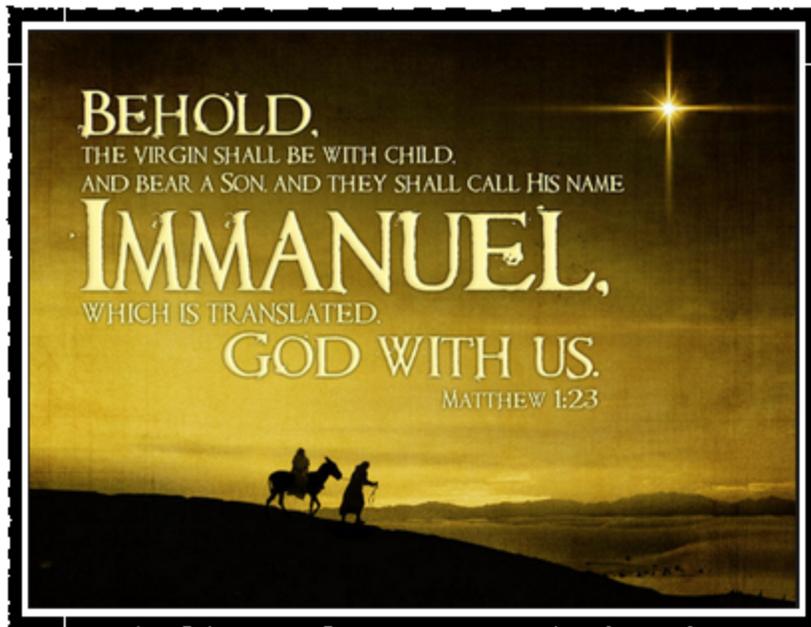



Living Word
Lutheran Church
LCMS

December 2013 Newsletter



“Communicating the Love of Jesus”

Worship Hours:

Christian Growth Hour: 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Living Word Lutheran Church

PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273
Located north of the New London Township Hall on Cty Rd 9 NE
Phone: 320-354-4637
Email: pastor@livingwordlutheran.net
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's Your Favorite Book in the Bible - Gospels?

Last month I talked about favorite books in the Old Testament. I promised to deal with favorites from the Gospels and the New Testament, so this month I will share some thoughts on the Gospels.

As we learned in a recent Men's Study, each of the Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) wrote about Jesus life, ministry, death and resurrection from a different perspective. For example, Matthew wrote from the perspective of someone who had grown up in the Jewish faith and was an eyewitness to the events he described. Luke, on the other hand, wrote as a Gentile who came to faith after hearing about Jesus after He had ascended back to heaven. Not an eyewitness to the events of Jesus' life, Luke investigated the stories about Jesus and interviewed Jesus' disciples and family in preparation for his writing.

Of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke are often grouped together as being similar with John's standing apart having obvious differences.

One difference comes due to the fact that John wrote quite a few years after the other gospels, so it is natural to find stories - like the raising of Lazarus - that are not found in the others. John makes an attempt to record important events and situations the others didn't include. John also tells us that the world could not hold all the books that could be written if everything Jesus did and said were written down. Thus, we are faced with a very simple



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fact: God doesn't tell us everything we want to know (none of the gospel writers tell us about Jesus' life from age 12 to 30, for example). God has, however, told us everything we *need* to know.

John's gospel also has a couple other differences.

1) John records more in-depth conversations that Jesus had with individuals. For example, with Nicodemus in chapter three, with the disciples in the Upper Room in chapters 13-16, with His Father in prayer in chapter 17 and with Pilate in chapter 18.

2) Whereas Matthew, Mark and Luke tend to focus on the words and actions of Jesus, John gives us more of the "behind the scenes" look at those words and actions, highlighting the eternal significance and spiritual meaning of those words and actions. Matthew and Luke, for example, give us the physical details of the birth of Christ including the angel, shepherd, and magi visits. John leaves out those details and describes the birth of Christ this way: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." With those words John makes sure that we know that the baby in the manger is God himself who has come to earth to save His people from our sins.

It is because of those in-depth conversations and the focus on the meaning behind the things Jesus said and did, that I tend to find myself turning to John's gospel with somewhat greater frequency than Matthew, Mark, or Luke. I'd be interested to learn which gospel you find yourself drawn to most often - and why.

Thanks for asking
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net



Mark Your Calendars...

Advent Midweek Devotion & Prayer Service

Take time out Wednesday evenings (December 4, 11) @ 6:30 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 and sing some Christmas carols too (in preparation for caroling after the service on the 18th).

Congregation Invited To A Baby Shower:

For Mari Geer and baby Michael

The shower is being hosted by Marcia Welsh at her home (4153 132nd Ave NE, Spicer, MN 56288) on Wednesday, December 11 @ 6:30 p.m. Come and welcome Mari's son Michael, who was born on September 23.

Christmas Caroling

On **Wednesday, December 18th** we get to share the joy of Christmas with others by Christmas caroling. The details :

5:30 - Meet at the church for supper.

6:00 - Leave for caroling.

(We'll start at Glen Oaks and go till we can't sing any more)

We encourage you to give us names of people who would enjoy hearing some carols.

Birthday Party for Jesus

Saturday, December 21 at 11:00.

A special time for the kids to celebrate Jesus' birthday with crafts, snacks, and activities. (We will practice for the Christmas program at 10:30 before the Party)

Good News! Great Joy!

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 22 at 10:00 a.m.

Please join us as the children of Living Word present the Christmas story, "Good News! Great Joy!"

Make sure to stay after the program for our Annual Christmas Ham Dinner

Annual Christmas Ham Dinner

December 22 11:30 a.m. (After the Christmas Program)
You are invited to Living Word's annual Christmas Ham Dinner following the Sunday School Christmas Program and Worship on Sunday, December 22. Ham will be provided by the Living Word LWML. Each family is asked to bring a dish to pass. We ask that food items be brought fully prepared and ready to serve. There is a sign-up sheet at church where you can indi-

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Thot for a day: Man cannot live by bread alone. He also needs a roll of duct tape and a can of WD-40.

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cate which food item you will be able to bring from the list below:

Raisin Sauce	Mustard Sauce
Potatoes (mashed, scalloped, potato hotdish - your choice)	
Spinach Salad	Lettuce Salad
Other Salad	Sweet Potatoes
Squash	Vegetable
Baked Beans	Fresh Vegetables and Dip
Cheese & Crackers	Cranberry Sauce
Gallon of Milk	Apple Pie
Pumpkin Pie	Other Pie or Dessert
2 Dozen Buns/Dinner Rolls	
Loaf of Bread (sliced & buttered)	
Plate of Christmas Cookies or Christmas Breads	



Crafting / Scrapbooking Day

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, January 11 @10:00 a.m.

Bring your projects and enjoy a day working and fellowshiping

Special Thank-Offering 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.

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

Bearing Fruit for Jesus...

Here's a summary of what we learned in our November study:

1. *Bearing Fruit* (producing the good thoughts, attitudes and actions that grow out of a faith relationship with Jesus) is not optional for disciples.
2. We naturally bear fruit when we abide (live) in Jesus.
3. The key to "living in" Jesus is to have His words live in us (i.e. Be into your Bible daily)
4. God has given each of us different talents (spiritual gifts) to use in bearing fruit. Our task is to simply use them.
5. God has given each of us earthly treasure to use to bear fruit as well. He's promised to throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out an overflow of blessings when we give Him back the first 10% of that treasure - and even told us to test Him on that!



Have Yourself a "Mary" Christmas...

You may remember the story of Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha from Luke 10:38-42. Martha we are told "was distracted with much serving" while Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching." Martha even got mad about that and told Jesus to tell Mary to get up and help. Jesus told Martha that she was "anxious and troubled about many things" and then went on to remind her, "but one thing is necessary." That one necessary thing was the very thing *Mary* had chosen to do, take time to just sit and listen to Jesus.

This time of year it is very easy to be a "Martha" and get distracted, anxious and troubled about all the food and gifts and events. Make this year a "Mary" Christmas instead. Like Mary, be sure not to overlook the "one necessary thing" - just spending time with Jesus. Talk to Him in prayer. Listen to Him by reading His Word. Spend time with Him in worship.

You will discover Jesus brings a level of peace, joy, hope and love that meals and presents and special events can never accomplish.

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That for a day: Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year.

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The LINK...

December 2013

Dear Friends,

The season of Advent is the time of waiting. For many children, this is the longest few weeks of the year! Maybe some of you have advent calendars with special treats you enjoy each day.

Tuesday's Table in December:

December 3rd: Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church
December 10th: Evangelical Covenant Church
December 17th: Faith Lutheran Church

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

No Tuesday's Table on
December 24th or December 31st.

The purpose of Tuesday's Table is to build relationships among all of God's people.

For many people in our community, the Christmas season can be a time of loneliness and sadness. Have you thought about what it might feel like to struggle to make ends meet all year and be faced with the costs of gift giving or traveling? Christ and grace and abundant blessings have been gifted to us. How will you share your

God-given gifts this Christmas?

This thank you trickled in earlier this year after we provided assistance to a family facing severe health issues:

"Thank you so much for the gas card and Target gift cards (we received from you for Christmas. We used the gas card to get to (medical appointments) and the gift cards to get some much needed toiletries. You have an awesome generosity."

The Link will, again, share gift cards and gas cards to our neighbors in need during Christmas to use to meet their basic needs, travel to be with loved ones or provide simple gifts to children. Please consider supporting this special outreach opportunity to **spark joy** this Christmas season.

Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,
Rhonda Otteson
Link Director

Household Exchange

We are looking for more volunteers to haul, pick up or deliver items. Call 894.1681 to get signed up!

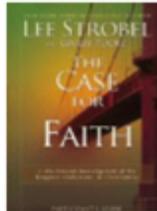
Current specific needs:

- Queen sized bedding (sheets, quilts, comforters)
- Bath rugs
- Towels

Opportunities for Growth...

Men's Study: Tuesdays @ 6:30pm

"Stuff they didn't teach me in Sunday School"
This Week: From the Gospel of Luke



Mom's Study: Wednesdays at 9:30
Childcare is Provided
The Case for Faith: A Six-session Investigation of the Toughest Objections to Christianity

Sunday Morning Study:

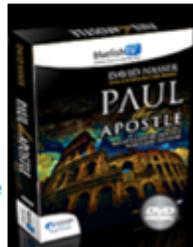
Sundays @ 9:00

and Wednesday Noon Study:

Wednesdays at noon

Paul the Apostle

FILMED IN ROME - A 4-part video-driven Bible study for small groups on culture and the life of the Apostle Paul



Sunday Night Youth Group

For youth (grades 5+) from 4:00 to 6:00

Sunday nights will include some activities, a short study, and some snacks, along with other special things. Please come and hang out, bring some friends, have some fun, and learn about God. (P.S. we will also try and mix in a special event night every once and a while.)

Could You Host A Small Group Study This Fall?

One of our Core Values at Living Word is that making disciples (people who are committed to growing to become more like Jesus) happens best in small group settings.

For example, it's easier for people to get connected to Jesus through small groups. It's easier to get to know other Christians in small groups. Caring happens best in small groups. With that in mind we'd like to "plant" more small groups this fall. If you could host a small group study - at your home, a coffee house or at church, please talk to Pastor David. There are many different kinds of studies available. We can find one that fits your situation.

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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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Confirmation:

This month we:

- Finish the Bible video
- Help plan and serve for Mari Geer's baby shower
- Go caroling



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

Sunday School News...

- **Class Time:** 9:00 - 9:45 every Sunday morning
- **Teachers:** Preschool - K: Amanda Sharp
1-3 grade - Jason Miller
4-6 grade - Violet Dauk

Substitutes still needed. Please talk to Mona if you can help.

- **November Service Project:** The students will work on their posters for the program and practice music and parts in class.

• **Curriculum:**

"Jesus is...A through Z" (names/titles of Jesus)

- Dec. 8: 9:00 Practice for program in individual classes
- Dec. 15 9:00 Everyone practices for program together
- Dec 21 10:30 Program practice
11:00 Birthday Party for Jesus
- Dec 22 9:00 Program Practice
10:00 Program

• **SS teachers' meetings:**

After worship on the 2nd Sunday of each month

December - Daily Devotionals

This month we continue reading the "100 (or so) Key Chapters" of the Bible. Each of these chapters will help you come to a greater understanding of God, who He is, what He likes, what He is like, and His plans for you.

Record your insights from these chapters on the lines provided.

Wk of Dec 1 Daily Readings: Key Chapters

Dec 2 Mark 4 _____

Dec 3 Mark 5 _____

Dec 4 Mark 6 _____

Dec 5 Mark 9 _____

Dec 6 Mark 13 _____

Dec 7 Colossians 3 _____

Wk of Dec 8 Daily Readings Key Chapters

Dec 9 Romans 1 _____

Dec 10 Romans 3 _____

Dec 11 Romans 5 _____

Dec 12 Romans 7 _____

Dec 13 Romans 8 _____

Dec 14 Romans 12 _____

Wk of Dec 15 Daily Readings Key Chapters

Dec 16 Galatians 1 _____

Dec 17 Galatians 5 _____

Dec 18 Ephesians 2 _____

Dec 19 Ephesians 4 _____

Dec 20 Ephesians 6 _____

Dec 21 Philippians 4 _____

Wk of Dec 22 Daily Readings Key Chapters

Dec 23 Luke 1 _____

Dec 24 Luke 2 _____

Dec 25 Luke 3 _____

Dec 26 Luke 4 _____

Dec 27 Luke 10 _____

Dec 28 Luke 15 _____

Wk of Dec 29 Daily Readings Key Chapters

Dec 30 Luke 19 _____

Dec 31 1 Corinthians 12 _____

Jan 1 1 Corinthians 13 _____

Jan 2 1 Corinthians 15 _____

Jan 3 2 Corinthians 5 _____

Jan 4 2 Corinthians 9 _____

December 2013 - Living Word Church Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 NEW MEMBER SUNDAY 9:00 Adult Study Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:30 New Member Reception 4:00 Youth Group	2 8:30 Pastors' Conf @ Living Word	3 6:30 Men's Study <i>"Stuff they didn't teach me in Sunday School"</i>	4 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 6:30 Advent Prayer/Devo 7:00 Confirmation	5 <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d4edda; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> LORD'S SUPPER DATES IN DEC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday, December 1st • Sunday, December 15th • Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24th </div>	6	7
8 9:00 Adult Study Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship / Choir Practice 11:30 Elders' Team SS Teachers' Mtg. 4:00 Youth Group	9	10 6:30 Men's Study <i>"Stuff they didn't teach me in Sunday School"</i>	11 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 6:30 Advent Prayer/Devo 6:30 MARI GEER BABY SHOWER @ Marcia Welshs'	12	13 <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>HAPPY JESUS' BIRTHDAY</p> </div>	14
15 9:00 Adult Study: Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship / Choir Practice 4:00 Youth Group	16	17 6:30 Men's Study <i>"Stuff they didn't teach me in Sunday School"</i>	18 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 5:30 Pre-Caroling Meal 6:00 CAROLING	19 6:30 Mission & Ministry Team	20	21 10:30 Christmas Program Practice 11:00 BIRTHDAY PARTY for JESUS
22 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 9:00 Adult Study Christmas Pgm Practice 10:00 Christmas Pgm/ Worship 11:15 CHRISTMAS HAM DINNER 4:00 Youth Group	23 	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP (Entire service by candlelight)	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 9:00 CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP	26 	27	28
29 TIME-CAPSULE BURIAL 9:00 Adult Study: 10:00 Worship 11:15 TIME-CAPSULE BURIAL 4:00 Youth Group	30	31	Jan 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 	Jan 2	Jan 3 6:00 Circuit Pastors @Montevideo	Jan 4

Upcoming Schedules...

Scripture Readers

Dec 1 Bryson Wachter
 Dec 8 Wendy Robbin
 Dec 15 Mona Hjelle
 Dec 22 Phillip Iverson
 Dec 29 Kevin Welsh

Jan 5 Linda Dilley
 Jan 12 Mark Fuglie
 Jan 19 Tammy Fuglie
 Jan 26 Duane Hansen

Fellowship Servers

Dec 1 Mona Hjelle / Elaine Abraham
 Dec 8 Violet Dauk / Laurel Iverson
 Dec 15 Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hansen
 Dec 22 Marcia Welsh / Pam Johnson
 Dec 29 Wendy Robbin / Alicia Sawatzky

Jan 5 Nancy Jo Wendt / Tammy Fuglie
 Jan 12 Tammy Wachter / Sarah Miller
 Jan 19 Mona Hjelle / Elaine Abraham
 Jan 26 Violet Dauk / Laurel Iverson

Nursery

Dec 1 Mona Hjelle
 Dec 8 Eve Bajari
 Dec 15 Grace Geer
 Dec 22 Michelle Johnson

Jan 5 Mona Hjelle
 Jan 12 Eve Bajari
 Jan 19 Grace Geer
 Jan 26 Michelle Johnson

Altar Guild

November Mona Hjelle
 Dec Pastor David & Linda Dilley

Make A Meal Volunteers

Dec Pastor David & Linda Dilley
 Jan Violet Dauk & Julie Bajari

Custodian

December Tim Geer family
 January

Thot 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.

Elders

Dec 1 Mark Fuglie & Scott Wachter
 Dec 15 Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp
 Dec 24 Mark Fuglie & Scott Wachter
 Jan 5 Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp
 Jan 19 Mark Fuglie & Scott Wachter

Usher Schedule

Dec 1 Troy Hansen & Brady Sharp
 Dec 8 Mark Fuglie & Tim Geer
 Dec 15 Linda Dilley & Mona Hjelle
 Dec 22 Kevin & Noah Welsh
 Dec 29 Jamie & Phil Iverson

Jan 5 Duane Hansen & Chuck Weflen
 Jan 12 Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter
 Jan 19 Lonny Robbin & Jason Olson
 Jan 26 Troy Hansen & Brady Sharp

Acolyte (little brothers & sisters can help)

Dec 1 Eli Sharp
 Dec 8 Lance Sawatzky
 Dec 15 George Arends-Schmidt
 Dec 22 Carson Jaspersen
 Dec 29 Noah Miller

Jan 5 Andrew Sharp
 Jan 12 Levi Miller
 Jan 19 Eli Sharp
 Jan 26 Lance Sawatzky

Accompanying Musicians

Dec 1 Sharon Willen
 Dec 8 Scott Wachter
 Dec 15 Pam Johnson
 Dec 22 Scott Wachter
 Dec 29 Scott Wachter

Jan 5 Sharon Willen
 Jan 12 Scott Wachter
 Jan 19 Pam Johnson
 Jan 26 Scott Wachter

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**

Miscellaneous Notes...

Last Call For Time Capsule Items

Bring something that signifies our faith and church at this point in time. Maybe a cd, movie, book, photos, predictions, news clippings, etc.... Also bring a favorite Bible passage to show that even though some elements of our faith and religion change over the years, the most important - the rock-solid foundation that is the Living Word of God - never will.

Time Capsule will be buried after worship Dec. 29.

Church Directory Pictures

If you didn't get your directory picture taken earlier this year, there's still time to bring a picture for us to include. Please talk to Linda Dilley.

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.

From the Fall Voters' Assembly

On October 27, the Voters' Assembly approved a budget for 2014. In a special meeting following the regular Voters' Assembly the voters also approved a bid from Duinick Companies to pave our parking lot. Duinick's was not able to fit the project into their schedule before winter, but will honor their bid price in the spring.

"Thank God For ..."

You've seen our sign board out by the road with the beginning of a sentence: "Thank God For..." Each week we'd like to change the ending of that sentence to encourage people who drive past to remember that God is the giver of all good things - especially things we take for granted. This week we thanked God for **Our Wildcats**. Let Pastor know how you'd complete that sentence next week.

Sing With Our Christmas Choir

The adult choir has been asked to sing in the Sunday School Christmas program. Come and be a part of this celebration. The choir will rehearse December 8th and the 15th after the fellowship hour. The Christmas program is scheduled for December 22nd during the worship service.

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That for a day: If the day before a holiday is called Christmas Eve, is the day after Christmas Adam?

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Now Available: Direct Deposit for Your Offerings

NEW! Thrivent Financial for Lutherans sponsors *Simply Giving*, a direct-deposit program that you can set up to have offerings automatically transferred from your bank account to the Living Word's general fund. Please see Stewardship Chair Jason Miller for more details.

Sing With Our Christmas Choir

The adult choir has been asked to sing in the Sunday School Christmas program. Come and be a part of this celebration. The choir will rehearse December 8th and the 15th after the fellowship hour. The Christmas program is scheduled for December 22nd during the worship service.

Stress In Your Life? Learn How to Deal With It

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

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.

Daily Readings Now Available in Audio

NEW! If you are among the folks who find it easier to listen to the Bible than to read it, you will be glad to hear that Pastor David has recorded the December Daily Bible Readings. You will find the audio recordings of those daily readings on our website www.livingwordlutheran.net.

**Operation
Christmas Child...**

Thanks for 30 shoe boxes!



LWML News...

We will gather together again on
Wednesday, December 11 @ 6:30

at Marcia Welsh's home for Mari Geer's baby shower.



Sharing the Love of Jesus in Practical Ways...

Be A Sunday School "Sub"

We need a couple substitute teachers. Talk to Mona Hjelle if you can help

A Great Month to Use Our Make-A-Meal Program

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. Please use the Prayer and Care cards in the attendance pad at worship or call Pastor David or Meal Coordinator Linda Dilley if you know of someone who would appreciate a meal. Thanks! Our December Make-a-Meal volunteers: Pastor David and Linda Dilley

More Ideas:

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.

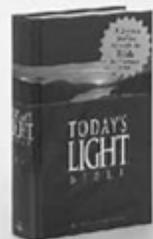
- Babysit for a mom (or dad) while they shop.
- Shovel snow for someone who could use the help this winter (it will snow!).
- Invite at least one person to join you in worship Christmas Eve.
- Drive others to church for worship.
- "Adopt" someone in a care center, not just for Christmas, but for an indefinite 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.

REMEMBER...

We Have New *Today's Light* Bibles

- 1) For our Bible Studies
- 2) To take home or give to someone who needs a Bible

These were given in memory of Geneva Olson by her family.



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Christmas began in the heart of God. It is complete only when it reaches the heart of man.

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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 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** (Sat., Dec. 21 @ 11:00 a.m.)

Everyone:

- **Caroling** (Wed., December 18 - Leave church @ 6:00)
- **The Christmas Program** (Sunday, December 22 @ 10am) (Special music, songs by the kids and the Christmas story)
- **Christmas Ham Dinner** (Sunday, December 22 @ 11:30)
- **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
- **Christmas Day Worship** (Dec. 25 @ 9:00am)

Congratulations!

- **Joe Johnson** on your new house!
- **Troy Hansen** on your new job!
- **John England** on your new job!

Please email pastor@livingwordlutheran.net if there's someone you'd like us to extend congratulations to.

Meet Our New Members...

Keith & Laurie Hanson

Laurie Dahlberg was born on October 25, 1952 at the Willmar hospital and grew up in New London. Keith Hanson was born on January 17, 1949 in Glenwood, Minnesota. He and grew up in Villard, and after moving to South Dakota for a couple of years, Keith's family moved to New London.

Keith and Laurie were married on December 18, 1971. They have four children: Shawn, Kyle, Shannon and Kelli. They also have nine grandchildren.

Laurie works at Rice Hospital. She likes to read and spend time with the grandchildren as they grow. Keith began working at Hanson's Tire in 1964 and most days you will still find him behind the front desk greeting and helping customers there. Keith also listed spending time with their children and grandchildren at the top of the list of things he enjoys. Also on that list is "spending time outdoors" and "going on short weekend trips and visiting."

"We were drawn to Living Word to hear God's Word - Unfiltered! Our favorite Bible verse is the Twenty-third Psalm."

Thanks be to God!
Keith & Laurie Hanson

E-Mail Humor...

Ducking into confession with a turkey in his arms, Dewey said, "Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned. I stole this turkey to feed my family. Would you take it and settle my guilt?"

"Certainly not," said the Priest. "As penance, you must return it to the one from whom you stole it."

"I tried," Dewey sobbed, "but he refused. Oh, Father, what should I do?"

"If what you say is true, then it is all right for you to keep it for your family."

Thanking the Priest, Dewey hurried off.

When confession was over, the Priest returned to his residence. When he walked into the kitchen, he found that someone had stolen his turkey.

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That for a day: You stop believing in Santa Claus when you start getting clothes for Christmas.

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The Daily Dozen of Christian Parenting

The class is finished, but the parenting never stops, so we'll have excerpts of things we learned in this and future newsletters.



DAILY DOZEN #2: Parents, Don't Forget Who Your Children Are

After you've reminded yourself that your identity is found not in what you own but in being a Child of God, your task is to instill that same identity in your children. This won't be easy. (Understatement alert!)

It's not easy, because the message our children will get from TV, video games and their peers is that their identity comes from outside - from what you look like, what you own and who you hang out with. God teaches that their identity is found on the inside, deep inside. Their identity goes even deeper than their DNA. It's found in being A Child of God.

The fact that our children are first and foremost children of God has huge ramifications for our parenting. Here's a question to ponder: *How would I treat my children differently if I were to always remember they are Children of God - children He has entrusted to my care and nurture?*

Story Behind The Song...

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Phillips Brooks and Lewis Redner collaborated to combine great words with a memorable, singable tune to give us one of the most-loved Christmas carols, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*.

Phillips Brooks, who gave us the words of this famous Christmas carol, was minister of Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia and had visited Bethlehem in December of 1865 and worshiped at the Church of the Nativity on Christmas Eve. Several years later, when he wanted a new song of Christmas for the children to sing at his church, he reached back in memory for inspiration from his Holy Land visit. The poem he wrote painted in words the sights and sounds of that little town of Bethlehem he had visited.

Brooks asked the church organist, Lewis Redner, to compose a melody that would be easy for the children to sing at their Sun-

day school Christmas Eve program. Mr. Redner sat down at the piano to find just the right tune to carry the descriptive words, but nothing he composed seemed right. On the night before the Christmas Eve service he felt defeated as he went to bed. During his fitful sleep it seemed that he heard music. Immediately, he got up and wrote down the melody just as we sing it today. When he joyfully presented it to Rev. Brooks he said: "I think it was a gift from heaven." The children sounded like a choir of angels as they sang the new carol written just for them. We are blessed to continue singing it over one hundred fifty years later.

Phillips Brooks was born in Boston in 1825 and educated at Harvard. He was a beloved and respected evangelist. After serving several Episcopal churches in Philadelphia and Boston, he was appointed Bishop of that area. He was a giant of a man - especially in that day - who stood 6-feet 8 inches. He also had a big heart that endeared him to old and young alike. There were toys in his office for the many children who visited him. It was a familiar sight to see the beloved bishop sitting on the floor playing a game with a group of children.

He never married but other people's children became like a family to him. When he died unexpectedly in 1893, at the age of 58, everyone was overwhelmed with grief. It was a child who put his death in a beautiful light. When told by her mother that Bishop Brooks had gone to heaven, she simply said, "Oh Mama, how happy the angels will be."

Indeed how happy they are when we sing the final verse and make it our own prayer.

You will notice that the original poem contains one verse (four) that Brooks left out of later publications of the hymn.

*O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.*

*O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary, And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.*

*How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still
The dear Christ enters in.*

*Where children pure and happy Pray to the blessed Child,
Where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the mother mild;
Where charity stands watching And faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
and Christmas comes once more*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem! Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Emmanuel!*

Editor's note: A beautiful a cappella version of this carol by David Phelps and friends at <http://youtu.be/67ACXORGNl> and a version from Jars of Clay at <http://youtu.be/qE9isipKDXc>

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Some of the sheep were not so gung-ho about visiting the Christ child that first Christmas night.

Luke 2