

The True Meaning Of Christmas



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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

16301 South Wolf Road
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708-403-9673
livingwordorland.org
intouchlwlc@yahoo.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Mon - Fri 9 am - 2 pm

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
9:15 am Adult study
10:00 am Worship

IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 31, Issue 50

December 25, 2022

"What Is the True Meaning of Christmas?"

Christmas truly is one of the most wonderful times of the year. For many, there are warm parties, cozy homes, fond traditions to celebrate, and gifts to be shared. It's a joyous time of celebration. However, sometimes we get lost in the season and forget the reason we celebrate it, to begin with. Among the hustle and bustle, our focus is lost and priorities are misaligned. Most people can tell you the origins of Christmas—that it's a remembrance of the birth of Christ. But either that's the extent of their knowledge or they lose sight of this in the busyness of the holiday. Why do we truly celebrate Christmas? Not Santa Claus, or the Christmas tree, or any other of the various traditions wrapped up into Christmas. Why do we celebrate this occasion—what is its true meaning?

The Birth of Jesus and Meaning of Christmas

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it

with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." -Isaiah 9:6-7 (ESV)

For thousands of years mankind waited for the coming of Christ; they longed for their King to arrive and free them from oppression. The Old Testament is full of prophecies, including this one from Isaiah 9. The Bible is full of Scripture pointing directly to the One who would save mankind from their sins. When Isaiah described His coming, he described His coming as an infant. But this child would grow and establish a Kingdom of righteousness forevermore. When we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating the moment in history when prophecy was fulfilled. God came to be with us.

Celebrating Christmas and Salvation in Jesus

Because when Jesus came, he also left us with the gift of salvation. His birth is significant because of His death. For thirty-three years Jesus lived a life free from sin so that He could be the perfect sacrificial lamb for the atonement of our sins. On Calvary, Christ paid the price and overcame death so that we could have victory over sin and condemnation. So, when that precious baby was born and placed in the manger, it wasn't just another birth. It was the beginning of God's redemptive plan for humanity. An act He didn't have to take part in but He chose to out of love.

True Meaning for Celebrating Christmas


This very act of humility and his choice to die on the cross is cause for bowed knees and lifted hands. I know the busyness of the season can cause time to fly and before we know it, the holiday has passed and we have forgotten to celebrate why we are celebrating it in the first place. But don't get sidetracked—get perspective. Choose reverence and give honor where honor is due.

Take time this holiday season to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas by glorifying the One who gave it all. A child was born in humble circumstances and his sacrificial death reflected the same, however, both were significant for humanity. Without the death of Christ, salvation isn't possible. So without His birth, neither is it possible. Jesus coming to Earth that night changed everything and it's a moment we should celebrate with all our hearts.

Certainly, enjoy the parties and food and gifts, but don't forget to point your heart, family, and those around you to Christmas' true meaning: Christ came with a plan for our redemption.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Worship Christmas Day	26	27 10:00am Push Prayer	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

This Week's Celebrations



Dec 29 Pam Hostert
Dec 30 Rick Boehm

Church Contacts

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

Stewardship Snapshot

December 18th

23 Worshipped, 21 Communed
2 DVD
11 Watched Online
36 Total

Financial Support

\$2,485.00 General Fund Offering 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.

Devotional Time

Opportunities to Connect with God

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 visit our website to send in your prayer request, 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 9:30 a.m. Sundays on 1580 AM

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK *[Jesus said] "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. The Father and I are one."* - John 10:27-30 (NLT)

We need Jesus. Without Him, we are lost. When we live in dependence on God day to day, our eternity is secure. When we are in God, no one can take us away.

God is good, and we are blessed. Merry Christmas!

FRIENDLY REMINDER for the Friday morning Adult Bible class, this past Friday was their last session for not only this year, but until the summer. I will have more updates from time to time regarding different study topics and as to when the group will resume meeting on Fridays again.

Preschool News

TOT TIME was last Monday, the kids had a fun time making snowmen with their crafts that Mrs. Diana had for them, plus they were able to make the 3D snowmen in the Dramatic Arts Play Area. This outreach program has been very successful. Two of the families have been here for all 3 Tot Times now, plus we keep getting some new ones too every month. You can pretty much guess what will be the star attraction at Tot Time in January. The room is full of milk jugs that will all be glued together and all of our little "Eskimos" will have a giant igloo to play in, lol.



When - Monday, January 24th
From - 9:30 am - 11 am

Calling all tots! Living Word Lutheran Church in Orland Park is excited to announce a fun once a month program for 2 to 4 year olds. Children will get to play in a special themed area, make a craft and hear a story. Registration is required and closes 72 hours before the event. A parent or caregiver is required to stay for this program.

FALL SEMESTER is wrapping up quickly, and preschool has grown from four students at the start of September and then with the youngest student, Callie starting in October, we had five. A couple of weeks ago, Diana had a tour with a mom and her son Ryan, and last weekend the mom registered her son for the winter semester when they all come back to school in January. All but two of the students are three and four, it will be so wonderful to see them return next fall. Plus Diana has messaged a couple of families that have been here for VBS and the Easter Egg Hunt that have younger children that has turned three this year, so hopefully we might be able to get one or two more students before too long.

Living Word News

COUNCIL MEETING was this Tuesday. They received updates from the Transition team regarding their discussions with Pastor Dubensky and info from Christ Lutheran. They also reviewed financial updates, plus discussed preschool, alarm systems and the security cameras and discussed resolutions regarding the issues of low attendance at voter's congregational meeting. They have agreed to schedule the next congregational meeting for Sunday, January 8th. The below flyer will be mailed out to all voting members and I will be emailing out reminders in the upcoming weeks. There will be updates and announcements at the end of the service on Christmas Eve and the council meeting notes are on the last page of this newsletter. We need everyone's participation and input for the future of our church.

Special **VOTERS' MEETING**



Sunday
January 8, 2023 at 11:00am

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 rest of this last month of the year. We would like to build up the designated funds and to help the General fund so we be able to afford our regular bills, as we too are noticing rising costs of everything. And also to be able to afford a new pastor. Along with these financial obligations, there are a few things that still need to be fixed and maintained. We are very thankful for the efforts of all of our members, you have been so great these past few trying years. So whatever you normally are able to give to all of the missions every month, our mission is to be able to exist and stay afloat and also considering calling a new pastor. Thank you for all that you do for our church!



Other Earning Opportunities

DON'T FORGET TO remember when doing gift card shopping this upcoming holiday season to use the app and/or website that Diana had set up for us last year to help raise money for our church just by doing our Christmas shopping, birthday shopping or buying gift cards for other happy occasions. With a mobile app, RaiseRight or the website ShopWithScrip, you can purchase gift cards for your friends, family, and even yourself and they will donate 3% of the sales to our church. If you need help setting this up, just let Diana know and she can help you set it up, and she will also have all of this up on our website and Facebook page, and once the account gets set up, our unique code to use in order for the 3% is **YL5M6W4APYDX**. This is the most safe and secure way to buy gift cards these days, Still be as generous as you always are, just be aware to do it safely and securely, and help raise extra cash for us. So as you are starting some of your Christmas shopping this year, stay nice and warm at home and do it from your phone or laptop and have the gift card company donate the 3% back to Living Word.

AMAZON SMILE will also donate some of the proceeds to our church when using that feature on their website. All you have to do is put Living Word into their search field or click on the link from our website and you can start doing your shopping. We all know how much we spend with Amazon, lol. Every little bit can go a long way for our church and our future. Happy shopping with both of these opportunities.

Important Information

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!

"Sunday Zoom Bible Study Class"

SUNDAY MORNING Bible Study will be on Zoom. We will have a dedicated link every Sunday for the Zoom portion of the class. I will email this link to everyone on Fridays, so it would be very easy for you to find the email with the link. 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 25th.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89414913726?pwd=R1pzNWFRa2hWazFsT1JSZWRZxQT09>

Meeting ID: 894 1491 3726 Passcode: 120167

Living Word Lutheran Church

Council Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 20, 2022 @ 7 pm

Attendees: Neal H, Bob G, Paul H, Bill M, Jim M, Pastor John, Diana M, and Donna W for the transition team update part.

Meeting opened with prayer at 7:04 pm from Pastor John

The meeting was then turned over to Donna as she wanted to inform the council of what was going on with Christ Lutheran and Pastor Matt D. As of right now Christ would not know if they could partner with us financially until after their budget is redone in June. They would still like to partner with us in other ways. The transition team did have a zoom meeting with Pastor Matt D and were very happy with the conversation. Pastor Matt has informed the team what he is currently making and serving two churches right now. He is also very interested in working closer with Christ Lutheran. Bob had put together some figures based off what we would like to offer Pastor Matt and for how long we could afford it based off if only Living Word was paying everything. There was a lot of discussion between the council and Donna about the salary that the Transition Team would like to offer. They will continue to look at the numbers and would also try to have another meeting with Pastor Matt next week. Donna did ask that we have a congregation meeting on Sunday, January 8th after worship. This meeting would show the financials to the congregation and what we all feel is a reasonable package to offer. Once the congregation was comfortable with that then we would also ask for them to vote if we should work to extend a call to him. We are working to get a list of members who are qualified to vote so that we have enough people at the meeting to be able to vote. We would allow qualified members to also vote online. Donna will also reach out to Pastor Lee to see what his plans are as we know in the past he would like to fully retire at some point soon. After everyone was comfortable with the discussion Donna left the meeting.

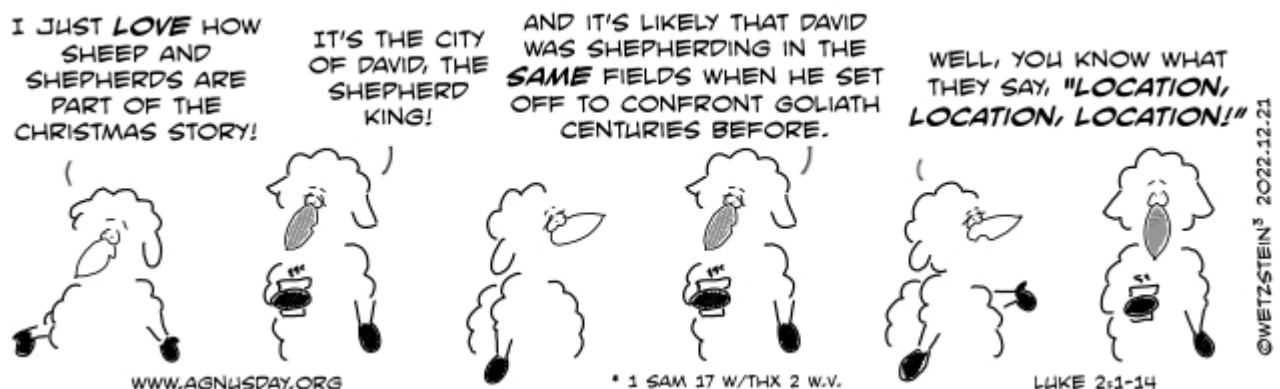
Bob then went over the rest of the financials from November. We are up in offerings as of right now thanks to a very generous donation. Our attendance is 71 behind than last year. All other finances look ok. Bill is going to reach out to Vanco who we use for our online giving as those funds have not been added to our accounts yet.

Diana did let the council know we will have a 6th student starting the preschool in January. He will be coming 2 days a week.

We then talked about our fire alarm service and needing a company to come out to do a fire alarm inspection. We did change to reliable to fill our fire extinguishers, but their alarm company was expensive. Bill is going to reach out to find out the best company to come out and make sure we aren't getting double charged from a few companies.

We did talk about the winter storm coming. We talked about if the weather is bad on Friday allowing Bev to work from home if she is ok with that. Also, if the weather were to be bad on Saturday maybe canceling our Christmas eve service. This would be determined by Neal on Saturday morning.

We adjourned the meeting at 8:22 pm with a prayer from Pastor John.



WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

* 1 SAM 17 W/THX 2 W.V.

LUKE 2:1-14

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