



# IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 32, Issue 36 "S.H.A.P.E.—God's Will" September 3, 2023

## Inside this issue:

"S.H.A.P.E.—God's Will"	1
This Week at Living Word	2
Stewardship/Celebrations/Devotionals	2
Living Word Endowment Fund	3
Living Word News	3
Tot Time	4
Mission of the Month	4
9-3-2023 Message Outline	5
Back Page	6

## PRAYER CHAIN REQUESTS

Eleanor Galik  
for immediate prayers



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

## Living Word Lutheran Church

16301 South Wolf Road  
Orland Park, IL 60467

livingwordorland.org  
intouchlwlc@yahoo.com

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS  
Mon - Fri 9 am - 2 pm

SUNDAY SCHEDULE  
9:15 am Adult study

In order for you to understand God's will, let's use the word S.H.A.P.E. as an acrostic.

### **S** represents your *spirit*.

Your regenerated spirit is the part of you that's capable of connecting with God and responding to Him. The Bible says: *'People who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. Those who are spiritual can evaluate all things'*. You can know something in your spirit without understanding it in your brain. Does that sound strange? It's not: *'But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things'*. Sometimes a Scripture leaps off the page you're reading in the Bible and you 'know' it's God speaking to you and giving you direction. At the time it may not seem to make sense to you, but it resonates in your spirit as being right. We use different words to describe this experience, such as 'a leading' or 'a prompting'. Will you sometimes get it wrong and make a mistake? Yes. The most mature Christians among us do. In his youth, God spoke to Samuel the prophet four different times before he finally recognized His voice. Just as you exercise your body to make it stronger, you must exercise your spirit to make it sharper and more sensitive to God: *'Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong'*.

### **The letter H** represents your *heart*.

What do you have a 'heart for' or feel passionate about? As a Jew, Paul was passionate about reaching the Jewish people: *'The longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in him are made right with God'*. You say, 'Does that mean I must be in the ministry to know and do God's will?' No. Nelson Mandela was so passionate about freeing his people from the evils of apartheid that he was willing to spend twenty-seven years in prison to bring it about. When your heart begins to ask, 'What can I do to change this situation?' you may be discovering God's will for you. The people who have made this world a better place all asked that question. Thomas Edison answered it by giving the world incandescent light. Henry Ford answered it by giving the world the car. Mother Teresa answered it by giving the forgotten and dying of India love and dignity. First, Nehemiah wept over the ruins of Jerusalem, then he rebuilt its walls. What moves you? What's in your heart? In answering that question you may discover God's will for your life.

### **The letter A** stands for *abilities*.

The Bible says, *'God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well'*. What is your dominant gift? You say, 'I don't think I have any gifts.' No one was born without a gift! Your gift may be undiscovered, undeveloped, unused, underused, or even misused, but you have a gift. Have you ever heard the saying, 'There is nothing so powerful as an idea whose time has come'? When you put together the right opportunity with the right gift at the right time, the results can literally blow your mind. Before, life can seem like you're just spending it surviving, when suddenly a crisis arises, a situation occurs, or a door of opportunity opens, and you discover abilities that have lain dormant within you for years. Today you may feel locked into a situation with no way out, but God is 'a way maker' But the Bible says: *'God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom....Whenever the king consulted them in any matter...he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom'*. Does that mean you can just sit around and wait for success to be dropped into your lap? No, the old saying 'opportunity knocks' is actually not true. Opportunity waits for those who open the door and go out and look for it.

(Continued on the bottom of page 5)

## This Week at Living Word

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>3</b> 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Worship Traditional Communion Hymnal Service	<b>4</b> Office Closed for Labor Day 	<b>5</b> 10:00am Push Prayer 5:00pm-6:00pm Back To School Night 	<b>6</b> 9:00am-12:00pm Preschool	<b>7</b> 9:00am-12:00pm Preschool	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

## September Celebrations

					
<b>Sept 5</b>	Noah Hostert	<b>Sept 1</b>	Jodi Kempke	<b>Sept 4</b>	Delores & Joe Urbank
<b>Sept 5</b>	Dwight Hostert	<b>Sept 3</b>	Kyle Motel	<b>Sept 6</b>	Pam & George Hostert
<b>Sept 8</b>	James Boehm	<b>Sept 14</b>	Jennifer Lange	<b>Sept 12</b>	Tami & Dan Folgers
<b>Sept 17</b>	David Merchantz	<b>Sept 23</b>	Jesse Meier	<b>Sept 19</b>	Diana & Paul Motel
		<b>Sept 30</b>	Dwight Hostert		

## Stewardship Snapshot

### August 27th

20 Worshipped in person

16 Watched Live

374 Watched Later

410 Total

### Financial Support

\$9,600.00 Special Donation for General Fund

490.00 General Fund Donation

200.00 Preschool Account (Mission of the Month)

**\$10,090.00 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.

**DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK** [Jesus said] "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me." - John 17:21 (NLT)

On the evening of Jesus' arrest, one of the things he made sure to do was to pray for his disciples, and he included all future disciples as well. And one of the things he prayed for was that the disciples would be unified, would be one in him just as he was one with the Father. The purpose of our unity is that it would broadcast the truth of God's power, love, and forgiveness to all who see it. So want what Jesus wanted—let that prayer for unity be yours today also.

## Living Word Endowment Fund

### LIVING WORD ENDOWMENT FUND (as of 8/31/2023)

The current value of the fund is \$162,715.24 invested in Thrivent funds. Current market value exceeds cost of investments by \$26,089.57. Since inception (10/12/05), the Fund has earned interest and dividends totaling \$51,644.94. Of this, \$25,822.47 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	26,089.57
	<u>Dividends and interest</u>	<u>51,644.94</u>
	<b>Total market value</b>	<b>\$162,715.24</b>



#### 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

## Living Word News

**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. 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. It is Pastor John's wishes though that you do not come and visit him, as he is very weak and tired, and his health has been declining. I will keep everyone posted as to any new updates.

**SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES** has seen a bit of a change starting this 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.

**KITCHEN ITEMS NEEDED** we are beginning to run a little low on coffee, if you happen to be out doing your grocery shopping, we would greatly appreciate it if you could pick up a can of coffee for Sunday morning fellowship time. As always, thank you in advance for any contributions.

**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. There will be a meeting scheduled very soon with Pastor Schauer, our Visiting Circuit Pastor from Trinity Lutheran as he will be receiving another list of potential pastors that we can interview and discuss our pastoral needs.

**FOR LABOR DAY** the office will be closed, I will be back in the church office on Tuesday, September 5th.

**SEPTEMBER CALENDAR** is available and copies are located on the welcome desk in the fellowship hall.

**PRESCHOOL** will start off on Tuesday night with Mrs. Diana's Back to School night, she has been working so hard almost all summer long on rearranging her classroom and cleaning out all of her cabinets. She has 4 students starting this week, one girl will start next month in October after she turns three years old, and we will one student's little sister 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.



**Tot Time**  
**Ages 2-4 year olds**  
**Monday, September 18th**  
**9:30 am- 11am**  
**Registration required**



**Tot Time**

**TOT TIME IS BACK!** Diana will be having Tot Time again this school year. It looks like the first theme next month is Camping Fun, lol. If you have any friends or neighbors that have little ones at home yet, tell them about how much they can have at this fun event. Diana reads them a story, they will have some fun time to play in the Dramatic Arts Play Area and they will be working on their crafts before going home. The kids really do love it and a couple have already signed up for it. Hopefully, this will also help grow our preschool enrollment for the fall and winter.



**Mission of the Month**

**AUGUST MISSION OF THE MONTH** was returning Living Word Preschool. Thanks to your very generous donations, we as a congregation had collected \$200.00 which was deposited into the Preschool account last week. We also received a separate special donation of \$1,000.00 during the week that was requested to be deposited as part of our Mission of the Month for August into that same Preschool account. As always thank you so much for all of the generous donations, it is so gratifying to Diana how much we want her preschool to succeed and to grow.



**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. 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. 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.

**How very true!**

JUST LIKE THAT,  
PETER FALLS FLAT  
ON HIS FACE. YEAH.



WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

BUT IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE.  
THE THOUGHT OF JESUS  
BEING CRUCIFIED  
IS HORRIFIC!



SURE, BUT PETER SHOULD  
HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD  
ALL WORK OUT, I MEAN...  
IT'S JESUS!



MATTHEW 16:21-28

## 9-3-23 Message Outline

### “Vindication”

Psalms 26:1 says, “*Vindicate me, Lord!*” Today we see how and why...

#### 1) **Lord, vindicate me because I bear your NAME.**

<sup>15</sup> LORD, you understand; remember me and care for me. Avenge me on my persecutors. You are long-suffering—do not take me away; think of how I suffer reproach for your sake. <sup>16</sup> When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty. Jeremiah 15:15-16

#### 2) **Lord, vindicate me because I overcome evil with GOOD.**

<sup>9</sup> Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good... <sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. <sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. <sup>20</sup> On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” <sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:9, 18-21

#### 3) **Lord, vindicate me because I take up my CROSS.**

<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. <sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” <sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.” <sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. <sup>26</sup> What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. <sup>28</sup> “Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.” Matthew 16:21-28

### “S.H.A.P.E.—God’s Will”

(Continued from page 1)

#### The letter P stands for *personality*.

The worst thing you can do is to envy someone else’s personality type and say, ‘I wish I was just like them.’ That’s like saying to God, ‘You made a mistake when You made me.’ God will help you to change your conduct and strengthen your character, but you can pray until you’re blue in the face and He won’t change your personality. Instead, He will help you to recognize it and maximize it. The old saying is true: ‘Birds of a feather flock together.’ Eagles don’t want to hang around with ducks. They don’t want to live in a farmyard or swim in a pond. Their potential makes them impatient with those who cannot soar. Eagles are loners. Ducks, on the other hand, are team players. Some migrate thousands of miles from the north to warmer climates, flying in a perfect V formation without breaking rank. They know how to defer to one another and care for one another. Before God assigns you, He designs you. He gives you the right personality to fulfil His plan for your life. So instead of putting yourself down or wishing you had a different temperament, say with the psalmist, ‘You...*knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous – how well I know it!*’

#### The letter E stands for *experience*.

How can you know God’s will for your life? Paul answers, ‘*Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you.*’ The word ‘transform’ means ‘to change in shape’. How is a diamond formed? It’s the result of unrelenting pressure over a long period of time. Your life’s experiences will point you towards your life’s purpose. God never wastes a pain! The psalmist said, ‘*I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word....My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees.*’ How do we learn to do what’s right? By experiencing the pain of doing what’s wrong. You say, ‘But others have mistreated me. Is that also part of God’s will for my life?’ It could be. The reverse side of a tapestry looks like a tangled mess of threads. But that’s what it takes to produce a picture of beauty, order, and value. Getting the idea? Re-examine your life’s experiences.

## Back Page

### Craft and Vendor Fair Trinity Lutheran Church New Lenox, Illinois Saturday, October 21, 2023 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

#### **Craft and Vendor Fair 2023:**

Please join us for the annual Craft and Vendor Fair on Saturday, October 21 from 9 to 3. This is a fundraiser for the youth of our congregation. There will be more than 30 participants. Come enjoy a vast array of crafts and products being sold just in time for the holidays. In addition, there will be a bake sale.

If you have questions, please email Jan T. @ [trinitycraftshow@gmail.com](mailto:trinitycraftshow@gmail.com) (or call the church office at 815-485-6973)

If interested, please fill out the form online if you would like to be a Crafter or Vendor at our fair.

"Trinity Lutheran Church invites you to our annual Craft and Vendor Fair on Saturday, October 21, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Admission is free! This is a fundraiser for the youth of the congregation. Trinity Lutheran Church is located at 508 N. Cedar Road in New Lenox. They are on the east side of the road, three blocks north of the Metra train station at Cedar Road and US 30. If you are interested in being a crafter or vendor at their Fair, visit their website at [www.trinitynewlenox.org/craft-fair-2023.html](http://www.trinitynewlenox.org/craft-fair-2023.html)"



**NEAT REPEATS RESALE STORES ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO WORK IN THEIR STORES WITH A BOUTIQUE ATMOSPHERE. SHARE YOUR COMPASSION, TALENTS, AND TIME. GIVE FIVE HOURS A WEEK, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR THE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.**

**All sales at Neat Repeats Resale benefit the clients served by the Crisis Center for South Suburbia, a non-profit domestic violence agency. For additional information, contact Michelle McCarthy (708-429-7233) option #5 or [mmccarthy@crisisctr.org](mailto:mmccarthy@crisisctr.org)**