



## A message from the Pastor

### ***Lift high the cross***

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”<sup>1</sup>  
Cor 1:18*



No one fully understands the mystery of the cross. It sounds foolish to proclaim the center of our faith to be a man who suffered death on the cross as a common criminal. After all, there is nothing magnificent or glorious about the cross. In fact, the cross is a symbol of agony and torment. It is a symbol of death. Why then do we Christians adore the cross rather than despise it?

The fact is that the cross of Christ is different. There is something special about that cross. It was Jesus the son of God who suffered and died on it in order to redeem us. That is why the cross of Christ holds a special place in our heart. For us it is a symbol of love and freedom.

In Ethiopia, where I came from, there is a big Holiday known as “Maskal” which means “cross”. On that holiday, we commemorate the finding of the true cross on which Jesus died by St. Helena, the wife of Constantine the Great. On that day, huge bonfires are lit all over the country. This celebration is very much like the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration here in America. After going and watching the lighting of bonfires in our towns and cities, we go home and light our own. Almost every home does that. Then we sing a song as we walk around it which says something like this “Cross, Cross, in which we have redemption and salvation. Thanks be to God who redeemed us and kept us safe with the power of the cross.”

Yes the cross is a symbol of our redemption. By it, we are set free from the power of sin, death, and the devil. That is why we lift high the cross of Christ like the statues of our liberty.



Every time we think of our freedom in this land, we think of those who paid a great price. In the same way, every time we think of our spiritual freedom, we think of Jesus who died for our sins and set us free from the bondage of sin, death and Satan. So, the cross is like our statue of liberty, a symbol of our freedom, and that is why we lift high the cross.

Thanks be to God who loved us so much and sent his son to die for our sin on the cross in order to redeem us.

Have a blessed spring season.  
Pastor Ale

### Church Events

- Sundays—9:30 a Worship  
10:30 a Fellowship
- Tuesdays & Fridays at 9:30 a—  
Coffee with the Staff
- Wednesdays (Feb 14-Mar 20)  
5:45 p Meal  
6:30 p Worship  
6:45 p Wed. School & Music  
7:15 p Bells Practice  
7:15 p Choir Rehearsal
- Wednesdays (April)  
5:30 p Meal  
6:15 p Worship  
6:30 p Wed. School & Music  
6:45 p Confirmation  
7:00 p Bells Practice  
7:00 p Choir Rehearsal
- Thursdays at 7:00 a—Men’s  
Breakfast at the Fryn’ Pan
- Mar 7 & Apr 4  
7:00 p Rebekah Circle
- Mar 12 & Apr 9  
1:00 p Prayer Shawl  
6:30 p Church Council
- Mar 14 & Apr 11  
1:00 p Abigail Circle
- Mar 18 & Apr 15  
7:00 p Book Club
- Mar 19 & Apr 16  
6:00 p Evening Quilting
- Mar 20 & Apr 17  
9:00 a Quilting
- March 28—Maundy Thursday  
5:45 p Meal  
6:30 p Worship Service
- March 29—Good Friday  
7:00 p Worship Service at  
Breckenridge United Methodist

### Contact Information

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Office Hours:  
9:00-3:00 Mon-Thur

## From the President—Orrin Ausen



Ever since Covid-19, churches across America have seen a massive decline in in-person church attendance. I have spent many waking hours pondering why this is, what has happened, and what can we do about it.

I came upon an article by John Beeson, Co-Lead Pastor at New Life Bible Fellowship in Tucson, Arizona, and blogger at The Bee Hive, and has shared his thoughts on why church attendance, across America, has experienced such an alarming decline in the following article [Why Doesn't My Neighbor Go to Church?](#) In the last paragraph, he challenges **us** to be active in inviting our neighbors and/or inactive members to attend church services with us. **Will you?** or will you continue to passively watch our congregation's attendance fade until there is no more church to attend.

Have some other solutions? Share with our council and members what we might do. It is ultimately up to us to be proactive and not to solely rely on our pastor and our council alone.

### Why Doesn't My Neighbor Go to Church? by John Beeson October 6, 2023

There was a time when going to church is what respectable people did. Church was a place not just of worship, but, for the worldly-minded, of upward mobility. My childhood was at the tail end of these days. When I was in sixth grade, our family became acquaintances with a businessman at church. My mom and dad ended up doing business with him only to be burned by his less-than-ethical business dealings. Church, it turned out, was just a handy place for him to expand his business.

Long gone are those days. And good riddance to them. I have no desire to have our society return to “the good old days” of church attendance done for the sake of appearances.

Any vestige of attending church because it is the right thing to do was killed by Covid. With online services and world class worship artists a click away, why go to your local church? Why not just sleep in?

But the local church is not just a dispenser of spiritual wares, it is the local manifestation of God's people, where we are called to serve and love. I long for people to come to church not because I want an outdated institution propped up. Attending your local church isn't propping up the last physical movie rental store in your zip code. Participating in your local church is choosing to encounter your holy and loving God in the presence of his people, experience the warmth of God's family, and steward the gifts God has given you for the sake of others.

A recent [survey](#) asked people why they do and don't attend church. Those who attend cited reasons such as “to get closer to God,” “because I find the sermons valuable,” and “to be part of a faith community” as some of their answers. Those who don't attend listed these as their top reasons for not attending:

1. I practice my faith in other ways
2. I am not a believer
3. I haven't found a church I like
4. I don't like the sermons
5. I don't feel welcome

That's a helpful glimpse into the heart of the non-church attender. You might notice that four of the five reasons don't have anything to do with their beliefs. That means that the most significant objection you might fear from your neighbor (disagreeing with your faith) is unlikely to be the main reason they aren't attending.

If we consider that in a town like Tucson somewhere in the neighborhood of 90% of residents very rarely, if ever, attend church, each of these reasons represents a huge number of people. An argumentative approach is certainly not the way to go. Instead, lovingly addressing each of these concerns is far more effective.

So let's consider these reasons:

- 1) **I practice my faith in other ways.** Sharing with this person the benefits and blessings you have experienced from church is a wonderful way to gently push back on this belief. You can share what you've learned through sermons or how you have been challenged. You can share how blessed you are in worshiping alongside others. You can share how the family of God has come alongside you in times of need. You can also, more boldly, but just as lovingly, suggest that the Bible doesn't have a category for Christianity without meaningful connection to other believers. Our witness is predicated on our unity (John 15), our spiritual gifts are given for the benefit of other Christians (1 Corinthians 12), and we are directly told not to forsake gathering together (Hebrews 12). While individual expressions of faith are important and purposeful, they are not the entirety of the Christian experience.
- 2) **I am not a believer.** While the main purpose of the gathered body is for the encouragement and upbuilding of believers, the church always welcomes unbelievers. In fact, it's a great way to test out what someone has heard about Christianity. Some sects and cults don't allow unbelievers in their worship. That is not so with Christianity. There are no secrets behind the veil. And doesn't such a significant decision—what one chooses to believe about who God is and what we were made for—merit meaningful time, energy, and inquiry?
- 3) **I haven't found a church I like.** The best way to find a church that is a good fit is to go with a friend. And you never know what you might end up liking if you give it a shot. What wound out being some of my favorite TV shows, I almost didn't make it to the

second or third episode. If your friend doesn't like your church, maybe you know another church they might like, or maybe your pastor can suggest a church that might better fit their preferences. Ultimately, of course, our commitment to the church shouldn't be predicated on our preferences, but rather our commitment to Christ and his people.

4) **I don't like the sermons.** Why doesn't your friend like the sermons? Because of a disagreement? Because they are boring? Because they are too elementary? Because they aren't grounded in the Bible? Each of these reasons has a different response. If the sermons aren't grounded in the authority of the Bible, then it is a good idea to consider a different church. If you disagree with the pastor, perhaps you can walk through those disagreements, or even encourage your friend to sit down with the pastor and walk through disagreements? If the sermons are boring or too elementary, perhaps digging into the Bible during the sermon you yield even deeper insight as the pastor preaches. Or perhaps there is a loss of thirst for spiritual things. Pray earnestly for a true spiritual thirst.

5) **I don't feel welcome.** This is an easy one! There is no better way for someone to feel welcome than you driving with them to church, walking through the doors with them, and sitting next to them. In fact, it's hard to imagine them not feeling welcome in that scenario!

Every church is flawed. I wish our church perfectly welcomed everyone who walked through our doors; I wish my sermons never left a single person bored, frustrated, or turned off, and I wish that we were able to play music that meaningfully connected with every person. I long for us to continue to grow to be the church God has called us to be. And we won't ever stop challenging ourselves to have the next Sunday be even better than the last Sunday.

But I still believe in the church! Every gathering of God's people is a place where God brings his transformative power, where God spills his love out over his people, and where he calls unbelievers to himself. **Don't stop believing in God's church. And don't miss out on your opportunity to invite the many who are disconnected from God's family to come and see what God is doing.**

## Youth Ministry—Lexi Hought

LYO has been active in service and fellowship. We had 12 people attend Feed My Starving Children in January at the Fargo Dome. This was a great opportunity to help children around the world fight hunger.

We added a new event this year and scheduled an afternoon at Arrowwood's waterpark. 37 people attended for a fun day of swimming and going down waterslides.

Unfortunately, due to warm temps, we will not be organizing the annual ski trip to Andes but will plan to pick this up next year.

Confirmation families are serving meals on Wednesday nights during Lent. Please join in for food and fellowship.

The seven youth that signed up for the National Youth Gathering in July 2024 have been working hard to raise money for their trip. They appreciate everyone's support in their fundraisers and look forward to seeing everyone at Ham Bingo on March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Wahpeton Community Center, Doors open at 6 pm and BINGO starts at 6:30. There will be a mix of 50/50 prizes and hams for Easter!



Thank you to all who volunteered on January 6th at the Feed My Starving Children Packing Event.

The winner of the casserole competition on January 31st was Ryan Crouse. (You can find the recipe on page 5.)



Great turn out for the Arrowwood water park February 4th.





## Memorials and Gifts

In memory of:	Given by:
<b>Debt Reduction</b>	
Patti Sharstrom	Dennis & Rene Hasbargen
<b>Elevator</b>	
Phil Koppelman	David & Carol Wood
<b>General</b>	
Irene Klemetson (Deb Knudtson's Mother)	Dennis & Rene Hasbargen
Janice Manning	Joel & Melanie Herder
Jim Widhalm	Joel & Melanie Herder
Joan Baumann	Joel & Melanie Herder
Marion Jorgenson (Marilyn Johnson's SIL)	Kenneth & Cleo Reitan
Patti Sharstrom (Nancy Kent's Sister)	Gary & Jane Fick, Jan Michels, Marvin & Joyce Aarons
<b>Quilting</b>	
Kathleen Reddy	Jeff & Cathy Affield
Marion Jorgenson	Marilyn Johnson
Patti Sharstrom	Mike & Diane Belseth
<b>Sunday/Wednesday School</b>	
Phil Koppelman	Kevin & Connie Foster

**first communion**  
PREP CLASSES  
for 5<sup>th</sup> graders & their parents  
**March 17 & 24**  
**10:30 am**  
(after Church Services)

For 5th graders and older students who have not yet received instruction.

Sunday March 17th and March 24th  
10:30 am (after Church Services)  
Luther Room

Please note: First Communion instruction is a family instruction, and we encourage the student to attend with a parent, stepparent, grandparent or other supportive adult.

First Communion will be Maundy Thursday March 28th at 6:30 pm.

HAPPY  
EASTER



## Mission Report—Connie Jensen




Our March and April Mission is the Richland-Wilkin Food Pantry and there are a couple EASY ways you can get involved!

On Saturday, March 16th from 9am-3pm Breckenridge Lutheran Church will partner with Boy Scout Troop 332 as they go do-to-door collecting grocery donations. WE ARE IN NEED OF DRIVERS to transport Scouts and their Leaders as they canvas Breckenridge neighborhoods. Volunteer shifts will run 9-12 or 12-3. This is a great opportunity to support youth community involvement while also supporting those in need. Please let Bonnie Karels know at 701.640.2890 if you can assist. Volunteers will be provided lunch.

Grocery and monetary donations will also be collected at church throughout the month of March. Food items may be dropped off in the back pews of the over-flow section (canvas bags are provided for your use). Monetary donations may be given online, in the offering plate or at the office. Please know that whatever you are able to contribute will serve a great need.



**Scouting for Food with the Breckenridge Boy Scout Troop 332 & Breckenridge Lutheran Church Members**



Scouts will be going door to door asking for food donations. If possible, please leave your donation on your front steps. All donations will be given to the Wilkin/Richland Food Pantry. Monetary donations will also be accepted. You may drop off a donation at the Breck Econo store from March 10th to March 15th, if you will not be home on the 16th.

**When: Saturday, March 16, 2024**  
**Time: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Who: City of Breckenridge residents**  
Suggested items to donate: Canned fruits and vegetables, canned meats, tomato products, paper goods, noodles, hamburger helper, peanut butter, cereal, personal care products.

### BBQ Brisket and Bacon Mac n Cheese Casserole

#### Ingredients

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 8 ounces elbow macaroni               | 1 teaspoon seasoned salt                       |
| 8 Slices fried bacon chopped          | 1/2 teaspoon ground mustard                    |
| 1/2 lb. chunks of smoked beef brisket | 2 1/2 cups milk                                |
| 1 small onion diced                   | 3/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce              |
| 1 cup of canned or frozen sweet corn  | 12 ounces Velveeta cubed                       |
| 1 tablespoon minced garlic            | 1/4 cup crushed cornflakes or cornbread crumbs |
| 1/4 cup butter cubed                  | 1/4 cup BBQ Sauce                              |
| 1/4 cup all-purpose flour             |  |

#### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add macaroni. Boil until the macaroni is tender but firm (al dente). Drain, and set aside.
3. In a large skillet, sauté onion and minced garlic in melted butter until tender.
4. Stir in flour, seasoned salt, and ground mustard. Gradually add the milk while stirring.
5. Bring to a boil, stir and cook for 2 minutes or until the sauce has thickened.
6. Add Worcestershire sauce, Velveeta and corn, stirring until cheese has melted.
7. Chop brisket, drizzle with BBQ sauce and toss. Set aside.
8. Combine the brisket, bacon, macaroni and cheese sauce in a 2 quart baking dish.
9. Crush cornflake crumbs or cornbread. Sprinkle over the casserole and bake 20-25 minutes or until browned and bubbly.
10. Drizzle with your favorite BBQ sauce.

## Financial Summary (as of January 31, 2024)

January 2024 Financial Summary	
General Account Income in January 2024	\$17,604.20
General Account Expenditures in January 2024	\$19,485.30
Cash Loss for the month	(\$-1,881.10)

Year to Date Income	Year to Date Expenses	Year to Date Net Loss	Monthly Budget	Weekly Budget
\$17,604.20	\$19,485.30	(\$-1,881.10)	\$21,012	\$4,850

### MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER | AUTHOR

Please join us on Sunday, March 17, 2024 (please note date change) at our 9:30 am church service to hear guest speaker, Shegitu Kebede who will share her moving life story, from being a 5 year old orphan in Ethiopia to a pregnant refugee at 17, moving to the U.S. and starting several businesses as a single mother, encourages audiences to look inward so you can also find your inner strength to overcome personal challenges.



Thrivent members with Choice Dollars - please consider directing your Choice Dollars to Breckenridge Lutheran Church. The deadline to direct your remaining 2023 Choice Dollars is March 31st.



By directing Choice Dollars, eligible clients with membership can recommend where some of Thrivent's charitable outreach funds go. Eligible clients are designated Choice Dollars based on: The amount they pay in annual premiums for qualifying products—life, disability income and long-term care insurance and the total contract value of their qualifying products.

A how-to guide can be found on the bulletin board.

# LENTEN SCHEDULE

Feb 21st	<b>RANDY WHITEHEAD</b> NEW LIFE & LITTLE BETHANY   ROTHSAY
Feb 28th	<b>JERRY PETERSON</b> AASTAD, AUGUSTANA, ELIZABETH, ROCK PRAIRIE
Mar 6th	<b>PHILLIP TOBIN</b> CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH   PELICAN RAPIDS
Mar 13th	<b>JULIE CARLSON</b> VUKKU   FOXHOME
Mar 20th	<b>ALE TULU</b> BRECKENRIDGE LUTHERAN CHURCH   BRECKENRIDGE

If you have had a recent change to your address, phone number or email address, please be sure to let the church office know!



## Upcoming Events



**Altar Guild**  
*Easter Memorial*  
**Flower Fundraiser**

The Breckenridge Lutheran Altar Guild will be selling Easter Flowers to defray costs of Altar Guild supplies. The cost is \$20 per plant. 20 Mums & Azaleas have been ordered. We will not be able to order additional plants.

*Place your order by filling out the order form and return it with payment to the church office by March 26th.*



Breckenridge and Foxhome Lutheran Church Youth Organization Fundraiser

**Friday, March 15**  
**Doors open at 6:00 pm**  
**Bingo starts at 6:30 pm**

**H A M**  
**BINGO**

**\*Both Ham and 50/50 Cash Bingo Rounds\***  
BBQ and Pulled Pork Sandwiches, Cash Bar

Proceeds will benefit youth attending the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans this July.

**Wahpeton Community Center**  
**304 5th St S | Wahpeton, ND**



**The Church Debt Reduction Drawing**

- \*Ticket chances are \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00.
- \*Baskets are located in the overflow area.
- \*Ticket sales begin on March 17th.
- \*Ticket sellers will be located in the overflow area before and after Wednesday and Sunday services.
- \*Purchase your tickets, put your name and phone number on them and place them in the box of your choice.
- \*Drawings will be held on April 14th following the 9:30 church service.

Please join me and let's have a little fun and help with the church's debt reduction. I invite you to make a basket for "The Church Debt Reduction Drawing". and later buy tickets for it too.

Let me explain. Congregation members are being asked to create a raffle basket. Some ideas for basket themes could be Mother's Day, Father's Day, Spring or Summer themed, Pets, Wine and Chocolate, Gifts Cards for Food, Coffee or Gas, let your imagination go...anything would be great and appreciated. Make one as a family or pair up with a friend. We have extra baskets in the youth office, next to Lois's office, if you would like one while making your donation basket.

Baskets should be turned into the church by March 13th .Ticket prices will be \$2 a ticket or 3 tickets for \$5. Check for ticket sellers either before or after Wednesday and Sunday services. Everyone can purchase tickets to be placed in a drawing box to have a chance to win that particular basket. The basket and box will have matching numbers so you will know which basket your tickets will be entered to win from. Ticket sales will take place from March 17th to April 14th . Winning tickets will be drawn after the 9:30 a.m. church service on April 14th . If you have questions, please contact Cindie Van Tassel (218-643-4374).

Thank you for supporting our "Church Debt Reduction Drawing" by making a basket and purchasing tickets!



**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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## Breckenridge Lutheran Church

Located at 301 6th St N | Breckenridge, MN

### Our Mission

Learning to be disciples and to make disciples,  
Reaching out to witness and support our community,  
Welcoming all to worship and serve Jesus Christ!



### Worship Schedule

Worship Service—Sundays at 9:30 am | Fellowship at 10:30 am

Wednesday Meal at 5:30 pm | Worship Service at 6:15 pm | Education at 6:30 pm | Confirmation at 6:45 pm

*Holy Communion on the 1st and 3rd Sunday*