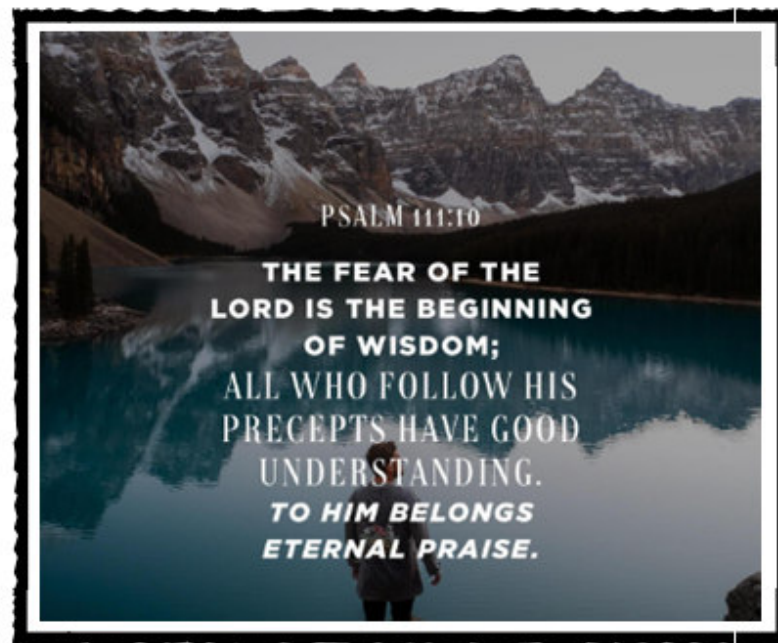



Living Word
Lutheran Church
LCMS



January 2025 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...

How did God make a star for the Magi to follow?

In December I gave the confirmation class an assignment to bring me questions they had about Christmas. The question above is one of those.

My answer is an easy one that took maybe one second to come up with: "I have no idea."

You see, the Bible doesn't tell us "how" God made that special star. There are lots of theories out there. For example, some say it could have actually been a comet or maybe a supernova or possibly a couple planets aligned or maybe even a solar flare. God certainly could have used any of those phenomena. But my best guess is that He did the same thing as when He created the universe: He simply spoke, saying, "Let there be..." and there was!!! I mean, if God could create everything that exists just by speaking it into existence, why not do the same with this guiding star?

Our problem is that we want everything God does to fit inside of this little "box" called "things I can understand." That's a problem, because God often (probably daily) does things we can't understand. He even told us that's what we could expect from Him:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:8-9



I've said many times, "I'm glad there are lots of things about God and things God does that I can't understand. I glad, because that means God is greater than I will ever be. He sees what I can't see (like the future); He knows what I (nor any human - nor AI) will never know. He has power to do



Page 3

anything - anything good. In short, if I could understand everything about God, that would mean He's no better than me. And that is a very scary thought!"

So, I may not know how God created the star that guided the Magi, but I don't need to know! All I need to know is that He did it - and to thank Him for all the "stars" He has put in my life to guide me to Jesus.

Thanks for asking
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Thank You...

...to 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

...to Wendy, Lonny, Scott and Tammy for putting up the Nativity!

...to Mona Hjelle and Meggie Ashburn for putting together another great Sunday School Christmas Program!

- MORE Christmas Program Thank You's To:

- Sharon Willen and Scott Wachter for the music provided,
- Sarah Olson and the Choir for Special Music,
- Angie Jaspersen for donating the Peanuts/Candy for treat bags
- The Confirmation kids who filled the bags of candy/peanuts.
- All the kids who participated in the program
- Special thanks to the parents who brought the kids on the two Wednesday nights for practice. Couldn't do it without your help!
Thank You All !!!

...to Everyone who helped decorate church for Christmas!

...to Phil Lungstrom for our new flag!

...to Everyone who brought a poinsettia!



If you have someone you'd like to thank, please email Scott at webmaster@livingwordlutheran.net

Mark Your Calendars...

Mission & Ministry Team

Thursday, January 9th @ 6:30 p.m.
Elders' Team @ 5:30 prior to MMT

Building Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 7th @ 5:30 p.m. (Prior to Men's Study)

Women's Retreat...

November 14-16 2025
At Green Lake Bible Camp
More details to come



Upcoming Fellowship Outings...

Celebrate Birthdays

We will celebrate December & January birthdays on
Tuesday, January 7th @ 11:00
at McMillan's Restaurant (Willmar)



January Supper-Fellowship Outing:

Thursday, January 23,
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Max's on the Green
(New London)

Twins Game - June 7th.

We need to know who wants to go so tickets can be ordered. (If we have 20 or more we can save 12 percent.)

I'm thinking of sitting in the legendary area where the food and drinks are free, but if someone has a better idea I'm open! Seats start at 34\$ and go up to 94\$

Please contact Marcia if you are interested.



Page 4

My goal for 2025 is to accomplish the goals of 2024 which I should have done in 2023 because I made a promise in 2022 and planned to do in 2021.

That for a day:

Page 5

Chili Cookoff...

January 18th
(at church, of course)
4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes !!!

Let us know if you have anyone who could be a "judge." (We still need 2 more!)

This is a Living Word outreach event, so please invite friends to eat (and compete)!



CHILI COOK-OFF RULES:

1. Name your chili. Be creative!
2. Briefly describe your chili: e.g. Beef, chicken, vegie, mild, hot, etc.
(You will receive an entry card and # on which to display your Chili Name and Description.)
3. Must be homemade. No pre-packaged mixes or canned chili.
4. Bring your own crockpot. One. Hot and ready to each upon arrival. (Also bring an extension cord)
We provide the table, tasting bowls and spoons.
5. Must be at church by 4:00 p.m. to set up.
Church will be open at 3:30
6. Must register with Tammy Miller by Jan. 15
320-905-2434

Lefsa Making...



The folks who helped us make lefsa last year have offered to help again this year if anyone is interested.

Saturday, February 15th.
Please sign up at church.

Opportunities for Growth...



Sunday Morning Bible Study
Every Sunday @ 9:00
Join us for coffee and God's Word

Monthly Morning Women's Study:
January 8th @ 10:00
All ladies are invited!



Men's Study
Meets Tuesdays @ 6:30
(Come at 6:15 for food)
Study resumes January 7th

Sunday School News..

Sunday School News:

- Jan. 5 - "Is Christmas Really Over??" John 1:1-18
- Jan. 12 - "Jesus the One and Only" Luke 3:15-17,21-22
- Jan. 19 - "Water into Wine" John 2:1-12
- Jan. 26 - Celebrating Life Sunday "Life Shines in Darkness" John 1:4-5

Confirmation News

Classes Resume

January 8th @ 6:00 (Pizza @ 5:45)



Remember to check the "PowerPoint Clicker" & Communion Wafer schedules.

Simple Ways to Give Your Spiritual Life a Lift...

Read... Through the Proverbs

(Or listen to Pastor read them.
He can text or email you a link to each day's recording) You'll find the readings listed on our Daily Readings page



NOTE: Daily devotions are better than yearly resolutions!!!

Page 6

Thot for a day: My new year's resolution is to get better at pretending to know the words to "Auld Lang Syne."

Page 7

2025 Children's Christmas Program



A New Year Reminder...

The wonder of the Christmas story doesn't have to stop as we enter a new year! It can continue to bring peace and hope to our hearts even in the midst of the unknown and confusing.

Think of the Jewish people in the days right before Jesus or John the Baptist were born. God had not spoken through prophets in about 400 years (period of time between the time of Malachi and the New Testament). Do you think some started wondering if God had forgotten them? ...that maybe God had forgotten to send their Messiah?

Has there ever been a time in our life, when we may have begun doubting God's faithfulness; maybe we've wondered if God had forgotten us. Maybe last year seemed that way. Things are not the same; they are confusing and maybe has been a bit scary. We don't know what to expect in this next year.

The good news is Christmas is a reminder that God is truly faithful; He does NOT forget His children! He is in control and can be trusted. Let's walk into this next year with that in mind.

Isaiah 49:15-16 says - *"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! 16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me."*

Where we get confused is "to what" God is faithful. He is faithful to His plan for His family -which is an abundant life here and for eternity - His presence always with us!

This truth of this is found in the most well known, most quoted verse of the Bible - John 3:16 - *"For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

In John 10:10 Jesus goes on to say - *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

And finally Jesus goes on to say in Matthew 28:20 - *"and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

<https://youtu.be/C7BtGs1w6hA>



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That for a day: Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to.

Page 9

Outreach News...

Prayer Ministry to start up in the New Year

Looking for a few people who have a passion for praying!!! The plan is to meet a few minutes after church to pray with and for each other.

Talk to Tammy Miller if interested



Community Festival / Block Party Spring, 2025 -

Talk to Tammy Miller if interested in being on planning Committee or if you have ideas!!!

Fellowship News...

Marcia has begun collecting prizes for BINGO

(Held after Friendship Brunch in February).

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



LWML Meeting & Women's Study:

Our next meeting and Bible study will be
Wednesday, January 8th @ 10:00 a.m.
All ladies of the church are welcome!



SHOES FOR MISSIONS:

A huge thank you to all who have donated!
This is fund-raiser for Lutheran Island Camp. Please continue to bring your good used shoes, slippers, or boots to church. Collection tote is in the entry of the church.

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS:

We will take down the Christmas decorations after church on Sunday, January 5th. All help is welcomed!

Smoke-Detector Battery Outreach...

We Have LOTS of Batteries left from

Our Annual Smoke-Detector Battery Giveaway

Please take some from the "Free Stuff" Table for your family and friends!



Youth Events...



Planning has begun for attending...

As of now we have 8 youth planning to attend.

Gathering Date: July 19—23, 2025

Youth, 14-19 years of age by the Gathering Date

- Gathering Registrations were sent on November 1st!
- Current Fundraiser: "Grab an Envelope"



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 December we thanked God for...

- Caregivers

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



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Thot for a day: Christm as might be over, but not the core values we exercise in it. So don't let go of the kindness, sharing God's grace, and love shared between friends and family.

Page 11

A Minute for Parents (and 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 week-ends?



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.

E-Mail Humor...

HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS

Got a letter from Grandma the other day. She writes...

The other day I went up to a local Christian bookstore and saw a "Honk if you love Jesus" bumper sticker.

I was feeling particularly sassy that day because I had just come from a thrilling choir performance, followed by a thunderous prayer meeting, so I bought the sticker and put it on my bumper.



Boy, I'm glad I did! What an uplifting experience that followed!

I was stopped at a red light at a busy intersection, just lost in thought about the Lord and how good He is... and I didn't notice that the light had changed.

It is a good thing someone else loves Jesus because if he hadn't honked, I'd never have noticed!

I found that LOTS of people love Jesus! Why, while I was sitting there, the guy behind started honking like crazy, and then he leaned out of his window and screamed, "For the love of GOD! GO! GO! Jesus Christ, GO!"

What an exuberant cheerleader he was for Jesus! Everyone started honking!

I just leaned out of my window and started waving and smiling at all these loving people. I even honked my horn a few times to share in the love!

Everyone was waving their arms in the air with me. There was even a guy waving in a funny way with only his middle finger stuck up in the air.

Then I asked my teenage grandson in the back seat what that meant, he said that it was probably a Hawaiian good luck sign or something. Well, I've never met anyone from Hawaii, so I leaned out the window and gave him the good luck sign back.

My grandson burst out laughing...why, even he was enjoying this religious experience!

A couple of the people were so caught up in the joy of the moment that they got out of their cars and started walking towards me. I bet

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That for a day: who needs Santa, when there is grandma?

Page 13

they wanted to pray or ask what church I attended, but this is when I noticed the light had changed.

So, I waved to all my sisters and brothers grinning, and drove on through the intersection. I noticed I was the only car that got through the intersection before the light changed again and I felt kind of sad that I had to leave them after all the love we had shared, so I slowed the car down, leaned out of the window and gave them all the Hawaiian good luck sign one last time as I drove away.

Praise the Lord for such wonderful folks!

Grandma

Forget Elf on the Shelf



Jesus wants Ewe in a Pew

A Minute for Couples...

(from the Prepare-Enrich blog)

The “Your Year in Retrospect”-type recaps are pretty popular these days. Deep down, we know they’re probably just clever marketing tactics, but we can’t help but be at least a little bit interested in seeing our listening/sleeping/purchasing/exercising habits quantified.



What if this was applied to your marriage?

Of course, we don’t have someone tracking all of our marriage behaviors or a complex algorithm to analyze that data, and this might be for the best. However, we can’t deny that there is value in reflecting on the past – whether it’s a calendar year or another year of marriage. It’s a great way to learn more about yourself, your partner, and your relationship.

Okay, so maybe knowing you had seven arguments about weekend plans wouldn’t be the most helpful (or practical) thing. But what if we made it aspirational and forward-looking? How could we use this framework to quantify and set marriage goals for the year ahead?

Here are a few ways to think about it.

More/Less

“I want us to spend less time on our phones this year.”

“I want to be more active together than last year.”

“Let’s have more discussions about our budget (and fewer fights about it).”

You might not know exactly how much of each of these things you did or didn’t do last year, but there are simple ways to ensure you’re making a concerted effort. Increasing your awareness and funneling that into intentional actions is a concrete way to know you’re doing things differently than you did last year. For example, if you want to spend less time on your phones, you might notice that you tend to spend a lot of time during the evenings scrolling. You can be intentional by choosing a few nights a week or a few hours each night to put the phones in another room and focus on spending time together. Similarly, you could commit to having a monthly budget check-in, where last year you never really set any intentional time aside to discuss your finances.

Specific Number

Instead of tracking numbers to look back on, you can use this strategy

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That for a day: Dance like Frosty. Shine like Rudolph. Give like Santa. Love like Jesus.

Page 15

to set a goal to work towards. Consider where this might work well in your marriage. You and your spouse might decide you want to go on 30 dates this year – great! Now you have a clear and concrete number in your sights, and you can easily track your progress and hold yourselves accountable. Break it down by month or schedule them out in advance – there are so many options. Think of other areas you might apply this: trying new activities together, staying healthy, relationship check-ins,

General Vibe

Some end-of-year recaps translate your usage patterns, preferences, activity, etc. into something else – maybe a colorscape, mood, or the aforementioned vibe. These things might seem strange to apply to your marriage, so think of it as a vision instead. What vision do you have for your relationship this year? Are there certain values you want to live out or embody more boldly? A feeling you want to have about your marriage by the end of the year? This one is abstract by nature, but it can help you take an aspirational approach to growing as a couple. Once you’ve settled on a general vision, you can break it down into more concrete areas to work on.

Top 5

You’ve probably seen lists of your top songs, shows, apps, or the times of day you’re using, watching, or listening. Now consider how you might apply this in a forward-thinking way to your marriage. What do you want to be your top five memories as a couple? Top areas of improvement? Strongest aspects of your relationship by the end of the year? If you want to get really specific, you could even consider talking to Pastor David about taking a Prepare/Enrich assessment (maybe again) to know exactly which areas of your relationship are currently strengths for you and which to work on.

The year-end recap is an interesting way to see your past 365 days quantified. It can give you some unique insights into the habits, preferences, and behaviors that have shaped your life over the past year, and you may even use that knowledge to make adjustments for the year to come. We challenge you to take that a step further and use the concept to revamp the way you set goals for your marriage.

Choir News...

...Will begin practicing soon (after Sunday service) for our next event. Everyone is welcome to join.



More Email Humor...

PARENT'S DICTIONARY

- **Bottle feeding:** An opportunity for Dad to get up at 2 a.m. also.
- **Defense:** What you'd better have around de yard if you're going to let the children play outside.
- **Family planning:** The art of spacing your children the proper distance apart to keep you on the edge of financial disaster.
- **Feedback:** The inevitable result when the baby doesn't appreciate the strained carrots.
- **Grandparents:** The people who think your children are wonderful even though they're sure you're not raising them right.
- **Hearsay:** What toddlers do when anyone mutters a dirty word.
- **Independent:** How we want our children to be as long as they do everything we say.
- **Puddle:** A small body of water that draws other small bodies wearing dry shoes into it.
- **Show off:** A child who is more talented than yours.
- **Sterilize:** What you do to your first baby's pacifier by boiling it and to your last baby's pacifier by blowing on it.
- **Storeroom:** The distance required between the supermarket aisles so that children in shopping carts can't quite reach anything.
- **Temper tantrums:** What you should keep to a minimum so as to not upset the children.
- **Top bunk:** Where you should never put a child wearing Superman jammies.
- **Two-minute warning:** When the baby's face turns red and she begins to make those familiar grunting noises.

Parents

[par•ents] noun

Living recollections of your embarrassing childhood memories. People that love you no matter what.

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That for a day: You can learn many things from children...like how much patience you have.

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Living Word Apparel Orders...

...have arrived! Pick yours up January 5th.



Congratulations...

- Alicia Sawatzky for reading through the Bible in a year!
- Brady Sharp on your new Shift Supervisor position at Jennie-O!

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

Communion Notes...






The Lord's Supper will be celebrated in December on the normal First and Third Sundays (January 5th & 19th)



Reminders:

- Wine - is in the two outer rings of the individual-cup tray
- Grape Juice - is in the inner ring of the individual-cup tray
- **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.
- 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.

January 2025 - Living Word Lutheran - Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec 29 9:00 - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP	Dec 30	Dec 31  7:00 - YOUTH LOCK - IN	1 NEW YEAR 	2	3 <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #90EE90; padding: 5px;"> Lord's Supper Dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday, January 5th • Sunday, January 19th </div>	4
5 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP w/Communion	6 EPIPHANY	7 11:00-BIRTHDAYS @ McMillan's 5:30 - BUILDING COMMITTEE 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	8 10:00 - LWML & WOMEN'S STUDY 6:00 - CONFIRMATION 7:00 - YOUTH GROUP	9 5:30 - ELDERS' TEAM 6:30 - MISSION & MINISTRY TEAM	10	11
12 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP	13	14 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	15 6:00 - CONFIRMATION 7:00 - YOUTH GROUP	16	17	18  4:30 - CHILI COOK-OFF
19 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP w/communion	20	21 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	22 6:00 - CONFIRMATION 7:00 - YOUTH GROUP	23 6:00 - JANUARY OUTING @ Max's on the Green	24 	25 10:00 MEAL MAKING
26 Sanctity of Life Sunday 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP	27	28 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	29 6:00 - CONFIRMATION 7:00 - YOUTH GROUP	30 6:00 - FEB. OUTING @ O'Neil's, Spicer	31 	Feb 1

January 2025 - Daily Readings

This Month we read "God's Practical Wisdom for Everyday Life" (the Proverbs).
Pastor records the readings (along with devotions based on the readings).
To receive these audio recordings daily, just email him: pastor@livingwordlutheran.net.
NOTE: Email or text Pastor with questions you have on something you read.

WEEK OF DEC 29:

Dec 30 "Angels from the Realms of Glory" _____

Dec 31 "Angels We Have Heard on High" _____

Jan 1 Proverbs 1 _____

Jan 2 Proverbs 2 _____

Jan 3 Proverbs 3 & 4 _____

Jan 5 Use today to Worship - and catch up on readings you missed!\)

Jan 6 Proverbs 5 & 6 _____

Jan 7 Proverbs 7 _____

Jan 8 Proverbs 8 _____

Jan 9 Proverbs 9 _____

Jan 10 Proverbs 10 & 11 _____

Jan 12- Use today to Worship - and catch up on readings you missed!

Jan 13 Proverbs 12 & 13 _____

Jan 14 Proverbs 14 _____

Jan 15 Proverbs 15 _____

Jan 16 Proverbs 16 _____

Jan 17 Proverbs 17 & 18 _____

Jan 19 Use today to worship and catch up on readings you missed!

Jan 20 Proverbs 19 & 20 _____

Jan 21 Proverbs 21 _____

Jan 22 Proverbs 22 _____

Jan 23 Proverbs 23 _____

Jan 24 Proverbs 24 & 25 _____

Jan 26 Use today to Worship and catch up on readings you missed

Jan 27 Proverbs 26 & 27 _____

Jan 28 Proverbs 28 _____

Jan 29 Proverbs 29 _____

Jan 30 Proverbs 30 _____

Jan 31 Proverbs 31 _____

Recordings of the Daily Readings can also be found on our website at:
<https://www.livingwordlutheran.net/devotions.htm>

Upcoming Schedules...

After-Worship Fellowship

We will have coffee / water and cookies at 11:15 after worship .Please join us when you can!



Usher Schedule

Jan 5	Wendy & Lonny Robbin
Jan 12	Jason & Levi Miller
Jan 19	Pam Johnson & Linda Vanmeter
Jan 26	Larry Levin & Jim Stinson

Elders

Jan 5, 19	Scott & Kevin
Jan 12, 26	Duane & Dan

Custodian

January	Open
February	Open

Children's Church

Jan 5 -	Alison Sarsland
Jan 12 -	Violet Dauk
Jan 19 -	Sarah Olson
Jan 26 -	Levi Miller



Power Point Clicker

Jan 5	Carter
Jan 12	Parker
Jan 19	Ella
Jan 26	Troy



Communion Bread Maker

Jan 19	Carter
Feb 2	Kjirsten

Altar Guild

January	Mona Hjelle
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Accompanying Musicians

Jan 5	Sharon Willen
Jan 12	Scott Wachter
Jan 19	Sharon Willen
Jan 26	Phyllis Schultz



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That for a day: I'm giving up eating chocolate for a month. Oh, wait, sorry, bad punctuation. I meant, I'm giving up. Eating chocolate for a month.

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USHERS NEEDED

Since we have resumed gathering the offerings during worship, we are in need of more ushers to help with that. Please sign up at church if you could take a turn. Thanks!

"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-VvJEU22yCYxbhwjg/featured>

Who Can You Invite?...

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 Chili Cook off**
January 18 - 4:30-6:00 p.m.
- **Any of our Fellowship Outings**
- **Any of our Bible Studies**



Seen on Church Signboards...

NEW YEAR - SAME MESSAGE:

JESUS SAVES !!!

January Discipleship Verse...

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him
belongs eternal praise."* Psalm 111:10

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 :

- Kid's books
- January Newsletters
- January-March Portals of Prayer
- Smoke Detector batteries

Recorded videos of Sermons

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

<https://www.youtube.com/@newlondonlivingword8097/streams>

- Dec 1 "The Goal of Life- and the Plan needed to reach it"
- Dec 8 "Jesus' peace conquers our greatest conflict, our greatest fear and our greatest uncertainty"
- Dec 15 "Sunday School Christmas Pgm: "His Name is Jesus"
- Dec 22 "Have yourself a 'John the Baptist' Christmas!"
- Christmas Eve Candlelight - "Truths from the Christmas Gospel"
- Dec 29 "Christmas is over. How do we get back to "reality?"



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

Offering Envelopes Are Available for 2025—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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Thot for a day: The most expensive vehicle to operate, by far, is the Costco shopping cart.

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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:

- Thanking God that Jesus is STILL Immanuel - God with us!
- Thanking God for all who attended our Christmas Pgm or Candlelight Worship
- Continued wisdom for guidance and decisions (BIG and small)
- The Holy Spirit's power to follow God's Plan everyday in 2025
- Thanking God for all the blessings of 2024 (take time to list them)
- Asking God to open our eyes to see His guiding in the coming year
- A "Christmas-like" attitude of giving that continues all year
- Safe travel (and good weather for traveling)
- For the Dahl family who lost William and Harrison last January.
- Asking God's continued guidance for our Building Committee
- Thanking God that His Word is Truth amidst the lies of the world.
- Protection from the deceitful messages Satan sends your way
- Asking God for faith to stand for His Truth like Daniel's 3 friends !
- Asking God to humble you, seek Him and repent (2 Chronicles 7:14)
- God's protection, wisdom & courage for government leaders
- The ministry of the Jastrams in Japan and the Int'l Lutheran Council

Directory Update...

Thank you to all who participated in getting photos and info for the new church directory!

We should have the directory available to order in a few weeks!!

Building Committee Update...

Check out the new computerized drawings on the table by the entry door at church.



The Committee is in the process of getting a preliminary blueprint drawn up as well as a preliminary "ballpark" estimate of cost.

Some pertinent figures (as of October 31st):

- Remaining Balance of Mortgage on current building: \$ 6900
- Balance in CDs dedicated to New Sanctuary: \$68,000

OUR NEXT BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING:

Tuesday, January 7th @ 5:30 (Prior to Men's Study)

Email Wisdom...

From Mikey's Funnies:

Christmas might be over, but not the core values we exercise in it. So don't let go of the kindness, sharing God's grace, and love shared between friends and family.

More Email humor...

A Christian starts to pray to God. He says, "God, how long is a million years to you?"

God replies, "It's as a second, my son."

The man says, "God, how much is a million dollars to you?"

God says, "It's as a penny, my son."

The man asks, "God, can I have one of those pennies?"

God replies with a smile, "Just wait a second, my son."

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That for a day: I started a new exercise routine. Every day I do diddly-squats.

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Living Word's 2025 Goals:...

- Continue the Make A Meal program. (It is very successful!)
- Continue the monthly Fellowship outings: Birthdays and Supper
- Continue the Birthday Card/Anniversary ministry
- Challenge every member to bring a guest this year
- Create a Visitors Table (Coffee, giveaways along with church and prayer ministry info)
- Initiate the "Prayer D-Fence" Program (Adults "adopting" a kid to pray for, send cards etc...)
- Start a Prayer Ministry - with people praying for/with others after the Sunday Service
- A Concert!! (Summer...outdoor)
- Chili Cook-Off (Will be January 18)
- Host a Block Party or Community Festival in the Spring
- Focus on the National Youth Gathering event for youth
- Coordinating with Redeemer, Willmar and St. John, Atwater to host joint youth events
- Continue weekly Youth Gatherings
- Keep the church yard looking nice and continue to de-clutter the storage areas inside.

A church that prays AND plays together stays together!

FALL VOTERS' ASSEMBLY:

Approved the above goals and the MMT's proposed budget for 2025



Thank You from the Jastrams..

Our hearts are full of gratitude to you, our dear readers, for your prayers and support of LCMS mission work here in Japan. Thank you so much! Dan & Joan Jastram

Read the current newsletter at:

<https://tinyurl.com/yzta6uac>



Opportunities to Serve...

Help With Children's Church

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.

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



Help Record our Worship Services ...

that we livestream and later upload our YouTube channel (New London Living Word). Talk to Pastor David if you can help out with this - just one Sunday a month. (Hint: It's really not difficult - even Pastor figured it out!)

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.



Custodian Volunteers Needed.

For JANUARY and any month in 2025...

Pick Your Month for you (or your family) to be our Church Custodian.

We are still in need of volunteers. Talk to our Trustee, Lonnie Robbin, to sign up or find out more details.



Make-A-Meal Program...



One of the best (and simplest) ways to share Jesus' love is by taking a meal for someone who is going through a tough time.

NEXT "Make-a-Meal" Day:
Saturday, January 25 @ 10:00

Until then...

Please grab some meals from the freezer at church and take them to someone who's going through a tough time.

Thot for a day: Just had 30 minutes of intense exercise trying to pick up an ice cube from the kitchen floor. Off for a rest now.

The Link...



NOVEMBER 2024 IMPACT FROM THE LINK

THE FOOD PANTRY



In November, The Food Pantry reached another record of **223 households** served- including 371 adults, 237 children and 62 seniors-distributing a total of 13,416 pounds of food! The Link was also able to provide 100 families with Thanksgiving meals this year thanks to Thrivent Financial, The Open Door, Crossroads Community Church and individual community members!

CLIENT OUTREACH and HOUSEHOLD EXCHANGE



Each month, The Link is able to provide support to a number of families facing hardships, such as (but not limited to): job loss, chronic illness, unexpected change in family dynamics and increase in the cost of living.

In November, your donations were able to support **129 families** by helping with medical bills and prescription cost, utility bills and rental payments along with providing budgeting support, networking and referrals for additional basic household needs including clothing, winter gear, dishes and furniture!

WILDCAT BACKPACK AND SNACK PANTRY



The Wildcat Backpack Program is again providing students from NLS for the weekend. Currently, there are **131 students** benefitting from this program! If you would like to sponsor a child for the year, please call Ashley at 320-354-5465

The Snack Pantry is currently providing snacks for over 30 teachers at NLS to distribute to their students throughout the school day.

TUESDAY'S TABLE



A free community meal the 1st Tuesday of the month: Our Lady of the Lakes (Spicer), 2nd Tuesday: Evangelical Covenant (New London), 3rd Tuesday: Faith Lutheran (Spicer), 4th Tuesday: Peace Lutheran (New London), 5th Tuesday: Crossroads Community Church (Spicer).

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Pray for the Link and the community; Help us spread awareness by talking about The Link to your friends and family and sharing on social media; Donate unexpired food items to the food pantry or organize a food drive; Volunteer at the thrift store or in the food pantry;

Donate your gently used clothing and household goods- (all proceeds kick back into The Link's programs;

Donate financially-

Remember for every \$1 donated, The Link can purchase \$10 in food through Second Harvest.

CURRENT NEEDS:

SHOPPERS FOR CHRISTMAS JOY! Gently used clothing & winter gear and household essentials. Food: Kid friendly food (corn dogs, chicken nuggets, french fries, pizza, snacks, etc. , Monetary donations.



Donations made easy

Monthly giving at the the Link is convenient . You can set up online giving directly through your bank or by visiting The Link's website at www.youarethelink.org by scanning the QR code. You can also mail your donation to P.O. Box 823 , New London, MN 56273, drop off your donation in person or leave your check in the drop box outside of The Link's door at 20 Central Ave E, New London. Questions? Contact Ashley at 320-354-5555.

Thank you for your support! YOU are The Link!

Email Inspiration...

New Year's Resolutions

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

"I never make New Year's Resolutions, anymore," the man told me, "I never keep them, anyway." I can remember all too many resolutions I've made and let slip away, too. But I believe New Year's resolutions are worth making. Let me tell you why.

First, we all need changes. Some we find very hard to admit to ourselves. I've heard people who say, "I have no regrets about my life. If I had it to do over, I'd do it the same way again." But that attitude is way too blind and self-serving so far as I'm concerned. There is great power in confession--to ourselves, to God, to others. Owning up to our failures is the first, painful step on the road to something better.

Second, when we change calendars is a good time for reassessment. How did last year go? What do I want to do differently this year? This time of year always reminds me of a passage of scripture, better understood by farmers than suburbanites: "Break up your unplowed ground, and do not sow among thorns" (Jer 4:3). It makes sense. The more land you put into production, the more prosperous you'll be. But some of us are stupid enough to try to sow seeds in land overrun by star thistle without breaking up the soil and taking care to root out the thorns as they come up. Call it laziness. Call it stupidity.

Let me ask you a serious question. What percentage of your life is producing something of value to God? How much "unplowed ground" do you have that ought to be broken up in this coming year and made useful? Reassessment. The brink of a new year is a good time for reassessment.

Third, New Year's is an excellent time for mid-course corrections. Sure, we might fail in what we set out to do, but if we fail to plan, the old saw goes, then we plan to fail. If you're so fearful of failure that you never set up your row of tin cans to shoot at, you're not very likely to hit any at all. Failure is not the end. For the person who determines to learn from it, failure is a friend.

One of my heroes in the Bible is the Apostle Paul. Talk about failure! Throughout his life he was opposed, persecuted, shipwrecked, stoned and left for dead, deserted by trusted co-workers, slandered, and scorned. Sometimes it seemed that projects to which he had devoted years were turning to dust before his eyes. But during from one of his stints in prison, we can see from one of his letters an unwillingness to quit. "Forgetting what is behind," he wrote, "and straining toward what

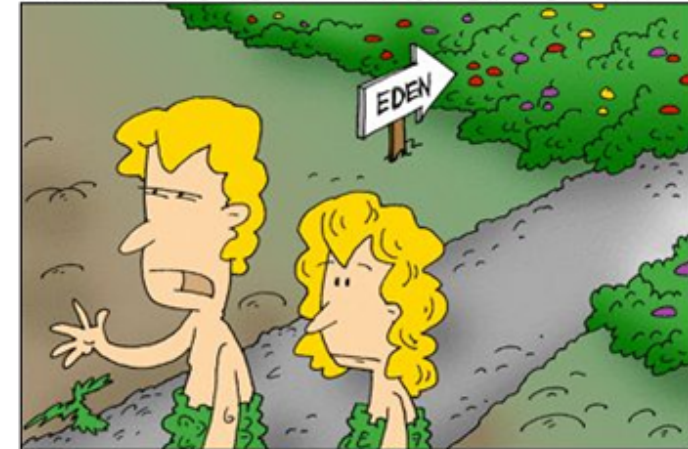
Thot for a day: Aim low. Reach your goals. Avoid disappointment.

is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14, NIV) No wonder he made a mark on his world. He stopped looking back, and looked forward instead. He didn't let the fear of failure keep him from trying again.

Fourth, New Year's is a time to learn to rely more heavily on the grace of God. Now I've met a few self-made men and women and so have you, but so often these people seem proud and driven. There is another way: beginning to trust in God's help. One more secret from the Apostle Paul: "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength," he said (Phil 4:13, NIV). And God's strength saw him through a lot--through pain, through joy, and through accomplishment.

If this last year, you didn't practice relying on the Lord as much as you should have, there is no time like the present to make a New Year's resolution. In fact, why don't you say a short prayer right now--use these words if you like: "Dear God, I want the new year to be different for me." Now spell out in prayer some of the changes you'd like to see. And close this way: "Lord Jesus, I know that I'm going to need a lot of help for this. So right now I place myself in your hands. Help me to receive Your strength. Amen." Good. Now you've got a much better chance of a Happy New Year.

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Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (See Genesis 3) 01-03-2005

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

Monthly Music Videos...

A new year and some new music to enjoy...

- "I Apologize" is another powerful new song from Sidewalk Prophets that will be a hit... <https://youtu.be/pmiV-fkxSxc>
- Toby Mac has a great new song is called "A lil Church"... <https://youtu.be/Mhapr8gKUps>
- Haven't heard from them in a while but Stars Go Dim go back to the 70's with just released "Mama Don't Lie"... <https://youtu.be/o4BVgHThTgc>
- "You Never Gave Up On Me" is new from The Afters... <https://youtu.be/zlehQxQHv-Q>
- Brandon Lake's new release is "Hard Fought Hallelujah"... <https://youtu.be/XZJUgBi7WvQ>
- Maverick City Music released "The Gift"... <https://youtu.be/vjOFmYXy3pY>
- You may not have heard of Mary Lou, but I like her new song, "Tear Stains On My Bible"... <https://youtu.be/Uihxr0AxVO8>
- Gotta love old rockers making Christian music. Van Zant, brothers known from their work with Lynyrd Skynyrd and .38 Special released "Speak His Name"... <https://youtu.be/27TXIIRybw8>
- "Hiding" is a new song from Michael Monroe... <https://youtu.be/FRudnXfnLVE>
- New from Michael Curtis Chapman and Hillary Scott is "Broken Dreams"... <https://youtu.be/jrViu72fXXo>
- "Rebels of Hope" is a new song by Good Weather Forecast... <https://youtu.be/4NnspX4F6Ps>
- "Come To Jesus was just released by Kristian Stanfill... <https://youtu.be/KwWJdABoHwc>
- A great song for the new year is "New Year's Prayer" by Ak-eem Healy... <https://youtu.be/DtaJnBd-U4E>
- Stephen McWhirter has another great song in "Jesus That I Know"... <https://youtu.be/OLSOfjTndFo>
- Finally, I'm not sure if I like this disturbing trend of using AI (artificial intelligence) to produce a song with recognizable vocals. Here is one with Rihanna and Justin Bieber called "God Is Good", Take a listen and let me know what you think... https://youtu.be/fi_GrBskjfc

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That for a day: Karaoke bars combine two great evils: People who shouldn't drink and people who shouldn't sing.

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Story Behind The Song...

"Christmas Amazing Grace"

Another Christmas song? Well, as I write this on January 4th, we are actually still within the twelve days of Christmas (lords a-leaping day—whom some believe refers to the ten commandments). So it is still appropriate to write about the song, "Christmas Amazing Grace". Wait, you say, "Amazing Grace" is one of the most beloved hymns and has a great origin story, but it is not a Christmas song...

Well... John Newton, a cut-throat slave trader turned to faith-filled composer who wrote the song, was also a prolific letter writer and wrote the following letter to his wife in December of 1752:

I now sit down to wish you a happy Christmas; a merry one, is a frequent phrase, but that falls far short of my desire. For I have often found mirth and happiness to be two very different things; and that either of them when prevalent in a great degree, is inconsistent without the other...

This has been a serious day with me...It grieves me to think, that this is usually a season of festivity and dissipation. Surely they who think proper to notice it at all, should show their attention in a different manner. If we are really Christians, and do indeed believe the tenor of the Scriptures, with what serious thankfulness and joyful composure

ought we to commemorate the coming of our Saviour into the world?

If the little good offices we perform to each other demand a grateful return, what do we owe to him, who, of his own free motion and goodness, humbled himself so far, and suffered so much, to redeem us from extreme and endless misery!

Newton was right. Christmas should be a time of both joy and soberness. Meditate on what Christ has done in your life! Consider what you owe Him this Christmas! Perhaps the greatest Christmas Carol we can sing this season is...

Thru many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When you think of Christmas think of Christ's amazing grace. Someday soon we will all celebrate Christmas together in Heaven. Throngs will gather, not around a manger, but around the throne. What a choir that will be! The Christmas story is forever the story of grace and that is the greatest Christmas gift of all time.

BUT, this debate is irrelevant, because in 2020, my favorite husband-wife duo, Caleb and Kelsey (Grimm) did indeed release a Christmas version of "Amazing Grace" called "Christmas Amazing Grace" which tells us the story of Jesus' birth set to the tune of one of our most familiar hymns.

This Holy Child is born to us
For all the world to see
Peace on the Earth, good will to men
To God, all glory be

This couple traveled from afar
Arrived in Bethlehem
And in the inn they sought to stay
There was no room for them

They found a stable filled with hay
A manger for a bed
God's Son was born this winter night
Just as the angels said

The shepherds left to see this boy
They wandered through the night
The angels led the way to Him
A Savior wrapped in light

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Thot for a day: Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.

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A star shone bright up in the east
The wise men following
They brought Him gifts of gold and myrrh
To honor Christ the King

Jesus grew into a man
He died for you and me
But in three days He rose again
And with us, He'll ever be
With us, He'll ever be

Here is the video to enjoy... <https://youtu.be/uIN6sesCD-g>

As a bonus, here is another Christmas version of a familiar song by Caleb & Kelsey—Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah"...

<https://youtu.be/v8KWfzrP2ro>

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Happy New Year!

SNOWMEN with Fitness New Year Resolutions