

# ***Living Word Monthly December 2004***

21 Ash St. North  
New London, MN 56273  
320-354-4594



**weekly services.....**

**Sunday mornings at 8:00am Traditional  
Service**

**Sunday mornings at 10:30am Contemporary  
Service**



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New London, MN 56251  
(320) 354-4594

**Jesus Loves:**

## GET GROWING AGAIN.

Jesus compares us to branches connected to a vine. He is the Vine. Our job as branches is to produce fruit - do things that nourish the lives of people around us. Just as a grapevine can only grow and produce fruit when it is attached to the vine, Christians can only grow and produce fruit when attached to Jesus. One of the ways we stay attached to Jesus is by getting into God's Word. If the summer found you not growing very much....

**Here are some opportunities to "get growing" again.**

- Sunday**      **2yrs - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Sunday School Classes** 9:15 -10:15
- Adults "Myth or Faith"** Every day we are exposed to many "religious" ideas. Join us at 9:15 to take a deeper look at which of those ideas come from God - and which only ones "sound good" but are actually contrary to what God says.
- Tuesday**      **Midweek Noon Bible Study** - join for a great time of fellowship and walking through books of the Bible.
- Wednesday**      **1st-6th Graders:** The NEW "Living Word All Stars" - Join us at 6:00 for a light supper followed at 6:30 by lots of fun growing closer to Jesus.
- 7-8th Graders: Confirmation classes** - The basics of our faith Join us at 6:00 for a light supper before we study at 6:30
- 9-12 Graders:** "Don't Check Your Brains At the Door" - at 6:30 we get together to separate myth from truth.
- Men - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays** - join us at 7:00 to study faith issues important to guys
- Women- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays** - join us at 7:00 to study faith issues important to women
- Friday**      **Pray at Noon.** Join us to "take it to the Lord in prayer"
- NEW 3<sup>rd</sup>-Friday Family Night** - Join us at 6:00 for potluck meal followed by "Parables from the Fishing Hole" a study on God's plan for our lives as taught in some humorous episodes of the old "Andy Griffith Show." After watching the video clip adults and kids break into separate groups.

What we aim to do: **Make disciples for Jesus - as we go, wherever we go.**

What we aim to be: **A joyful, caring, Christ-centered**

## Questions for Pastor

*In Galatians chapter five we see that there are two forces battling in our lives: our sinful nature and the Holy Spirit. You said that the Holy Spirit is the stronger force, but isn't our sinful nature stronger? I mean, we keep on sinning.*

This is a great question that came during a confirmation class. I'm sure it's something each of you have noticed - even if you didn't phrase it exactly the same. You are not alone. Even the apostle Paul, who usually strikes us as pretty close to perfect, says in Romans chapter seven: "*The good that I want to do - that's what I don't do. The bad that I don't want to do - that's what I do.*" And most of the letters of the New Testament are filled with exhortations to *Christians* to quit sinning and start acting like believers in Jesus.

One of the realities of sin is that it will be with us until the day we die. (Another great reality is that sin will NEVER be with us in eternity!)

A couple things are important to remember as we await eternity:

- 1) Thank God He sent His Son to this earth for the express purpose of taking the punishment for our sin! Thank God that we receive that forgiveness every time we turn to Jesus and repent!
- 2) Your sinful nature doesn't need to get the upper hand. Think of Satan and your sinful nature as a team that knows it has lost the championship. But it keeps trying real hard to make life miserable for the team that is going to win. When you trust in Jesus, you are on the team that wins. You don't have to let Satan and your sinful nature keep the game close to the end. Here's the key:

*"Submit to God. Resist the devil. And he will flee from you."* James 4:7

Notice what comes before the "resist the devil" part? The "submit to God" part. If you are trying to resist the devil on your own power, you *will* lose. But when you submit to God and trust that His will for you is always best, you resist the devil with the power of God on your side. The devil has no choice but to run from God. So, submit to God. Resist the devil. (Just say "No."). And he flees.

After the Holy Spirit has defeated Satan by bringing you to place your faith in Jesus, He continues to work in your life to help you "submit to God" (to quit living like you are the one in charge and let God be in charge). How can you tap into the power the Spirit has for you to submit to God and resist the devil? Pray and read God's Word daily. Like an electrical outlet, the power is there. But you still need to 'plug into it' to bring it into your life.

Thanks for asking,

Pastor Dave

## Advent... a time to prepare for Christ's coming.

### The Season...

Of the sacred seasons of the Church Year, Advent is the first, observed during the first four weeks of each new Church Year leading to the festival of Christmas. In the weeks of Advent, **familiar sights and sounds** serve to prepare us to receive our Savior, while sharpening our sense of the world's need for redemption and the great mystery of God's becoming human for us.



Advent is a Latin word meaning *the coming*. The season of Advent is a time of preparation. Advent helps Christian people prepare each other to receive the promise Christ as He comes, whether at his lowly birth in history, his mysterious coming now to the Christian community through His Word and the Sacraments, or his triumphal coming to be our Judge at the end of time.

Early Christians in the western tradition treated the days before Christmas in two ways: some as a time of repentance and others as a time of joyous celebration. Christians in northern Europe viewed Advent as a time to "clean house" spiritually in preparation for the Lord's final coming. Christians in Rome viewed Advent more as a time of joy our remembrance of the incarnation of God in the Christ-child.

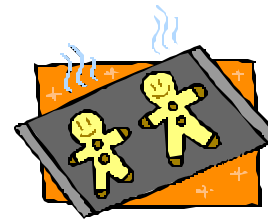
Today these two emphases continue side by side. They give our observance of Advent, symbols, terms and Scripture lessons that lead us to introspection and renewal, and to exuberant joy and celebration as we travel toward Christmas.

### The Symbols...

**Advent Colors.** The colors of Advent are purple and blue. The ancient tradition of purple symbolizes the Advent's emphasis on repentance, signaled by John the Baptist's call. More recently, the use of blue signifies hope, as the people of God look forward to Christ's coming.

**Advent Wreath.** The Advent wreath is probably the most popular symbol of Advent. Its bright candles, forming the wreath, symbols of the Light of the World who overcomes the darkness and warms a wintry world. The candles lit week by week, first one, then two, three and finally four candles at a time, most often consist of three purple or blue candles and one pink. The pink one, lit on the third Sunday in Advent, is the "Rejoice" candle.

**Advent Calendar.** Advent calendars help us count the days of Christ's birth, giving young and old a daily reminder of where our Christian hopes lie - with the holy child in the lowly manger.



### "Baking Day"

on Saturday December 4th. All men and women are invited to attend. "Holiday Treats" At 8:30 am we will gather to bake cookies, bars, candies, so bring recipes and ingredients and we will do an exchange so we all have a variety of treats for the Holidays!!!

At 1:00pm that day we will be doing "Italian bread and dipping oils"  
So come with recipe in hand and again the ingredients and lets

### Confirmation Parents:

**Mentors & Meal Makers are needed for January and February**

Sign up posted at church in the kitchen. Thanks!

### Confirmation Schedule During Advent

7-8th & 9th Confirmation will meet from 6:30-7:15 during Advent.

## ASFJ Schedule During Advent

The *All Stars for Jesus* will meet from 6:30 - 7:15pm  
For Movies and Popcorn

## CHRISTMAS EVE

**Two Ways to Celebrate Christ's Birth :**

**Sunday School Christmas Program 7:30 p.m.**

The Students lead us in celebrating God coming to be with us.

**Late night Candlelight Communion Worship 11:00 p.m.**

Celebrate the wonder of Christ's birth in word and song.

# A Minute for Men

### Lessons From Bible Guys : Jesus

It almost seems sacrilegious to refer to Jesus as a "guy." But, the celebration of Christmas reminds us that in addition to being fully God, *Jesus was also fully human*. Indeed he is the ultimate example for us to follow.

As we approach the Christmas season and the celebration of his coming to earth, he gives us the example of the gift to give. What gift did he give us on his birthday (setting the example that, as he later said, "It is more blessed to give than receive.")?

The most basic gift He gave was the gift of Himself.

God came to be with us as one of us.

As you are tempted this month to buy all sorts of material gifts for the people close to you, remember what they really want is your presence - not your presents. Get creative and think of ways to give your presence *throughout the coming year* - not just a week or so after Christmas...

**Some ideas:** Give your wife the promise of a "date a month"

Give your kids the promise of a special day spent with each of them each month. If they no longer live at home, promise them a visit more often than in the past. Or mark dates each month (week?) when you will call them.

The same thing applies with your parents and your friends. The gift they really want is your presence. It's the example that Jesus set the first Christmas. You will be blessed and so will they.

### Simple Ways to Give Your Spiritual Life a Lift:

**"Get Into" Advent with Advent Midweek Worship:**

**Join us the Wednesdays of Advent from 7:30-8:15 p.m.  
as we do the difficult part of Christmas: The waiting part**  
(As a way of preparing us to really celebrate Jesus' coming)

**Each service will include a skit by members of the congregation as well as music and messages by the young people of our congregation.**

**December 1** Skit & Message by 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Class

**December 8** Message by Bryson Wachter

**December 15** Skit by 7-8th Grace Confirmation Class  
Message by Vince Mische

**Plan to join us. It will give your spiritual life a lift.**

## **Family Night Fellowship and Study**

### **“Parables from the Fishing Hole”**

Friday evening, December 17. Potluck meal begins  
at 6:00 at Ryan and Shelli Blocks.’

After we eat, we watch an episode of the TV classic  
“The Andy Griffith Show” and discuss the biblical principle that  
episode is based on. It’s a fun evening, please join us. This  
month’s topic is especially appropriate to the season:  
Contentment.

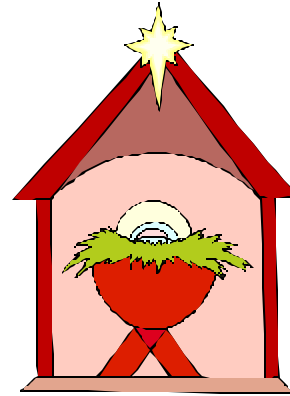
## **Packing and moving day!!!**

Please help as much or when you can on Saturday and Sunday  
December 4th and 5th. we will be sifting, sorting, packing and  
throwing and we NEED YOU! Women will be baking goodies and  
hopefully the men can pack on Saturday; Sunday after church  
services! We appreciate any time you can give! Contact Dan or  
Tammy if you have questions and boxes would be appreciated as  
well!

## **Simple Ways to Give Your Spiritual Life A Lift**

**Give thanks in *all* circumstances.**

Our Thanksgiving holiday is history. The turkey and pie is probably  
long gone - even the leftovers. But the thanks-giving part doesn’t have  
to be over. In fact, we’re told in the Bible “give thanks in *all*  
circumstances.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) Thanking God isn’t just for the  
fourth Thursday in November. It’s for every day.



But how is it possible to “give thanks in *all*  
circumstances”? There are all sorts of situations  
where it’s really hard to be thankful. A job is  
lost. People you love make bad choices. You  
make bad choices. A friend betrays. A loved  
one dies. “Richer” becomes “poorer.” “Health”  
turns into “sickness.” “Better” becomes  
“worse.” How is it possible to give thanks in  
those circumstances?

I think Jesus gave us a great example in the  
feeding of the 5000. You remember the situation. The disciples were  
your typical “grumblers and complainers.” They grumbled that Jesus  
didn’t want to send the people away. They grumbled about how much  
it would cost them to buy food for the people. They grumbled about  
only finding five loaves and two fish. They focused on the “thankless”  
situation - instead of on the God who could change the situation.

What did Jesus do? Just the opposite. He took the loaves and fish and  
*gave thanks!* He focused not on the situation, but on the God who  
could change the situation. He gave thanks to God. You know how the  
story ends. God miraculously multiplied the bread and fish, so all the  
people had enough to eat... with twelve baskets full left over!

In order to be thankful in all circumstances, don’t focus on the  
circumstances (which are constantly changing). Focus on the God who  
can change the situation. The God who “works all things for the good  
of those who love Him.” (Romans 8:28)

No matter what situation you find yourself in, God will be there. He has  
the power to make something good come from the bad that happens to  
you. He has the power to make something good come from the bad  
that you’ve done. Thank God for that - everyday!

## **Don’t Forget Whose Birthday Christmas Is..**

## To Our Live Nativity

### Quick tips to help you focus on Jesus

AND give witness to what the **REAL** Christmas celebration is about:



1. In your prayers at supper, include a prayer for each person who received a Christmas card from that day.
2. Invite someone to join you for one or more of the special services (or live nativity). Many people who wouldn't accept an invitation other times, will accept one this time of year.
3. Give your lighting scheme a "Jesus" theme by having a star or cross as the central focus.
4. When decorating the tree, take time to read the Christmas story and have everyone share what Jesus birth means to them.
5. Have everyone write down (or draw and color) gifts they will give Jesus, then wrap these in little (or big) boxes and put them under the tree. Open and read them when you open your other gifts
6. Don't just recount events of '04 in your Christmas letter, tell how you saw God working in those events. Include a Bible verse that helped you through the year. Maybe even put it in bold at the top of your letter.
7. Remember: The "perfect" Christmas isn't made perfect by gifts, or food, or traditions, but simply by celebrating Jesus and His presence.

## Invite someone....

A several years ago the Evangelism Committee initiated a Living Nativity as a way of helping achieve an outreach goal of spreading the true message of Christmas to our community. It was a huge success and a lot of fun. Coffee, hot cider and cookies that will be available after the outdoor presentation. This is a great opportunity to invite people you know to come and hear the message of the Gospel and see the real reason for hope and peace and joy: God coming to save his people!

### Or become part of it:

We are in need of people who will bring animals such as a donkey, a calf, sheep, a pig, camel etc. We will also need straw for making the manger scene, outside lights, extension cords and speakers.

We will also need people to:

1. participate as the characters of the Christmas story;
2. also, narrators, pianist, and soloist;
3. kitchen and decorating help and help bake cookies and bars;
4. participate by singing Christmas carols;
5. set up and take down the scene.

Our Living Nativity will be set up behind the church for a one time performance, **Sunday, December 12 @ 4:30 p.m..** The Evangelism Committee hopes you will use this event as a fun and meaningful way to show God's unconditional love and spread His powerful message of hope.

Look for sign up sheets in the narthex. Or talk to Pastor David or Tammy Fuglie if you can help in any way.

Thanks

# December Schedule

your place or to switch. Thanks

## **Elder - Early Service**

**Dec.** Kevin Welsh  
**Jan.** Duane Hansen  
**Feb.** Ron Wothe

## **Elder - Late Service**

**Dec.** Randy Mord  
**Jan.** Tim Geer  
**Feb.** Randy Mord

## **Acolyte**

5- Mariah Welsh  
12- Joey Johnson  
19- Gabe Mische  
26- Emily Fuglie

## **Children's Church Helper**

5- Amanda Olson  
12- Skylar Wachter  
19- Alicia Willer  
26- Anthony Dauk

## **Fellowship Server**

5- Melissa Mord  
12- Tammy Fuglie  
19-  
26- Melissa Mord

## **Ushers**

Early- open  
Late- Dan Miller & Brent Miller

## **Greeters**

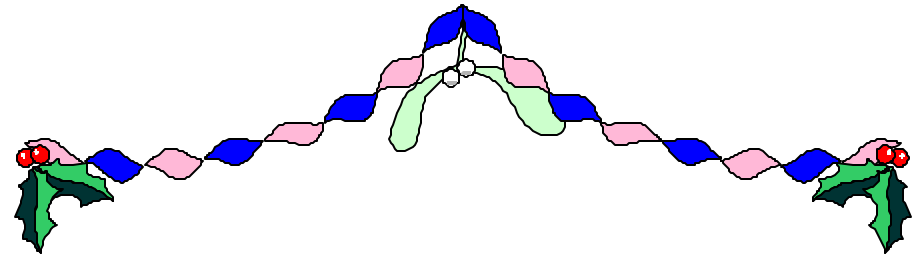
Early- open  
Late- Melissa Mord

## **Junior Greeters**

Amanda Olson

## **Junior Ushers**

Anthony Dauk



## **Reminder:**

If you are unable to attend church on the Sunday that you are scheduled, please contact someone to take