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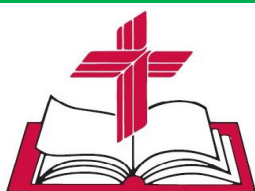
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PRAYER CHAIN REQUESTS

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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708-403-9673

livingwordorland.org
intouchlwlc@yahoo.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Mon - Fri 9 am - 2 pm

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
9:00 am Adult study
10:00 am Worship

IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 31, Issue 4

January 23, 2022

"The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength"

It's not that Christians don't want God to be happy, it's just that we are slow to understand the theology that God is always, essentially, and completely happy. We may believe that he is sometimes happy — that makes sense to us. But is God always, essentially, and completely happy at the core of his being? If we do not embrace the happiness of God, we jeopardize three precious realities in our own lives.

1. Your joy rests on God's joy.

In a fallen world, cursed and made vain at so many points, we are fundamentally unhappy and prone to long bouts with unhappiness. We are made "happy" by having stuff, getting gifts, or feeling like we belong in a group. In stark contrast, God is happy within himself. As Aquinas said so clearly, "God is happiness by his essence: for he is happy not by acquisition or participation of something else, but by his essence. On the other hand, men are happy by participation." But God *is* happiness. Joy is fundamental to his triune nature. To find God is to find the fountain of all joy, so beautifully and simply put by Augustine:

"Following after God is the desire of happiness; to reach God is happiness itself." We participate in joy when we reach the essence of all joy: God himself.

The foundation for this point is laid in, where Paul extols "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God." God is essentially blessed. His blessedness — his happiness — is central to his glory. This text shows us that God's expressive glory is essentially linked to his inner joy. God's majesty is his radiating joy, and that joy is what he promises to us. His holiness and beauty attract the elect to him. God communicates his majesty as beams that burn out from the solid, rocket-fuel radiance of his inter-Trinitarian joy. See this truth, and embrace it, and your life will find an eternity of joy-fuel for this life — and the next one.

2. God really does delight in you.

When we assume that God is fundamentally angry, and simultaneously know that we are nothing special — not unique or extraordinary in our service — we cannot believe how on earth (or in heaven) the God of the universe would sing over us his song of delight. How can a holy God delight in me? It was a preacher named Henry Donald Maurice Spence (1836–1917) who made a point I cannot forget: "God is so joyous that he finds joy even in us." Let that land for a moment. God's song of joy over his justified children is not merely the sum of the joy we attract from him; it's also the multiplication of his abundant joy exponentially expressing itself out over us. Joyful people more easily express joy, just as God delights to rejoice over his children, because he is essentially joyful.

3. The happiness of God is the strength you need.

The text on this point is a familiar one, but one we don't stop to think about more carefully. "The joy of the Lord is your strength". Whether the "joy of the Lord" here refers mainly to the joy he has in himself, or to the joy he gives us, we have no real hope of joy or strength unless God is happy. God does not give us any joy outside of the joy he has in himself already. Which means, *God's happiness is our strength*. It's a remarkable point delivered to Nehemiah and a people who were ravaged by war, weakened by insecurities, and constantly reminded of their own fragility. And this is where we find our strength: for life, for pain, for trials, for marriage, for child-raising, for missions, for everything. The strength we need for this life is found in the essential joy of God. You will never be spiritually stronger than your God is happy. God's joy is our strength. Settle it biblically. God is essentially happy within himself.

This Week At Living Word

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
23 9:00 am Adult Study 10:00 am Worship Congregation Voters Meeting	24	25 10:00 am PUSH	26	27	28	29

Stewardship Snapshot

January 16th

16 Worshipped, 16 Communed
 2 Watched DVD's
22 Watched Online
 40 Total

Financial Support

3,090.00 General Fund
22.99 VBS Refund from Oriental Trading
 3,112.99 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.

January Celebrations

Anniversary



Jan 27 Joan & John Gabrielson

Church Contacts

intouchlwlc@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

ATTENDANCE TRACKING Going forward starting with last Sunday, we are trying to keep count of all those who watch the service online. If you could please either sign in with Facebook or very briefly comment at the time that you are watching, and if any are watching with you, we would greatly appreciate it. Also, if you happen to watch it during the week at a more convenient time, please just email us back saying that you had watched, and how many others had watched with you. This way you can get the credit for participating in the service and we can grow our attendance totals in order to reach our endowment fund goals. Thank you for helping us with this effort, again we greatly appreciate any help you can give.

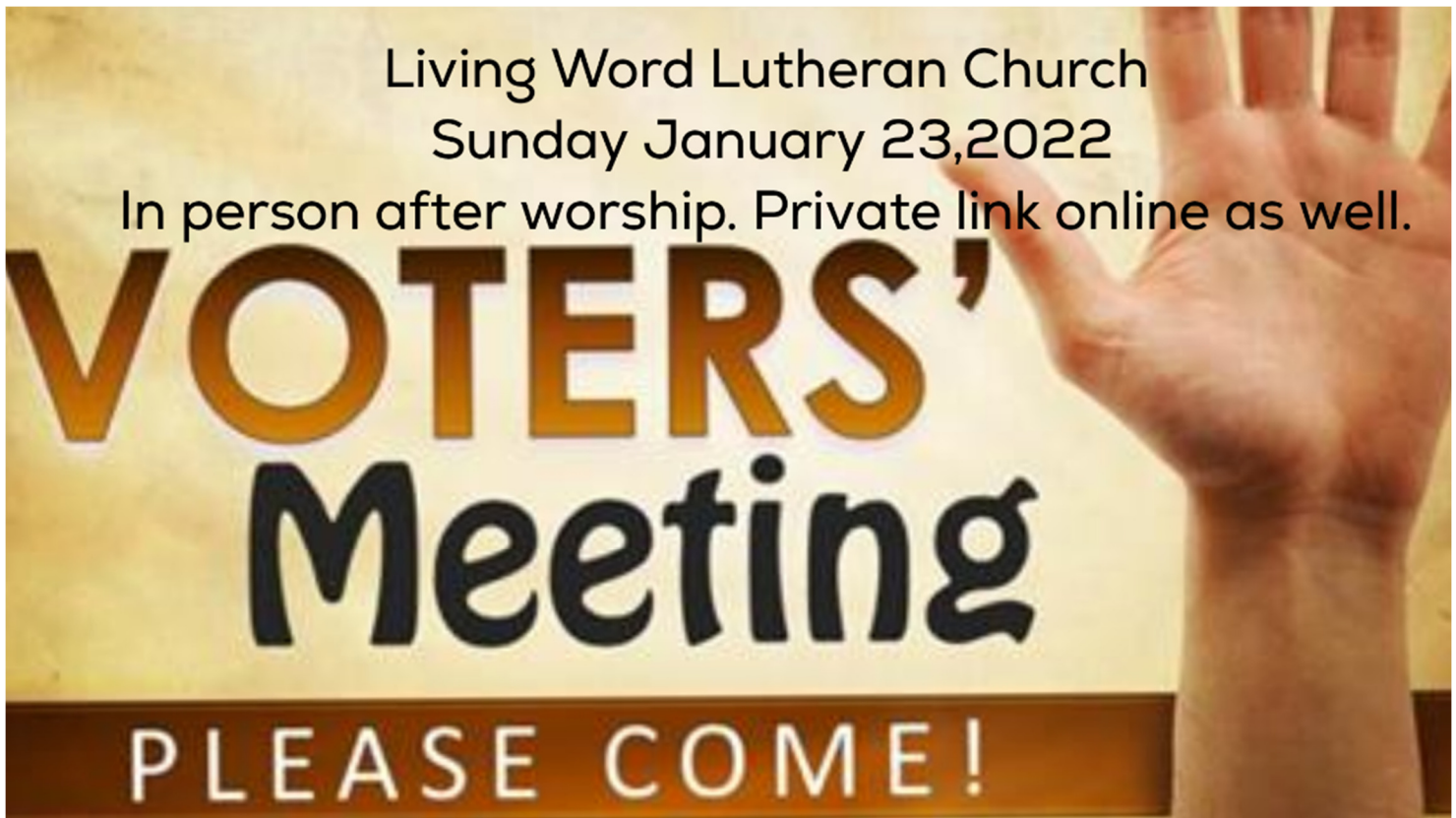
Miscellaneous Information

2021 OFFERING STATEMENTS are now available and in the box on the desk located next to the office. Please review carefully and notify us of any discrepancies that you may encounter.

2022 OFFERING ENVELOPES are ready and available for you to pick up on Sunday. They are located on the desk next to the office.

GREETINGS FROM GEORGIA another letter was received this week from our dear friend Carolyn in Georgia, it reads: "Dear Bev, First of all I want to wish you a happy birthday and blessings in the coming year. Thank you for the package of Portals of Prayer booklet and my envelopes for the new year. It is easier for me to send a check frequently than find envelopes weekly. I am feeling well at present and thank the Lord everyday. Keeping Living Word in prayer everyday for a new pastor and blessings everyday. Miss my church but enjoy services each week on my cell phone." Signed "Blessings to all! Carolyn Wagenaar." Thank you Carolyn for the prayers, greetings and blessings. We miss you too, but glad you are well!

Important Information



TRANSITION TEAM UPDATES The transition team did receive Pastor Lesemann's decision regarding our call that we extended to him and his family. Unfortunately he has declined the call and we need to focus on the next steps in order to fill out the paper work to call a seminary student. The LCMS has extended their deadline due to the current pandemic and other delays, so we have until February 15th to have all the paperwork to be filled out. We need to listen to what God wants and let Him choose the right person for us. Ballots will be emailed and will need to be filled out ASAP to meet the timeframes that we need to honor.

CONGREGATIONAL VOTERS' MEETING is scheduled for today, January 23rd, immediately after worship. We received Pastor Lesemann's decision and need to have another vote for the direction that the transition team will need to follow. Please plan on attending this very important meeting. I will be sending out a separate private link for the meeting that you will need to click on in order to view and participate in the meeting. We need to have a solid attendance and the majority vote for their next step. Both the transition team and the church council had met last Tuesday, both in person and via Zoom. We will also be receiving updates from the council regarding the future of the preschool and other items that they covered during the meeting.

A NEED FOR YOU AND A NEED FOR CHURCH As church attendance numbers fade across the nation and online services become very convenient (who doesn't love not getting ready in the morning or leaving their home?!), it's important to remember why church attendance for you and your family matters so much. You can't serve from your sofa. You can't have community of faith on your sofa. You can't experience the power of a room full of believers worshipping together from your sofa. Christians aren't consumers either. We are contributors. We don't watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We do life together. The church needs you. And you need the church. Wherever you are, find a local church where you and your family can be part of community and use your talents to advance the kingdom and reach others. To come alongside one another physically, not just through a screen. While I'm grateful for technology to keep people connected that can't physically come to a facility or need to be away, it's absolutely not like being in the building. Never will be. Yes, church on the sofa is nice. But it'll never be the same as church in the sanctuary. We look forward to seeing everyone in church. There is nothing like fellowship time among some of your closest friends that share the same beliefs as you do!

"Living Word Preschool"

A NEED FOR OUR PRESCHOOL AGAIN Please try to help us pass the word about our preschool throughout our community. January and the winter semester is upon us. We need to fill our church with the little ones and teach them the love and knowledge of Jesus and prepare them for kindergarten and grade school. Let all your friends and family know that enrollment is open online. We already have one student enrolled and a family just visited us this week.

LIVING WORD LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL

Registration is open!

Offering both a 5 day program
with a 3 day option.

Click on our preschool tab to
register or for more information

Call us with any questions or to
schedule a tour at 708-403-9673



Incarnate Community

A Bible Study from the LCMS Northern Illinois District

Taking it live! Incarnate Community Bible Study Discussions

Join Incarnate Community's author Rev. Kris Whitby and his guests as they take a deep dive into what it means in a pandemic age to be an in person community centered on Jesus!

Thursdays in February 2022, there will be live discussions hosted by Rev. Whitby and special guests fielding questions from our viewers on each of the four Bible study sessions. We'll discuss perspectives on aspects of the study, what churches are currently facing as communities who have not fully come back to in person activity, and what our hope is for the Church, both for in person and online ministry moving forward.

The live discussions will be broadcast on our Facebook and YouTube pages each Thursday in February (February 3, 10, 17, and 24) from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

CHURCH UNDECORATING! Thank you to all of the following who helped with taking down all of the Christmas decorations and for getting them stored upstairs, Pastor John Bucka, Jill Goebel, Neal and Kristi Hartz, Pam and George Hostert, Anita Meier, Bill Merchantz and Diana Motel for all your hard work, everything was all done in no time at all.

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK *As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. - John 1:36-37 (NLT)*

Being ready to follow Jesus is one of the keys to staying in the will of God. When confronted with testimony or evidence of the specialness of Jesus (the testimony of John the Baptist or close friends they knew and trusted, Jesus' personal knowledge of strangers, Jesus' personal invitation), they respond immediately. Let's pray that we also will be ready to follow the calling of God today and every day.

1-23-22 Message Outline

"Refreshing"

Psalm 19:9 says: *"The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul."* Come be refreshed...!

1) God refreshes me with the JOY of the Lord.

⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. ¹⁰ Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:9-10

2) God refreshes me with the BAPTISM of the Spirit.

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

3) God refreshes me with the GOSPEL of Jesus.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read..., ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to pro-claim the year of the Lord's favor." ²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." ²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips.

Luke 4:16-22a

VBS 2022



VBS 2022—CELEBRATING GOD'S GREATNESS Diana has theme for VBS picked out and has already ordered the basic supplies and when it gets closer, and warmer especially, she will have her list of items that she will need for snacks and craft time. Everyone had so much fun here last year, that we already have three kids signed up. Thank you Diana for all of the hard work you put into this program for us and the children of our community. If you can help out a day or two during that week, please see Diana for more information.

Mission of the Month



JANUARY MISSION OF MONTH is the LCMS Life Ministry. They speak up for life, care for people in body and soul and they teach about the sanctity of human life. The people of LCMS love children and families and they demonstrate this love through many acts of mercy in their communities. To help support these pro-life efforts, both big and small, we are collecting all month long, not only are you helping with whatever you can give, but our efforts will be doubled, as LCMS will offer to match donations this year, up to one million dollars. Please see the information that is posted on the bulletin board.

Mission of the Month Updates

REDEEMING LIFE OUTREACH MINISTRY UPDATE. We received the following email from RLOM, it seems like things are starting to go very well for them. An enlarged version of this email is located on the bulletin board next to the office. Its wonderful to see they are still continuing with an Illinois maternity home, and that they remember to include us in their updates that they send out to all of those who have supported their mission. Please join me in keeping RLOM in our prayers for their continued growth and outreach project.

Dear Pastor & Elaine,

Greetings to you in Christ and Happy New Year!

I want to start the new year off with an update for the Redeeming Life Illinois Expansion project. I know you have not heard much from us since we announced that the Carpentersville site would not work out. However, I want to assure you that LOTS of activity has been taking place behind the scenes to move the project forward.

God's plan for this maternity home expansion is much BIGGER than what our earthly minds were originally envisioning. We have an amazing team in place who have been busy working through the vetting process of a potential new location in close proximity to the original Carpentersville site.

This project requires multiple partners to collaborate with the end in mind. RLOM is partnering with a local LCMS church, an engineering firm and the Village to work through multiple complexities in order to achieve a win-win!

It is very important that you know that we are still extremely dedicated to this expansion project and this direction looks very promising! Unfortunately, because there are multiple parties involved, I cannot share the exact location and other details with you yet. As soon as we can make the BIG announcement you will be the first to know! We continue to be uplifted and strengthened by your patience and support.

Here is a brief recap of our progress and where we are today:

- There is an existing home on the prospective location that would initially serve as our maternity home (after some renovation)
- The location has enough acreage to BUILD a brand-new maternity home right next to the existing home
- Once the new maternity home is built and operational, the existing home would be repurposed to serve as the transitional living home

The location provides an opportunity for RLOM to open its doors to women quickly while also allowing new construction to take place at the same time

We are genuinely grateful for your continued support and patience! We look forward, with great hope and joy, to the opening of this new Illinois home. I know you do, too!

Galatians 6:9, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

In His Service,

Sheryl

Sheryl DeWitt

Executive Director

Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, Inc.