



Mountain *Mover*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH | MAY 2025

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HAPPY

Mother's Day

Sunday, May 11

*Brunch after worship in the
Fellowship Hall*



Join us on Mother's Day
for a Special Brunch

Pastor's Thoughts

by Pastor Marvin Havard, Senior Pastor



The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it, for [the Lord] has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers. *Psalm 24:1-2 NRSVUE*

The beauty of new buds, fresh flowers, and flourishing greenery heralds the spring and the approaching summer. Even with my allergies, I still love this time of year! The new life that bursts forth every year provides a connection for us to the joy and wonder of resurrection. One of my favorite Easter hymns uses the imagery of new plant growth to describe Jesus' rising from death:

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
wheat that I dark earth many days has lain;
love lives again, that with the dead has been;
love is come again like wheat arising green.

Martin Luther understood creation as God's ongoing act of communication and preservation. This idea is expressed in the understanding that God reveals Godself in Scripture and through the "Book of Nature". In Job 12:7-10, we hear Job speaking of this communication when he says,

"ask the animals, and they will teach you, the birds of the air, and they will tell you; ask the plants of the earth, and they will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In [the Lord's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being."

We are called as good stewards to care for creation and not to exploit it for our own greed and consumption. It is always good for us to consider our place as part of God's creation and how we can best protect and preserve the beauty and diversity of that creation. Small acts like recycling and limiting water waste are important, as well as the larger work of encouraging our elected officials to enact proper laws and policies to safeguard our home world.

As we continue to consider God's creation and the ways we live within it and care for it, think of the ways that we can each work for the betterment and care of our environment. The team which is leading our landscaping project on the Bellaire Blvd side of the building (Lois Hamblin, Chris Schultz, and I) considered these ideas and made the decision to go with a company that uses native Texas plants and organic methods. Native plants are better suited for our climate and can better withstand the variance in our weather. These plants will also provide food and shelter for local pollinators and birds. The irrigation for this area will be changed to a drip irrigation system that will help us reduce water waste. This project will get underway very soon and will make our front entry more inviting as well as better for the local environment! Thank you to all who gave in support of this project!

Peace & Blessings,
Pastor Marvin



*The mission of Faith Lutheran Church is
to follow Jesus in blessing the world
with faith, hope, and love.*



2025 National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walks Greater Houston 5k Walk

Saturday, May 17, 2025

Sam Houston Park, 1000 Bagby Street, Houston, TX 77002
8:30-11:00 (walk time)-Registration before and during walk

Join Us

It will take all of us to demand victory over mental illness. That's why NAMIWalks provides a safe space for everyone who joins this mission.

We invite you to take the walk of your life - with NAMIWalks. Each participant will stand by you and walk by your side, every step of the way. Together, we will make a powerful change in our community. "Mental Health for All," here we come.

To join the Faith team, please contact Pastor Tan at: itan@faithbellaire.org or 832-540-6802.

Broken Hallelujah

by Pastor Junfeng Tan, Associate Pastor



I am writing this reflection on Holy Wednesday. While I eagerly anticipate the joyous celebration of Easter, I also look ahead to the solemn observances of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. As I meditate on the significance of these Three Holy Days, I am drawn to the Gospel of John's account of the wounds of the risen Lord.

It was Easter evening. The disciples, gripped by fear and uncertainty, were hiding in a locked room. Suddenly, the risen Jesus appeared among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side.

I find myself wondering: Why did the risen Lord still bear the horrific scars of crucifixion in His glorified, resurrected body? It amazes me that it was precisely these wounds that connected the agony of Good Friday with the triumph of Easter morning. Like the disciples, we are invited into a new life—not by burying our hurts, fears, failures, and tears, but by bringing them into the light. In the season of Easter, we are free to sing songs of hallelujah even with wounded hearts, hearts longing for healing.

With this in mind, I want to share a song that speaks deeply to me: "Broken Hallelujah" by the late Christian singer Mandisa. The first stanza and chorus read:

With my love and my sadness > I come before You, Lord > My heart's in a thousand pieces > Maybe even more > Yet I trust in this moment > You're with me somehow > And You've always been faithful > So Lord, even now

Chorus: > When all that I can sing > Is a broken hallelujah > When my only offering > Is shattered praise > Still a song of adoration > Will rise up from these ruins > I will worship You and give You thanks > Even when my only praise > Is a broken hallelujah

As I listen to this song, I hold in my heart the participants of the GriefShare support group. Our spring cycle at Faith concluded on Palm Sunday. At our final gathering, I invited them to consider attending Easter worship. My hope is that after thirteen weeks of encountering the healing and hope-filled words of Scripture, and experiencing mutual support, they will feel ready to return—perhaps with tears and trembling voices—to sing Hallelujah once more.

I also pray for the many others who bring their broken hallelujahs this Easter season. I pray for the struggling families who turn to CCSC's Food Pantry for help, and for the homeless youth who find counseling, support, and warm meals prepared by volunteers, including members of Faith, at Montrose Grace Place. I pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ at St. James Lutheran/Santiago Apóstol and other immigrant and migrant faith communities who now live in fear and uncertainty. I pray for all those whose lives have been shattered and who have been victimized in war-ravaged regions like Ukraine, Gaza, Congo, and Sudan. It is my hope that many among them can find the strength, courage, and faith to offer their broken Hallelujahs and faltering praises this Easter season.

On the evening of Holy Tuesday, a small group of nine of us gathered on Zoom to pray for over forty individuals facing serious health challenges. We lifted each name to God, one by one, asking for Jesus' healing touch. As we now rise in our Easter hallelujahs, let us continue to keep these brothers and sisters in our hearts. In solidarity with those still waiting for healing, we sing on their behalf—believing in the power of the risen Lord to restore.

Doubting Thomas touched the wounds of Jesus, and his shattered faith was restored. When we lift our own wounds and the wounds of the world to the risen Jesus, He teaches us to treat all suffering as if it were His own. He invites us to become a community of healing and hope. The risen Lord has the power to mend our broken hallelujahs and make our shattered praises whole.

Faith's Zoom Prayer meeting Tuesday, May 20 @ 7:00 PM

sing prayer songs
share prayer concerns
pray for strength,
hope, and healing



Scan for
Zoom Link

To submit a prayer request, please email to jtan@faithbellaire.org.

The Choreography of the Soul: A Theology of Worship

by Dr. Jerry Maynard, Director of Worship & Digital Ministries



"Ritual is the choreography of the soul." — Rev. Dr. Matthew Fox, Reinventing Work

When we gather for worship—whether in person or online—we step into a sacred rhythm. It is a dance with Spirit, a way our inner life finds expression through movement, music, prayer, silence, and word. This rhythm shapes us and reveals our soul's deepest yearnings, the ones God imprinted on us from the beginning.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you."
— Jeremiah 1:5 (NRSV)

A theology of worship asks not just *what* we do, but *why* it matters. Worship is about content—what we say, sing, or hear—and about connection with God, with one another, and with our truest selves. Each step in the liturgy is a movement of the soul. Repetition is used as a tool to form us. Like dancers building muscle memory, we learn to move in rhythm *with* grace. The church calendar—Advent, Lent, Easter, Ordinary Time—offers a spiritual choreography that helps shape our faith and guide how we live it out.

And this dance takes us beyond the sanctuary. It flows into our digital spaces, too. Whether you are in the pew or on your couch, the invitation is the same: to show up with intention, to be present to God and neighbor. The choreography may look different, but the Spirit still leads.

In the months ahead, I will be writing more on how we can worship *with* grace —exploring topics like ritual, embodiment, liturgy, and how technology opens new pathways to the sacred.

For now, I invite you to reflect:

- ♦ What rhythms in worship stir your soul?
- ♦ What rituals help you feel God's presence?
- ♦ How might you engage more fully in the sacred choreography we create each week?

You are invited....to be a dance partner! Let's show up, move with the Spirit, and dance the holy dance together!

Celebrate the Whole Season of Easter

by Courtney Lerch, Director of Faith Formation



The month of May brings many celebrations: the Rite of Confirmation, Mother's Day, Graduation Day, and the beginning of summer for the many children eagerly anticipating the end of the school year. With so much going on, we tend to get pulled into a whirlwind of activity and forget all about the faith disciplines we practiced during Lent. Unfortunately, society moves on immediately after Easter Sunday, and it is all too easy for us to get swept along as well. Now that the Easter Egg Hunts and Easter Brunch are in the past, it is easy to forget that Easter is not one day, but a whole season! What we are celebrating is so huge that it cannot be contained in just one day. Alleluia! Christ is risen! I encourage you to continue focusing on the

importance of Jesus's resurrection for the entire season of Easter, which continues until Pentecost on June 8. Pick a faith practice to do daily, much like you would do during Lent. While the focus of Lent tends to be a more reflective and penitent, the focus during Easter can be more joyful and hopeful in celebration of Jesus's resurrection. Here at Faith, we are using Traci Smith's *50 Days of Spiritual Practice* to guide us through the season of Easter. Each week focuses on a different spiritual practice, with a different activity for each day. Each activity can be as short or as long as your schedule allows. Despite your busy, hectic schedule (or, perhaps more appropriately, because of your busy, hectic schedule!), I encourage you to spend just a few moments with God during each day and observe how God shows up in your life. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



Alleluia Raffle Winners

Lily Best
- Children's Basket

Christ Schultz & William Lerch
- Adult Basket (tie)

CELEBRATING
ASIAN AMERICAN
 AND
PACIFIC ISLANDER
Heritage MONTH

Since 1990, the U.S. government has designated the month of May as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, celebrating the achievements and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in the United States. The month of May was chosen to mark the arrival of the first Japanese immigrant to the United States on May 7, 1843, as well as the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.

For a list of events and resources, please visit: asianpacificheritage.gov.

BLOOD DRIVE

Faith Lutheran - Bellaire

Sunday, May 11
 8:30 am - 1:00 pm
 Faith Center

Contact Tim Griffith (832) 277-5592
 sponsor code: 1037

****Free Towel and A1c testing****



Appointments preferred. Walk-ins welcome.



Iris, blood recipient



EAT. DRINK. BRING I.D.

*Save lives on
 the go with*



Complete your Health History Interview before you come in for your donation.

Go to <https://cflxpress.giveblood.org/> and complete the same day as your appointment.



Volunteer with CCSC Food Pantry

*For I was hungry and you gave me food.
(Matthew 25:35)*

Come to join the Faith food pantry volunteer team! We serve as receptionists, interviewers, or packers.

Location:

St. Luke's United Methodist Church Gethsemane Campus (6856 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77074)

Saturdays @ 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

May 3, June 7

To join the Faith Food Pantry Team or for more information, contact Pastor Tan at jt看@faithbellaire.org or 832-540-6802.



Back To School Needs Volunteers in May

Back To School, CCSC's program that provides underserved students with school supplies, backpacks and clothing gift cards, needs volunteers to assist with client registration **May 13-16, 8:30 AM -1:00 PM**, at Bellaire United Methodist Church.

Volunteers help check in clients, verify eligibility, and hand out invitations to the Back To School Community Event. Spanish-speaking volunteers are especially helpful (even moderate skills are welcome). Most volunteer jobs are indoors. On-site training and snacks are provided.

Sign up to volunteer by contacting the Faith church office at info@faithbellaire.org. If you have any questions, please contact Youth Services Manager Sarah Hans at shans@ccschouston.org.

Put Your Spanish Skills to Use as a CCSC Bilingual Volunteer



CCSC has a variety of weekly volunteer positions open for bilingual English/Spanish speakers.

Volunteers give four hours of their time, from 9:50 AM to 2:00 PM, one day each week. Positions include answering phones, helping clients in our clothing pantry, and interviewing or translating for clients.

To learn more or sign up to volunteer with CCSC, contact Volunteer Manager Beth Robertson at volunteer@ccschouston.org.



News from Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (ELC-CAR)

By Karen Elsen

This month there is good news from our sister church the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic. First the news from the churchwide assembly which ran from April 1 –April 6 where President Joseph Ngoe was re-elected for a second four-year term. The President is the equivalent of our Bishop. This is good news, because it affirms the work that the church has been doing under the leadership of President Ngoe and assures that the progress made can continue. Our missionary, Willie Langdji, serves as Regional Representative of the ELCA for West and Central Africa nurturing church-to-church relationships between the ELCA and national Lutheran churches in seven countries: CAR, Cameroon, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia, and Senegal.

There are three main areas of focus that Willie highlighted in his most recent newsletter.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

The Food Security Program of the ELC-CAR has provided technical and material support to subsistence farmers in the Nana Mambere and Ouham Pende Prefectures of CAR for over 30 years. This support has helped the farmers grow food for their families and sell the surplus on local markets. It has been the dream of the ELC-CAR to add value to the agricultural products of the farmers and enable them to derive more benefit from their produce while at the same time ensuring that the Food Security Program becomes sustainable in the future. January 31, 2025, saw the inauguration of the first peanut oil extraction unit of the church—the first in the country by a faith-based organization. The unit has a production capacity of two tons of peanut oil per day.

PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CENTRAL AFRICAN CHILDREN

With the increasing number of children leaving elementary school and limited high schools to take them in for secondary and higher studies, the church opened the first Protestant High School in Bouar in 2023. The first permanent building to house the high school was inaugurated on January 31, 2025. The high school now has 51 students, 17 of whom are girls.

ACCESS TO GOOD DRINKING WATER

In the past 20 years, and with the support from the ELCA, the Water Resources Management Program has supported 75 villages to have access to potable water by harnessing 77 springs and building wells that have benefitted more than 25,000 families.

There is truly much for which to give thanks.



**Have you subscribed to Faith's
YouTube channel?**

Scan the QR code to watch:

Worship Live

Recorded Services

Virtual Family Learning

And more!

Gearing Up for Faith Camp 2025

by John Vickery, Pastoral Intern



Somehow it is already May! I feel like I blinked in January and already we are approaching the hot summer months!

Though, summers here are very exciting, because with the end of school just around the corner, that also means that Faith Camp is not far behind.

This year our Faith Camp theme is “Innovators” so we will be having plenty of creative themes throughout the three weeks of camp; and have bible focus stories for each day that will help form all of our faith.

The Faith Camp staff is already getting very excited about what is in store for the camp which will happen in throughout July. We have several staff who are returning for another year, and we have several staff who are going to be staffers for the very first time.

This is what makes the Faith Camp program so special, is that not only is it an opportunity for elementary age kids to come, have fun, and to learn; it is also an opportunity for middle and high school students, and even college students to come and learn and grown in leadership. AND, if that wasn't enough Faith Camp is an outreach ministry into the community!

We have many families whose parents work in places like the Texas Medical Center, who will drop their kids off at camp in the morning on their way into town, and then pick them up at the end of the work day on their way back home. A safe place for kids to learn and to be when it is not the school year, and parents don't need to worry about planning for their kids around their work schedule. Talk about a WIN-WIN!

But, all of this is only possible through the support of the wider congregation. All of us together have and continue to contribute to making the Faith Camp program a reality. Through your financial gifts to Faith, we are able to fund scholarships for families who may not be able to afford to attend camp, helps us develop our programs in curriculum and experience, and more. And, every year we have an amazing team of individuals who partner with Faith Camp to encourage, pray for, and support the staff as they move through all three weeks.

When we say that Christianity is a team sport, this is a prime example. Many hands with Faith Camp, makes light(er) work. But even more importantly, it brings together and promotes community!



July 7 - 25, 2025

ANNUAL SPRING FAMILY PICNIC

BUBBLES, BOUNCE & BBQ



**Bring lawn
chairs and
blankets**

**SUNDAY, MAY 18
AFTER WORSHIP**



— ★ ★ ★ —

Memorial Day

Remember and Honor

Monday, May 26, 2024

Faith Lutheran's Church Office &
Schools are closed.

Faith Lutheran Church

4600 Bellaire Boulevard at Avenue B
Bellaire, Texas 77401

Office: 713-664-3048

Fax: 713-664-3371

Faith Day School: 713-664-3233

Mother's Day Out: 713-664-3233

Faith House: 713-664-3048

FaithBellaire.org

FaithDaySchool.org

FaithHouseHouston.org

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Pr. Marvin Havard

Pr. Junfeng Tan

Stacy Williams

Dr. Jerry Maynard

John Vickery

Courtney Lerch

Kendolyn Pope

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Patricia Deckard

Lin Chen

Malcolm Mathis

Teresa Roman

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Director of Operations

Director of Worship & Digital Ministries

Pastoral Intern

Director of Faith Formation

Director of Faith Schools

Organist/Choir Director

Office Coordinator

Office Coordinator

Faith Formation Admin Assistant

Facility Sexton

Accounting Clerk

