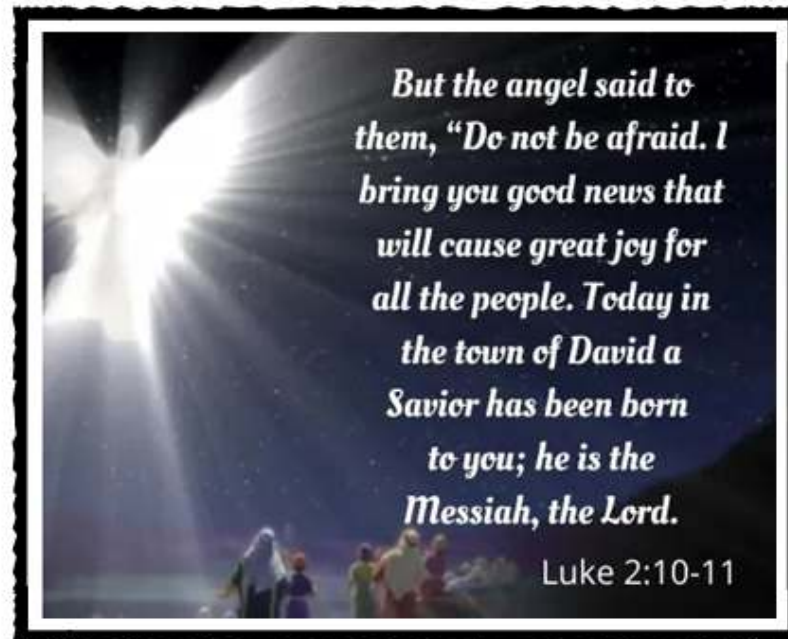



Living Word
Lutheran Church
LCMS



December 2021 Newsletter

"Communicating the Love of Jesus"

Sunday School: 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

Questions for Pastor...

Is Santa Claus real?

The modern Santa Claus is really a hodge-podge of several earlier Christmas- or gift-giving figures, hence the reason there are so many names for him used interchangeably today (at least

in the U.S.). But even in the 1800s, Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, and Kris Kringle were all separate figures.

Saint Nicholas is a real person. He was a 4th century, very wealthy Christian who was famed for giving away all of his money secretly in gifts to the poor. Nicholas later became a bishop from the town of Myra in what is now modern-day Turkey. After his death he was made a saint by the church. This quote is attributed to him:

"The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic Gods giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves."

St. Nicholas' feast day is on December 6, and part of that celebration is the giving gifts.

Father Christmas is a folklore image of the Christmas holiday dating back to the 15th century in England. He was a large, jolly, festive figure, often wearing red and white, who encouraged everyone to eat, drink, and be merry.



Kris Kringle is an Americanized spelling (mis-spelling) of the German Christkindl, (literally: "Christ Child"), another gift-giving

Christmas figure. This time with the celebration on Christmas Eve instead of December 6th.

Over the course of the 19th century, these three figures kind of blended together. Take Saint Nicholas's name



Page 3

and run it through a couple translations and you get "Santa Claus." Add Father Christmas's appearance, and "eat, drink and be merry" emphasis. Then add Christkindl's celebration date, and you come up with our modern-day Santa who comes giving gifts on Christmas Eve.

The poem "The Night Before Christmas" and Thomas Nast's illustrations of Santa over a period of 30 years are some of the most significant factors that helped the transition to a single, unified Santa Claus figure.

There is a famous story about St. Nicholas which tells how the custom of hanging up stockings first started. It goes like this:

There was a poor man who had three daughters. The man was so poor that he did not have enough money for a dowry, so his daughters couldn't get married. One night, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold down the chimney and into the house. The bag fell into a stocking that had been hung by the fire to dry! This was repeated later with the second daughter. Finally, determined to discover the person who had given him the money, the father secretly hid by the fire every evening until he caught Nicholas dropping in a bag of gold. Nicholas begged the man to not tell anyone what he had done, because he did not want to bring attention to himself. But soon the news got out and when anyone received a secret gift, it was thought that maybe it was from Nicholas.

The short answer: St. Nicholas is a real historical figure. The Christ Child is - obviously - a real historical figure. Santa Claus? Not so much!

Thanks for asking!
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship...

Friday, December 24

@ 5:00 pm



- The entire service is done by candlelight
- The Christmas Story from Luke chapter two is interspersed with Christmas Carols
- The Lord's Supper is Celebrated

Please pray about who you can invite to join you!

Opportunities for Growth...

Sunday Morning Study:

Sunday mornings @ 9:00
"The Radical Teachings of Jesus"
Please join us for coffee and God's Word!



Sunday Morning Youth Study

Sundays @ 9:00
"Feed the Dog" study.
Bring friends!

Monthly Morning Women's Study:

Is on "Christmas Break"
Will be back January 12 @ 10:00 a.m.



Wednesday Evening Women's Study

December 8th, 15th, & 22nd @ 6:15
Violet Dauk will host the study at her home (5126 Co Rd 40 NE, New London). Violet will also host a time of prayer prior to the study at 5:45 for anyone who wants to come and pray.

Men's Study

Tuesdays @ 6:30 (Come at 6:00 for Brats, etc...)
Who can you invite to join you?

Confirmation News...

- Class starts at 6:15 (Dec 8, 15, 22)
- Pastor will have PB & J sandwiches and hotdogs at 5:45 for those who want to eat before class.
- We're still in need of a couple chaperones (and drivers), so we can take the students to AirMaxx over Christmas break. Please talk to Pastor if you can help. Thanks!



Church Choir...

Sings on Christmas Eve

Please join us for practice after worship!

(Willingness to make a "joyful noise" is the only requirement)



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Thot for a day: Stop telling God how big your storm is. Instead, tell your storm how big your God is.

Page 5

Sunday School News...

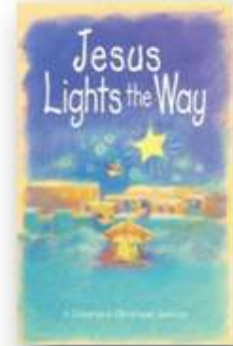
CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Sunday, December 19
during 10:00 A.M. Worship

Cookie & Coffee Fellowship
following the Service

+ Practice during the Sunday School Hour
December 5 and 12.

(We will not have Sunday School or Youth Study on December 26)



Operation Christmas Child

Thanks to EVERYONE who packed a shoebox!
And thanks to Mona Hjelle for organizing the effort!

We sent 20 shoeboxes this year - along with a considerable number of monetary donations!

Communion Notes...

The Lord's Supper will be celebrated on the First Sunday in December (Dec. 5) and on CHRISTMAS EVE (Dec 24).



We won't have communion on December 19 due to the Sunday School Program being held during worship.

On Christmas Eve we will come single-file to the front to receive the wafer from Pastor and the wine or grape juice from an Elder. On your way back to your seat everyone will have an opportunity to stop at the manger for a short prayer of thanks to God for being Immanuel: God With Us!

COMMUNING AT THE ALTAR HAS RESUMED: Those who are not comfortable coming to the altar should inform an Elder or Usher, and communion will be brought to you in your pew.

Reminder: Gluten-free bread wafers are available for those who have gluten-sensitive conditions. You will find these wafers in a separate cup in the communion tray.

Mark Your Calendars... Mission & Ministry Team...

Meets: Thursday, December 9th @ 6:30 p.m.

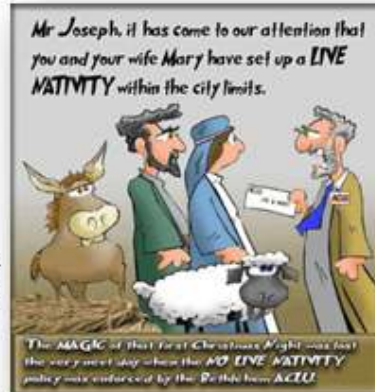
Elders' Team @ 5:30 prior to MMT

Community Outreach...

Living Nativity,
Sunday December 5,
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

What a fun and amazing event...

- Special appearance from Cledus the Camel (Carl's younger brother) also Donkey, Ox, Sheep and Goats!!
- Drive through OR Walk through this year!
- Hot Chocolate and cookie table!!



Make it a FAMILY event - invite your friends and neighbors !!

Upcoming Fun Stuff...

Wednesday, December 8

Lunch at



(in honor of Leone's retirement)

- * Meet at church 10 a.m. -
- * Our reservation is at 11:00
- * Please let Marcia know if you can join us.

+++

Marcia has also started collecting prizes for BINGO (after Friendship Brunch in February).

Please let her know if you have any prizes you could add. Thanks!

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Thot for a day: Life isn't measured by the number of birthdays but by the many events that fall between them.

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Youth Gathering...

The NEXT National Youth Gathering (2022 in Houston)



We have roughly \$5500 in our Youth Gathering account with a total needed by July 2022 of \$12,000.

Youth attending:

Noah Miller,
Levi Miller,
Zoe Rustad,
Lexi Macik
Alison Sarsland.

Chaperones:

Becky Sarsland,
Carmen Macik
Jason Miller.

(Pastor & Violet have volunteered to drive the group to Texas if we decide not to fly)

We are VERY excited about this great group!

Wisdom (from past newsletters)...

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 a conscious decision to have yourself a "Mary" Christmas instead. Like Mary, be sure not to overlook the "one necessary thing" - just spending time with Jesus. Set the example for (and with) your kids and grandkids. By talking to Jesus with them in prayer. By listening to Him as you read His Word together. By spending time with Him together in worship. Jesus is the gift God gave to us that first Christmas. He's the best gift you can give yourself and your family this Christmas!

When you commit to a "Mary" Christmas, you will discover that Jesus brings a level of peace, joy, hope and love that meals and presents and special events can never accomplish!

Who Can You Invite???

Two of the prophecies about the Messiah 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.)

- ◆ **The Living Nativity** - December 5 from 2-4pm
- ◆ **The Sunday School Christmas Program** - December 19 @ 10am
- ◆ **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship** - December 24 @ 5pm



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Thanksgiving is a time to count your blessings...one by one...as each relative goes home.

Give Your Spiritual Life a Lift...

Share the Love of Jesus This Month

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

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

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Special Yearly 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

With that in mind we came together on Thanksgiving Eve for a special joyful celebration of the blessings God has provided us. We're each encouraged to bring a special freewill offering in proportion to how God has blessed us this past year.

"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

Please pray about your Thank-offering proportion.. Use the special Thank-Offering envelope in the pew rack to make your Thank-Offering. (Your yearly Thank-Offering can be given any Sunday, if you were not able to attend the Thanksgiving Eve service.)

Thank You...

Thank you from our family to the members of Living Word Lutheran Church for all the calls, food, visits, and prayers while Carroll was in the hospital and at his funeral. Our family has a strong bond and support for one another with the love of Jesus. Carroll really enjoyed attending Living Word and we plan to continue his wishes. Thanks again and God bless.

-Donna Sarsland & Family





The Free to be Faithful® newsletter highlights important and relevant details on religious liberty issues that impact the rights of Christians to live faithfully.

In the latest newsletter, read about:

- Mary Ann Hanusa, a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs, Iowa, who is running for the U.S. House of Representatives;
- Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health, a U.S. Supreme Court case that questions whether all pre-viability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional; and
- Carson v. Makin and Demkovich v. St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, two other cases before the Supreme Court that deal with religious liberty issues.

Find the latest Free to be Faithful Newsletter at this link:

<https://resources.lcms.org/newsletters/free-to-be-faithful-fall-2021-newsletter/>

Church Clean-up...

You can sign up to take on any of these "cleaning" projects. They can be completed any time that works for you (there won't be a designated "Clean Up Day").

- CLEAN / ORGANIZE EAST FURNACE ROOM
- CLEAN / ORGANIZE WEST FURNACE ROOM



That for a day: Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.

Thank You...

- Thanks to all who donated pies & desserts and helped with the Thanksgiving Pumpkin Pie Fellowship. Bonnie Hansen
- Thanks to Leone, Marsha, Ruth, Pam & Bonnie for decorating the church for Christmas, and for putting up the Christmas tree.
- Thanks to Laurie Hanson for donating our new Nativity Scene figures in memory of Keith!
- Thanks to the Men's Study group for setting up the new Nativity Scene!
- Men's Study Group: Thank you so very much for setting up chairs for Carroll's funeral. That was a big job and we really appreciate you! God's Blessings on you and your families.
Sincerely, Donna Sarsland

If you have someone you'd like to offer thanks to, just email Scott at webmaster@livingwordlutheran.net

LWML News...



LWML MEETING:

Wednesday, January 12th @ 10:00 a.m.
We'll have a business meeting, followed by Women's Bible Study (video & discussion).

SHOES FOR MISSIONS:



This is a continuing fundraiser for Lutheran Island Camp. Please bring shoes, boots, slippers, sandals (in rubber banded pairs, or with shoestrings tied) to church, and place them in the SHOES FOR MISSIONS box near the entrance.

Thank You from the Jastrams..

We are so happy to have you as part of our missionary team. Your support for LCMS mission work in Asia means a lot to us. Dan & Joan Jastram



Read the current newsletter at

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8b34xw>

December 2021 - Daily Readings

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

Wk of Dec 5 PROPHECIES OF THE COMING OF CHRIST

- Dec 6 Genesis 3:15 _____

- Dec 7 Genesis 12:1-3 _____

- Dec 8 Deuteronomy 18:14-19 _____

- Dec 9 Psalm 68:16-20 _____

- Dec 10 Micah 5:2 _____

- Dec 11 Malachi 3:1-4 _____

Wk of Dec 12 ISAIAH'S PROPHECIES of CHRIST'S COMING

- Dec 13 Isaiah 2:4 _____

- Dec 14 Isaiah 7:10-14 _____

- Dec 15 Isaiah 9:6-7 _____

- Dec 16 Isaiah 11:1-10 _____

- Dec 17 Isaiah 42:1-8 _____

- Dec 18 Isaiah 61:1-3 _____

Wk of Dec 19 THE COMING AND BIRTH OF CHRIST

- Dec 20 Luke 1:26-38 _____

- Dec 21 Luke 1:39-45 _____

- Dec 22 Luke 1:46-56 _____

- Dec 23 John 1:1-14 _____

- Dec 24 Luke 2:1-20 _____

- Dec 25 Matthew 1:18-25 _____

Wk of Dec 26 THE BIRTH OF CHRIST - TIMING & RESPONSES

- Dec 27 Galatians 4:4-7 _____

- Dec 28 Ephesians 1:7-10 _____

- Dec 29 Luke 2:21-24 _____

- Dec 30 Luke 2:25-35 _____

- Dec 31 Luke 2:36-40 _____

- Jan 1 Revelation 12:1-5 _____

Wk of Jan 2 JESUS TELLS WHY HE CAME

- Jan 3 Matthew 5:17-18 _____

- Jan 4 Matthew 20:28 _____




- Jan 5 Luke 4:42-44 _____

- Jan 6 Luke 19:9-10 _____

- Jan 7 John 3:16-17 _____

- Jan 8 John 10:7-10 _____

December 2021 - Living Word Lutheran - Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Nov 28</p> <p>9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY</p> <p>10:00 - WORSHIP</p>	<p>Nov 29</p>	<p>Nov 30</p> <p>6:30 - MEN'S STUDY</p>	<p>1</p> <p>6:15 - CONFIRMATION</p> <p>6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's</p>	<p>2</p> <div data-bbox="1291 316 1696 462" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d8bfd8; padding: 5px;"> <p>Lord's Supper Dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday, December 5th • Christmas Eve, December 24th </div>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:00 - PREP FOR LIVE NATIVITY</p>
<p>5</p> <p>9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY</p> <p>10:00 - WORSHIP w/Communion</p> <p>2:00-4:00 LIVE NATIVITY</p>	<p>6</p> 	<p>7</p> <p>6:30 - MEN'S STUDY</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:00 LWML & WOMEN'S STUDY</p> <p>6:15 - CONFIRMATION</p> <p>6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Mission Ministry</p> <p>5:30 - ELDERS' TEAM</p> <p>6:30 - MISSION & MINISTRY TEAM</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p> <p>9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY</p> <p>10:00 - WORSHIP</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00 - CIRCUIT PASTORS @ L.W.</p> <p>6:30 - MEN'S STUDY</p>	<p>15</p> <p>6:15 - CONFIRMATION</p> <p>6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p> <p>9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY</p> <p>10:00 - WORSHIP w/ SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30 - MEN'S STUDY</p>	<p>22</p> <p>6:15 - CONFIRMATION</p> <p>6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>CHRISTMAS EVE</p>  <p>5:00 CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT (w/communion)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>CHRIST IS BORN TODAY!</p> 
<p>26</p> <p>9:00 - NO Sunday School or YOUTH STUDY today</p> <p>- ADULT BIBLE STUDY</p> <p>10:00 - WORSHIP</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> 			<p>31</p>	<p>Jan 1</p>

Upcoming Schedules...

After-Worship Fellowship

We've had requests to re-start our after-worship fellowship time (complete with coffee, juice, and maybe even goodies).

COORDINATOR NEEDED

Here's what that would involve:

- + Putting together a rotating schedule of Fellowship Servers.
- + Reminding servers of their date to serve.
- + Making sure there are cups, plates, napkins, etc... to use.

If you could take on this ministry to our congregation, there are LOTS of folks who would be extremely grateful for your effort!

Usher Schedule

Dec 5 Wendy & Lonny Robbin
 Dec 12 Rya Sharp family
 Dec 19 Larry Levin
 Dec 24 Open
 Dec 26 Open

USHERS NEEDED AGAIN:

Since we are back to "normal" after covid restrictions, we are in need of ushers to greet people at the door as well as to usher people to the altar for communion.

Please sign up at church on the table by the door (you can choose which type of ushering you are interested in)!

Scripture Readers

NOTE: Pastor David will read the Scriptures in Worship until COVID restrictions are eased

Elders

Dec 5, 12 Joe & Duane
 Dec 19, 24 (Christmas Eve) & 26 Jason & Ed

Confirmation Parent Assistants

Dec 8 Autumn Foshaug family
 Dec 15 Alex Meis family
 Dec 22 Carson Sawatzky family

NEW: Communion Wafer Makers

Dec 5 Will Dahl family
 Dec 19 Carson Sawatzky family

That for a day: Education is important but ice cream is importanter.

Custodian

December Volunteer Needed

Dec Mona Hjelle

Nursery

(Volunteers needed - please talk to Mona H.)

Dec 5 Volunteer Needed
 Dec 12 Pam Johnson
 Dec 19 Christmas Program
 Dec 26 Mona Hjelle

Make A Meal Volunteers

Dec Scott & Tammy Wachter

Accompanying Musicians

Dec 5 Sharon Willen
 Dec 14 Scott Wachter
 Dec 21 Sharon Willen
 Dec 24 Pam Johnson
 & Scott Wachter
 Dec 26 Carmen Macik

Altar Guild

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.

In October we Thanked God for ... Carroll Sarland
 Our Live Nativity

Let Pastor know how you'd complete that sentence in December

Seen on Church Signboards...

**This World Needs
 a Stable Influence !**

December Discipleship Verse...

"The angel said, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord!'"

Luke 2:10-11

Miscellaneous Notes...

Food Pantry Reminder

Please remember to bring your donations for the Food Pantry on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Place them in the purple container by the door at church. Thank to everyone for donating!



Check out our "Free Stuff" Table

Here's just a sampling of what you'll find :

- Read With Me Bibles for toddlers
- Today's Light Devotional Bible
- 100 or so Key Chapter Bible Reading Booklets
- Oct-Dec Portals of Prayer

Note: The Jan-March Portals of Prayer will be available in your mailbox or on the "free stuff" table on Dec 19th.

Recorded videos of Sermons

Sermons can be found in on our Living Word YouTube channel (New London Living Word) at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG9eU-VvIJEU22yCyxbhwjg/videos>



- | | |
|--------|---|
| Oct 31 | "Truth: It's Something That Must Be "Stood Up For." |
| Nov 7 | "All 'Saints' Leave a Legacy. What Will Yours Be?" |
| Nov 14 | "Persevere: It Won't Be Easy, But it is Essential!" |
| Nov 21 | "Stay Alert- You don't want to be caught napping" |
| Nov 28 | "Timing is Everything - including for Jesus" |

Note: Carroll Sarsland's funeral service can also be found on our YouTube channel.

Still Available: Direct Deposit for Your Offerings

Living Word has the option of an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account .

Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. An authorization form and a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer are available from the church office.

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.

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That for a day: Never laugh at your spouse's choices. You are one of them.

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Prayer...

Remember to use "The Prayer Force"



Please continue to call, text (320-220-1816) or email (pastor@livingwordlutheran.net) prayer requests to Pastor David for the Prayer Force prayer chain to include in their prayers. Thanks!

And an Invitation to Join our "Prayer Force"

Being a part of our prayer chain is a HUGELY important - and very simple - way you can serve God and His people! When a request to pray comes in, Pastor forwards it via text message (or email for those who don't have a cell phone). Then you simply include that request in your prayers. Text Pastor today and tell him "Yeah, I can do that!" Thanks!

Please Remember to Pray At 11:09 Every day

(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 PRAY for things like... these VBS Prayers:

- God to bring lots of people for our Drive-Through Live Nativity
- God to work through our Live Nativity to help people find hope in Jesus
- People you can invite to the Sunday School Christmas Program or Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
- An end to COVID
- Safety for all traveling during the Christmas season
- Asking God to replace fear with trust in Him
- God to show you opportunities to Share His Love in Practical Ways.
- Asking God for His power to bring healing to our nation - in all ways!
- Asking God to humble you, seek Him and repent (2 Chronicles 7:14)
- Protection from the deceitful messages Satan sends your way
- God's protection, guidance, wisdom & courage for government leaders
- Continued wisdom for guidance and decisions (BIG and small)
- Courage to take a stand for Jesus at work AND school
- Protection and boldness in witness for all persecuted Christians
- The ministry of the Jastrams in Japan

Congratulations...

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

A Minute for Couples...

(from the Prepare-Enrich blog)

An important part of marriage is being there for each other. It's one of the underpinnings of a strong relationship, but it's also, well, rather vague. Your vows may have specified for richer or poorer or in sickness and health, but the truth is, often the times in which we need that extra support are not always so clearly defined. They might seem like ordinary, "just part of life" circumstances. That, combined with getting wrapped up in the hustle of our own daily life demands means it's easy to miss out on opportunities to truly support our partner when they need it most. Here are five times to be aware of when your spouse might need extra support.

When they're grieving (any time of "loss")

Whether it's the profound loss of a friend or loved one, the death of their childhood pet, or even something more "minor" like having to miss their best friend's wedding, when your spouse is grieving, they need your emotional support. Validate their feelings, but also realize that they might not tell you they're having a hard time. Everyone grieves differently, so support your partner in a way they are receptive to. If you're not sure what to say or what they need, just be honest. They might be able to tell you exactly what they need, or just knowing that you're there for them may be comfort enough.

When they're facing an identity crisis

It might not always manifest as dramatically as staring into the mirror and asking, "Who am I?" However, the feelings of being lost or questioning things that had once seemed clear are real. Maybe your spouse is realizing the career path they've dedicated 20 years to is not the right one for them. Perhaps they're struggling with their new identity as a parent or having a hard time transitioning to an empty nest or retirement. It's normal to face growing pains like these throughout life, and you are in a unique position to be a source of support and encouragement to each other when you're going through them.

When they're stepping outside their comfort zone

Let's say your spouse tells you they're taking the lead on a big project at work, and they're nervous they'll be in over their head. Or they're pushing aside their introverted tendencies to organize the next food drive at your church. These might seem like small things, but you know it's a big deal for your spouse. And that makes it an important chance to step up and show that you're in their corner cheering them on. After all, supporting each other in stepping outside your comfort zone



That for a day: He who lives in a glass house should not invite in he who is without sin.

leads to personal growth.

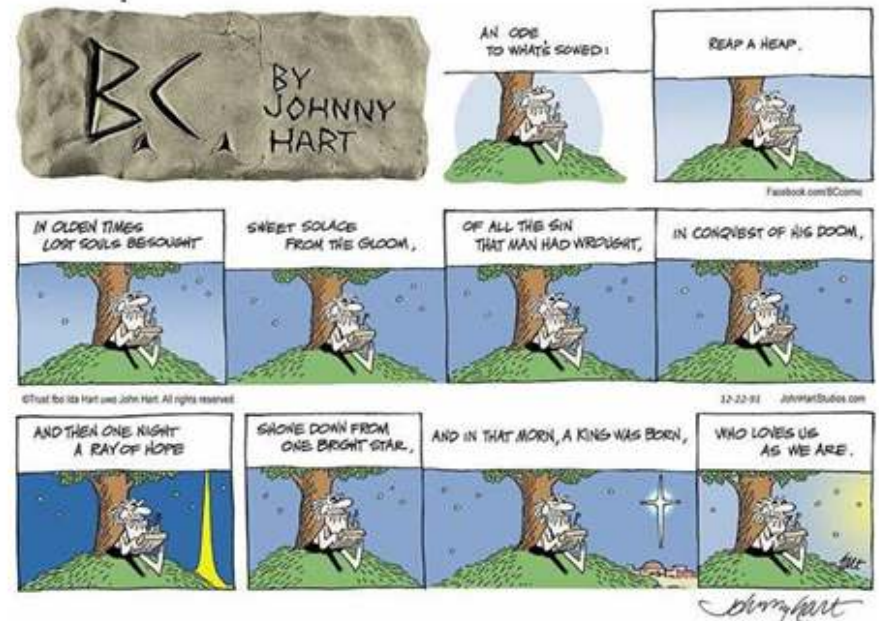
When they're standing up for themselves

Maybe they're finally creating or enforcing a boundary with their family or putting their foot down with a friend who's been treating them poorly. If your spouse struggles with assertiveness (and even if they don't), then this is a good time to support them in working on that skill, that they're worthy of being treated well, and that ultimately you have their back.

When they're trying to reach a goal

Working to adopt a healthier lifestyle or finishing an advanced degree are examples of when your support can make or break your spouse's success. Think about how big of a role you play in their daily life and how impactful your positive reinforcement can be. Showing an unwavering belief in them is like having an extra player on their team as they work toward their goal, whatever that may be.

As you go through life together, you'll inevitably face situations in which your spouse needs some extra support (and vice versa). The problem is, these scenarios don't always announce themselves when they come around, and so you may not always pick up on them. With a little more awareness, you can be sure you're stepping up when you're needed most.



Email Humor...

The age of computers makes preparation of worship folders much easier. Some churches which use the same basic format each week can simply call up the form on the computer screen, make a few necessary changes, and presto, it's done. But it can be tricky.

In one church I know, they use the same format for funeral services. And when a person dies and a funeral service is prepared, the secretary simply uses the word-search-and-replace process and changes the name of the deceased from the previous service to the name of the deceased who has just passed away. Very simple.

So when Edna died, the pastor instructed the secretary to prepare the service for her by following the above mentioned process. The last person who died was Mary. So the secretary instructed the computer to change all "Marys" to "Ednas." And so it was.

Imagine the surprise of the attendees when they recited the Apostles' Creed and read: "He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Edna..."

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On their first Sunday at worship after joining the church, a first-grader handed the pastor a note from

his mom as he came forward for Children's Church.

The note read: "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents."

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A pastor and two of his elders are out on the river fishing in their row-boat. Twelve o'clock rolls around, and one of the elders notices a nice spot on the bank to have lunch. He turns to the others and says, "That looks like a nice spot for lunch. What do you say we have lunch over there?"

The other elder agrees, as does the pastor. The elder stands up in the boat, steps out onto the river and walks over to the bank. The pastor looks on with amazement, and thinks to himself, if his elder has enough faith to walk on water, surely he can.

The second elder stands up, picks up the picnic basket, steps out of the boat, and walks over to the bank and sits down by the first elder. Again, the pastor is amazed. He says to himself, if this second elder has enough faith to walk on water, surely he can.

The pastor stands up, steps out of the boat, and sinks into the water. The first elder turns to the second and says, "Think we should have told him where the rocks are?"

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That for a day: The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies, probably because they are generally the same people.

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Inspiration from Cartoons...

A Charlie Brown Christmas first aired on national prime time television in 1965. In a world where the latest greatest technology is outdated in a matter of months, and social media trends come and go in a matter of days, 50 years of anything becomes quite meaningful.



To me the most meaningful part of the show is when Linus reads Luke 2:8-18 to tell Charlie about the real meaning of Christmas. What you may not have noticed in this reading is that right in the middle of speaking, Linus drops the blanket.

Charlie Brown is best known for his uniquely striped shirt, and Linus is most associated with his ever-present security blanket. Throughout the story of Peanuts, Lucy, Snoopy, Sally and others all work to no avail to separate Linus from his blanket. And even though his security blanket remains a major source of ridicule for the otherwise mature and thoughtful Linus, he simply refuses to give it up.

Until this moment. When he simply drops it.

In that climactic scene when Linus shares "what Christmas is all about," he drops his security blanket, and I am now convinced that this is intentional. Most telling is the specific moment he drops it: when he utters the words, "fear not".

Looking at it now, it is pretty clear what Charles Schultz was saying, and it's so simple it's brilliant.

The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears.

The birth of Jesus frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves.

The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to Him instead.

This world can be a scary place, and most of us find ourselves grasping to something temporal for security, whatever that thing may be. Essentially, ours is a world in which it is very difficult for us to "fear not."

But in the midst of fear and insecurity, this simple cartoon image from 1965 continues to live on as an inspiration for us to seek true peace and true security in the one place it has always been and can always still be found.

Watch this part of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vJPAQJAvjg>

Opportunities to Serve...

Help With Our Nursery

We need a couple more volunteers to help with our during-worship nursery (2-6 year olds). Please talk to Mona Hjelle if you can help.

Pick Your Month for you (or your family) to be our Church Custodian: We are still in need of volunteers for December and into next year. Talk to our Trustee, Steve Wulf, to sign up or find out more details.



Make A Meal

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 call Pastor David or our December Make-a-Meal volunteers Scott & Tammy Wachter if you know of someone who would appreciate a meal.



We are also looking for a person to be the Make-a-Meal coordinator.

The coordinator is NOT responsible for making the meals, but rather notifies the meal makers when a meal is needed and then arranges for the meal to be delivered. If you could be that person, please talk to Pastor David. Thanks!

Remember to use our "We Prayed for You" program...

We'd like to send out a card or two each week to people we prayed for during worship.

Please contact pastor@livingwordlutheran.net with the address of someone you asked us to pray for who would be greatly encouraged by getting a card. **We are currently in need of a volunteer to mail the cards. If you could help, talk to Pastor David**



Operate our new Video Camera...

to record the worship service that we livestream and later upload our YouTube channel (New London Living Word). Talk to Pastor David if you can help out with this - at least one Sunday a month. (Hint: It's not difficult!)

Remember the Teal's Rebate Program.

Teal's Grocery gives a 1% rebate to eligible organizations. There's a teal-colored box on the back-wall table where you can put in your receipts.



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That for a day: At Christmas, remember that the best things at life aren't things.

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Donate to Living Word when you order from Amazon

Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible smile.amazon.com purchases to Living Word. Use this link to have your purchases support Living Word:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/41-1513306>



2021.

Story Behind The Song...

Joy To The World

"Joy To The World" is a song that we hear every Christmas, but did you know that it was not written as a Christmas carol? It wasn't even written to be a song. In its original form, it had nothing to do with Christmas. Instead of celebrating the birth of Jesus like many Christmas hymns do, this carol is all about Christ's triumphant return.

Isaac Watts was one of the great hymn writers in church history, and I guess nothing shows that better than the fact that he wrote one of his most famous hymns by accident. In 1719, Watts published a book of poems in which each poem was based on a psalm. But rather than just translate the original Old Testament texts, he adjusted them to refer more explicitly to the work of Jesus as it had been revealed in the New Testament.

One of those poems was an adaptation of Psalm 98. Watts interpreted this psalm as a celebration of Jesus's role as King of both his church and the whole world. .

A second collaborator for the song was an unwitting one, George Frederic Handel, the popular German-born composer residing in London. Though contemporaries in England, they did not collaborate on this hymn. Another pieced together portions of Handel's Messiah to make up the tune that we sing in North America. The opening bars for the chorus, "Lift up your heads," was adapted to the incipit "Joy to the world." An instrumental portion of the opening tenor recitative, "Comfort ye," provides a basis for the text "heaven and nature sing." Such borrowings were common, the aesthetic notion being that the music of great musicians had in itself an innate beauty. This repurposing of "great music" implied that the result would also be of high quality.

In 1836, a third collaborator assured that this tune and text would appear together in the United States. Boston music educator, Lowell Mason, a musician with significant influence in his day published his own arrangement of Handel's melodic fragments and named the tune Antioch. While this is not the only tune to which Watts's text is sung, it is

certainly the dominant one.

Although it clearly depicts the second coming of the Christ, it doesn't have any trivial connection with the Christmas story. However, contrary to popular opinion, there lies a correlation - a "second coming" cannot be manifested without a "first coming." The piece is all about fulfillment, depicting the notions of a supernatural phenomenon, of what could be achieved from its impact. Similarly, Christmas does not only dwell in the past attainments but also looks forward to the grace that was achieved subsequently. The song proclaims the ultimate joy that is yet to be revealed, establishing a strong connection with the festive period.

"Joy to the World" inspires the listeners to look forward to the future, at times when the sin will finally be evicted, and all of humanity will bask in the glory of the almighty's righteousness. The message, "We must hope, and rejoice - the future will be bright" was accompanied well with melody and harmonies that are uplifting and in the forward motions. Watts and Mason succeeded profoundly in their mission. Although, they had no clue that the work will spark a tune that will last through the ages.

Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing.

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

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

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

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

And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.

Editor's note: The song has been recorded by many secular and Christian artists... I can't choose the best so I'll give you plenty of options to choose from. Hope You enjoy them all.

- My favorite family bluegrass group...**The Petersens** <https://youtu.be/ASZnRoRihvc>
- Great acapella by **Pentatonix** <https://youtu.be/-Xo64Q2ucQ8>
- A favorite.. **For King & Country** <https://youtu.be/LpjW7Ynv49g>
- Beautiful version by **Tori Kelly** <https://youtu.be/BYZV6ml6st8>

Including some great variations of the song..

- **Rend Collective** <https://youtu.be/k7iPgWgeNsk>
- **Phil Wickham** <https://youtu.be/DtrnuG5wZ-Y>
- **Chris Tomlin** <https://youtu.be/s3EyYnwzfvw>

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Ho, ho, HO..
Y'ALL!

Don't settle for substitutes! It's tacky when choosing a SANTA, it's foolish when choosing a SAVIOR. **JB 11.6**