



Living Word
Lutheran Church
LCMS

December 2011 Newsletter



"Communicating the Love of Jesus"

Worship Hours:

Christian Growth Hour: 8:45 a.m.

Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Living Word Lutheran Church

Located on the West of Spicer on County Rd 10
in old Prairie Meadows building
PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273
Phone: 320-796-0742
Website: www.livingwordlutheran.net

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 family of God.

Question for Pastor...

What is *Your* Favorite Christmas _____ ?

I recently asked someone what their favorite Christmas song was and I got the question tossed back at me. That led to a conversation about all sorts of other "favorites" of Christmas. I've listed some of mine below. I'd be interested to hear about your favorites. (You'll get a chance to share some of them at our Advent devotional services on December 14 and 21st).

... **song?** That depends. Christmas seems to bring out the best (and in a few cases, the worst) in people musically. There are so many great songs and hymns. I'll have to put my favorites into a few categories.

As for "songs on the radio" I'd have to pick two:

- 1) "What A Wonderful Beginning" by Kathy Mattea
Amazing Voice - Great Words!
- 2) "Ding Dong! Merrily on High" by Roger Whittaker
Amazing Voice - Great Bells!

Songs from TV shows

Schroeder's Christmas song from "A Charlie Brown Christmas"

Songs from our hymnal

- + Hark the Herald Angels Sing
- combination of great words and great tune.

Songs not in our hymnal

- + Good King Wenceslas - I love the story and the tune

... **TV special?**

- + A Charlie Brown Christmas.

That's an easy one. Every year Linus cuts through all the traditions

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and the buying frenzy and reminds us once again that it's all about Jesus! (Plus I like Charlie's tree.)

... **food?**

- + Oyster Stew - But it has to be on Christmas Eve. Doesn't taste nearly as good any other time.
- + Spritz cookies - These taste just as good any time of year.

... **church tradition?**

- + The Christmas Eve Candlelight worship.

The Christmas story, the Christmas songs, the entire service by candlelight. Hard to beat that.

... **family tradition?**

- + Cutting a Christmas tree.

We've had this tradition since Anthony and Becca were little. Each year a different family member gets to choose the tree. After cutting the tree the kids used to have us take a picture of one them under the tree as though it had fallen on them. This year with the kids at college Violet and I will go cut the tree. I volunteered to get my picture taken under the "fallen" tree. Violet says she thinks we should get a General Sherman Sequoia this year. Not sure why....

... **characters in the Christmas story?**

- + The shepherds and wise men

It's a toss-up. (I know the Magi aren't *technically* part of Christmas, but they have a way of showing up in Christmas programs). What I like is that both groups dropped what they were doing to come and worship the Savior. They received a message about the Messiah being born and simply believed it. They showed their belief was genuine by acting on it - by coming to Jesus. That's an example for all of us.

...**part about Christmas?**

- + The fact that it happened!

It boggles my mind every time I stop to think of what Christmas really is: God leaving the comforts of heaven to come to earth to be with us... for the express purpose of suffering death and hell... so that we selfish, ungrateful sinners can be with Him for eternity!!! What a comforting thing it is to know that God loved us enough to become human and experienced everything we do. That means we can be sure that when we go to Him we are going to One who really understands - He gets it, because He lived it!

Have a Merry Christmas,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Sharing the Love of God In Practical Ways...

One of the best (and simplest) ways to share Jesus' love is by making a meal for someone who is going through a tough time. We are updating our Meal-Making program, and could use more meal makers (and meal takers). Please talk to Congregation Outreach Coordinator Linda Dilley if you can help by making a meal from time to time. Thanks!

More Ideas for Sharing the Love of Jesus This Month:

During the busy weeks prior to Christmas thoughtful Christians go out of their way to show their love for others. In fact, "Sharing the Love of Jesus in Practical Ways" is one of our Core Values at Living Word. Here are a few suggestions. You may think of more. The possibilities are limited only by your creativity.

- * Babysit for a mom (or dad) while they shop.
- * Shovel snow for someone this winter who could use the help.
- * Invite at least one person to join you in worship Christmas Eve.
- * Drive others to church for worship.
- * "Adopt" someone in a care center, not just for Christmas, but for an indefinite period of time.
- * Use your special talents (what are they?) where needed.
- * Invite someone who is alone for the holidays over for dinner.
- * Ask the Lord for guidance in using you in meaningful ways to bring glory to Him - He will direct you.

Christmas Music Needed:

We will have special music for our Christmas Program on December 18 and for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship. Please talk to Pastor David if you (and some of your family or friends) and provide special music during these services. Thanks in advance for using your talents.

Who Can You Invite ?

Two of the prophecies about the Messiah that God promised to send talk of Him as being a "Light to the Gentiles." People who are living without Jesus are living in the dark - and that's no way to live!

Those of us who believe that Jesus is truly the "Light of the World" and our only Savior have the privilege of being like "mirrors" - reflecting the Light of Jesus to those around us.

One great way we can reflect that Light is by a simple invitation to friends, neighbors, relatives. Invite them to join you for one

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That for a day: He who has no Christmas in his heart will never find Christmas under a tree

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of our special services this Christmas. Who can you invite? Pray about it. Ask God to give you the words and opportunity. Then just do it. Ask them to come with you. Offer to pick them up. (And if they don't take you up on your invitation,, keep praying for them and for another opportunity to invite.)

Kids: **Birthday Party for Jesus**
(After Christmas Dinner on Dec. 18)

Everyone: **Caroling in a horse-drawn carriage**
(Wednesday., December 7 - Meet at Glen Oaks @ 6:30)

The Christmas Program
(Sunday, December 18 @ 10am)
(Special music, songs by the kids and the Christmas story)

Christmas Dinner
(Sunday, December 18 @ 11:15am)

Everyone: **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**
(Dec. 24 @ 5pm)
+ The entire service is done by candlelight.
+ The Christmas Story from Luke chapter two is interspersed with Christmas Carols

You can help with our Support of Heidy

We have committed to \$32/month to help pay for basic needs and Christian education opportunities for Heidy. Donations may be placed in the "Heidy" box on the usher table at church. Thank you!

Poinsettias Welcome

Everyone is welcome to bring a poinsettia plant to place in the sanctuary for Christmas. You may bring the plant any time and set it on the counter. The Altar Guild will take care of it and place it around the altar.

Thanks !!!

...Thanks to Everyone Who Packed a Shoe Box for Operation Christmas Child. We collected almost 20 boxes filled with the love of Jesus.

If you have someone you'd like to thank for serving, please email their name and how they served to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net



The LINK Update...

News from The Link Dec. 2011
Creating a community where neighbors share the love of God through service to each other.

From the director... If you have yet to visit us up at our New London site, I invite you to stop by and see what is going on. Looking at all the activity in this building, it's hard to believe that none of this existed three years ago! We are in the Community Outreach Building in the former Clinic at the end of Main Street. The Willmar Area Food Shelf, The Community Closet Clothing Thrift Store and The Link all share space in this building owned by the Covenant Church.

We are open on Tuesdays from 2p-6p and Thursdays from 10a-2p. We offer free laundry and Internet in addition to our household exchange. Stop by and drop off a piece of gently used furniture or a kitchen item that is collecting dust. Come in and find a needed lamp or desk.

Our volunteers are happy to welcome you and help you find what you need or receive a donation. This is a great way to pass along things you are no longer using that still have good use left in them for someone else. It's also a great way to clear out space in your home for something new you might get at Christmas.

Please note there are a few things we do not take. Because we try to help with the basic needs, we don't take knick knack or decorative type of items, no books, cds, video tapes or DVDs, and *please only items that are gently used and clean*. Clothing can go to the Community Closet.

Naomi Mahler, Director The Link

TUESDAY'S TABLE Join us Every Tuesday night at 6pm!
1st Tues @ Our Lady of the Lakes, Spicer
2nd Tues @ Evangelical Covenant, NL
3rd Tues @ Faith Lutheran, Spicer
4th Tues @ Peace Lutheran, New London
5th Tues @ Hope Presbyterian, Spicer

Tuesday's Table is a great way to enjoy some fellowship and conversation. Invite a friend! Volunteer to help!

Send your year-end donations c/o of The Link's fiscal host, Faith Lutheran Church, 310 Medayto Dr, Spicer, MN 56288. Designate your check for The Link.

If you have any questions or concerns contact Naomi Mahler, the director at 320-796-2522 or flc_naomi@tds.net

That for a day: Love is lovely when it's easy, but much truer when it's hard.

Living Word "Core Value" Series...

To-date in our sermon series on the Core Values we hold at Living Word we have reviewed these essential values:

1. The Bible - It is 100% God's Word, and thus it is THE standard for all we believe and do.
2. Jesus Christ - He is God-in-the-flesh and the only way to God the Father
3. Making Disciples for Jesus - This is our basic reason for existence.
4. Small-Group ministry - Disciples to grow as we study the Bible, pray, fellowship and reach out together in small groups.
5. Worship - Each one is a "mini-Easter" celebrating who God is and what He has done.
6. Praying Together - Jesus promises His special presence wherever two or three are gathered together in His name.
7. Humility - We strive to never leave a "holier than thou" impression.

Join us the Sundays in December as finish up our series and prepare for the Celebration of Christ's First Coming at Christmas.

A Christmas-Giving Lesson from Jesus...

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 humans 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 of something He later said, "It is more blessed to give than receive.")?

The most basic gift Jesus 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 for 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.

p.s. Don't forget, your presence is also the gift Jesus wants for His birthday - and the rest of the year.

E-Mail Wisdom... (received via e-mail)

Bend in the Road

When we feel we have nothing left to give
And we are sure that the song has ended
When our day seems over and the shadows fall
And the darkness of night has descended.

Where can we go to find the strength
To valiantly keep on trying,
Where can we find the hand that will dry
The tears that the heart is crying.

There's but one place to go and that is to God
And, dropping all pretense and pride,
We can pour out our problems without restraint
And gain strength from Him at our side.

And together we stand at life's crossroads
And view what we think is the end
But God has a much bigger vision
And He tells us it's only a bend.

For the road goes on and is smoother
And the pause in the song is a rest
And the part that's unsung and unfinished
Is the sweetest and richest and best.

So rest and relax and grow stronger
Let go and let God share your load
Your work is not finished or ended,
You've just come to a bend in the road.

Helen Steiner Rice

Thot for a day: Take C-H-R-I-S-T out of Christmas and you're left with a "miss."

E-Mail Humor...

One particular four-year-old prayed: *"And forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets."*

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A teacher was drilling his young students on the Westminster Confession of Faith. The first question in the catechism is "What is the chief end of man?" The answer: "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

One youngster seemed quite sure of himself as he anxiously waved his hand for recognition. When the teacher called his name, he proudly blurted out, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and annoy Him forever!"

He was possibly more right than we'd care to admit!

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A new business was opening and one of the owner's friends wanted to send him flowers for the occasion. They arrived at the new business site and the owner read the card, "Rest in Peace." The owner was angry and called the florist to complain.

After he had told the florist of the obvious mistake and how angry he was, the florist replied, "Sir, I'm really sorry for the mistake, but rather than getting angry, you should imagine this: somewhere there is a funeral taking place today, and they have flowers with a note saying, 'Congratulations on your new location.'"

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Can you answer all seven of the following questions with the same word?

1. The word has seven letters
2. Preceded God
3. Greater than God
4. More evil than the devil
5. Poor people have it
6. Wealthy people need it
7. If you eat it, you will die

(answer on page 23)

Living Word is now on Facebook!

Posting the daily bible readings, church activities, and taking prayer requests! Go to www.facebook.com to sign up for your free account. Already on facebook? search for Living Word Lutheran Church and add us to your friend list.

December- Daily Devotionals

December Daily Readings:

This month we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth with readings about prophecies of His coming, readings about His birth, and finally readings about responses to His birth.

Wk of Dec 4 DAILY READINGS... PROPHECIES OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

Dec 5 Genesis 3:15 _____

Dec 6 Genesis 12:1-3 _____

Dec 7 Deuteronomy 18:14-19 _____

Dec 8 Psalm 68:16-20 _____

Dec 9 Micah 5:2 _____

Dec 10 Malachi 3:1-4 _____

Wk of Dec 11 DAILY READINGS ... More PROPHECIES of CHRIST'S COMING

Dec 12 Isaiah 2:4 _____

Dec 13 Isaiah 7:10-14 _____

Dec 14 Isaiah 9:6-7 _____

Dec 15 Isaiah 11:1-10 _____

Dec 16 Isaiah 42:1-8 _____

Dec 17 Isaiah 61:1-3 _____

Wk of Dec 18 DAILY READINGS ... THE COMING AND BIRTH OF CHRIST

Dec 19 Luke 1:26-38 _____

"The Coming of Christ"

Dec 20 Luke 1:39-45 _____

Dec 21 Luke 1:46-56 _____

Dec 22 John 1:1-14 _____

Dec 23 Luke 2:1-20 _____

Dec 24 Matthew 1:18-25 _____

Wk of Dec 25 DAILY READINGS THE BIRTH OF CHRIST - Timing & Responses

Dec 26 Galatians 4:4-7 _____

Dec 27 Ephesians 1:7-10 _____

Dec 28 Luke 2:21-24 _____

Dec 29 Luke 2:25-35 _____

Dec 30 Luke 2:36-40 _____

Dec 31 Revelation 12:1-5 _____

Wk of Jan 1 DAILY READINGS JESUS TELLS WHY HE CAME

Jan 2 Matthew 5:17-18 _____

Jan 3 Matthew 20:28 _____

Jan 4 Luke 4:42-44 _____

Jan 5 Luke 19:9-10 _____

Jan 6 John 3:16-17 _____

Jan 7 John 10:7-10 _____

December 2011 - Living Word Church Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 9:00 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: - Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/ Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship	5 9:00 Circuit Pastors @ Wood Lake	6 6:00 Men's Group	7 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Bible Study 5:45 Pre-Caroling Meal 6:30 Caroling in N.L. (Start at Glen Oaks)	8	9	10 10:30 Christmas Program Practice
11 9:00 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: - Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship Outreach Meeting	12	13 6:00 Men's Group 7:15 Elders' Team	14 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Bible Study 5:45 Soup Supper 6:30 Advent Midweek Devotion Service 7:00 Confirmation	15 6:30 Sunday School Mtg 7:00 Mission & Ministry Team	16	17 10:30 Christmas Program Practice
18 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 9:00 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: - Sunday School 10:00 SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 11:15 CHRISTMAS HAM DINNER noon BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS	19	20 6:00 Men's Group	21 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Bible Study 5:45 Soup Supper 6:30 Advent Midweek Devotion Service 7:00 Confirmation	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP
25 CHRISTMAS DAY 10:00 CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP	26	27 6:00 Men's Group	28	29	30	31 NEW YEARS EVE
Jan 1 9:00 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum - Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	Jan 2	Jan 3 6:00 Men's Group	Jan 4 9:30 Moms' Study Noon Bible Study 6:30 Confirmation	Jan 5	Jan 6 EPIPHANY	Jan 7

Upcoming Schedules...

Scripture Readers

Dec 4 Duane Hansen
Dec 11 Scott Wachter
Dec 18 Bryson Wachter
Dec 25 Wendy Robbin

Jan 1 Mona Hjelle
Jan 8 Phil Iverson
Jan 15 Susan Johnson
Jan 22 Kevin Welsh
Jan 29 Linda Dilley

Confirmation Meal

Nov 30 Pastor David
Dec 7 Pam Johnson
Dec 14 Marcia Welsh
Dec 21 Julie Bajari
Dec 28 No Class

Jan 4 Pam Johnson
Jan 11 Marcia Welsh
Jan 18 Julie Bajari
Jan 25 Vicky Nelson

Fellowship Servers

Dec 4 Tammy Wachter / Sarah Miller
Dec 11 Mona Hjelle
Dec 18 Violet Dauk / Laurel Iverson
Dec 25 Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hanson

Jan 1 Violet Dauk / Laurel Iverson
Jan 8 Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hansen
Jan 15 Marcia Welsh / Pam Johnson
Jan 22 Wendy Robbin / Alicia Sawatzky
Jan 29 Nancy Jo Wendt / Tammy Fuglie

Children's Church Schedule

Dec Leaders Needed
Jan Leaders Needed

Acolyte

Dec 2-3rd Graders
Jan 2-3rd Graders

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That for a day: Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect.

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Elders

Dec 4 Jason Miller & Troy Hansen
Dec 18 Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp
Jan 1 Jason Miller & Troy Hansen
Jan 15 Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp

Usher & Greeter Schedule

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Greeter</u>
Dec 4	Lonnie Robbin & Jason Olson	Bryson W
Dec 11	Mark Fuglie & Tim Geer	Laurel I
Dec 18	Linda Dilley & Mona Hjelle	Bonnie H
Dec 25	Kevin & Noah Welsh	

Jan 1	Jamie & Phil Iverson	Bryson W
Jan 8	Duane Hansen & Chuck Weflen	Laurel I
Jan 15	Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter	Bonnie H
Jan 22	Troy Hansen & Brady Sharp	
Jan 29	Lonnie Robbin & Jason Olson	

*Fill-in Greeter Bonnie Hansen 796-5605

Building Update...

Building details: 52'X80', 4160 sq. ft., 9ft. sidewall, 4/12 pitch steel roof, aluminum soffit & fascia, vinyl siding.

Groundbreaking in April 2012, \$190,000 total cost.

The Building committee has met three times and will continue to meet every two weeks. We have put together the basic building parameters, worked up a detailed floor plan and mapped out the 2nd phase location. We are now working out the many smaller details. At this point we are focused on getting updated contractor bids for Heating & A/C, Plumbing, Electrical, Excavation, Masonry, Well, Septic, and interior/exterior materials. We plan to utilize SIP panel construction and are working with two suppliers in obtaining bids for that also. As per Pastor Strohshein's recommendation, we are also applying for loans from 2 or 3 different banks, but need to get cost details in place first. There is also a fund-raising letter going out to friends of Living Word that will be mailed out within the next week to give people an opportunity to make a donation before the end of the year.

Those are the highlights. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Building Committee Chairperson, Jamie Iverson

Sunday School News...

Thanksgiving is over and Christmas is almost here! I am THANKFUL for so many things regarding our Sunday School. The kids! The Teachers! The Helpers! Children's Church! Our Hay Ride and Bonfire! And, so much more!!! Now during the Advent season we begin to focus on the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. What a wonderful time of anticipation and excitement.

Christmas Caroling –

We Will Be Driven Around Town by a Horse Drawn Wagon!

On **Wednesday, December 7th** we get to share the joy of Christmas with others by Christmas caroling. The details are as follows:

5:45 to 6:15 - Meet at the church for supper.

6:30pm - Caroling starts at Glenn Oaks in New London. We will ride in a horse drawn covered wagon (with windows). Bring blanket to snuggle under.

6:30-7:30 - Sing and enjoy the clip clops of the horses. I hope it snows just a little bit!

Invite a friend! The more, the warmer!

Christmas Program and Practice

We also start Christmas Program practice on **Saturday, December 3rd at 10:am**. Our program is called 'Follow the Star.' A cute story of the Birth of Christ.

The Christmas Program will be presented on **Sunday, December 18th at 10:00am**, followed by our annual ham dinner and a special birthday party for the kids to celebrate Jesus' birth. It will be a special day for the kids so invite family and friends to share it with them.

Thanks, and enjoy the anticipation and excitement of the Christmas Season!
Violet

Sunday School Schedule:

December 4 The Birth of Jesus
December 11 The Visit of the Wise Men
December 18 Children's Program
December 25 Christmas Day - No Sunday School
January 2 The Presentation of Jesus

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That for a day: You know you are getting old when Santa starts looking younger.

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Upcoming Events...

Advent Midweek Devotion & Prayer Service

Wednesdays, Dec, 14 & 21 @ 6:30 p.m.

Take time out of your Wednesday evenings on December 14 and 21 for a time of fellowship, devotion and prayer as a way of preparing your heart for the celebration of Christ's birth. We'll light the Advent wreath, share some favorite Christmas preparations and sing some Christmas carols too. Soup and Sandwich supper will be served prior to the ½ hour service.

Schedule :

5:45 - 6:20	Soup & Sandwich Supper
6:30 - 7:00	Devotion & Prayer Service
7:00	Confirmation &

Other Regular Wednesday Evening Activities

MN North District

LLL & Orphan Grain Train Meeting & Christmas Party

Saturday, December 10 @ Trinity Lutheran in Fergus Falls

1:00 Orphan Grain Train Meeting

2:00 Lutheran Layman League meeting

Evening Meal after the meetings

There will be an opportunity to give a Christmas money donation for Lutheran Hour Ministries/Dr. Lee in South Korea

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship @5:00 p.m.

The entire service is held in candlelight.

+ The Christmas story in Word and song, plus Lord's Supper.

Christmas Day Service

Regular Sunday Worship Time: 10:00 am

(No Sunday School or After-worship fellowship)

The NLS Ministerium Presents:
A Benefit Concert for The Link

CHILD OF JOY AND PEACE

An Evening of Advent and Christmas Music
Featuring choirs & soloists from area congregations

Sunday Dec 4th, 7pm

Faith Lutheran Church, Spicer

A free-will offering will benefit The Link.

Refreshments to Follow

Special Thank Offerings Can Still Be Given...

God commanded the Israelites to come to the temple once a year for a joyful celebration of the blessings God provided in the harvest. This harvest festival was called the Feast of Weeks.

Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. Deuteronomy 16:10

In keeping with the example of the Israelites, on Thanksgiving Eve we came together for a special joyful celebration of the blessings God has provided us. We also brought special Thank-Offerings to the Lord in proportion to the blessings He's given us this past year.

If you weren't here for the Thanksgiving worship, you can still give your Thank-Offering during the month of December. Please use the "Thank-Offering" envelope and simply place it in the offering along with your regular offering at worship. (Thank-Offerings will be applied toward *You're A Hero Sandwich* fund to reduce our debt and enable us to get into a new building this spring.)

But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

King David in 1 Chronicles 29:14

"You're A Hero Sandwich" Update...

Our sandwich is filling up with ingredients!
To date we have [\\$3446](#)

Remember, by donating certain amounts* to build the "You're a HERO Sandwich," you can select the sandwich fixings to put on the felt board at the back of church. The faster the sandwich builds, the closer all of us are to having our new church building. And when we meet our goal, we'll all get to have a soup and Hero sandwich party!

*\$500=Bacon, \$200=Salami, \$150=Ham, \$100=Cheese,
\$75=Lettuce, \$50=Tomato, \$30=Onion, \$20=Peppers,
\$10=Pickle

You can donate by bringing in your donations to church or mailing a check payable to:

Living Word Lutheran Church
PO Box 242
New London, MN 56273

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That for a day: Why was Santa's little helper depressed? Because he had low self-esteem.

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Opportunities for Growth...

The Daily Bible Readings ... Giving Thanks

This month we finish up the readings on God's Favorite Songs and appropriately turn to readings about Giving Thanks.

In Our December Bible Studies:

WEIRD - Because Normal Isn't Working

- Men's Study Every Tuesday Evening at 6:00
- Mom's Study Wed. Mornings @ 9:30
- Wednesday Noon Study
- Sunday Morning Study @ 9:00



Normal people are stressed, overwhelmed, and exhausted. Many of their relationships are, at best, strained and, in most cases, just surviving. Even though we live in one of the most prosperous places on earth, normal is still living paycheck to paycheck and never getting ahead. Lust and frequent 'casual' sex are far more common than purity and a healthy married sex life. And when it comes to God, the majority believe in him, but the teachings of Scripture rarely make it into their everyday lives. Simply put, "normal" isn't working.

In this six-session, video-based study, Craig Groeschel's WEIRD views will help you break free from the norm to lead a radically abnormal (and endlessly more fulfilling) life.

Stress In Your Life ?

(Who doesn't have it this time of year?)

Learn How to Deal With It

In our free booklet rack (in front of Pastor's office)

Stress is natural in a world damaged by sin. Stress can actually be a good warning sign - if we heed the warning and deal with it appropriately. But what is "appropriately"? Pick up one of the booklets on Stress - or others like it - from our friends at Lutheran Hour Ministries. Then pass it along to someone else.

December Discipleship Verse...



"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

Matthew 1:23

A Minute for Parents...

TEACHING THE FAITH AT CHRISTMAS

God commanded the Israelites to hold yearly celebrations commemorating major things He had done for them. (e.g. Passover). One purpose for these annual celebrations was so they would never forget what God had done (God knows how quickly we forget things He does for us). Another purpose was to force the people to *tell their children* what God had done. (The quickest way to forget what God has done is for one generation to not tell the next generation.)

Although God never commanded us to celebrate Christ's birth, it is a great thing to do each year, because it forces us to stop and think about the great thing God did for us in sending His Son to earth. It also gives us an opportunity to tell (or remind) our kids about Jesus. Here are some tips on ways to make sure your kids don't grow up thinking that Christmas is really about "some really fat chimney sweep who dresses in hideous clothes and never shaves."

Quick tips to help you set an example of what the REAL Christmas celebration is about:

1. In your prayers at supper, include a prayer for each person you received a Christmas card from that day.
2. Invite someone to join you for one or more of the special services (Advent midweek, Wednesdays @ 7:30; Christmas Program/Dinner @ 4:00 on December 17; Christmas Eve Candlelight @ 5:00; Christmas Day @ 9:00) 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. Don't forget to point out some of the aspects of the tree that remind us of Jesus (see the "Questions 4 Pastor" article)
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. Remember: The "perfect" Christmas isn't made perfect by gifts, or food, or traditions, but simply by celebrating Jesus and His presence.

Story Behind The Song...

In our recent study of the Psalms one of the things that stood out was the great number of favorite hymns and songs of praise that are based on a psalm. An example is one of the most loved hymns of Christmas - Joy to the World. In fact, the song was not written for Christmas at all. It was originally a poem based on Psalm 98.

I read that from his earliest memory, Isaac Watts recalled being competitive. Watts' confidence in his own talent gave the world some of its best-loved and timeless hymns, including: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*, *From All That Dwell Below The Skies*, *Joy to the World* and nearly 750 other hymns,

Watts' mother recognized his outstanding gift when he was young. To encourage him and her other eight children, Mrs. Watts devised a family writing contest. The child who composed the best poem would receive a prize of one farthing. Young Isaac won that farthing prize and laid the groundwork for making his mark on music history.

It was Isaac's father who inadvertently ignited his talent. While still a youth, Isaac commented to his father that the hymns they were accustomed to singing in church lacked substance. The elder Watts, a staunchly religious deacon, took offense at his son's criticism. He retorted, "If you don't like the hymns we sing, write better ones!"

Instead of feeling defeated by the comment, Isaac took it as a challenge. He showed his father a hymn that he had written. He eagerly presented his son's composition at church the next Sunday. It was so well-received he was asked to write another for the following week. Isaac Watts wrote a new hymn every week for the next four years.

Isaac later went on to enter the Christian ordained ministry himself. Watts' hymn Joy to the World came about as a personal epiphany of sorts. After serving just less than two decades Watts found it necessary to leave the ministry due to health problems.

His declining health and resulting reflect on his own humanity led Isaac to undertake a project that had been stirring in his heart for several years. He had developed a deep fondness for the Psalms of David during his childhood. With time on his hands as he recuperated from illness, Watts set about to write a series of poems based on the Psalms. It was from this series of works that Joy to the World came to fruition. Here's the poem and Psalm it was inspired by.

**Joy to the World the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room**

And heav'n and nature sing.
And heav'n and nature sing.
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth the Savior reigns;
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods,
rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy.
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make
His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found.
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness.
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love.
And wonders, wonders of His love.

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things;

His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

2 The LORD has made known His salvation;

His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.

3 He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

*4 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.*

*5 Sing to the LORD with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,*

*6 With trumpets and the sound of a horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.*

*7 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;*

*8 Let the rivers clap their hands;
Let the hills be joyful together*

*9 before the LORD,
For He is coming to judge the earth.*

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That for a day: Christmas is weird. What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?

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*With righteousness He shall judge the world,
And the peoples with equity.*

Watts wove together the original Old Testament poem of David with the fulfillment of prophecy in the New Testament. The result was the hymn that is still cherished today, almost three centuries later. Nearly one hundred years after Watts wrote it Lowell Mason set Watts's poem of "joy" to music - a score adapted from George Frederick Handel's "The Messiah." Thus it became the song we

Answer from page 9:

NOTHING

PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY AT 11:09 EVERYDAY
(inspired by Luke 11:9: "So I say to you, Ask and it will be given to you; Seek and you will find; Knock and the door will be opened to you")

Remember to take a time-out to be "impudent" and PRAY for things like...

- + God to prepare your heart for Christ to come to you daily
- + God to open hearts at Christmas that have been closed to Him
- + Safe travel for everyone in the winter weather
- + For increased trust that God will continue to provide
- + For those who have recently lost loved ones

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



The MinneFROZEta Live Nativity