Salad Luncheon, the Presbyterian Women held their second luncheon (post COVID), and it was another huge success. People from our community attend and enjoy the hospitality of the women of our church, plus get a delicious lunch. (Oh, and they buy some baked goods, canned goods and crafts.)

Pledged giving for 2024 is \$10,000 more than it was in 2023, a sign of both the generosity of our members, and trust in the ministry that is occurring at Faith Church

What do you see happening at Faith Church? Please share with others the ministry that makes you smile.

Peace,  
Becky

## **Streaming Sunday Worship Service 10:00am**

We continue to broadcast the worship service on Facebook. If you do not have computer access, you may listen to the service by calling 1-844-855-4444 and entering access code 716966#.



## Session Highlights

As required by the Book of Order, the Deacons and Elders met together, enjoying a delicious potluck dinner together. Each group shared with the other what ministry had been happening during the last year. During the conversation, it was agreed that Deacons would no longer be required to serve on a committee; if they want to serve on a committee, great, but it is no longer a requirement. We also welcomed new deacons **Robin Gentry** and **Debbie Ziegler**.

The elders made the following decisions:

Committee chairs were agreed upon: Worship, Al Zimmerman; Mission, Terri O'Brien; Finance, Peter Svoboda; Fellowship, Tracy Kristensen; Human Resources, Bob Meyer; Facilities, Matt Kasprzak, with Doug Bogenhagen as deputy; and, Nominations, Bob Meyer. We currently have eight elders, rather than nine. There is not a chair for the Discipleship Team at this time.

Approved the budget for 2024

Approved recommending to the congregation that the Board of Deacons be comprised of seven deacons, beginning in 2025

Approved the purchase of seven banners for ordinary time, using Memorial funds

Approved the motion from the Finance Team for how to fund the new endowment fund

**Agreed to call the Annual Congregational Meeting for January 21, 2024, immediately following the worship service**

Approved the communion schedule for 2024

Thanked outgoing elder **Shayla Hall**

Please continue to pray for your elders as they lead this congregation with energy, intelligence, imagination and love.

## Transitions Group

When a family member's memory starts to change and decline, it is a challenge for the people around them. If you are in this situation, Faith Church is here for you. A small group of members and friends meets monthly, all of whom have a family member with some form of dementia. We share our experiences. We listen. We comfort and console, and we even give a little advice.

If there is a member of your family that is transitioning to the next stage of life, a time when their memory isn't good, you are invited to be part of this group on the third Friday of every month, at 10:00 am in Room 1 - the room with comfy chairs. Coffee is always served.

Questions? Please call Becky Balestri at 402-709-0568.

## Chair Exercise Class

Wednesdays 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall

A new form of exercise - chair-exercise - is being hosted by Janine Yates using exercise videos. If you are recovering from an injury or surgery, if you have balance challenges, or if you want to strengthen your joints and muscles, **this is for you!**

Chair exercises allow you to build strength in your upper body, lower body, and core. If you have limited mobility, you can build muscle without putting additional stress on the joints using only a chair.



Happy  
Birthday!

*Jan 1 Jim Willett*

*Jan 3 Marilyn Mavity*

*Jan 10 Kara Negley*

*Jan 13 Becky Balestri*

*Jan 15 Jackie Cook*

*Jan 24 Doug Bogenhagen*

*Jan 24 Lynda Shafer*

*Jan 24 Ann Tresemer*

*Jan 29 Mary Ann Stevens*

*Jan 31 Betty Eggleston*



The next Fun & Lunch will be January 5 at  
12:00 pm at

**La Mesa Mexican Restaurant**  
829 Tara Plaza, Papillion

Anyone of any age is invited.

Sign up at church by January 3 or contact  
Sharon Fleming at 402-709-2103 or  
sfleming43@aol.com for your reservation or  
if you need a ride.

### Thanksgiving Baskets

A big thank you to the Mission Team for putting together Thanksgiving baskets for 15 families. Special thanks to

**Janice Miner**, who organized the event. She does this so well! In addition to the food that was given to families, 13 families also received funds to help pay their utility bills.

Many thanks to those who helped transport the food, prepare the boxes, greet the families, and take out the boxes. You were amazing!

### Annual Congregational Meeting

Please stay after the worship service on Sunday, January 21, 2024, for our annual congregational meeting. As usual, the congregation votes on the pastor's compensation, and can bring any business to the congregation. Your session will have one recommendation for your approval. And, please be listening/watching for the meal that the Fellowship Team will host for us. It might be potluck; it might be something else. Ask the Fellowship Team how you can help!

### Presbyterian Women

We invite all women of Faith to join Presbyterian Women on the 3rd Tuesday of each month January through May. We will be starting a new Bible Study on January 16 at 1:30 pm. We will be using Shannon Bream's book *The Love Stories of the Bible Speak*. The book includes Biblical lessons on romance, friendship, and faith. If you would like to attend, please contact the church office or Debbie Kippley at drdbk@aol.com.

### Your Session

Clerk of Session -	Joe Seda
Facilities	Matt Kasprzak Jim Willett Doug Bogenhagen
Fellowship	Tracy Kristensen
Human Res	Bob Meyer
Mission & Ev	Terri O'Brien
Support	Peter Svoboda
Worship	Al Zimmerman

### Helping Hands to the Rescue

Congregation members – Do you have jobs at home that you cannot do on your own (cutting up limbs, small electrical or plumbing jobs, yardwork, etc)? For help, contact the church office, and we will check with our Helping Hands Team.

*The Faith Church Helping Hands Team is in need of a coordinator.* Anyone interested in filling this need please contact the church office.

If you would like to join the Helping Hands Team, please let us know and we will add you to our list of helpers.

**Sunday**  
**Worship Service**  
**10:00 am**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
 Office Closed

**2**  
 6:30 pm Bells Rehearsal

**3**  
 11:00 am Chair Exercises

**4**  
 1:00 pm Pickleball  
 6:00pm Table Tennis - FLC  
**Team Meetings**  
 4:00pm Worship mtg  
 5:00 pm Fellowship  
 6:30 pm Mission/Evang  
 7:00 pm Facilities - FH

**5**  
 8:30 am Donuts & Dialogue  
 12:00 pm Lunch Bunch

**6**  
 1:00pm Omaha Christian Social Group - FH

**7**  
 1:30 pm Volleyball  
 2:00 pm GriefShare  
 2:00 pm Puppet Rehearsal  
 5:00 pm Table Tennis - FLC

**8**  
 5:45 pm Book club  
 6:30 pm Pickleball  
 6:30 pm A Capella Group

**9**  
 6:30 pm Bells Rehearsal  
 7:00 pm Deacons' meeting

**10**  
 7:00 am Campus Life - FLC  
 10:00am Yesterday's Kids  
 11:00 am Chair Exercises  
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

**11**  
 1:00 pm Pickleball  
 6:00pm Table Tennis - FLC  
 6:30pm Stephen Ministry  
 7:00pm Support Meeting

**12**  
 8:30 am Donuts & Dialogue

**13**  
 8:00am Men's Breakfast  
 1:00pm Omaha Christian Social Group - FH

**14**  
 1:30 pm Volleyball  
 2:00 pm GriefShare  
 2:00 pm Puppet Rehearsal  
 5:00 pm Table Tennis - FLC

**15**  
 6:30 pm Pickleball  
 6:30 pm A Capella Group

**16**  
 1:00 pm PW meeting  
 6:30 pm Bells Rehearsal

**17**  
 7:00 am Campus Life - FLC  
 10:00am Yesterday's Kids  
 11:00 am Chair Exercises  
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

**18**  
 1:00 pm Pickleball  
 6:00pm Table Tennis - FLC  
 7:00pm Session meeting

**19**  
 8:30 am Donuts & Dialogue  
 10:00 am Transitions Group

**20**  
 9:00 am Clothing Giveaway  
 1:00pm Omaha Christian Social Group  
 4:00 pm Bday party - FLC

**21**  
 11:00 am Congregational meeting/dinner  
 1:30 pm Volleyball  
 2:00 pm GriefShare  
 2:00 pm Puppet Rehearsal  
 5:00 pm Table Tennis - FLC

**22**  
 6:30 pm Pickleball  
 6:30 pm A Capella Group

**23**  
 6:30 pm Bells Rehearsal

**24**  
 7:00 am Campus Life - FLC  
 10:00am Yesterday's Kids  
 11:00 am Chair Exercises  
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal  
**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE 9:00 am**

**25**  
 1:00 pm Pickleball  
 6:00pm Table Tennis - FLC

**26**  
 8:30 am Donuts & Dialogue

**27**  
 1:00pm Omaha Christian Social Group - FH

**28**  
 1:30 pm Volleyball  
 2:00 pm GriefShare  
 2:00 pm Puppet Rehearsal  
 5:00 pm Table Tennis - FLC

**29**  
 6:30 pm Pickleball  
 6:30 pm A Capella Group

**30**  
 6:30 pm Bells Rehearsal

**31**  
 7:00 am Campus Life - FLC  
 10:00am Yesterday's Kids  
 11:00 am Chair Exercises  
 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal



## Sightings

A big thank you to **Shayla Hall**, who has stepped into the media booth and is now part of the team running audio and video. And, we're grateful that **Bob Meyer** is back in the booth! We are grateful for the whole media team!

On behalf of Faith Church (and the Mission Team), **Bill Neubert** delivered 105 Christmas-themed cookies to the teachers and staff at the middle school. Check out the bulletin board for thank you notes from the teachers. Thank you, Bill, for spreading love and support for our community teachers.

Our Mission Team has been actively doing, well, *mission!* **Terri O'Brien, Mary Ann Stevens,** and **Janice Miner** sorted all the gifts given by worshipers on a Sunday after worship. The next day, Janice delivered them. Thank you three, for sharing Christ's love at this time of year. *Thank you to all who gave gifts!*

Our chancel choir and Grace Notes bell choir both performed at the Community Choral Concert. Thank you, choirs, for offering the community beautiful music!

Although not actually 'sighted,' a little mouse has told us that **Jeana Svoboda** provides the beautiful decorations outside the doors to our building. The festive Christmas decorations are so inviting. Thank you, Jeana!

**Rod Bosserdet** hung our new Advent banners, brightening the sanctuary. **John O'Brien** hung three nativity quilts at the back of the sanctuary - more to brighten the sanctuary. Thank you both!

**Ruth Tresemer** was the powerhouse organizer behind the hanging of the greens, making the church look so festive! Thank you, Ruth, for coordinating that organized chaos of greenery, trees and nativity sets.

## GriefShare

GriefShare is a 13-week grief support ministry offered by local churches. GriefShare is open to people of all faiths, as well as those who do not practice a faith.

GriefShare will go through February 18, 2024. We will meet in Room 9 (lower level) from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. There will be a video and small group discussion. You can register for the group at [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). Please RSVP to [janine@faith-presbyterian.com](mailto:janine@faith-presbyterian.com) or call the church office at (402)331-6944. I hope to see you there!

**Faith Presbyterian Church**

**Becky Balestri, Pastor**

**8100 Giles Road, La Vista, NE 68128**

**402-331-6944**

**Web page: [www.faith-presbyterian.com](http://www.faith-presbyterian.com)**  
**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/faithpresby](http://www.facebook.com/faithpresby)**

## Great Exercise & Great Fellowship

Join us for   
Mondays 6:30 pm  
Thursdays 1:00 pm



Join us for   
Sundays 1:30 pm



If you are interested and want more info,  
call the church office.



## What a Wonderful Season of Giving

When we asked, you as a congregation responded. I will update you on the Christmas Joy Offering and the Christmas Eve offering when I get the final numbers.

The tree is loaded with gloves, mitten and scarves!!!! The students at La Vista West and G. Stanley Hall will be so much warmer thanks to all of you.

The gifts for the family from Moving Vets Forward have been delivered. You purchased and gifted over \$400.00 in gift cards that will be used to help others through MVF.

Thanks so much for your generosity.

Terri O'Brien and the Mission Team

## Clothing Give Away Update.

The next Give Away is January 20. We will be sorting January 3 and 17 from 9:00 - 11:00.

We were so excited and grateful to receive a \$1,500.00 grant from the Papillion Jr. Women's Club to be used for underwear and socks.

We are shopping for some shelving units and more hanging racks. Detergent, fabric softener, and stain remover will be added to the give away in 2024. The grant from the Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation will help fund these purchases.

I heard recently that homelessness has increased nationally by 12%. I'm not sure if the number applies to the Omaha area. One thing I am sure of is that Faith Church is helping people!!!!

John, Terri O'Brien and the Mission and Evangelism Team

