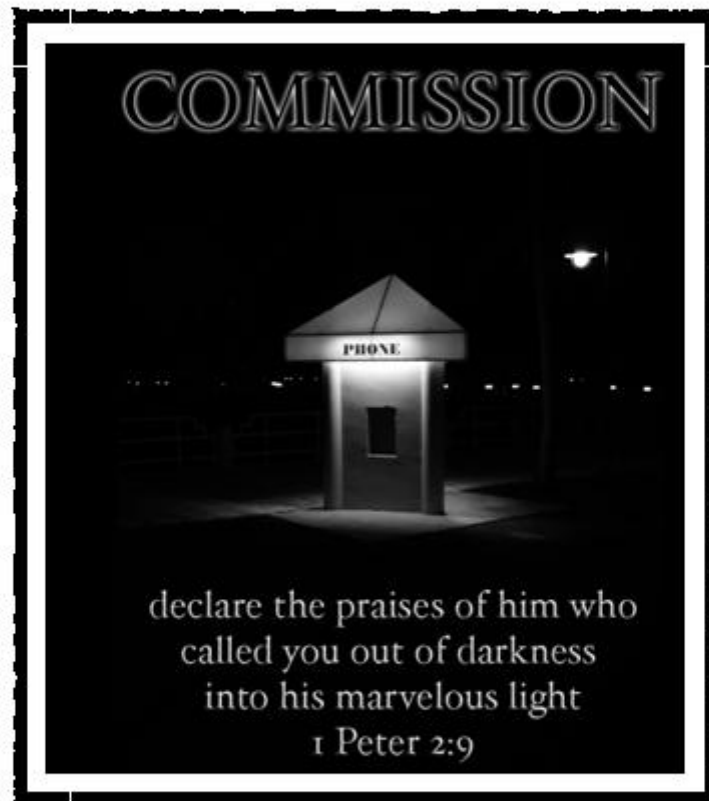


# **Living Word Lutheran Church LCMS**

**January 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 Cty Rd 10  
in old Prairie Meadows building  
PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273  
Phone: 320-796-0742  
Website: [www.livingwordlutheran.net](http://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...

How do I know what God wants me to do ?

This is a question I've fielded at least three times in the past month. In fact, it's one of questions that would show up near the top in the Frequently Asked Questions category. Chances are you've asked it yourself. It's actually a timely question, because the *50 Days Ablaze* study that we begin this month will help with the answer. But first some background information....

Quite often we find ourselves in situations where we have a choice to make (and doesn't it seem there are usually way too many options to choose from?). One thing I've learned is that the best choice is always the one God wants for you. If you choose something other than God's plan, you will always run into trouble. It makes sense: God is the only One with infinite wisdom. He's the only One who always knows how things will work best. In fact, He's the One who designed everything, so it just makes sense that "God's plan" is always going to be the best course of action. Anything else just isn't going to work best, because it wasn't designed to work that way.

In our society it seems we have been trained to believe that everything should be quick and easy - and that whatever is not "quick and easy" isn't worth our time or effort. Having this attitude means that when we come to realize we need God's guidance, we'd like Him to show us what to do... right now! So one thing we typically do is ask for a sign. This isn't bad in itself, but the problem comes when we then expect God to give a huge, unmistakable sign within, say, the next 5 minutes! Something like a finger writing a message on the wall (check out Daniel chapter 5) or a burning bush that talks (see Exodus 3). Unfortunately "quick and easy" does not normally equate

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with "best," so God rarely works that way. (And even when He does give us a "sign" it's usually not the one we are looking for, so we miss it anyway.)

In our Senior High Bible Study this week we talked about making decisions and the need to follow God's leading in those decisions. When I asked the question, "How do you know where God is leading?" someone said, "I suppose it's the classic 'Confirmation Class Answer' isn't it?" (That Classic Confirmation Class Answer is the answer that seems to work best for many questions they get asked in Confirmation: "Prayer, Bible Reading, and Worship.")

Praying, reading your Bible and worshiping regularly would indeed be the best answer to the question "How do I know what God wants for me?" It's not that there's something "magical" about praying or reading your Bible or coming to worship that automatically gives you insight. It's not like you can pray once, then go dust off your Bible, open it up and read the page that happens to come up and then head to church the next Sunday and all of a sudden know what God wants for you. That would be "quick and easy." But that kind of thing also treats God more like some kind of glorified vending machine - you punch the right buttons and He gives you what you are looking for. God doesn't work that way. He's not a Holy Vending Machine you only come to when you need something. He created us to have a close, daily, trusting Father-child relationship. Someone you spend time with all the time.

So what is it about praying, reading God's Word and making a priority of worship that enables you to better know God's will for your life? It's quite simple really: In each of those actions you are spending time with God. And there is just no "quick and easy" substitute for spending time with someone if you really want to get to know what they are like - and what they like.

The more time you spend with God, the more you will know Him. The more you know Him, the more you know what He wants... for you. Plus, the more you spend time talking with Him in prayer, listening to Him in His Word and receiving His gifts in worship, the more you will find that when God does give you a sign, you actually recognize it.

I've never met anyone who said they didn't think it was a good idea to get to know God better. I'm guessing if you've read this far, you probably think it would be good for you to get to know God better too. Here's where participating in *50 Days Ablaze* comes in. It's 50 days designed to help us make a concerted effort to get to know God better by spending time with Him in prayer and Bible

reading/study and worship. An added bonus is that we will all be doing it together. Reading the same devotions, praying for the same things, studying the same passages, and having what we learn reinforced as we worship together. It's a great way to start the New Year. Read more about *50 Days Ablaze* in the introductory letter and sample devotion that follows. Then make your commitment to spend time getting to know God better these next 50 days.

Thanks for asking,  
Pastor David

p.s. The *Ablaze* part comes from Luke 24:32 where the two disciples from Emmaus commented after spending time walking and talking with Jesus the day He rose from the grave, "*Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*"

Send your questions to [pastor@livingwordlutheran.net](mailto:pastor@livingwordlutheran.net)

## 50 Days Ablaze...

### 50 DAYS ABLAZE LETTER

Dear friends in Christ,

As a fellow member of the body of Christ I am excited to let you know about a great opportunity in the faith that is starting at Living Word on January 16. Here at Living Word Lutheran Church, we are going to be going through a study called *50 Days Ablaze*. This study focuses on getting to know Christ better, so that we can be better equipped to share him with others around us (outreach). We are trying to get as many people involved as possible. This means that you can get involved in this as well.

This study has three levels of participation. Each level stands on its own, and you can be involved with just that level. But all three levels are designed to work together and your best growth will come from participating in two or all three levels.

First of all, each week starts with a Sunday Worship Service that highlights the topic of focus for the upcoming week. (e.g. LEARN is the topic for Week #1 beginning with worship on January 16.)

The second level of participation is the Daily Devotions and Readings for each day of the week based on that week's topic. The devotions will run from Sunday through Saturday and will only take 5 to 10 minutes a day. Each devotion contains a devotional reading

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That for a day: A person who thinks logically provides a nice contrast to the real world.

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based on a passage of Scripture as well as a prayer and a "challenge" of suggested ways to put into practice what you read in the devotion. There is also a recommended longer reading from God's Word and a paragraph relating to the topic from the Book of Concord - the Lutheran Confessions. You may choose to receive the devotions via email or on paper. The paper copies will be available at church and can be mailed if you aren't able to pick up your copy at church (so you can still participate from "long-distance.")

The third level of participation in 50 Days Ablaze is the Small Group Discussion/Get together. These groups will be held at a number of different times and locations, so there are ample opportunities to take part.

All three of these levels are available for everyone to take part in, so you may choose to participate in one, two, or all three parts.

In order to get the greatest benefit as a congregation, we need to get lots of people involved and growing in the Word. To help with this we are laying all of the possible options out for everyone and asking people to make a commitment to your participation in this study.

Following this letter you will find a sample of a Daily Devotion that you can read through to get an idea of what you will receive if you choose to take part in that level of participation.

Here is a listing of the Small Group Studies that you also have the option of being a part of:

- 6:00 pm Tuesday @ Living Word - A men's study group
- 9:30 am Wednesday @ Living Word - A moms study group
- 12:00 pm Wednesday @ Living Word - A women's study group
- 7:00 pm Wednesday @ Pam Johnson's home
- 7:30 pm Thursday @ the Spicer Dairy Queen
- 7:00n pm Friday @ Pastor David and Violet's home
- 6:30 pm Saturday @ Tim Geer's home
- 8:45 am Sunday @ Living Word - during Christian Growth hour
- 6:45 pm Sunday @ Living Word

First of all, thank you for taking time to consider this, and please pray for the study and God's power to be at work for everyone involved. Feel free to look over and pray about the options, and come to a decision. Please fill out the enclosed commitment card indicating how you would like to participate in this study. Thank you and God bless you for all your prayers and faithful work in the name of the Lord.

Bryson Wachter  
*50 Days Ablaze* Director



## 50 DAYS ABLAZE EXAMPLE DAILY DEVOTION

### Learn Who Matters to God

*"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time." (1 Timothy 2:1-6)*

When I first heard about the mission and goal of Ablaze—"to



share the Good News of Jesus with 100 million unreached or uncommitted people by the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017"—I laughed. My laughter was not necessarily one of joyous faith and thanks. It was more like that of Sarah and Abraham when they heard that they would have a baby: "Yeah, right." I thought, "How crazy is this? This is just about numbers—another wild idea

by people who sit in offices and have no grasp on reality."

But the vision would not let me go. The question that kept surfacing was, "Can we do any less?" This was especially brought home to me when I read these words:

*"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving be made for everyone . . . This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved . . . For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men . . ." (1 Timothy 2:1-6).*

Do you hear the reoccurring theme as to who matters to God? Everyone! Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all men—not just some or most—but all men.

I have heard it said that numbers are not important when it comes to matters of faith. Don't tell that to God. A book of the Bible is named "Numbers." If you read the book of Acts, you will very quickly get the impression that numbers do matter to God and to the early Christian Church—twelve, to begin with, and then one hundred twenty. Soon there were three thousand added to their number. But who's counting? God apparently was. Why? Because numbers matter to God.

Remember what Jesus said about the shepherd: One, two, three, fifty-six, fifty-seven, eighty-nine, ninety-one, ninety-nine—where is

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Thot for a day: A smart man only believes half of what he hears. A wise man knows which half.

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number one hundred? The shepherd went out looking for the one. Why? Because numbers mattered to the shepherd.

Remember the woman with the ten precious coins? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—where is the tenth coin? She turns the entire house upside down in search of it—and when it is found, there is partying and celebrating among her friends. Why? Because numbers mattered to the woman.

Picture it this way if you will: A family of six goes to the zoo. After a very nice day, they head home. Only when they get home do they realize that one of their four children is not with them, apparently left behind and lost. Can you imagine the wife saying to her husband, "I am so glad that we have the three children we do. After all, it is quality that counts and not numbers"? Ridiculous to even consider. Those parents would waste no time in going back to find that child. In fact, they would never have been placed in this situation in the first place, because they would have been keeping count. Why? Because numbers matter to those parents.

Who matters to God? Everyone! God wants all to be saved! Not most. Not a majority. He wants all to be saved. So, He keeps count. Like the woman with the coins and the shepherd with the sheep, numbers matter to God. Not numbers in themselves, but *who* those numbers represent. Each number represents a soul for whom Jesus gave His life as a ransom. He paid the debt that each of us owed to God on account of our disobedience. His final words, "It is finished," literally mean "paid in full."

Numbers matter to God because each and everyone of them is someone for whom blood was shed. Jesus tells us that the angels celebrate and party in heaven when just one person repents and comes home to God. Why? Because numbers matter to God. He is keeping count.

**Prayer:** Jesus, you are my ransom. You are my mediator. There is no way that I could have paid the debt that you so willingly offered on my behalf. You stand before the Father on my behalf as my mediator. Only through you can I approach the throne in prayer and have confidence that on the Day of Judgment I will be able to stand before the Father with confidence and peace. Thank you, that in the multitude of people upon this earth, I matter to you. Move my heart, Jesus, that those in my life who matter to you will matter to me as well. In your name I ask this. Amen.

**Challenge:** Think about who matters to you. Who matters to you but does not know or believe that they matter to God? For the next 48 days, would you be willing to pray for them? Pray for their family, their job, their health and, yes, pray for their relationship to God through Jesus Christ.

### Scripture Reading: Matthew 11

**From the Book of Concord:** "But since the Confutation condemns us for assigning these two parts to repentance, we must show that Scripture makes them the chief parts in repentance or the conversion of the ungodly. For Christ says in Matthew 11[:28], 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.' There are two parts here: being weary and carrying heavy burdens refer to contrition, anxieties, and the terrors of sin and death; to come to Christ is to believe that on account of Christ sins are forgiven. When we believe, our hearts are made alive by the Holy Spirit through the Word of Christ. Therefore, these are the two chief parts: contrition and faith. In the first chapter of Mark [v. 15] Christ says, 'Repent and believe the gospel.' Where in the first part he denounces sin, in the second part he consoles us and shows us the forgiveness of sins. For 'to believe in the gospel' is not that general faith, which the demons also possess, but it is properly speaking to believe the forgiveness of sins given on account of Christ. For this is revealed in the gospel. Here you also see that these two parts are joined: contrition, when sins are condemned, and faith, when it is said, 'believe the gospel.' We will not argue if someone says that Christ also included the fruits of repentance or the entire new life. It is enough for us that he names these two chief parts: contrition and faith" (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII: Repentance, pp. 193-194.44-45).

## Sunday School News...

### Morning Prayer:

Lord, bless us little children in all the world we pray;  
Help us to share Your love and do the things you say.  
Amen

### Memory Verse:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of  
eternal life" John 6:68

### Lessons:

Jan.9: "The Presentation of Jesus" Luke 2:22-40  
Jan. 16: "The Boy Jesus, in the Temple" Luke 2:41-52  
Jan. 23: "The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus" Mark 1:1-13  
Jan. 30: "Jesus Calls the Disciples" John 2:35-51

### \*\*6th grade+:

starting a separate study on the Life of Jesus in January

Jan. 16: Children SING during service

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Thot for a day: Anything free is worth what you pay for it.

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

### Helping Others:

Several women in the church prayer group were visiting an elderly friend who was ill. After awhile, they rose to leave and told her; "We'll do what we can to help. We promise to keep you in our prayers."

"Just do something more useful like wash the dishes in the kitchen," the ailing woman said, "I can do my own praying."

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### The Best Bait:

We are fishers of men. Fishermen don't bang gongs and scream to catch fish. They "wisely" bait their hooks and capture the imagination of the fish.

\*\*\*\*\*

### The Bible and the Cell Phone:

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone?

- What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?
- What if we flipped through it several times a day?
- What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?
- What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
- What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
- What if we gave it to Kids as gifts?
- What if we used it when we traveled?
- What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go....hmm...where is my Bible?

Oh, and one more thing. Unlike our cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected, because Jesus already paid the bill.

And, perhaps best of all, no dropped calls!

Makes you stop and think "Where are my priorities?"

## 11:09... (set the alarm on your cell phone)

### 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")



# January - Daily Devotionals

We start with readings about PEACE then move on to WHAT IT MEANS TO BE DISCIPLE then start on the daily readings for 50 DAYS ABLAZE. Full Devotions for the 50 Days readings are available at church

Jan 2 What God Says About ... PEACE

Jan 3 Isaiah 26:3-4 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 4 Isaiah 48:17-18 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 5 Isaiah 53:4-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 6 John 16:33 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 7 Philippians 4:6-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 8 Colossians 3:15-17 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 9 What God Says About ... BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Jan 10 John 8:31-32 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 11 John 13:34-35 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 12 1 Corinthians 13:1-8,13 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 13 John 15:7-8, 16-17 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 14 Galatians 5:22-23 \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 15 Matthew 28:18-20 \_\_\_\_\_

**50 Days Ablaze Readings: What God Says About ... LEARNING About Him**

Jan 16 Jeremiah 9:23-24 "Learn of Me" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 17 1 Timothy 2:1-6 "Learn Who Matters to God" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 18 Matthew 9:13 "Learn What He Desires" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 19 Deuteronomy 4:10 "Learn His Word to Revere Him" \_\_\_\_\_

# "What Does God Say

Jan 20 Psalm 89:15 "Learn the Joyful Sound" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 21 Revelation 14:3 "Learn A New Song" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 22 Philippians 4:11-13 "Learn the Secret" \_\_\_\_\_

**50 Days Ablaze Readings: What God Says About ... PRAYERS**

Jan 23 Matthew 9:33-38 "A Farmer's Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 24 Matthew 6:9-10 "A Disciple's Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 25 Psalm 46:10 "A Child's Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 26 Philippians 1:3-4 "Elsie's Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 27 Mark 1:35 "Jesus' Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 28 Ephesians 6:17-18 "A Soldier's Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 29 Revelation 3:20 "A Friend's Prayer" \_\_\_\_\_

**50 Days Ablaze Readings: What God Says About ... GIVING**

Jan 30 Psalm 145:16 "Give With An Open Hand" \_\_\_\_\_

Jan 31 Matthew 6:24 "Give With A Servant's Heart" \_\_\_\_\_

Feb 1 Exodus 4:1-3 "Give What You Have" \_\_\_\_\_

Feb 2 Mark 14:3 "Give Extravagantly" \_\_\_\_\_

Feb 3 Luke 12:32-33 "Give Eternally" \_\_\_\_\_

Feb 4 1 Chronicles 21:24 "Give What Will Cost" \_\_\_\_\_

Feb 5 2 Corinthians 9:7-8 "Give Cheerfully" \_\_\_\_\_

# January 2011 - Living Word Church Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>2</b> 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour Adult Forum - Prayer Sunday School 10:00 Worship - w/ Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 7:00 Elders' Team	<b>5</b> 9:30 Mom's Study "Peace" Noon Women's Study 6:30 Confirmation All Stars 4 Jesus Sr. High Bible Study	<b>6</b> Noon NL-S Ministerial At Living Word	<b>7</b> 6:00 Circuit Pastors Mtg	<b>8</b> 6:00 Couples' Fireproof Study @ Dauk's
<b>9 50 DAYS ABLAZE KICKOFF</b> 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - Adult Forum: Prayer - Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:00 Men's 'Bible & Burgers' Group 7:30 50 Days Small Group Leaders Meeting	<b>12</b> 9:30 Mom's Study "Peace" Noon Women's Study 6:30 Confirmation 6:30 LWML / Bldg Mtg	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16 50 DAYS ABLAZE: LEARN</b> 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - 50 Days Ablaze: - Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship 6:45 50 Days Study: @ LWLC	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 6:00 Men's 50 Days Ablaze 7:00 Mission & Ministry Team	<b>19</b> 9:30 Mom's 50 Days Study Noon Women's 50 Days Study 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 50 Days Study @ Pam Johnson's	<b>20</b> 7:30 50 Days Study @ Dairy Queen	<b>21</b> 7:00 50 Days Study @ Dauk's	<b>22</b> 6:30 50 Days Study @ Tm Geer's
<b>23 50 DAYS ABLAZE: PRAY</b> 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - 50 Days Ablaze Study - Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 6:45 50 Days Study @ LWLC	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 6:00 Men's 50 Days Ablaze	<b>26</b> 9:30 Mom's 50 Days Study Noon Women's 50 Days Study 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 50 Days Study @ Pam Johnson's	<b>27</b> 7:30 50 Days Study @ Dairy Queen	<b>28</b> 7:00 50 Days Study @ Dauk's	<b>29</b> 6:30 50 Days Study @ Tm Geer's
<b>30 50 DAYS ABLAZE: GIVE</b> 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour - 50 Days Ablaze Study Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship / Outreach Mtg 6:45 50 Days Study @ LWLC	<b>31</b>	<b>Feb 1</b> 6:00 Men's 50 Days Ablaze 7:00 Elders' Team	<b>Feb 2</b> 9:30 Mom's 50 Days Study Noon Women's 50 Days Study 6:30 Senior High Study 6:30 Confirmation	<b>Feb 3</b> Noon NL-S Ministerial At School 7:30 50 Days Study @ Dairy Queen	<b>Feb 4</b> 7:00 50 Days Study @ Dauk's	<b>Feb 5</b> 6:30 50 Days Study @ Tm Geer's

## Upcoming Schedules...

### Elders

Jan 16 Bryson Wachter & Brady Sharp  
Feb 6 Jason Miller & Troy Hansen  
Feb 20 Bryson Wachter & Brady Sharp

### Scripture Readers

Jan 2	Kevin Welsh	796-6840
Jan 9	Carolyn Rossow	952-738-1036
Jan 16	Gerri Wadsworth	796-2294
Jan 23	Paulette Spletter	354-7143
Jan 30	Linda Dilley	235-0235
Feb 6	Mark Fuglie	796-6975
Feb 13	Tammy Fuglie	796-6975
Feb 20	Lu Kiehm	979-0097
Feb 27	Tammy Wachter	796-6222

### Usher & Greeter Schedule

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Greeter</u>
Jan 2	Tim Geer & Allan Fuglie	Jack & Bryson
Jan 9	Mona Hjelle & Paulette Spletter	Laurel Iverson
Jan 16	Brady Sharp & Wally Abraham	Lu Kiehm
Jan 23	Jamie & Phil Iverson	Gerri & Paulette
Jan 30	Youth	Youth
Feb 6	Brandon Sharp	Bryson Wachter
Feb 13	Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter	Laurel Iverson
Feb 20	Brian Tri & Troy Hansen	Lu Kiehm
Feb 27	Duane Hansen & Chuck Weflen	Gerri & Paulette

Fill-in Greeter Bonnie Hansen 796-5605 Please call Bonnie if you aren't able to greet on your scheduled Sunday

### Fellowship Servers

Jan 2	Marcia Welsh / Pam Johnson
Jan 9	Wendy Robbin / Stacy Olson
Jan 16	Nancy Jo Wendt / Tammy Fuglie
Jan 23	Tammy Wachter / Sarah Miller
Jan 30	Youth
Feb 6	Lu Kiehm / Mona Hjelle
Feb 13	Laurel Iverson / Violet Dauk
Feb 20	Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hansen
Feb 27	Marcia Welsh / Pam Johnson

### Acolyte

Jan 2	Grace Geer
Jan 9	Michelle Johnson
Jan 16	Matthew Tri
Jan 23	Caleb Beeler
Jan 30	Youth
Feb 6	Grace Geer
Feb 13	Michelle Johnson
Feb 20	Matthew Tri
Feb 27	Jacob Beeler

### Children's Church Schedule

Jan 2	Joe Johnson	354-3545
Jan 9	Kasey Nieland	354-2036
Jan 16	Mona Hjelle	354-4315
Jan 23	Emily Fuglie	796-6975
Jan 30	Mikayla Geer & Halee Lucas	
Feb 6	Carolyn Rossow	952-738-1036
Feb 13	Mariah Welsh	796-6840
Feb 20	Joe Johnson	354-3545
Feb 27	Kasey Nieland	354-2036

### Meal Deliveries

#### Meal Makers

Laurel Iverson  
Pam Johnson

#### Meal Takers

Bryson Wachter  
Pam Johnson

### **MATCHING FUNDS 'THANK YOU'**

As of last Sunday we have received \$6346 in our Matching Funds drive

Donations can still be made, but will be credited to 2011 giving.

### **January Discipleship Verse...**



*"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life"*

**John 6:68**



## Habitat for Humanity...

### TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR A HOME IN NEW LONDON

Habitat for Humanity of West Central Minnesota is currently seeking a partner family for a home in New London. Would you please help us spread the word by including information in your bulletin and newsletter; making an announcement during your next church service; and posting the attached flyer on a community bulletin board?

Habitat for Humanity is an ecumenical Christian housing ministry that exists to:

- Provide simple, decent housing for low-income families;
- Make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action; and
- Bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout West Central Minnesota.

Our partner families are selected based on three factors: need, ability to pay, and willingness to partner. Need can be defined as unsafe, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions and/or spending more than 30% of monthly income on rent. Ability to pay is important because Habitat does not give houses away. Rather, families partner with our organization throughout the building process and eventually purchase the home by making payments on a 30 year, 0% mortgage. Partner families must have a minimum of \$25,000 in annual income and not exceed the maximum income guidelines found on the attached flyer. This income includes all wages, social security, county assistance, and child support.

Willingness to partner is our final selection factor. Habitat partner families put in 200 hours of sweat equity for a single adult family or 500 hours for a two-adult family. Sweat equity hours for the New London family will be spent making improvements to the existing home and attending homeowner classes that are designed to help families transition from renting to owning.

The home in New London has three bedrooms and one bathroom. Habitat follows Equal Housing Lender regulations; all families who meet the above criteria are welcome to apply. Families or individuals who would like to apply should call our office at 320-231-2704 to request an application.

Applications will be accepted from January 3rd-February 7th. We will greatly appreciate your assistance in generating awareness with the attached resources and personal referrals during the coming month.

Please visit our website ([www.habitatwcm.org](http://www.habitatwcm.org)) for more information or contact our office with any questions you may have.

## Page 16

Thot for a day: Confidence is the feeling you have before you really understand the problem.

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## Inspirational Story...

### GOD VS. SCIENCE....

A science professor begins his school year with a lecture to the students, "Let me explain the problem science has with religion." The atheist professor of philosophy pauses before his class and then asks one of his new students to stand.

"You're a Christian, aren't you, son?"

"Yes sir," the student says.

"So you believe in God?"

"Absolutely."

"Is God good?"

"Sure! God's good."

"Is God all-powerful? Can God do anything?"

"Yes."

"Are you good or evil?"

"The Bible says I'm evil."

The professor grins knowingly. "Aha! The Bible!" He considers for a moment. "Here's one for you. Let's say there's a sick person over here and you can cure him. You can do it. Would you help him?"

Would you try?"

"Yes sir, I would."

"So you're good...!"

"I wouldn't say that."

"But why not say that? You'd help a sick and maimed person if you could. Most of us would if we could. But God doesn't."

The student does not answer, so the professor continues. "He doesn't, does he? My brother was a Christian who died of cancer, even though he prayed to Jesus to heal him. How is this Jesus good? Hmmm? Can you answer that one?"

The student remains silent.

"No, you can't, can you?" the professor says. He takes a sip of water

from a glass on his desk to give the student time to relax.

"Let's start again, young fella. Is God good?"

"Er...yes," the student says.

"Is Satan good?"

The student doesn't hesitate on this one. "No."

"Then where does Satan come from?"

The student falters. "From God"

"That's right. God made Satan, didn't he? Tell me, son. Is there evil in this world?"

"Yes, sir."

"Evil's everywhere, isn't it? And God did make everything, correct?"

"Yes."

"So who created evil?" The professor continued, "If God created everything, then God created evil, since evil exists, and according to the principle that our works define who we are, then God is evil."

Again, the student has no answer. "Is there sickness? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All these terrible things, do they exist in this world?"

The student squirms on his feet. "Yes."

"So who created them?"

The student does not answer again, so the professor repeats his question. "Who created them?" There is still no answer. Suddenly the lecturer breaks away to pace in front of the classroom. The class is mesmerized. "Tell me," he continues onto another student. "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, son?"

The student's voice betrays him and cracks. "Yes, professor, I do." The old man stops pacing. "Science says you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Have you ever seen Jesus?"

"No sir. I've never seen Him."

"Then tell us if you've ever heard your Jesus?"

"No, sir, I have not."

"Have you ever felt your Jesus, tasted your Jesus or smelt your Jesus? Have you ever had any sensory perception of Jesus Christ, or God for that matter?"

"No, sir, I'm afraid I haven't."

"Yet you still believe in him?"

"Yes."

"According to the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God doesn't exist. What do you say to that, son?"

"Nothing," the student replies. "I only have my faith."

"Yes, faith," the professor repeats. "And that is the problem science has with God. There is no evidence, only faith."

The student stands quietly for a moment, before asking a question of His own. "Professor, is there such thing as heat?"

"Yes," the professor replies. "There's heat."

"And is there such a thing as cold?"

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That for a day: If you are not content with what you have, you'll never be content with what you want.

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"Yes, son, there's cold too."

"No sir, there isn't."

The professor turns to face the student, obviously interested. The room suddenly becomes very quiet. The student begins to explain. "You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, mega-heat, unlimited heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat, but we don't have anything called 'cold'. We can hit up to 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can't go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold; otherwise we would be able to go colder than the lowest -458 degrees."

"Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-458 F) is the total absence of heat. You see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it."

Silence across the room. A pen drops somewhere in the classroom, sounding like a hammer.

"What about darkness, professor. Is there such a thing as darkness?"

"Yes," the professor replies without hesitation. "What is night if it isn't darkness?"

"You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is not something; it is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light, but if you have no light constantly you have nothing and it's called darkness, isn't it? That's the meaning we use to define the word."

"In reality, darkness isn't. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?"

The professor begins to smile at the student in front of him. This will be a good semester. "So what point are you making, young man?"

"Yes, professor. My point is, your philosophical premise is flawed to start with, and so your conclusion must also be flawed."

The professor's face cannot hide his surprise this time. "Flawed? Can you explain how?"

"You are working on the premise of duality," the student explains.

"You argue that there is life and then there's death; a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science can't even explain a thought."

"It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood either one. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive



thing. Death is not the opposite of life, just the absence of it."

"Now tell me, professor. Do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?"

"If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, young man, yes, of course I do."

"Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir?"

The professor begins to shake his head, still smiling, as he realizes where the argument is going. A very good semester, indeed.

"Since no one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and cannot even prove that this process is an on-going endeavor, are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you now not a scientist, but a preacher?"

The class is in uproar. The student remains silent until the commotion has subsided.

"To continue the point you were making earlier to the other student, let me give you an example of what I mean."

The student looks around the room. "Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen the professor's brain?" The class breaks out into laughter.

"Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor's brain, felt the professor's brain, touched or smelt the professor's brain? No one appears to have done so. So, according to the established rules of empirical, stable, demonstrable protocol, science says that you have no brain, with all due respect, sir."

"So if science says you have no brain, how can we trust your lectures, sir?"

Now the room is silent. The professor just stares at the student, his face unreadable.

Finally, after what seems an eternity, the old man answers. "I guess you'll have to take them on faith."

"Now, you accept that there is faith, and, in fact, faith exists with life," the student continues. "Now, sir, is there such a thing as evil?"

Now uncertain, the professor responds, "Of course, there is. We see it everyday. It is in the daily example of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil."

To this the student replied, "Evil does not exist sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat or the darkness that comes when there is no light."

The professor sat down.

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That for a day: if opportunity doesn't knock, build a door.

## Page 21

### News from The Link



*Creating a community where neighbors share the love of God through service to each other.*

#### From the Director

##### Who does The Link Serve?

Thank you to everyone who was so generous over the holidays with donations to The Link. Your care and giving helped many folks have a brighter Christmas.

Many of you ask about the work of The Link and about how things are going. Well, I say that it is a "good news - bad news" situation. It's good news that the word is getting out that The Link is place to go to for help. The bad news is that people need the help in the first place.

The other question I hear a lot is who does The Link serve? The answer to that is we serve your neighbor. We serve your co-worker, your child's friend's family, the person in line in front of you at the grocery store, or someone who goes to your church.

We primarily serve people in the Northern half of Kandiyohi County who have an income at 200% or less of the Federal poverty guideline. That means that for a family of four they are making \$44,100 or less. Did you know that in our area the average annual cost of meeting basic needs for a family of four with two workers is about \$51,000. To cover these costs each worker must earn \$12.29 per hour.

40% of the jobs in our area pay less than \$12.29. Many of the people who come to

The Link for help are working fulltime, but it can be hard to make ends meet with a low wage job. Sometimes, families are just getting by, but an emergency car repair or sudden health crisis can push someone off a financial cliff.

The Link can be a resource to help people stay out of the deep hole when an emergency strikes. The Link can also help guide people in their budgeting in order to make the best use of their limited resources.

Sometimes folks just need to know that someone cares and that they are not alone. This is why The Link will continue to try to find ways to informally "link" people together so that we can be a community where we share the love of God with one another.

If you need help or want to volunteer with The Link please contact Naomi Mahler Link Director at [naomi@tds.net](mailto:naomi@tds.net) or 796-2522.



#### Cleaning out your Closets?

Are you cleaning out the old to get ready for the New Year? Don't forget the New London Link site is happy to take your gently used household items like furniture, appliances, bedding, dishes, and lamps (no clothes please). We are able to pass along these items to folks who have a need. Just please contact Naomi beforehand if you have something you'd like to donate.

The Link, together with the Willmar Area Foodshelf New London Satellite, is open at the ECC Community Building (former clinic) in New London on Tuesdays 2-6 and Thursdays 10-2.

### E-Mail Humor...

#### Changing Times:

I have five siblings, three sisters and two brothers. One night I was chatting with my mom about how she had changed as a mother from the first child to the last. She told me she had mellowed a lot over the years:

"When your oldest sister coughed or sneezed, I called the ambulance. When your youngest brother swallowed a dime, I just told him it was coming out of his allowance."



## Story Behind The Song...

### As With Gladness Men of Old

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi (wise men) from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." Matthew 2:1-2*

January 6 is the day of Epiphany. The day we celebrate the coming of the wise men to see the Jesus. This day traditionally marks the first time that Jesus was revealed to non-Jewish people as the true God that He is. Isaiah prophesied in the Old Testament that the Messiah would be a Light to the Gentiles, and Epiphany highlights the fulfillment of the prophesy.

It is appropriate that Light is a theme of the Epiphany seasons (which runs from January 6 through Ash Wednesday). Jesus was revealed as the Light to the Gentiles, and the Gentile magi followed the light from a star to find Jesus.

These wise men who sought and found Jesus have much to teach us. They set the example of perseverance - the trip would have taken hundreds of miles (on foot) under treacherous conditions. They teach us about the priority of worship - they made that trip for the purpose of worshiping Jesus. They teach us that worship isn't just done with our presence - it also includes our presents - returning to God from the gifts He's given us. We learn from them to be discerning and listen to the leading of God - they heeded God's warning about the evil intentions of King Herod. Their return home to share the news of what they found with their people is a reminder for us to share the news of Jesus with the people in our lives.

This hymn commemorating the example of the wise men was written by William Dix, who also wrote one of our most beloved Christmas hymns: *What Child is This*.

**As with gladness men of old,  
Did the guiding star behold—  
As with joy they hailed its light,  
Leading onward, beaming bright—  
So, most gracious Lord, may we  
Evermore be led by Thee.**

**As with joyful steps they sped  
To that lowly manger bed,  
There to bend the knee before**

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Thot for a day: A clean house is the sign of a cluttered closet.

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Him whom heav'n and earth adore.  
So may we with willing feet  
Ever seek Thy mercy seat.

As they offered gifts most rare  
At that manger rude and bare,  
So may we with holy joy,  
Pure and free from sin's alloy,  
All our costliest treasures bring,  
Christ to Thee our heavenly King.

Holy Jesus, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

## The Back Pew – Jeff Larson



### THE MINNESOTA MUMMY

Put on the full 'snowsuit' of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's freezin' cold winter. **Ephesians 6:13**