

# Faith's Happenings...

January, 2024

## *Happy Birthday*

Linda Hughs	2nd
Ken Stephens	3rd
Noma Schattauer	6th
Niki LeVasseur	6th
Barbra Davis	14th
Karen Potts	14th
Ron Mines	16th
John Kohler	17th
Jim Taylor	19th
Linda Jackling	20th
Bill Buccine	20th
Sue Michaleski	23rd
Steve Hoops	23rd
David Johnsen	23rd
Susan Schuemann	24th
Toni Newton	26th
John Matz	28th
Laura Kohler	28th

## *Happy Anniversary*

Bruce & Margarete Rieck	14th
David & Donna Johnsen	23rd

**If we missed your name/date, we're sorry.  
Please notify Barbra in the church office  
to have your special dates added.**

### **January at a Glance**

*Mark your calendars now!*  
*Men of Faith Breakfast: January 2*  
*Ladies Luncheon: January 17*  
*Budget Forum: January 21*  
*Annual Meeting: January 28*



Remember, we return to  
2 services on January 7:  
8:30 outside in the  
Memorial Garden and  
10:30 inside.

## Men's Breakfast

Guys, you are invited to join us on Tuesday morning, January 2nd, at Stefanos. We meet at 7:30 for some great food and fellowship. You can stay as long as you like and get to know your church brothers. No sign-up necessary.

## Long Term Prayer

This prayer list is for those who need continued, long-term prayer. We try to keep the weekly prayer list short, so people named may be moved to the newsletter after a few weeks in the bulletin. If you want to add someone to this list, contact Barbra in the church office (697-3313). Please keep these folks in your prayers: Joanne Best, Kathy Kanak, John Schleede, Carl Jaspers, Lois Howell, Jackie Magee, Gary Wilkins, Neal Schattauer, Scott Schultz, Alex Hoops, Tom Jackling, Ginny Linsberg, Jack Myers, Rosie LaQuay

## Wanted: Council Members

If you are a full member of Faith, you can be a member of the congregation council, assisting in the leadership of the church. Council members meet once a month and serve a 3-year term. This year's Nominating Committee includes Jim Taylor, Gene Newlon and Linda Bennett. If you are interested in serving, or need more information about the job, see one of them or call Barbra in the church office (941-697-3313).

## Some Important Dates

~ 2024 Budget forum: January 21 between services (9:30 am)

~ Annual meeting: January 28 between services (9:30 am)

## Save the Date

Priscilla Fullerton, former organist for Faith, will be presenting a concert, "Hymns and Classics," on Sunday, February 4 at 3:00 pm. Mark your calendars now.

## From the Finance Committee

The arrival of Hurricane Ian in September, 2022, resulted in a number of our members moving outside our area to be closer to family. Many are still struggling financially while waiting for insurance settlements. In 2022, congregation ministry expenses exceeded income by almost \$31,000. In 2023 we project expenses exceeding income by a similar amount. As we prepare for the Budget Forum on January 21, and the Annual Congregation Meeting on January 28, there will be options presented to address the income shortfalls of 2022 and 2023.

For the last 9 years income has typically covered expenses. In 2024 giving intents are up over 2023 at just over \$100,000. However, the budget is \$230,000. Again, Faith's members have always been faithful and generous supporters of our work in God's name. Typically, our donation income is double what we have received in intents. Based on past experience, it is our hope and expectation that in 2024 donation income will be in the neighborhood of \$200,000. However, the budget is \$230,000.

To address this shortfall, the budget to be presented to the congregation will show the full budget for 2024 as proposed. Many items are what are typically referred to as fixed costs: utilities, taxes, maintenance, and basic staffing of secretary/office manager, organist, custodian and operational supplies.

An alternative budget will also be presented. This will illustrate what a congregation budget will look like if the commitment of the pastor is reduced to ½ time. This is one

area of the budget where we think we can save costs, with less impact on the ministries God has called us to support. Please plan on attending the Budget Forum, where this will be explored in more detail. The final decision will be made by the congregation as a part of business in the annual meeting.

Thank you,  
Your Finance Committee, Congregation  
Council and Pastor Brian

### Start the Year off Right Ladies Luncheon

The January ladies luncheon will be held Wednesday, January 17, 11:30 am at Libee's Sports Bar and Grill. The restaurant is located in the Lemon Bay Plaza by Big Lots. We will order from the menu with separate checks. Come prepared to share just one resolution for 2024 with all. Deadline to sign up is January 14. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you have questions, see or call Kathie Wiley (941-662-5383).



*Isaiah 41.10 – So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

As we enter the new year, it is full of hope and promise, but as Isaiah would remind us there is uncertainty that lingers in the back of our mind. This is the human condition, which I have heard summed up this way: “on

the outside of every silver lining is a dark cloud.” It is our human nature to look for the dark cloud, that ominous “thing” that hangs over us like the dust cloud that perpetually surrounds the Peanuts character Pig-Pen.

Today, the prophet Isaiah tells us do not fear as God is with us. Here in the middle of the Christmas season (the 12 days of Christmas) we are drawn back to Bethlehem, the manger, and a babe wrapped in swaddling cloth. He is the baby Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us. We are not alone. God is with us on Christmas eve, New Years eve, and every day of the coming year.

Not only is God with us, but God will strengthen us. God will walk with us and help us. As we enter into 2024, we know there will be changes and challenges. God, through the prophet, reminds us we need not fear or be dismayed. God is still God, and God is still with us.

Thank you for the cards and gifts you shared with Lori and me during the Christmas season. God be with you and bless you as we continue forward into 2024.

+ Pastor Brian (and Lori)

