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PRAYER CHAIN REQUESTS

Eleanor Galik
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

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
9:15 am Adult study

IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 32, Issue 38

September 17, 2023

"Regardless—Always Obey God"

The rewards of obedience are awesome, but sometimes the process is agonizing. *'Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way, God qualified him'.* Before God promotes you to a position of usefulness in His service, He qualifies you. We admire the faith of Abraham who took his son Isaac up Mount Moriah and laid him on the altar. But the story doesn't make sense until you read the first verse in the chapter: *'Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham'.* What did God test? His faith! His obedience! And when he passed the test, God told him, *'In blessing I will bless You, and in multiplying I will multiply Your seed' (Genesis 22:17).*

Understand this: when you pray and ask God for success, you're inviting Him to test your faith and obedience. God probably won't test you at the same level He tested Jesus or Abraham. But it's the smaller tests that prepare you to handle the bigger assignments in God's kingdom. The obedience God desires from you today is obedience that rises above your feelings and circumstances and says, 'Yes, Lord!'

Job describes the rewards of obedience: *'If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity'.* John adds, 'Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight'. But Paul describes the cost of obedience: *'We think you ought to know...about the trouble we went through in the province of Asia. We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure, and we thought we would never live through it. In fact, we expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God, who raises the dead. And he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again. We have placed our confidence in him, and he will continue to rescue us'.*

Notice the words *'He did rescue us...He will rescue us again...He will continue to rescue us'.* God didn't lift Paul out of his trouble, He walked with him in it and brought him through it. You say, 'But I have asked God to help me understand the situation and He hasn't.' God doesn't owe us an explanation, but He promises us an exit strategy. *'No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it'.* So the word for today is – obey God, regardless.

What God commands you to do, He will give you the grace to do. But that doesn't mean it will be easy. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were ordered by the king to be burned alive for refusing to worship his golden image. Notice their faith confession: 1) *'Our God...is able to deliver us'.* They never doubted God's ability. 2) *'And he will deliver us'.* They never doubted God's willingness. 3) *'But if not,...we will not...worship the golden image'.* They never considered an alternative to obedience!

How did their story turn out? *'Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished...saying..."Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God"'.* What happened next? *'Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon'.*

We know it's hard sometimes, when God asks you to do something you don't want to do, or feel you can't do, He has your best interests in mind. When your children say, 'I can't do this, it's too hard,' do you change your mind and let them off the hook? No, you insist, because it's for their good. That's how God feels about you: *'Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them'.*

This Week at Living Word

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
17 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Worship—COMM Informal Outreach Service	18	19 9:00am-12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	20 9:00am-12:00pm Preschool	21 9:00am-12:00pm Preschool 7:00pm Council Meeting	22	23

September Celebrations



Sept 17 David Merchantz



Sept 23 Jesse Meier

Happy Anniversary



Sept 19 Diana & Paul Motel

Stewardship Snapshot

Church Contacts

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Ministry Support Coordinator, Diana Motel

dianamotel@yahoo.com

Leadership Team

Neal Hartz - President

Ken Marks—Vice President

Bill Merchantz - Treasurer

Diana Motel - Secretary

Members at Large

Paul Huang

September 10th

25 Worshipped

3 Watched Live

29 Watched Later

57 Total

Financial Support

1,435.00 Total 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.

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 *"I told you that I am He," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." ... But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?" - John 18:8, 11 (NLT)*

As Jesus' final hours draw near, He is still protecting His disciples, and still accepting, even embracing His Father's plan for our salvation in spite of the cost to Himself. We, too, should be willing to accept whatever task the Father calls us to do, even if it involves discomfort or even suffering. For we know we can endure it through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Living Word News

GROWTH IN OUR ATTENDANCE this year. As many of you are aware we have been trying to grow our attendance for worship service, both in person and online. I know some of you think that we still only get about 20 people coming for service every week, but we actually have been doing much better this year. I ran some reports just to make sure I wasn't imaging it, and the numbers have increased substantially. So for the 10:00 am Sunday morning services, in 2022 from the beginning of January to the end of August our in person attendance total was 659 and we had 213 online viewers. This year till the end of August, the in person attendance total is 805 and there were 310 online viewers. That is a 22% increase for in person attendance and a 45% increase in online viewers. These numbers include only church members, including Pastor and Elaine, and they do not include any visitors or extended family members in these reports as we count them as guests. In other words, those totals are even higher. Thank you everyone for helping make this possible. Please keep up the excellent effort in this matter. We love seeing all of our church family and it's so rewarding to know that you haven't forgotten about us. As an added bonus, we also should be eligible for the growth initiative from the endowment fund which would help us tremendously. **Good work everyone!!**

PRAYER REQUEST for Pastor John as he has been in the long-term care facility of the Victorian Village. He is still having trouble with the blood clots. He still has a very strong heart and spirit. Pastor Schauer said that he visits with him every couple of weeks, and he was there a couple of weeks ago to do service and said that Pastor John seems to be doing a little better since he was taken off of the new medicines that he was on. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they are very concerned about Pastor John. If you would like to send cards and/or well wishes within the next week or to call him, here is the complete address: John Bucka, C/O Victorian Village, Hope House, Room #17, 12600 Renaissance Circle, Homer Glen, IL 60491. Phone number is 708-578-7091. Even though Pastor John had not been wanting anyone to visit him, as he was very weak and tired, and his health had been declining, Pastor Schauer said that he seemed much more chipper this last time. I will keep everyone posted as to any new updates.

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES has seen a bit of a change starting last month. The first Sunday of every month will be a traditional hymnal worship service and the third Sunday of the month will be an informal outreach service and the remaining Sundays will be the blended service that we currently have. This will be a trial basis for a 6 month period, at which time you will have a chance to express your favorites, suggest minor changes to either service and choose if we do this going forward or use one or the other or go back to the same service styles each week. We will be announcing this on our sign and on our website and Facebook page to see if we can get any visitors or new members.

CALL COMMITTEE is looking for anyone who would like to volunteer to join us in our ongoing process of calling a pastor. I have volunteered to join the committee going forward, but we would love to have more voices and input in this process. If you have ever thought that you might want your voice heard in this process, now is the time to act upon that desire. We met Wednesday evening with Pastor Schauer, our Visiting Circuit Pastor from Trinity Lutheran as he now has another list of potential pastors. This seems to be a much more interesting list this time. There are a total of 6 pastors that we can call to see if they are still interested or available to interview and discuss our pastoral needs.

PRESCHOOL started last week. She has 4 students now, one girl will start either later this month or next month in October after she turns three years old, and one student's little sister will join the class in February when she turns three also. Please help spread the word about our preschool, we have to make sure the preschool keeps growing, Diana will accept students throughout the school year, as soon as the child is three. The first week of school was amazing and filled with fun for the kids. This week they have been working on writing their name and practicing writing upper case letters and numbers.

Mission of the Month



HONEY SUNDAY is returning to Living Word this year. We are holding the Honey Sunday on September 24th. For each bottle of honey, there is a \$10.00 fee, 30% of the proceeds will be returned to Living Word, and 70% will be donated to the Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch. This is our Mission of the month for September. If you need additional time, just let us know. Please call me with any orders that you would like to place because if you place the order online, we will not receive the 30%. Please see the bulletin inserts inside of your worship folders for the order forms this Sunday and next week also. Once we have all of the order forms and money, we will fill out the master order form and mail it to them, and you will receive your in the mail. If you prefer, and need to have your honey mailed here, please let us know, and we will just put the church's address on the form. We also have extra forms on the desk located next to the office if you need any.

9-17-23 Message Outline

"Forget Not All His Benefits"

1) Praise the Lord for all His good INTENT.

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷ 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept. ¹⁸ His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Genesis 50:15-21

2) Praise the Lord for all His glorious JUDGMENTS.

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. ² One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ³ The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand. ⁵ One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. ⁶ Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷ For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. ⁹ For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹ It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God.'" ¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Romans 14:1-12

3) Praise the Lord for all His gracious FORGIVENESS.

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. ²⁸ "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. ²⁹ "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' ³⁰ "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. ³² "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. ³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Matthew 18:21-35

IF GOD LOVES US,
WHY DOES HE
THREATEN NOT
TO FORGIVE US?

OH GOD
LOVES US!

BUT IF WE'RE UNWILLING
TO FORGIVE, HOW CAN WE
SAY THAT WE TRUST GOD'S
FORGIVENESS FOR US?

I FORGIVE
YOU, RICK.

I'M JUST COVERING
ALL MY BASES.

WHAT?
I DIDN'T DO
ANYTHING!

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WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

MATTHEW 18:21-35