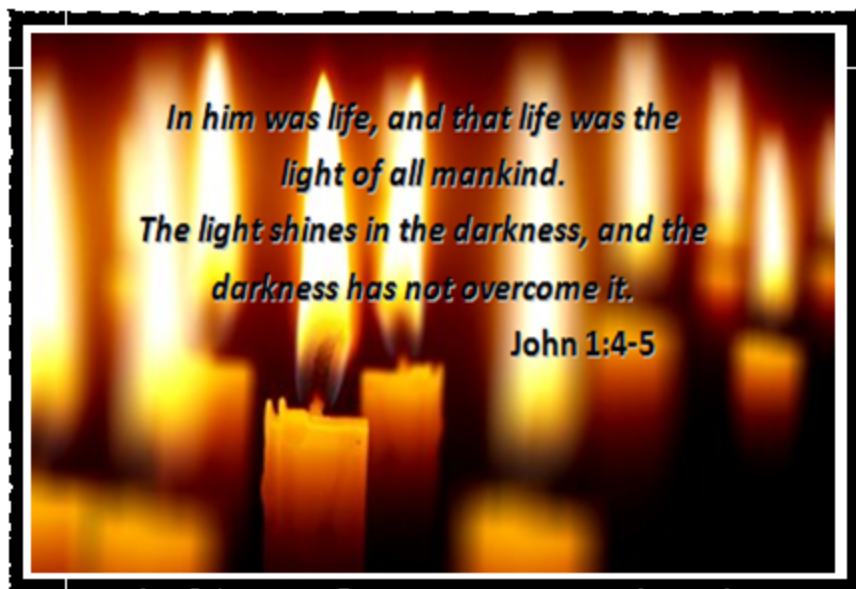




January 2014 Newsletter



"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 going on with Thrivent?

I'm sorry, those of you who were waiting for my answer to the question "What's your favorite New Testament book?" will have to wait another month.

The third Sunday of January is traditionally "Life Sunday" - the day we celebrate the Sanctity (holiness) of Life. With that in mind it seemed timely to deal with the question above which cropped up just before Christmas.

Here's some background about Thrivent: Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is the financial services organization that provides things like mutual funds and life insurance for Lutheran Christians. Its Thrivent Choice Dollars® are profits that must be given back to those its members each year. Once a year the members get a chance to tell Thrivent where they would like those dollars given. Many Thrivent Choice Dollars get channeled back to individual Lutheran congregations. Around \$500 Thrivent Choice Dollars® were directed to Living Word this past year.

About a week before Christmas an email with this title caught my eye:

LCMS issues statement about Thrivent Choice Dollars®

That email subject-line prompted me to ask the question listed at the beginning of this article. Of course I read the email which stated:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is deeply concerned by the news that Thrivent Financial has recognized Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota as a potential recipient of funding through its Thrivent Choice Dollars



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grant program. The LCMS always has been, and will continue to be, clear and faithful in its proclamation of the sanctity of all human life from conception until natural death. We are currently in conversation with Thrivent Financial and pray for a God-pleasing resolution to this matter so that the pro-life witness of individual Lutherans and the LCMS will not be compromised.

*Maggie Karner, Director
LCMS Life and Health Ministries*

*Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*

The very next day I received an email with this subject line:

LCMS Responds to Thrivent's Choice Dollars® Statement

The body of that email reads:

With the recent Thrivent announcement to reconsider their Choice Dollars® Program, the LCMS is encouraged to learn that Thrivent is beginning to recognize the serious concern its members have when their choice dollars are stewarded toward organizations such as Planned Parenthood that directly support the abortion industry and the killing of unborn children.

"We are very happy that Thrivent was willing to reconsider this issue. However, the LCMS and every one of its entities and congregations are both pro-life and nonprofit, so we certainly hope that Thrivent will continue to support such pro-life, nonprofit organizations," said the Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

LCMS members are urged to express their concerns directly to Thrivent Financial during this time of re-evaluation of the Choice Dollars® Program.

The above email included a link to the Thrivent Statement which included this paragraph:

After input, discussion and a review of the concerns from Thrivent members, the leadership of this local chapter voted Thursday to remove it [the Planned Parenthood affiliate] from the Thrivent Choice program effective immediately. Given the deeply held views on this issue across our membership, we also are taking action to address the concerns of our membership. These steps include temporarily suspending all pro-choice and pro-life organizations from the Thrivent Choice program,

placing a temporary hold on the addition and removal of nonprofit organizations from the program, and conducting a comprehensive program review.

Please notice the words I highlighted in bold. Not only did they remove Planned Parenthood from the list of those who can receive money, Thrivent also removed all pro-life organizations from that list. As the second email from our synod indicated, that could technically include all Missouri Synod congregations. That email encouraged us to give Thrivent our feedback. I thought it may be helpful to share the feedback I gave:

When I first learned that Thrivent was considering channeling Thrivent Choice Dollars to a Planned Parenthood affiliate my initial reaction was, "You're kidding, right?" And after finding out that this was no joke, I said, "Unbelievable," and wondered where we should go to replace the financial products we currently get from Thrivent.

The next day upon hearing that Thrivent had reconsidered and removed the Planned Parenthood affiliate from the list of possibilities, my response was "Thrivent made a good choice." But then I read the fine print and discovered that Thrivent had also removed all pro-life organizations from the rolls of possible recipients, and I was back to, "You've got to be kidding me." And we are back to trying to find alternative providers for our Thrivent products.

Working to save the lives of those yet to be born is biblically defensible. Taking those same lives is not - no matter how you slice-and-dice and spin it. There are "grey" areas where Christians can in good conscience agree to disagree. Abortion is not one of those areas. It is categorically contrary to the Word of God in the Scriptures. Just to be clear: That does not mean that a person who's had an abortion cannot be considered a Christian. Everyone of us sins and needs God's forgiveness daily. But what it does mean is that it is unconscionable for an organization that identifies itself as "Christian" to support abortion.

Thrivent's real "Choice" as I see it is this: If you want to be a politically correct organization, then you must choose to remove the "Christian" facade. If you truly want to be a "Christian" organization, then you must choose to get rid of any pretense about being politically correct. (If Jesus had been "politically correct" He never would have gone to the cross.)

Sincerely, Rev. David Dauk

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That for a day: A clear conscience is the sign of a fuzzy memory.

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In my sermon last Sunday I talked about things we could say "Amen" to about this past year and the coming year - things that are "most certainly true." One of those truths is this: "It has been / will be difficult to be a Christian." Every day we face choices. Sometimes we listen to the wrong voices and make the wrong choices. The challenge is to repent of those wrong choices and listen to God's voice and seek His power to make better ones the next day.

One of the choices we will increasingly need to make is the choice to either stand up for what God's Word clearly says or stick our heads in the sand and pretend everything is ok (when it really isn't). We live in a time when everyone has an opinion - and we all, it seems, love to make our opinions known. But if God has spoken on an issue, it really doesn't matter what my or your or anyone else's opinion is. The Sanctity of all human life is one of those issues that is not a matter of opinion. It is one of those black and white areas where "God has spoken." God tells us, for example, in the 5th Commandment (not His "fifth suggestion") "You will not murder (take an innocent life)". Please pray that more people will be emboldened to point out what God has declared about life fact as a result of Thrivent's action.

Thanks for asking
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Congratulations!

- **Joe Johnson** on your new house!
- **Troy Hansen** on your new job !
- **Kim & John England** on your new baby girl Daenarys

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

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.



The Common Table Prayer...

A way to stay ready for Christ's Second Coming

During the Advent Season we focused on what Jesus would have us be doing as we wait for His return. We found the Common Table Prayer can be a very useful tool to remind us of some of those things.

Come, Lord Jesus. Pause after this part to remember what you are really asking: For Jesus to return to bring an end to this world and usher in eternity. It's hard to ask Jesus to return in one breath and then go out and act like He's never coming back.

Be Our Guest. Pause after this petition to remember that you are asking Jesus - the King - to come into your home and your life. Let that be a reminder to "clean house" before the King comes. In other words, sweep out your sins by repenting.

And Let These Thy Gifts To Us Be Blessed. During Advent we focus on four specific gifts Jesus brought when He came the first time: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. The way for these gifts to be a blessing for us is two-fold: 1) Use them. No gift, no matter how great, does anyone any good unwrapped and sitting on the shelf. Make the choice to put these gifts to use in your life. 2) Share them. God gives gifts to be shared. You will be blessed when you share the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love Jesus gave you. Pause after saying this petition to remind yourself to use and share these Thy gifts.

Amen. This is a word that indicates your agreement that what has been said is "most certainly true." Pause after ending the prayer and remember that Jesus has promised to return again. He is still here to be a guest in your life right now. He will bless you for using and sharing His gifts.

Thanks to All Who Sang With Our Christmas Choir...

.And to Leone for directing and Pam for accompanying !

Sign up to have this newsletter sent directly to you by e-mail. Send your email address to:
newsletter@livingwordlutheran.net

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Thot for a day Silence is golden; duct tape is silver.

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The LINK...

January 2014

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generosity. As the end of the year came to a close, the Link received generous support from our community in November and December to continue to provide needed assistance to our neighbors in need and meet our budget goals.

Happy New Year!

Tuesday's Table in January:

January 7th: Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Church
January 14th: Evangelical Covenant Church
January 21st: Faith Lutheran Church
January 28th: Peace Lutheran Church

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

The cold weather has made it very difficult for our neighbors over the past month. Car breakdowns, the cost of warm winter gear and the extra gasoline needed to warm up a vehicle can stretch an already stretch budget very thin.

Here's a story about a young man that the Link was able to assist in December:

John (name changed) called the office and was frustrated by a lack of funds at local agencies. Desperate, he called the Link as his last hope. As a self-employed person, John was lacking any income due to the unpredictable nature of his work. John had secured a new job and had lined up a second job for the week-ends. He was facing homelessness as his rent and utilities were all past due. Additionally, he needed warm clothing to work his new job outdoors in sub-zero temperatures.

The Link assisted John in applying for Energy Assistance to ensure the heat in his home. Link staff contacted the WorkForce Center to see if they had any available funds to assist with work clothes, but they didn't. With the help of the Link and partnership with local churches, businesses and community members, the Link assisted John with a rent and water/sewer payments to avoid eviction. The Link purchased a warm face mask, gloves and boots so he could begin his new job without the fear of frostbite in the frigid cold. A friend purchased warm bibs for him and allowed him to pay him back later.

Through your generosity, the Link is able to assist hard-working people like John **get and keep work** and **avoid homelessness** in the frigid cold weather. Thank you!

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!

Opportunities for Growth...



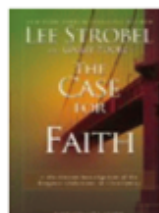
New Men's Study:

Tuesdays @ 6:30pm

Starting January 7: *Lost Books?*

Ever wondered if some texts were intentionally excluded from the Bible and why? In *Lost Books?* we look at why some ancient writings failed to make the cut, why other

texts most definitely met the standard, and why others, including those "gospels" found in the last century, came up short.



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

Could You Host A Small Group Study This Winter?

It's often easier for people to get connected to Jesus and other Christians through small groups. With that in mind we'd like to "plant" more small groups this winter. If you could host a small group study - at your home, a coffee house or at church, please talk to Pastor David. There are lots of studies available. We can find one that fits your situation

Confirmation:

Wednesdays @ 6:30

We are on a year-long tour through the Bible. This month:

Jan 8: We finish The Bible video. Assignment update.

Host: Tim Geer

Jan 15: Bible video review. Start 100 Key chapters

Host: Pastor

Jan 22: Project 24. 100 Key Chapters. Host: Julie Bajari

Jan 29: Interview Pastor. 100 Key Chapters Host: Pastor

Meet Our New Members...

On December 1st we celebrated another "New Member Sunday" and welcomed four new members to our Living Word family: Keith and Laurie Hanson, Mike Von Rueden and Mike Knutson. To help you get acquainted with them, we asked them to tell a little about themselves. Last month we heard from Keith and Laurie. This month we meet...

Michael Von Rueden

Michael joined Living Word last month. He was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and still (don't hold this against him) considers himself a Packers fan. Mike actually grew up in the southern Minnesota town of Comfrey, and he now lives near Atwater.

Mike has four siblings - three sisters and one brother. He works for a trapping supply company, which is a natural for him since he loves the outdoors. One of the outdoor activities Mike enjoys most is going for rides on his motorcycle.

Mike says that he doesn't have one favorite passage in the Bible, but that "It's all good." Which passage he turns to varies based on the situation. Mike came to Living Word at the invitation of friends Brent and Alicia Sawatzky. He joined our congregation because, "I like the smaller size of Living Word and the family atmosphere - the fellowship and togetherness."

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.

- **January Outing:**

We will have a special Bowling Outing after church on January 26. Parents and friends are welcome to come with us - as is the rest of the congregation!

- **Curriculum:**

This month we get back to learning about the names & titles of Jesus.

- **SS teachers' meetings:**

After worship on the 2nd Sunday of each month

January - Daily Devotionals

This month we conclude 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. Note: beginning January 5 there are also reading for Sunday.

Record your insights from these chapters on the lines provided.

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 _____

Wk of Jan 5 Daily Readings: Key Chapters in John's Gospel

Jan 5 John 1 _____
 Jan 6 John 3 _____
 Jan 7 John 11 _____
 Jan 8 John 15 _____
 Jan 9 John 17 _____
 Jan 10 John 20 _____
 Jan 11 John 21 _____

Wk of Jan 12 Daily Readings Key Chapters in the Acts of the Apostles

Jan 12 Acts 1 _____
 Jan 13 Acts 2 _____

Jan 14 Acts 4 _____
 Jan 15 Acts 8 _____
 Jan 16 Acts 9 _____
 Jan 17 Acts 12 _____
 Jan 18 Acts 16 _____

Wk of Jan 19 Daily Readings Key Chapters in the NT Letters

Jan 19 Acts 17 _____
 Jan 20 1 Timothy 3 _____
 Jan 21 2 Timothy 3 _____
 Jan 22 Hebrews 11 _____
 Jan 23 Hebrews 12 _____
 Jan 24 James 2 _____
 Jan 25 1 Peter 2 _____

Wk of Jan 26 Daily Readings Key Chapters in the Final NT books

Jan 26 2 Peter 1 _____
 Jan 27 1 John 4 _____
 Jan 28 1 John 5 _____
 Jan 29 Revelation 19 _____
 Jan 30 Revelation 20 _____
 Jan 31 Revelation 21 _____
 Feb 1 Revelation 22 _____

January 2014 - Living Word Church Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 29 TIME-CAPSULE BURIAL 9:00 Adult Study 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship 4:00 Youth Group	30	31	Jan 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3	4
5 9:00 Adult Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 4:00 Youth Group	6	7 6:30 Men's Study <i>"The Lost Books?"</i>	8 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 6:30 LWML 6:30 Confirmation	<div> Lord's Supper Dates In Jan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunday, January 5th Sunday, January 19th </div>		11 10:00 - ?? CRAFTING / SCRAPBOOKING DAY
12 9:00 Adult Study: <i>Paul the Apostle</i> Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship 11:30 Elders' Team SS Teachers' Mtg. 4:00 Youth Group	13	14 6:30 Men's Study <i>"The Lost Books?"</i>	15 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 6:30 Confirmation	16 6:30 Mission & Ministry Team	17	18
19 LIFE SUNDAY 9:00 Adult Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> Sunday School 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship 4:00 Youth Group	20	21 6:30 Men's Study <i>"The Lost Books?"</i>	22 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 6:30 Confirmation	23	24	25 Baptism: Daenarys & John England
26 9:00 Adult Study <i>Paul the Apostle:</i> Sunday School 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship noon SUNDAY SCHOOL BOWLING @ Kandi Bowl 4:00 Youth Group	27	28 6:30 Men's Study <i>"The Lost Books?"</i>	29 9:30 Moms' Study <i>Defending your faith</i> noon Wed. Noon Study <i>Paul the Apostle</i> 6:30 Confirmation	<div> Please Remember to Pray At 11:09 Everyday <i>(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")</i> </div>		Feb 1 6:00 ANNUAL WHIST PARTY @ Pastor & Violet's

Upcoming Schedules...

Scripture Readers

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

Feb 2 Tammy Wachter
Feb 9 Eve Bajari
Feb 16 Scott Wachter
Feb 23 Bryson Wachter

Fellowship Servers

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

Feb 2 Linda Dilley / Bonnie Hansen
Feb 9 Marcia Welsh / Pam Johnson
Feb 16 Wendy Robbin / Alida Sawatzky
Feb 23 Nancy Jo Wendt / Tammy Fuglie

Nursery

(more volunteers needed, please talk to Mona)

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

Feb 2 Mona Hjelle
Feb 9 Eve Bajari
Feb 16 Grace Geer
Feb 23 Michelle Johnson

Altar Guild

January Nancy Jo Wendt
February Mona Hjelle

Make A Meal Volunteers

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

Custodian

January Tim Geer family
February Brent & Alicia Sawatzky and Mike Von Rueden

That for a day: Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

Elders

Jan 5 Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp
Jan 19 Mark Fuglie & Scott Wachter

Feb 2 Kevin Welsh & Brady Sharp
Feb 16 Mark Fuglie & Scott Wachter

Usher Schedule

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

Feb 2 Mark Fuglie & Tim Geer
Feb 9 Linda Dilley & Mona Hjelle
Feb 16 Kevin & Noah Welsh
Feb 23 Jamie & Phil Iverson

Acolyte (little brothers & sisters can help)

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

Feb 2 Andrew Sharp
Feb 9 Levi Miller
Feb 16 Eli Sharp
Feb 23 Lance Sawatzky

Accompanying Musicians

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

Feb 2 Sharon Willen
Feb 9 Scott Wachter
Feb 16 Pam Johnson
Feb 23 Scott Wachter

January Discipleship Verse...



In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:4-5

Miscellaneous Notes...

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.

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 Duinink Companies to pave our parking lot. Duinink'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 A New Year.

Let Pastor know how you'd complete that sentence next week



Now Available: Direct Deposit for Your Offerings

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.



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

If you are among the folks who find it easier to listen to



Page 16

Thot for a day: Efficiency is intelligent laziness.

Page 17

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.

Lutheran Witness Magazine Subscriptions

Please talk to Pastor David if you would like a subscription to the official magazine of the LC-MS. You can check out some of the most recent issues on the "Free Stuff" table. Subscriptions are \$21.65/year. (Those families that became Living Word members in 2013 will receive a free one-year subscription.)

Portal of Prayer Daily Devotionals

Are available in your mailbox and on the "Free Stuff" table.

Have You Seen Our New Star?

It's the lighted star above the cross on the front of our building. Just in time for the Epiphany season which begins with the story of the Magi following the star to Jesus!

Thanks to Cody Sarsland for making it for us!



Birthdays and Anniversary Dates Needed

I would like to request birthday and anniversary info for all members that belong to Living Word Lutheran Church - as well as those who are not members but attend regularly. We'd like to have these dates to keep track of when to send our 'congratulations' and also possibly put into the church directory.

You can give me your Birthdays and Anniversary dates when you see me in church or just email them to me at jason.miller@fbfs.com

Thank you,
Jason Miller
Stewardship Chair
Living Word Lutheran Church

LWML News...

We will gather together again on
Wednesday, January 8th @ 6:30



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 January Make-a-Meal volunteers: Violet Dauk and Julie Bajari

Who Can You Invite?...

During the Advent season we highlighted some of the gifts God delivered to us in Jesus: The gifts of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love. God always gives gifts with the idea that we will use them and also share them. One way we can share Jesus' gifts is by making a simple invitation to church or a church group or function. Here are four special opportunities to invite people this month:

1. Crafting / Scrapbooking Day

THIS SATURDAY, January 11 @10:00 a.m.

Bring your projects and enjoy a day working and conversing.

2. Sunday School Kids (and parents) Winter Outing

BOWLING - After worship Sunday, January 26

(The congregation is invited as well)

3. Annual Whist Party

Saturday, February 1 at 6:00 p.m.

We'll celebrate Groundhog Day Eve (and Super Bowl Eve) with a great time of fun and fellowship at Pastor David and Violets home. No card-playing experience is necessary. (There will be a prize for the worst score). **Just bring a friend and a snack to share.**

(RSVP to Violet, so we know how many to expect)

4. Any of our New Studies

We have some great new studies beginning this month. You can find them on under "Opportunities for Growth" on page 8.

Page 18

Thot for a day: No man goes before his time -- unless the boss leaves early.

Page 19

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

The Toothless Grin

I was doing some last-minute Christmas shopping in a toy store and decided to look at Barbie dolls for my nieces. A nicely dressed little girl was excitedly looking through the Barbie dolls as well, with a roll of money clamped tightly in her little hand. When she came upon a Barbie she liked, she would turn and ask her father if she had enough money to buy it.

He usually said "yes," but she would keep looking and keep going through their ritual of "do I have enough?" As she was looking, a little boy wandered in across the aisle and started sorting through the Pokémon toys. He was dressed neatly, but in clothes that were obviously rather worn, and wearing a jacket that was probably a couple of sizes too small. He too had money in his hand, but it looked to be no more than five dollars or so at the most. He was with his father as well, and kept picking up the Pokémon video toys. Each time he picked one up and looked at his father, his father shook his head, "No."

The little girl had apparently chosen her Barbie, a beautifully dressed, glamorous doll that would have been the envy of every little girl on the block. However, she had stopped and was watching the interchange between the little boy and his father. Rather dejectedly, the boy had given up on the video games and had chosen what looked like a book of stickers instead. He and his father then started walking through another aisle of the store.

The little girl put her Barbie back on the shelf, and ran over to the Pokémon games. She excitedly picked up one that was lying on top of the other toys, and raced toward the check-out, after speaking with her father. I picked up my purchases and got in line behind them. Then, much to the little girl's obvious delight, the little boy and his father got in line behind me.

After the toy was paid for and bagged, the little girl handed it back to the cashier and whispered something in her ear. The cashier smiled and put the package under the counter.

I paid for my purchases and was rearranging things in my purse when the little boy came up to the cashier. The cashier rang up his purchases and then said, "Congratulations, you are my hundredth customer today, and you win a prize!" With that, she handed the little boy the Pokémon game, and he could

only stare in disbelief. It was, he said, exactly what he had wanted!

The little girl and her father had been standing at the doorway during all of this, and I saw the biggest, prettiest, toothless grin on that little girl that I have ever seen in my life. Then they walked out the door, and I followed close behind them. As I walked back to my car in amazement over what I had just witnessed, I heard the father ask his daughter why she had done that. I'll never forget what she said to him.

"Daddy, didn't Nana and Pawpaw want me to buy something that would make me happy?"

He said, "Of course they did, honey."

To which the little girl replied, "Well, I just did!"

With that, she giggled and started skipping toward their car. Her toothless grin said it all. Apparently, she had decided on the answer to her own question of, "Do I have enough?"

I feel very privileged to have witnessed the true spirit of Christmas in that toy store, in the form of a little girl who understands more about the reason for the season than most adults I know!

Written by Sharon Palmer (received from "Good Clean Funnies")

Pastor David's Note: I have to wonder if God didn't go "skipping" around heaven that first Christmas morning knowing He had just given us the gift we really needed in that manger - the gift of His Son.

E-Mail Humor...

Pastor David's Note: The first "funny" reminds us how important it is to pass along the truth about Jesus to the next generation. They aren't going to get that "truth" from their usual sources of information.

Daniel, aged 4, returned from Sunday school with a new perspective on the Christmas story.

He had learned all about the wise men from the east who brought gifts to the baby Jesus.

Daniel was so excited he just had to tell his parents, "I learned in Sunday school today all about the very first Christmas.

There wasn't a Santa Claus way back then, so these three guys on camels had to deliver all the toys. And Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer with his nose so bright wasn't there yet, so they had to have this big light in the sky to find their way around."

Every Christmas morning, when my kids were little, I read them the nativity story out of the big family Bible.

When my son was old enough to talk, he asked me what a stable was.

I thought for a moment how to explain it to him in terms he could understand, then told him, "It's something like your sister's room, but without a TV."

(Received from Mikey's Funnies)

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 #3

One of the basics of parenting is this:

"You can't begin to meet the needs of your children, until your needs are taken care of."

If you've ever been on an airplane you've heard this principle explained as the flight attendants tell you about what to do when if the oxygen masks drop down: "If traveling with small children, secure your mask first, then put them on your children." The idea is that you can't very well help them put theirs on if you have run out of oxygen yourself. It's really the same in all aspects of parenting.

If you are going to help your children build a strong relationship with the God whose children they truly are, you will need to first build that strong relationship with God. As with any relationship, your relationship with God grows stronger by spending time together. When it comes to God we do that by talking to Him (PRAYER). We do that by listening to Him (BIBLE READING), and we do that by coming into His presence in WORSHIP. Make sure to take time for those relationship needs and you will be equipped to take care of the needs of your children.

Story Behind The Song...

"Simple Gifts" A.k.a. Lord of the Dance

The Magi traveled hundreds of miles to bring gifts to Jesus, honoring Him as the true King of kings that He is. This month we look at a song our choir sung a while back entitled, "Simple Gifts."

"Simple Gifts" is a song written and composed in 1848 by Elder Joseph Brackett (1797–1882) of the Shaker community in Gorham, Maine. (Shakers were a protestant sect sharing aesthetic-life similarities with the Amish). Brackett first joined the Shakers at when his father's farm helped to form the nucleus of a new Shaker settlement.

Though often classified as an anonymous Shaker hymn or as a work song, it is better classified as a dance song.

The song was largely unknown outside Shaker communities until Aaron Copland used its melody for the score of Martha Graham's ballet Appalachian Spring, first performed in 1944. Copland used "Simple Gifts" a second time in 1950 in his first set of Old American Songs for voice and piano, which was later orchestrated.

Many people thought that the tune of "Simple Gifts" was a traditional Celtic one but both the music and original lyrics are actually the compositions of Brackett. "Simple Gifts" has been adapted or arranged many times since by folksingers and composers. It has been recorded by such diverse musicians as The rock band Weezer, 70's folk singer Judy Collins, and 80's alternative rock group R.E.M

For many years, a portion of this tune was used as the opening theme for the CBS News television documentary series, CBS Reports. The TV series Little House on the Prairie also had the Ingalls family singing this song.

More recently the tune was incorporated into *Air and Simple Gifts* arranged by John Williams for the 2009 inauguration of United States President Barack Obama.

Many contemporary Christian denominations incorporate this tune into hymnals, under various names, including a song that we use regularly: "Lord of the Dance," which was adapted in 1963 by English poet and songwriter Sydney Carter.

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Thot for a day: Sometimes I wake up grumpy. Other times I let him sleep.

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Here are the lyrics of the one-verse song:

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed,
To turn, turn will be our delight,
Till by turning, turning we come 'round right.*

The word "repent" literally means to "turn around." The final line gives us the great result of repenting. We come 'round right.

Editor's note: Listen to a beautiful version of this sung by Jewel at <http://youtu.be/amcGIfMu0bw>

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**