



IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 30, Issue 48

December 5, 2021

"Prepare the Way—Advent & Road Construction"

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PRAYER CHAIN REQUESTS

Please call
Eleanor Galik
708-302-1686

for immediate prayers



Living in the Word...that the
Word may live in others.

Living Word
Lutheran Church

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CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Mon - Fri 9 am - 2 pm

**** NEW SUNDAY
SCHEDULE**

9:00 am Adult study
10:00 am Worship

ADVENT – PREPARE THE WAY

There had to be some groundwork laid first—a slow, gradual preparation of the human race to get it ready for the historic encounter with its Savior. There were some ideas about God and his plan that had to be gotten across to the people. Moses was entrusted with the lion share of that job. But besides this doctrinal, intellectual preparation, there had to be spiritual and moral preparation as well. Calling the people of God to repentance and holiness was the specialty of the prophets, and given the magnitude of their job, there were many of them.

FROM COMFORT TO ROAD CONSTRUCTION

General George Patton once said of his soldiers "every young man needs a good pat on the back from time to time—sometimes high and sometimes low." The Israelites were young, and God spoke to them both stern and comforting words through the prophets. Isaiah 40, for example, begins with comfort. It proclaims that captivity is over, that God is coming to the rescue, coming with power as a shepherd to feed his flock.

Yet it goes on to say that a road in the desert must be prepared for this coming. Prepare the way of the Lord! Valleys must be filled in. Mountains must be leveled. Crooked ways made straight. This is a massive undertaking, to tell the truth.

Actually, it would be easier if all we had to do was literally dynamite some mountain-side. But the last and greatest of the prophets, John the Baptist, helps us understand the true meaning of Isaiah's words. The prep work needs to be done in us, not in sand and gravel.

MOUNTAINS & VALLEYS

For the Messiah, the good shepherd to come, the way must be leveled and straightened. The heights blocking his approach were mountains of pride. The sin of pride exalts itself higher than God, erecting a barrier against him. It is characterized by know-it-all-ness and smug self-sufficiency. The tower of Babel is a great example of pride's futile arrogance. But how about the valleys that must be filled in? Philosophers and theologians define evil as the privation of good, the lack of something that ought to be there. Lack of faith is a sin. The failure to pray is a sin. The absence of charity is a sin. These are all sins of omission, and these gaping holes need to be filled in to make a highway for our God.

CROOKED WAY MADE STRAIGHT

In his fabulous space trilogy, CS Lewis calls Satan "the Bent One." Because the nature of the deceiver is to take great blessings from God and twist them, misdirect them, so that they become curses. With a little twist, abundance becomes greed, marital love becomes lust, and piety becomes self-righteous hypocrisy. In Advent, these crooked ways must be made straight.

ADVENT PREPARATION'S GOAL: THE HOLY SPIRIT

The last of the prophets, John the Baptist, lived his message. The mountains of pride had been leveled in him, the way cleared. He pointed not to himself, but to him whose sandal strap, he says, he is not fit to untie. He was as excited as anyone about Him who was to come. For John knew what *He* was bringing. "I have baptized you in water; *He* will baptize you in the Holy Spirit." The messiah was coming to utterly immerse us in the power and wisdom of God in order to make us new people, able to be like God, able to do new and great things.

This is without a doubt worth preparing for.

December 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 9:30 am POW Bible Study Zoom and Living Word	4
5 9:00 am Adult Study 10:00 am Worship—COMM Angel Tree Gifts Drop Off Day	6	7 10:00 am PUSH	8	9	10 9:30 am POW Bible Study Zoom and Living Word	11
12 9:00 am Adult Study 10:00 am Worship	13	14 10:00 am PUSH	15	16	17 9:30 am POW Bible Study Zoom and Living Word	18
19 9:00 am Adult Study 10:00 am Worship—COMM	20	21 10:00 am PUSH	22 9:30 am POW Bible Study Zoom and Living Word	23	24 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 10:00 am Christmas Morning Service
26 9:00 am Adult Study 10:00 am Worship	27	28 10:00 am PUSH	29 9:30 am POW Bible Study Zoom and Living Word	30	31 New Year's Eve	JOYOUS 2022!

December Celebrations



December 11	Bryan Boehm
December 17	Eleanor Galik
December 17	Jennifer Lange
December 29	Pam Hostert
December 30	Rick Boehm



*Happy Baptism
Birthday!*

December 1	Joan Tinich
December 8	Peter Gabrysiak
December 8	Patrick Gabrysiak
December 10	Eric Hann
December 14	Karen Lange
December 16	Pat Johnson
December 16	Bruce Kempke
December 18	Carolyn Wagenaar
December 20	Hank Kalis

Stewardship Snapshot

November 24th—Thanksgiving Eve

20 Worshipped
2 Watched DVD's
15 Watched Online
37 Total

Financial Support
445.00 General Fund Deposit

November 28th

30 Worshipped,
2 Watched DVD's
9 Watched Online
41 Total

Financial Support
3,085.00 General Fund 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

intouchlwc@yahoo.com

Ministry Support Coordinator, Diana Motel

dianamotel@yahoo.com 708-287-4939

Leadership Team

Neal Hartz - President 847-344-2410

Jim McKinney - Vice President 708-359-8527

Bill Merchantz - Treasurer 708-539-6027

Diana Motel - Secretary 708-287-4939

Members at Large

Pastor John Bucka 815-931-2961

Bob Grossart 708-870-0202

Paul Huang 626-551-1446

Important Information

UPDATED MASKS REQUIREMENTS: we will have to require masks now. We would still like to offer communion at the altar and pre-portioned communion for those who wish to stay at their seat. If you go up for communion you can pull your mask down to receive the sacraments. Diana has this posted on Facebook and our website. I have posted the new signs at the door and it will also be in the newsletter. As always for your safety, we still have extra masks and hand sanitizer available in the fellowship as you enter, in case you don't bring one from home. Hopefully, this will be short termed, but your safety and health will always be our main concern.

FROM THE TRANSITION TEAM! The transition team met several times over the past few weeks. They had two conversations with Pastor Lesemann and met separately by themselves a couple of times during that time. Donna had presented him to us and afterwards we had taken a vote as to the next steps for our church.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING was last Sunday, immediately after service. We voted on the options for calling a new pastor. We received updates from both the council regarding the church's financial status and the attendance and offerings status. Voting was opened until Wednesday, December 1st at 5:00 pm. The more than 2/3 majority vote was to extend the Call to Pastor Lesemann and Donna has been busy with preparing the paperwork for that since voting had closed. Let's keep Living Word and Pastor Lesemann in our prayers for the future.

Living Word Endowment Fund

LIVING WORD ENDOWMENT FUND (as of 11/30/2021)

The current value of the fund is \$170,829.54 invested in Thrivent funds. Current market value exceeds cost of investments by \$44,661.62. Since inception (10/12/05), the Fund has earned interest and dividends totaling \$41,187.19. Of this, \$20,593.60 will return to Living Word for growth initiatives.

THIS REPRESENTS A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING!

To Date:	Total contributions	\$84,980.73
	Market value over cost	44,661.62
	Dividends and interest	41,187.19
	Total market value	\$170,829.54



HOW THE ENDOWMENT FUND WORKS

Contributions treated as donation for tax purposes. Funds invested by Thrivent Financial. 50% of interest and dividends available for church growth. Interested in estate planning? Call Tim Regan/Thrivent (708-326-4750). If any questions, call Bob Grossart

Promoting Living Word

Living Word Lutheran Church



Orland Park

Living Word Lutheran Church



Orland Park

CAR DECAL CLINGS Help promote our church to the community and everywhere you go. Diana has made a couple of different car decal clings so that we can spread the knowledge of love of Jesus. She has both designs here on Sunday, and will be making more of each in the weeks to come. She has them in both black and white lettering. Please feel free to take as many as you need. Thank you in advance for helping to spread the Word!

Mission of the Month



DECEMBER MISSION OF MONTH is LIVING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH! After helping so many other organizations and communities, we are going to help ourselves for the last month of the year. We would like to build up the designated funds for a new pastor this month, so whatever you normally are able to give to all of the missions every month, our mission is to be able help pay for a new pastor considering in the process of calling Pastor Lesemann. Thank you for all that you do for our church!

THANK YOU LETTERS RECEIVED from VITAS Healthcare this week. They sent a card and a letter. The letter reads: "Dear Living Word Lutheran Church, Thank you for your support of VITAS hospice patients and their families. VITAS Community Connection acknowledges the receipt of your donation and is most grateful for your thoughtful support! Your support helps VITAS hospice patients in the community with expenses like rent, funds for groceries or clothing, help with utility bills, or arts and crafts projects for grieving children. 100% of donations received are used to assist patients, families and caregivers in need, and to our Community Partners. We thank you for your generous support! Sincerely Chrissy Austing." The card reads: "Pastor Steve Lee & congregation, Thank you for your generous donation to VITAS. We cherish our community Partners who share our mission and look forward to future collaborating efforts. Sincerely, General manager."

12-5-21 Message Outline

“Prepare the Way”

Psalm 66 says: *“Praise our God all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard.”* We begin preparing the way of the Lord by praising Him...

1) Prepare the way of the Lord by being PURIFIED.

³ “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty. ² But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver...

Malachi 3:1-3a

2) Prepare the way of the Lord by forging PARTNERSHIP.

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partner-ship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ.

Philippians 1:2-6

3) Prepare the way of the Lord by straightening PATHS.

³ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Tracōnitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—² during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: “A voice of one calling in the wilder-ness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. ⁶ And all people will see God’s salvation.”” ⁷ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

Luke 3:1-8a

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK *All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. Acts 4:32 (NLT)*

In the book of James it says “Faith without works is dead”, but the works follow the faith. Godly works flow out of Godly belief. In the case of stewardship, the key belief is that *everything* belongs to God, and should be used for His purposes. As we recognize God’s ownership, it frees us to be generous, and do our part toward seeing that there are no needy among us.

Church News

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY will always be available and ready to go if we have any children in attendance at church. Ms. Diana will always have a short lesson planned and as many of you know, she is always here and ready to go, and will hold class Sunday mornings from 9:15 to 9:45. Please let anyone you know that might be interested in having children have fun learning about Jesus, and maybe doing a craft or two. Another opportunity for growth for our church.

GREETINGS FROM WARMER STATES Bobbi Pote texted me the other day. They left Illinois on Sunday afternoon, and they arrived safe and sound in Arizona on Tuesday, it was an adventure for them driving through the mountains, but Gary handled it, so all is good. They unpacked the truck on Wednesday and had started to decompress on Thursday, lol and checking out their house in the meantime. She promises to send updates from time to time. She wishes all of us well.



FRIDAY Zoom Bible Class

POW (People of the Word) Bible Study just started the study on Advent “*Our Hope Has Come*”. We are going back to individual links every Friday for the Zoom portion of the class. I will email the following link to everyone on Thursdays, so it would be very easy for you to find the email with the link in your inbox. Please see me or call the office if you would like to join, that way we can order books for you. Not only will you gain some insight with these bible study classes, but you will have fun doing so at the same time. **Please see below for the Zoom info for the Bible study on December 10th.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89057297518pwd=ZmhuWEdTUGRvcmxWVWExK3VGTFhYZz09>

Meeting ID: 890 5729 7518 Passcode: 759200

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,89057297518#,,,,*759200# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

SUNDAY Zoom Bible Class

SUNDAY MORNING Bible Study will be heading into the technology era, hoping that the technology lets them that is. Pastor Lee will doing his Bible study on Sunday mornings via Zoom and in person. Starting today, you can also join via Zoom, and hopefully there will not be any issues. Study begins at 9:15 am and ends at 9:55 am. We will be using the same link every Sunday for the Zoom portion of the class. Going forward, I will email this link to everyone on Fridays, so it would be very easy for you to find the email with the link. Please see me or Pastor Lee or call the office if you would like to join, we can give you the information that you will need for Zoom. Not only will you gain some insight with these bible study classes, but you will have fun doing so at the same time. **Please see below for the Zoom info for the Bible study on December 5th.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87916681753?pwd=Z0QxQncxQ1Q2dWttS3lvSC9XOWlrZz09>

Meeting ID: 879 1668 1753 Passcode: 994994

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,87916681753#,,,,*994994# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Church Holiday Events

OUR ANGEL TREE has been up with the angels on the tree for the underprivileged families and children of Orland Park for a few weeks now. All of the angels have been taken care of. Diana had a couple dozen angels for us to help make a merrier Christmas for these families. The gifts need to be here at church by Sunday, December 5th. They will be collecting these presents by Tuesday December 7th.

CHURCH DECORATING Thank you to all of the helpers, Jeff, Lisa, Ashley and Shawn Regan, Pastor John, Bill Merchantz, Dave Holloway, Diana Motel and Neal and Kristi Hartz, and let's not forget Kyle who helped supervise us, LOL. The Regans put up our “new” 10' Christmas tree, and the rest of us helped brought out all of the nativity and all of the garland and all of the other decorations and thanks to Jim McKinney, who put up our Advent banners. As you can see all of the pictures on the next two pages, everyone worked real hard on making our church festive looking for the blessed season! Once again a huge thank you to Larry Andorf for all of his donations.





