



IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 32, Issue 52

December 31, 2023

"God's Resolutions for Your New Year"

Emotions surrounding the New Year swing from excited to nervous.

We anticipate with hope the new opportunities and adventures that surround the dawn of a new year. *What is in store? What is around the corner?*

At the same time, we feel timid, because we have made plenty of resolutions in years past that fizzle after a month or two.

God has resolutions of His own for you and me.

God is constantly inviting us into His plans and His ways for our lives. And I have to believe His plans are probably more fitting, more beneficial, and more doable than the lofty notions that pop in and out of our minds.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)

God has a plan and a purpose for you and for me. It has been in formation since the moment of our conception—even before. We have been fearfully and wonderfully made for such a time as this. And no matter how imperfect we may be, no matter how many times we stumble, His plan remains intact. His mercies are new every morning—every year—for us to start again.

Pondering God's resolutions for me has changed how I am approaching New Year's plans and goals. I am encouraged to bring my ideas to Him in prayer and to listen to what He has to say about them. I am inviting Him into my hopes and dreams. But I am also trying to intentionally embrace His invitation to live out His plan for my life in a deeper way.

What do you want me to do this year, Lord? What area of my life needs attention? Will You be my strength in this, Lord, because I know I can't accomplish this on my own?

To encourage us in our dialog with God about our New Year's resolutions, plans, and goals, I found some Scripture verses that are worth pondering. The Bible is full of God's love letters to us, and He speaks to us personally and intimately through His Word. Perhaps one of these is just perfect for your journey.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. (Psalm 37:4)

I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

So for 2024, I am putting hope for my resolutions in Christ, not myself, to take steps toward healing—all according to His will. The Scripture quote that I am focusing on is from First Corinthians: *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."* (6:19-20)

Whatever you hope to do in the New Year, bring it to the Lord. And in turn He will whisper to you His resolutions, hopes, and dreams for your life. Consistent communication with God (aka prayer) allows our wills to align more with His, and then His resolutions for us will indeed become our own.

What are your New Year's resolutions, goals, or dreams? How can you invite the Lord into your plans? How can you be more attentive to His desires for your life?

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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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Orland Park, IL 60467

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CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
Mon - Fri 9 am - 2 pm

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
9:15 am Adult study

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2 10:00am Push Prayer Christmas Break—No Preschool	3	4	5	6
7 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Worship Traditional Communion Hymnal Service Epiphany Observed	8	9 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	10 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	11 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	12	13
14 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service	15	16 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	17 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	18 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 7:00pm Council Meeting	19	20
21 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Informal Outreach Communion Worship Service	22	23 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	24 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	25 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	26	27
28 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service	29	30 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	31 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool			

January Celebrations



Jan 8 Brad Kempke
Jan 16 Beverly Hodo
Jan 19 Dave Holloway



Jan 4 Eleanor Galik
Jan 8 John Paul Lange

Stewardship Snapshot

December 24th AM

28 Worshipped, 27 Communed
 3 Watched Live
5 Watched Later
 36 Total

Christmas Eve Night

14 Worshipped
 2 Worshipped
12 Worshipped
 28 Total

Christmas Day

8 Worshipped
 2 Worshipped
7 Worshipped
 17 Total

Financial Support for all 3 Services
 \$9,600.00 General Fund

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.

PUSH PRAYER will be available on Zoom now for any of our out-of-towners to join us. I will email the link out to before leaving church on Monday afternoon, so it would be very easy for you to find the email with the link in your inbox. All you have to do is click on the link and it will connect you to the group. **Please see below for the Zoom info for the PUSH PRAYER study on January 2nd.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84588239000?pwd=bS9ZbjRBcXJPmNEcitUMlhOTENoUT09>

Meeting ID: 845 8823 9000 Passcode: 648155

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,84588239000#,,,,*648155# US (Chicago)

+13092053325,,84588239000#,,,,*648155# US

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

ADULT BIBLE STUDY CLASS is every Sunday morning at 9:15am in the conference room. Join Pastor Lee and the others as they review the Word of the our Lord.

Greetings and Salutations

CHRISTMAS CARD was received by our dear friend Carolyn Wagenaar. It was so good seeing pictures of her and knowing that she is doing good, that I just had to share it with all of you. The actual card is up on our bulletin board next to the office. We wish you a very blessed holiday season and a very happy and healthy New Year too. We miss you Carolyn.



It has been a wonderful 2023. I am thankful for my health and ability to exercise. I enjoy my home, family visiting, and being nearby. I got to see my grandson Nathan be pinned as a registered nurse - so proud!! Praying for all to enjoy the blessings of the season and have a happy and healthy 2024.



CHANGE IN SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES are in full swing as we are getting used to the different formats. The first Sunday of every month will be a traditional hymnal worship service and the third Sunday of the month will usually be an informal outreach or praise service and the remaining Sundays will usually be the blended service that we currently have. This will be a trial basis for a 6 month period, which will end at the end of January, 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. If you could give your feedback in the coming weeks on your opinions and likes and dislikes, it would be greatly appreciated. The council will be addressing these surveys in the January council meeting. As always we appreciate your participation and value your input. My apologies for misleading anyone in thinking that we were actually voting on the type of service you prefer.

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available and on the desk in the fellowship hall.

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS! We have a request from Dianna Bonfield from Lutheran Church Charities for a driver to help a gentleman that is in Alden Estates Assisted Living located behind the Marcus Theaters in Orland Park to be able to come to worship. He is 40 years old, has suffered a stroke recently. He is in a wheel chair, but is able to get in and out of cars by himself. If you are interested in helping him, please let me know.

CARE MEALS HAVE RETURNED! We have started up our Care Meal Teams again. I am hoping to be able to organize a few teams of volunteers to help or assist with cooking or buying different dishes for meals for our families that are going through medical issues, hospital stays, treatments and those who might have lost loved ones recently. We currently have 4 volunteers, and we will always accept more people to step up to give a helping hand. If you are interested in volunteering, please let me or Diana know. I will also have a sign up sheet on the desk in the fellowship hall as well. We have already made a meal for Ken Marks' mom last week, and just this week we have made several meals and bought snacks and frozen meals to John and Jay Gabrielson, John is back home now, but he was very appreciative of the care and thought that was shown to them. Thank you in advance for your service and support towards this ministry.

POINSETTIAS ARE BACK! The owner of Baas Greenhouse had retired, the nursery has been purchased and is now called 88th Ave Nursery. They have worked with us to be able to purchase our poinsettias again, yay! They have graciously reduced the delivery fee and will be delivering the multi-plant 8" poinsettias for the same reduced price of the 6" single plants. If you are looking for beautiful hostess gift this season, or just want something colorful and fresh, please visit them, they are opened to the public and they are located at 20143 So. 88th Avenue, Mokena, IL and their phone number is 815-469-1481. They are a small and new business, and they have been more than helpful and kind to us. Let's try to show that same kindness back to them and help them grow their business. If you would like to take one home with you, please do so.

PRAYER REQUEST OF THANKSGIVING for Pastor John as he was in the long-term care facility of the Victorian Village. He is still weak and a fall risk, but as I let everyone know via email, his daughter Lisa had called me a few weeks ago and said that they had re-evaluated his condition and moved him to the regular assisted living building. He is now able to join in the meals in the dining area and/or any activities that he wants to participate in, just as long as he has someone with him. His new room number is at the bottom of this page. Pastor Lee and Elaine visit him on Sundays from time to time, he still tires easily, and is still weak. He has expressed that he is up to having visitors again. Just plan on short visits with him so he doesn't try to overdo it. My apologies if the directives I had been given previously had kept you from visiting him all this while. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they are very concerned about Pastor John, but are very thankful for his incredibly improved condition. 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, **Room #108**, 12600 Renaissance Circle, Homer Glen, IL 60491. Phone number is 708-578-7091.

BALLOTS have been counted to call Pastor Ziemann. The vote was unanimous. We had 28 total votes. Thank you to everyone who voted. Donna has been working on the call documents and we will be sending them to Pastor Ziemann, his church in Painesville, OH and to the district. Please continue to pray for Pastor Ziemann as he contemplates his decision to accept the call or not. Also, please keep our church in your prayers during this time.

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK *But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name. - John 20:31 (NLT)*

God has done many mighty works; some of them are recorded in the Bible, and some of them have occurred in your life. All of them are effective to lead you to faith and then strengthen that faith. The end of the year is an appropriate time to look back and reflect on when and how God has guided and sustained you.

12-31-2023 Message Outline

"He Remembers"

Psalm 111:5b says: *"He remembers his covenant forever..."*

1) The Lord remembered His promise to ZION.

¹⁰ I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign

Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. **62** For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. ² The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will bestow. ³ You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

2) The Lord remembered His promise to YOU.

⁴ But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. ⁶ Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *"Abba, Father."* ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Galatians 4:4-7

3) The Lord remembered His promise to SIMEON.

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." ³³ The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." ³⁶ There was also a prophet,

Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. Luke 2:22-40

CAN YOU IMAGINE **SIMEON**?
WHAT A **PROMISE** HE'D BEEN
GIVEN! I BET THAT **EVERY DAY** HE
WONDERED IF THAT WOULD
BE **THE DAY!**



WWW.AGNUSDAY.ORG

OH YEAH! I
CAN **TOTALLY**
RELATE!



YOU CAN?

YEAH! EVERY DAY I THINK
"WILL THIS BE **THE DAY?**
WILL THIS BE THE **WINNING**
TICKET?"



LUKE 2:22-32

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