



# IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 29, Issue 21

October, 2020

## "I Am the Vine, You Are the Branches"

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### PRAYER CHAIN

#### REQUESTS

Please call

Eleanor Galik

708-302-1686

for immediate prayers



### Living Word Lutheran Church

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intouchlwlc@yahoo.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS  
Mon - Fri 9 am - 2 pm

**\*\* NEW SUNDAY  
SCHEDULE**

**9:00 am Adult study**  
**10:00 am Worship**

Amid all the unknowns of today's unprecedented chaos, there's one thing we're surely learning—how interconnected we all are. This is such a contrast to the modern worldview of stringent individualism that we inherited from the Enlightenment era. It seems that we are not quite so autonomous as we imagined. And that's a good thing. The demand for autonomy has bred an epidemic of loneliness, despair, and alienation. But we were not created to be self-sufficient. We were created to live connected to God and to each other.

Listen now to Jesus as he begins one of His most amazing statements: "I am the vine; you are the branches..." ([John 15:5](#)). Such a simple statement, yet you can spend a lifetime plumbing the depths of it. Let's explore its meaning. Jesus first mentions that He is the vine a few verses earlier: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener" ([John 15:1](#)). There are a number of Old Testament references that speak of Israel being a vine, planted and tended by God. Yet instead of bearing good fruit, it was degenerate. It was a false vine. Against this background, Jesus speaks of Himself as the *true* vine, the One who will bear good fruit to His Father's approval and glory. Now we understand a bit more about our verse at hand. Jesus is the vine, the *true source of life* for us believers. We are branches connected to Him, drawing that life from Him as branches draw the necessary nutrients to survive and flourish. At first glance, we may assume that branches bear fruit, but in another sense, it's really the vine that makes it all happen. The point is: there is such interconnectedness that while we are doing the work, Jesus is doing the work in us as well. But there is even more here in this short statement. When Jesus says that He is the vine, it is the last of a series of statements He makes in the gospel of John using the same form: "I am the [Bread of life](#), I am the Good Shepherd, I am the Resurrection and the Life." The repeated use of "I am" suggests the name God gave to Moses by which to call Him: "I am who I am" ([Ex. 3:14](#)). Jesus is implying that He is *the vine from which all life comes*, that He is indeed God as the Son. Every life in the created order came through Jesus ([John 1:3](#)), and the new life of the Kingdom now flows out of Him as well.

More help in understanding Jesus' words comes when we look at the context. What was going on in [John 15](#) when He spoke these words? [John 14-17](#) is often called [the Last Supper](#) Discourse because it was His last time of teaching with the twelve disciples. He is already looking over the cliff, into the darkness He is about to fall with the cross. A few hours after He finishes these words, He is arrested, tried, and crucified. He knows the end is near. Yet with all the horror facing Him, He still wants to prepare the disciples for His departure as best He can. The significance of the context now becomes clear. When someone is nearing death, what do they talk about? What do they want to say? It's often words of great importance, words that reveal the deep loves and concerns of the heart. They are words that must be said before death comes. This is how we should see Jesus' words in [John 15:5](#). He is saying something so close to His heart, hoping we will hear Him and receive those words.

Many of us have left the life of the farm. So agricultural contexts commonplace in Jesus' times sometimes need a bit of explaining. What kind of vine was Jesus speaking about here? Not a poison ivy vine, nor a wild vine growing up a tree in the woods, nor an ivy vine covering an old house. The Old Testament allusions make it fairly clear that this was a grapevine, often used for making wine. This was as commonplace as growing corn in Kansas or potatoes in Idaho. In fact, the grapevine is mentioned more often than any other plant in the entire [Bible](#). This is so in line with the way Jesus taught throughout His ministry, taking everyday items as analogies for Kingdom truths.

(Continued on the bottom of page 4)

# October 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration	<b>2</b>  9:30 am POW Bible <b>Study</b>  1:00 pm Transition <b>Team Meeting</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>  9:00 am Adult <b>Bible Study</b>  10:00 am <b>Worship-Comm</b>	<b>5</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>6</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy  10:00 am <b>PUSH</b> <b>Prayer</b>	<b>7</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>8</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  10:00am-Chapel  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>9</b>  9:30 am POW Bible <b>Study</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>  9:00 am Adult <b>Bible Study</b>  10:00 am <b>Worship</b>  <b>Congregational</b> <b>Meeting</b>	<b>12</b>  Columbus Day	<b>13</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy  10:00 am <b>PUSH</b> <b>Prayer</b>	<b>14</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>15</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>16</b>  9:30 am POW Bible <b>Study</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>  9:00 am Adult <b>Bible Study</b>  10:00 am <b>Worship-Comm</b>	<b>19</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>20</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy  10:00 am <b>PUSH</b> <b>Prayer</b>	<b>21</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>22</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>23</b>  9:30 am POW Bible <b>Study</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>  9:00 am Adult <b>Bible Study</b>  10:00 am <b>Worship</b>	<b>26</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>27</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy  10:00 am <b>PUSH</b> <b>Prayer</b>	<b>28</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>29</b>  9:00am – 12:00pm <b>Preschool</b>  <b>Halloween</b> <b>Pajama Party</b>  9:00–3:00 Nature Exploration Academy	<b>30</b>  9:30 am POW Bible <b>Study</b>	<b>31</b>  <b>Halloween</b>  

# October Celebrations



**October 3** John Bucka  
**October 3** Petra Wasilkoff  
**October 5** Barbara Erjavec  
**October 5** Alexis Gawlik  
**October 11** Jill Goebel  
**October 12** Linda Tarandy  
**October 21** Hank Kalis  
**October 21** Carolyn Wagenaar  
**October 24** Russ Kalis  
**October 25** Ashley Meier  
**October 25** Pastor Lee



**October 8** Dave Holloway  
**October 9** Joe Urbank  
**October 19** Luke Sefcik  
**October 23** Tommy DiGrazia  
**October 24** Noah Hostert  
**October 25** Benjamin Bonnar  
**October 26** Renate DiGrazia  
**October 31** Dale Johnson

## "Stewardship, Contacts & More"

### Stewardship Snapshot

September 6, 2020  
29 W, 28 C

#### Financial Support

1,185.00 General Fund

Living Word's budget calls for weekly offerings averaging \$3654 to fund our ministry. Regular, intentional and meaningful contributions from what the Lord provides you helps carry this out.

### Stewardship Snapshot

September 13, 2020  
26 W

#### Financial Support

1,780.00 General Fund  
 615.00 Rent from Nature Academy  
 575.00 Law Enforcement Bibles  
 \$2,970.00 Total Deposit

\$15.00 In-Kind Donation

Living Word's budget calls for weekly offerings averaging \$3654 to fund our ministry. Regular, intentional and meaningful contributions from what the Lord provides you helps carry this out.

### Stewardship Snapshot

September 20, 2020  
31 W, 29 C

#### Financial Support

2,235.00 General Fund

Living Word's budget calls for weekly offerings averaging \$3654 to fund our ministry. Regular, intentional and meaningful contributions from what the Lord provides you helps carry this out.

### Stewardship Snapshot

September 27, 2020  
25 W

#### Financial Support

2,351.00 General Fund  
 20.00 Law Enforcement Bibles  
 \$2,371.00 Total Deposit

Living Word's budget calls for weekly offerings averaging \$3654 to fund our ministry. Regular, intentional and meaningful contributions from what the Lord provides you helps carry this out.

### Church Contacts

Pastor Steven Lee

[intouchlwlc@yahoo.com](mailto:intouchlwlc@yahoo.com)

Ministry Support Coordinator, Diana Motel

[dianamotel@yahoo.com](mailto:dianamotel@yahoo.com)

#### Leadership Team

Rick Boehm - President

Bobbi Pote - Treasurer

Diana Motel - Secretary

#### Members at Large

Jim McKinney

Pastor John Bucka

Donna Wasilkoff

## *"New Website Features"*

**PRAYER REQUESTS??** There is a brand new feature on our website. Diana Motel has added a link where you can add a prayer request during the week. The website will automatically forward that request to me so your prayer request will be added to our list for Sunday morning prayers. If any request comes in by Tuesday morning, I always have our prayer group include those requests in their prayers as well.

**GIVING PAGE** There has been a new feature added to our website. You can now send in your offering using our giving page. You can make a one time offering or create an account to have offerings come out as often as you like. Thank you for your continued support.

### **GROWTH & OPPORTUNITIES...**

**HELP US GROW OUR CHURCH** In these unprecedented times it is important to get back to the basics. Remember how lively and full our church was back in the '90's, or just a few years ago even, we are trying to get back to that status. Please don't forget about us at this time. We miss seeing you here at church and we would like to be able to have more regular attendance at service every Sunday. We have been worshipping together since May 31st and haven't had any issues with COVID or any other illnesses. The church gets cleaned weekly, and now since both preschool and the Nature Exploration Academy has started up again, it gets cleaned two to three times a week, plus we have been going thru a lot more disinfectant spray and wipes. Your safety and health are still the utmost important aspect, but at the same time, the future of our church is starting to depend on your help. Your offerings, and helpful talents have been so appreciated in the past, and we look forward to receiving those benefits again. The transition team has been back in full swing working on the call process, please be on the lookout for more information to come in the coming weeks and months.

**POW (People of the Word) Bible Study** In an effort to get back to some normality and to God's word, we will be offering a weekday bible study again! It will begin on Oct 2 at 9:30am. Friday was chosen due to the fact that no school children will be in the building and we can observe social distancing better. Please consider joining to reconnect with others in this fellowship and most importantly in God's word, which is so needed in this time of our history. We will start with a study on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. We may feel like we are walking in darkness, but we are not alone. Psalm 23 pictures life as deeply secure and richly blessed--life lived with awareness of God's intimate love for us. It speaks to our deepest longings and fears, which may be why we return to this psalm so often. Yet frequent exposure to it may result in over familiarity. This nine session LifeGuide® Bible Study will help us discover its wisdom by pulling in other texts that show the same attributes of God--who guides us, protects us, feeds us and much more. Please let me know if you are interested and I will make sure you receive a book. Or if you have any questions, contact Donna at 708-949-9340.

## *"I Am the Vine, You Are the Branches"*

*(Continued from page 1)*

After Jesus states that He is the vine and we are the branches, the rest of [John 15:5](#) reads this way: "...If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

The key action is to remain. It is translated in different ways: to stay, to abide, to live, to live in union. I like to state it this way: "If you stay at home in me and I stay at home in you, you will bear much fruit." Jesus is to be so much a part of our daily existence that He feels like home. Talking to Him becomes like talking to your best friend. Being with Him is like being at home on your favorite couch. We become like Jesus and do His great deeds not by trying harder or pumping up some kind of spiritual energy. We do all of this by simply staying at home with Him. Bearing fruit then just happens—because it's ultimately His fruit, not ours.

To make this point even stronger, Jesus concludes this verse by stating the same truth in the negative: There is nothing you can do in terms of bearing fruit by yourself. Nothing. Zero. Zip. Let that sink in. It will change you.

The other place in the New Testament that describes something parallel to remaining in Jesus is Paul's letters. It's his catchword, a simple two-word expression continuously repeated without apology: in Christ. Paul uses this phrase to describe almost everything about being a follower of Jesus. We aren't just believing a set of truths. We aren't just practicing wholesome ethics. We aren't just doing good things for others. We are in Christ, literally and figuratively. We are in such close proximity to Him that when He died on the cross, we died with Him, and when He rose from the dead, we did as well into a new life (see [Romans 6:1-10](#)). To even add more shape to the idea, Paul uses another metaphor. We are the body of Christ, and He is the head. Our whole life is dependent on staying connected to Him, remaining in Him (see [1 Corinthians 12:12-27](#)).

## Classes & Groups

**ADULT SUNDAY FORUM** has resumed meeting again each Sunday with a new start time of **9:00 a.m.** Join us each week in our new location in the **south classroom**, even though it might be a smaller group than usual, we still want to maintain safe social distancing.

**PUSH PRAYER** meets **every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.** to pray for our church, community and world. We welcome requests (call 708.403.9673) or join us for 30-40 minutes each week.



## RADIO & TV OPPORTUNITIES

- **Worship Anew** 8:00 a.m. Sunday - Comcast channel 184 (TLN) & 8 (SD) , WPWR channel 50 AT&T U-verse channel 1008 (HD) & 8 (SD), Dish Network # 8495 10:30 a.m. Sunday - DIRECTV channel 377 (TCT)
- **The Lutheran Hour** 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sundays on 1230 AM; and 9:30a.m. Sundays on 1580 AM

## For Your Information ...

**GOD'S GRACE AND COMFORT** to the Hostert family. George Hostert's mother, Lucy Hostert passed away on Monday, 28th. She was a resident of Beecher Manor, and had respiratory health issues. Due to the coronavirus, visitation and funeral services were private and for immediate family only at Vandenberg Funeral Home. For anyone wishing to make a donation of any kind, the family has asked in lieu of flowers, kindly make a donation to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mokena in loving memory of Lucy Hostert.

**PASTOR LEE'S OFFICE HOURS** Pastor Lee will be in his office this week on Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm for anyone wishing or needing to see him or visit with him for pastoral needs.

**WE NEED MORE USHERS AND GREETERS!** Now that we are getting back together again for worship we will be needing people to volunteer to be ushers or greeters. If you are not currently serving and would be willing to serve as you worship please inform the office or Bev at church. The monthly schedule usually only requires each person to serve once a month, maybe less if we can get enough people. Thank you in advance for your service, it is greatly appreciated.

**ORLAND PARK POLICE** would like to remind everyone to be safe and mindful of your surroundings. Always make sure you lock your car doors and never to leave your keys in the car. Criminals can access your garage door opener from your unlocked car and gain entry into your home that way. As always if you see something, say something and call 911. Never approach a dangerous situation. Any questions or other concerns regarding safety or the community can be directed to Acting Chief of Police, Joseph Mitchell 708-349-4111.

**CELEBRATION DINNER** Now that we have started to gather for worship on a more regular basis, we will want to start looking forward to fellowship events and summertime fun. The idea is already being kicked around slightly. Of course our main goal is everyone's safety, but we just thought that it would be really nice to have something to get excited about and to be able to have plenty of time to start planning. Of course we want to have a dedication ceremony for our brand new floor to honor Ruth Grebik for her very generous bequest, in addition to a plaque in her honor, it was suggested that we should also rename the fellowship hall to the Grebik hall in honor of Ed and Ruth. What a wonderful idea that was. In order to make it easy on everybody and to keep everyone safe, we most likely will have it catered. We will send more information out about what type of donations we should have or be able to accept, you know how hungry we all must be for not being able to have a grand spread all this while. LOL.

**COFFEE TIME** In an effort to return to some type of regular fellowship after service, we will start having coffee available as of today for anyone who is interested in having a cup of joe and conversation with one another, while still practicing safe social distancing.

**DEVOTIONAL PRAYER FOR THE WEEK** *Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.* Galatians 5:25 (NLT)

Every one of us has a sinful nature, inherited from Adam, that leads us into all kinds of ungodly and antisocial thoughts and behaviors. But God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, has provided an alternative—life in the Spirit. As we let the Holy Spirit guide our lives, we can resist our sinful nature, and when we fail, we can turn again to God for forgiveness and renewal.

## "October Mission of the Month"



**LIVING WORD PRESCHOOL IS OUR MISSION OF THE MONTH** In October, the mission of the month will be the Living Word Preschool. Amongst helping so many other well deserved missions and charities, we need to help ourselves.

Our preschool has seen a drop in enrollment for this school year due to COVID 19, and we want to help them stay afloat financially for the whole year. Originally we had 7 students enrolled this year, but the first few weeks of preschool only had 3 students attending, this past week the 4th student started on Thursday, the 1st. There will be another one starting later in October, and we have started to receive calls regarding our preschool. Please help us keep preschool opened this year. Tell everyone you know how great the program is, and if they have 3 or 4 year old children in their family, please refer us

as their new preschool. We have never shutdown our preschool program in over 25 plus years, it would be a huge loss for these children if we had to resort to that determination. Please see me for more information on tuition and hours. Ms. Audra comes highly recommended and is looking forward to a new venture with our preschool. During the month of October we will be sharing pictures of the students that will be in the class, the different projects that they are working on, and as you can see by the pictures, this past month they have been learning about apples. We are hoping they might even be having a little show for us during service one Sunday in October. There will be a door offering scheduled for October 11th, but you can donate towards our preschool all month long. Let's get more children involved in our preschool, so they can start learning about God and be able to make new friends.

