

January 2022 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...

What's your favorite Bible story?

This question came from a confirmation student after we had done a skit based on King Ahab's coveting of a vineyard owned by a guy named Naboth. (1 Kings 21)



The answer to this question probably changes 'most every time I'm asked. I suppose it depends on what situation I find myself in at the time. Below are some biblical accounts that always stick out in my mind. (I don't have room for all of them, so I'll finish next month.)

I find a common theme running through most of these accounts: It seems I tend to remember people who set some example of faithfulness, especially when it would have been easier not to!

Esther (Esther 1-10): I love how, even though God is not mentioned by name in the entire book, He literally is everywhere behind the scenes. Esther's uncle Mordecai made a comment to her that should make all of us stop and think about the purpose God has for us being in a given situation: "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

Zacchaeus (Luke 19): Jesus' encounter with this hated tax collector gives us a perfect illustration of Jesus' mission. He stated that mission to those who thought it was absolutely awful that He had gone to eat at the house of a "sinner." "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Zacchaeus himself sets us a great example of the change Jesus wants to bring about in our lives.

The birth of Jesus (Matthew 1, John 1, Luke 2): Having just gone through the amazing way God chose to come into our world, the details are fresh in my mind. There are so many examples of believing what had to seem "unbelievable": The obedience of Joseph for whatever God called him to do. The shepherds' checking out the unlikely message from the angel that they would find the Messiah in an animal feed trough, and discovering that it was 100% true! Mary's willingness to do whatever God knew was best. And, of course, that army of angels (that's literally what "heavenly host" means) praising their "Commander in Chief" who has just "moved"

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out" from heaven to earth to win the war against Satan! But mostly I love the account of Jesus birth because of who He really is: God- with us! (Immanuel)

The Wise Men (Matthew 2): Again, this one comes to mind quickly because we will soon be celebrating their coming to worship Jesus

The Magi set some great examples for us too: The example of following God's guiding, persevering until they found Jesus; humbly worshiping Him; and being discerning enough to not tell Herod they'd found Him.

Check back next month for more of my favorites - including the one that I told the confirmation students about

Thanks for asking! Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

PRAYER PUPS BY JEFFREY SMITH





THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO BETTER YOURSELF, NIM. JUST LIKE JESUS GAVE US ANOTHER CHANCE BY DYING FOR OUR SINS, EVERY NEW YEAR GIVES US ANOTHER CHANCE TO BE BETTER CHRISTIANS. DON'T WASTE IT.





IT'S A NEW YEAR AND A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO GROW AS A CHRISTIAN.

Opportunities for Growth...

Sunday Morning Study:

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



Word as we look at just how Jesus' teachings turned the first-century world upside down (and have the power to do the same in your world)!

Sunday Morning Youth Study

Sundays @ 9:00 Bring friends!

Monthly Morning Women's Study:

January 12 @ 10:00 a.m. Video and study. All are welcome.



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

Confirmation News...

- Class resumes again January 5 at 6:15
- Pastor will have PB & J sandwiches and hotdogs at 5:45 for those who want to eat before class.
- Parents: Remember to check the "Parent Helper Schedule" for your date to sit in on the class.

Church Choir...

Please join us for practice after worship! (Willingness to make a "joyful noise" is the only requirement



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Page 5 | Communion Notes...

The Lord's Supper will be celebrated on the normal First and Third Sundays in January. (January 2nd & 16th)



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.

Leone's Retirement Lunch at





"Participate" in Worship from home...

If you can't be here in person:

Watch on our YouTube channel with Sunday services being livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG9eU-VVIJEU22yCYxbhwig/featured



Thot for a day: Amazon is approved with prizes.

Community Outreach...

Living Nativity

MANY thanks to all who helped plan, execute and volunteer with the Living Nativity!

It was a cold, brutally windy day but we had such a GREAT team of helpers who stuck it out!!

Thanks to Ruth Vegdahl for her many hours as our resident seamstress!!



Our shepherds even made the newspaper.....







Email Wisdom...

An actual situation recounted by a Christian school teacher:

Today we were talking about how Jesus' arrival was told of in Isaiah.
"And his name shall be called "Immanuel" which is God with us..."

Sydney raised her hand and, in a way only Sydney can, asked,

"A manual? Isn't that something that gives us instructions?"

I could only respond by saying,

"I have never thought of it that way but it is without a doubt true!!"

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Page 7 | Mark Your Calendars...

Mission & Ministry Team...

Thursday, January 13 @ 6:30 p.m. Elders' Team @ 5:30 prior to MMT

Marcia has started collecting prizes for BINGO

(after Friendship Brunch in February).

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



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.

UPDATE: We will have a Youth Gathering Meeting during Sunday School hour on January 9th. We'll touch base and start looking at plans for the gathering.



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

Youth attending: Noah Miller.

Levi Miller,

Zoe Rustad, Lexi Macik

Alison Sarsland.

Chaperones:

Becky Sarsland, Carmen Macik Jason Miller.

FIRST

Coming in February...

Preparation for First Communion...

Will begin on Wednesday, February 23 (6:15 p.m.) for 5th & 6th Grade students. The stu-

dents will have their first communion during the Maundy Thursday service on April 14. Please talk to Pastor David if you have questions. Thanks!



Give Your Spiritual Life a Lift...

Resolve (again) to feed on God's Word daily this year.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

God renews our mind through what we put into it. A couple of things are true regarding what we put into our minds:

- 1. You tend to believe what you hear most often.
- 2. What you put into your mind is what comes out in your life.

It just makes sense that life goes better when we put the things of God into our minds daily.

Once again, daily Bible readings will be printed in each Newsletter to help you get into God's Diary. God's Word is more than just a reference book to keep on the shelf until you need to find out something. God calls his Word "Living and Active." That means there is power in the Word.

God's Word:

Generates life Creates faith Heals hurts
Produces change Overpowers the devil Infuses hope
Causes miracles Overcomes adversity Forgives sins
Builds character Defeats temptation Imparts joy
Transforms circumstances Releases power
Guarantees our future forever!

Some results God promises from reading You will...

- be able to live a life worthy of the Lord
- please God
- bear fruit like: love, joy, peace, patience, self-control, faithfulness
- grow in your faith your trust in God will be strengthened
- tap into God's power for life physical as well as spiritual
- gain endurance for getting through life
- gain a thankful attitude as you are reminded of all God has done for you
- grow in your love for God and the people in your life
- be able to tell what is good and right
- be completely equipped for every good work.

Be it resolved that

1)	Make the commitment today:
	"I commit to feeding my Spirit with God's word daily."
	Signed

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2)	Pick the time that will work best for you:
	"I will set aside time at: each day to spend with God."
3)	Set your Bible in a place where you literally will trip over it every
	day:
	"I'll put my Bible"
4)	PRAY. Ask God to help you resist Satan's temptations to quit. "Lord
	I know Satan will tempt me by
	Please help me to stand firm and resist his lies."
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A Minute for Parents (& Grandparents) ...

Set an example by giving an "After-Christmas" Gift that keeps on giving. (The same one God gave us at Christmas)

By now some of the Christmas presents you gave your kids (or grand-kids) have become broken. Others have been forgotten. Hopefully some are still in use. But the start of a new year would be a great time to resolve to give your children the present they really want most-your presence.

His presence is the present God gave us at Christmas. It's the one He has promised to give us until the end of time "And surely I am WITH YOU always, to the very end of the age." Mt. 28:20

Of all the things my parents did to show their love, the things that stick in my mind most are the times they made a special effort to just "be there." Chances are the same can be said for you. And chances are that is what your kids will remember too.

How can you spend more time with your children - collectively and individually? After school? In the evening? On the weekends?

Maybe read them a story instead of reading what's on your phone. Play a game with them instead of watching TV. Plan a special project that you can work on together. Have a "Date Your Kid" night once a week. Set aside one night as "Family night." Get their input on what they would like to do on those days. Sit down with them and plan what you will do then put it on the calendar.

"Being there" isn't limited to the kids that still live under your roof. When could you "be there" for your kids that are away at college?

When could you "be there" for those children that live on their own?

Follow Jesus' example and give the gift of your presence. It says "I love you" like nothing else.

Thot for a day:



Our New Nativity Scene Donated by Laurie Hanson in memory of Keith!

Your
"Living Word"

Sweatshirts (and caps)



Not only are they warm
(and look really "cool") but they could also be a conversation starter
when people ask things like, "And where is Living Word located?"

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

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/ysbv6uza



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LWML News...

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LWML MEETING:

Wednesday, January 12, 2022 @ 10:00 a.m. We will also take down the Christmas decorations, and have a potluck lunch. All ladies of the church are welcome.

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...

- ... everyone who remembered us with cards and gifts this Christmas! Your support and partnership in the Gospel is truly a great blessing! ~Pastor David & Violet
- ... everyone who brought Poinsettias!

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



"Wireless communication is nothing new.
I've been praying for 75 years!"

That for a day: Sixty

January 2022 - Daily Readings

January begins with Epiphany - the celebration of the coming of the Wise Men. So, this month we'll read one chapter a day in God's "Practical Book of WISDOM" - the Proverbs. Record one bit of wisdom from each day's readings. Keep your list and refer to it throughout the year!

	Proverbs 2	
	Proverbs 3	
	Proverbs 4	
	Proverbs 5	
	Proverbs 6	
1	Proverbs7	
	Proverbs 8	
	Week of Jan 9 Daily Readings Proverbs 9	
1		
1	Proverbs 9	
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Jan 18	Proverbs 18
Jan 19	Proverbs 19
Jan 20	Proverbs 20
Jan 21	Proverbs 21
Jan 22	Proverbs 22
	Wk of Jan 23 Daily Readings
Jan 23	Proverbs 23
Jan 24	Proverbs 24
Jan 25	Proverbs 25
Jan 26	Proverbs 26
Jan 27	Proverbs 27
Jan 28	Proverbs 28
Jan 29	Proverbs 29
	Wk of Jan 30 Daily Readings
Jan 30	Proverbs 30
Jan 31	Proverbs 31
Feb 1	Matthew 21
Feb 2	Matthew 24
Feb 3	Matthew

January 2022 - Living Word Lutheran - Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP w/Communion		6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	6:15 - CONFIRMATION 6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's		• Sunday, Janua • Sunday, Janua	ary 2nd
9 YOUTH GATHERING MTG. 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH GATHERING MEETING - ADULT BIBLE STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP	10	11 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	10:00 LWML & WOMEN'S STUDY 6:15 - CONFIRMATION 6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's	13 Mission Ninistry 5:30 - ELDERS' TEAM 6:30 - MISSION & MINISTRY TEAM	14	15
9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP w/Communion	17	18 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	6:15 - CONFIRMATION 6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's	20	21	22
9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP	24	25 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	26 6:15 - CONFIRMATION	27	28	29
9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - YOUTH STUDY - ADULT BIBLE STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP	31	Feb 1 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	6:15 - CONFIRMATION 6:15 - WOMEN'S EVENING STUDY @ Violet Dauk's	Feb 3	Feb 4	Feb 5

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!

USHERS NEEDED AGAIN:

Since we are back to "normal"

after covid restrictions, we are

in need of ushers to greet peo-

Please sign up at church on the

choose which type of ushering

table by the door (you can

vou are interested in)!

ple at the door as well as to

usher people to the altar for

communion.

Usher Schedule

Wendy & Lonny Robbin Jan 2

Open

Jan 16 Larry Levin

Jan 23 Open

Jan 30 Open

Scripture Readers

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

Elders

Jan 2.9 Joe & Duane Jason & Ed Jan 16, 23, 30

Confirmation Parent Assistants

Jan 5 Foshaug

Jan 12 Meis

Jan 19 Miller

Jan 26 Sawatzky

NEW: Communion Wafer Makers

Carson Sawatzky family

Custodian

January Chuck Weflen February Volunteer Needed

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(Volunteers needed - please talk to Mona H.)

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Jan 2 Violet Dauk Jan 9 Pam Johnson

Jan 16 OPEN

Jan 23 Mona Hjelle

Make A Meal Volunteers

Wendy Robbin Jan

Feb Pam Johnson

Altar Guild

Mona Hjelle

Accompanying Musicians

Sharon Willen Jan 2

Jan 9 Scott Wachter Jan 16 Pam Johnson

Jan 23 Open

Jan 30 Open

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 sen-



tence to encourage people who drive past to remember that God is the giver of all good things - especially things we take for granted.

In December we Thanked God for ...

Our Sunday School Christmas Program Candlelight Worship

Jesus is Still Immanuel- God... With Us!

Let Pastor know how you'd complete that sentence in January.

Seen on Church Signboards...

Cold? Warm Yourself in the Light of the SON!

January Discipleship Verse...

"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." James 1:5

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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:

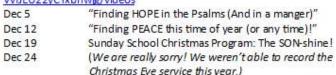
- Read With Me Bibles for toddlers
- Today's Light Devotional Bible
- 100 or so Key Chapter Bible Reading Booklets
- The Jan-March Portals of Prayer are available in

your mailbox or on the "free stuff" table.

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



Dec 26 "John's account of Jesus' birth: Big Picture Stuff!

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.

If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.

An authorization form and a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer are available from the church office.

Offering Envelopes Are Available for 2022

If you like to use dated envelopes for your offerings, we have them available. Just pick up a box of envelopes from under the mailboxes. Write down the # of the box you picked up. Thanks!

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Page 19 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:

- Thank God for all who came to our Live Nativity & Candlelight Worship
- The Holy Spirit's power to follow God's Plan everyday in 2022.
- Thanking God for all the blessings of 2021 (take time to list them)
- Asking God to open our eyes to see His guiding in the coming year
- Thanking God that Jesus is still "Immanuel" (God With Us) today.
- A "Christmas-like" attitude of giving that continues all year
- Safe travel
- 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 <u>pastor@livingwordlutheran</u> if there's someone you'd like us to extend congratulations to.

That for a day:

A Minute for Couples...

(from the Prepare-Enrich blog)

Birthdays, anniversaries, holidays – our lives are sprinkled with special moments of celebration, joy, sentimentality, and love that we want to remember years down the road. The ironic thing is, it seems like the more we try to make them a picture-perfect memory, the less present we actually are in the moment.



Have you experienced this? There are some sneaky habits that can steal away our memorable moments. Here's what to look out for and how to reclaim those moments.

LIVING BEHIND YOUR PHONE

Snapping some pictures and recording a few videos is pretty much parfor- the-course nowadays, whether it's a selfie with your spouse on your way to date night or capturing their reaction as they walk into their surprise birthday party. That's all well and good. What's more problematic is when you're living behind your phone, recording every moment digitally instead of being present in the moment and recording the moment in your mind. Or you get so caught up in posting a photo to your social media that you miss out on what's happening right in front of you.

Reclaim the moment: Try to get any pictures you want done right away, or set a limit on how much you'll have your phone in your hand, then tuck it away for a period of time. Focus on being fully present with each other and taking everything in naturally. You might find that you're enjoying yourself so much that you totally forget about using vour phone!

BEING TOO STUCK ON YOUR "PLAN"

Sometimes you have plan for how you want things to go, or an image in your head of your ideal scenario. Say you reserved your favorite table with a view for your anniversary; it was the same table you sat at the night you got engaged, so it holds extra meaning. You envision romantic conversation as you laugh and reminisce about your honeymoon, all while enjoying that fabulous view. Cut to reality: they've double-booked your table, and the only other one available is next to the noisy kitchen en route to the restrooms. It could be easy to let this spoil your entire evening, sulking and complaining instead of simply enjoying each other's company.

Reclaim the moment: Allow yourself to feel disappointed, but don't dwell on it! You're still on a date with the person you love, right? Con-

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sider how you can take advantage of this turn of events and still make this a meaningful, memorable night. Maybe you skip dessert at the restaurant and find your new favorite ice cream shop. Maybe you make friends with the chef, get your meal on the house, and share laughs over a new inside joke about bathroom tables. Things are not always going to go as planned, so learning to make the most of those times is key!

GETTING MENTALLY DISTRACTED

It's probably not intentional, and hey, maybe you're not even on you phone! If you're like most people though, turning off the to-do list that's scrolling through your mind can take a conscious effort. Did I pay the electric bill? I need to remember to email my boss about the project update. What are going to have for dinner tomorrow night? Meanwhile, your partner is giving you an irritated look because they've just repeated their question twice, and you still haven't answered.

Reclaim the moment: It might sound blunt, but if you're not mentally present, you're sort of wasting potentially memorable moments and quality time! If you feel other things vying for your mental attention, take one minute to jot them down (let you spouse know what you're doing), then dismiss the distracting thoughts. Focus your freed up mental energy on the here and now.

Memorable, joy-filled moments with our partner and family are sort of what life's all about. We work so hard for them, yet technology and our own mental hurdles can end up sabotaging our enjoyment. By being more mindful of these habits, hopefully you can take steps to break them and reclaim the moments that mean the most.

Email Humor...

As team leader of the Police Tactics and Rescue Unit, I directed officers late one night to strategic positions around a building where a dangerous suspect was hiding.

Believing the culprit to be on the roof. I decided to have an officer shine his flash-light in that direction on my command.

At just the right moment, I whispered to him, "Okay, throw a light on the

The officer hurled his flashlight to the top of the building.

Note: You are only allowed to roll your eyes at that funny story if you've never done anything remotely similar. :)

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Inspiration from the Internet...

A Man's One-Word-Sermon "Eternity" Reaches Millions (New Year's Eve, 1999)

As TV networks around the world cycled between the various New Year's Eve fireworks shows and Millennial celebrations on 1999, one in particular stood out Sydney, Australia. The famous Sydney Harbor Bridge was emblazoned with the word "Eternity" in illustrious copperplate script that looked hand-written — except it was the size of a giant bridge, of course. For many Christians, the word was a happy reminder of God's wonderful promises in Christ. For many others, it was a curious sight — especially if the viewer didn't happen to believe in eternity or Heaven or Hell. People began asking about it, and the story got out. An illiterate alcoholic heard a sermon in the 1940s and was powerfully saved. He was subsequently cured of his alcoholism as he grew in his personal relationship with Christ. One day, he heard a sermon in which the preacher shouted the word "Eternity!" and exclaimed that he wished all of Sydney could hear the word and contemplate where they would be spending eternity. The preacher described it as a one-word-sermon: "Eternity!"

At that moment, a lightning bolt of revelation struck Arthur Stace's heart. He found some chalk, walked outside, and in beautiful flowing script wrote "Eternity" — even though he had never learned to read or write. He could never explain how he managed to write it, but for the next 35 years he wandered through the streets of Sydney in the

nights and early mornings and wrote the word wherever he could — sidewalks, subway walls, buildings, etc. One newspaper estimated that he would go on to write his one-word sermon 500,000 times. The city took notice and newspapers searched for the mysterious "Mr. Eternity," as they called him. For years, no one could discover his identity or photograph him, and he never stepped forward. Finally, in 1956, a reverend caught him writing the word and obtained his name. Only four photographs were taken of him in 35 years. He was very elusive.



For him, it was his simple way of getting people's minds focused on spiritual matters so that, hopefully, they would think about their eternal destiny and eventually come to faith in Christ.

It became such a part of Sydney's lore in the 1900s that in 1999, the city honored Arthur Stace by replicating his handwriting in enormous letters across the city's most famous bridge. Cameras focused in on

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that word during the fireworks show, and millions of viewers around the world saw the simple Gospel message of a reformed, illiterate Christian man. One word was all he had to offer to God, but — like Jesus multiplying the boy's few loaves of bread — God multiplied Arthur's efforts far beyond anything he could have imagined. His one-word-sermon was preached not just to Sydney, but to millions upon millions of people around the world as the New Millennium began. How's that for going viral? And all he had was a piece of chalk!

More Email Humor...

An inexperienced pastor was to hold a graveside burial service at a pauper's cemetery for an indigent man with no family or friends. Not knowing where the cemetery was, he made several wrong turns and got lost. When he eventually arrived an hour late, the hearse was nowhere in sight, the backhoe was next to the open hold, and the workmen were sitting under a tree eating lunch.

The diligent young pastor went to the open grave and found the vault lid already in place. Feeling guilty because of his tardiness, he preached an impassioned and lengthy service, sending the deceased to the great beyond in style.

As he returned to his car, he overheard one of the workmen say to the other, "I've been putting in septic tanks for over twenty years and I ain't never seen anything like that before"

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OUR RESOLUTION LAST YEAR COULD HAVE BEEN "LESS FRUIT", BUT NO ... WE WENT WITH "TRUST PEOPLE MORE"

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.

<u>Pick Your Month</u> for you (or your family) to be our Church Custodian: We are still in need of volunteers for 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 January Make-a-Meal volunteer Wendy Robbin 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.

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.

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

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Story Behind The Song...

Be Thou My Vision

The hymn, Be Thou My Vision is a perfect New Year's prayer. It's one of the most loved songs of all times. The medieval melody brings images of rolling hills and Scottish highlands.

But very few people know the story behind the song. In fact, the history of *Be Thou My Vision* is as ancient and mysterious as the haunting hymnitself. A quick look in a hymnal offers little help. Ambiguous entries like "Irish Melody" and "Anonymous" appear where the name of the composer and lyricist typically belong.

The story behind Be Thou My Vision begins with St. Patrick. When he was just sixteen years old, pirates kidnapped Patrick and sold him into slavery in Ireland. This caused him to enter adulthood knowing the Gaelic language and Irish customs. He also became a Christian during this time. Years later, he managed to escape and return home to his family in England. While most would've stayed home forever, Patrick chose to go back to Ireland and become a missionary!

What does all this have to do with Be Thou My Vision? On Easter Sunday in 433, the local Irish king issued a decree in observation of a pagan Druid festival that prohibited anyone from lighting a flame or candle. Patrick, refusing to honor anyone but Christ, stood against the king. That morning, Patrick risked his life by climbing to the tallest hill in the area and lighting a huge fire. As the ancient Irish people woke up, they could all see Patrick's defiance of the king. He could not hide his light. Patrick wanted to show the world that God's light shines in darkness, and that only He deserves praise.

Years later, an unknown composer wrote a melody in honor of Patrick's heroism. Called, "Slane," the now-forgotten composer named it after the hill where Patrick shined his light: Slane Hill. People still recognize the tune today.

While the story behind the melody is legendary, the history behind the lyrics is much more obscure. Tradition tells us that an Irish poet from the 6th century named St. Dallán Forgaill wrote a Gaelic poem entitled Rop tú mo Baile, in honor of St. Patrick. Borrowing from another medieval poem, St. Patrick's Breastplate, Forgaill's lyrics referred to God as his "battle shield" and "high tower," phrases that still exist in the modern version today.

Sadly, the oldest existing copy of Forgaill's poem comes from the 14th century, which included no indication of its author. Because no other historical evidence connects Forgaill to the poem, it's impossible to

ay: A hug is a great gift. One size fits all. It can be given to exchange.

That for a day: A

verify the actual origin of the lyrics to Be Thou My Vision. As a result, most hymnals attribute the song to "Anonymous."

As the years passed, Slane, and Rop tú mo Baile fell into obscurity. Their authors, once known, faded away into the fogs of time.

But in 1905, nearly fifteen hundred years after Saint Patrick lit a flame on Slane Hill, the forgotten hymn re-emerged from the mists of time. Mary Byrne, a 25-year-old university student, discovered the 14th century copy of *Rop tú mo Baile* and translated it into English for the very first time.

It that moment, the now-hallowed lyrics, "Be thou my vision... oh Lord of my heart" sprang from the forgotten pages of time and into the modern world. Later in 1912, an Irish woman named Eleanor Hull set the words to music. The melody she set it to was none other than "Slane," the medieval tune written in honor of St. Patrick. The hymn became famous overnight and appeared in its first hymnal in 1919. In 2019, the world celebrated the 100th anniversary of the modern version of Be Thou My Vision.

The story behind Be Thou My Vision is the story of the Gospel. In God's timing, He took what the world ignored and made it something beautiful. As far as man was concerned, music like Rop tú mo Baile and Slane were dead--nothing more but irrelevant fragments from antiquity. But God took what was dead and made it alive again. He took what was ancient and made it new.

So is *Be Thou My Vision* an old song? Yes and no. Just like he took dusty pages of lyrics and infused it with new life, He took us and our sinful flesh and infused us with His Spirit.

Be Thou My Vision is perfect for the New Year. It is the song of new life. It's the song of the new life of St. Patrick, who shined his light for Christ. It's the song of the new life in Ireland, where dead paganism gave way to centuries of vibrant faith. It's the song of new life in the singer's heart, where God shines His forgiveness in a sinful soul. And it is the song of new life for the hymn itself, which millions now enjoy again after centuries of obscurity.

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart; Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art. Thou my best Thought, by day or by night, Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word; I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord; Thou my great Father, I Thy true son; Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

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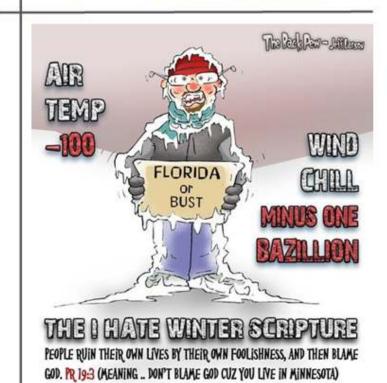
Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight, Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight, Thou my soul's Shelter, Thou my high Tower: Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise, Thou mine Inheritance, now and always: Thou and Thou only, first in my heart, High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won, May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'n's Sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

Editor's note: Here is a great version performed by BYU Noteworthy. Watch at https://youtu.be/lczmaRem3w4

And once again I will refer you to my favorite family bluegrass group...The Petersens https://youtu.be/rwwWMWTpp-U



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