



IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 33, Issue 8

February 25, 2024

"Jesus Is Our Teacher"

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| "Jesus Is Our Teacher" | 1 |
| This Week at Living Word | 2 |
| Stewardship Snapshot/Celebrations | 2 |
| Devotional Time | 2 |
| March 2024 Calendar | 3 |
| Living Word News | 4 |
| Living Word Council Meeting Notes | 5 |
| Mission of the Month/Easter Egg Hunt | 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

Throughout John's biography of Jesus, a clear theme emerges: "Who is this guy?"

The answer comes in the form of the famous "I Am" statements. Jesus describes himself in imagistic terms to be "the bread of life ... the resurrection and the life ... the light." In each of these ontological statements, Jesus employs the important Greek phrase *ego eimi*, "I am," which hearkens back to the story of Moses and his interaction with the *I am*. And in case anyone is confused as to whether Jesus means to make such a blasphemous claim, he later boldly declares that "before Abraham was, *I Am*." These statements of identity clue us in to who Jesus is—he is life. He is nourishment. He is God. Skilled scholars have numbered the "I Am" statements to seven. But careful readers will notice that there are more than seven, far more. And one of them has lacked the attention that it deserves. In John 13, after having washed his disciples' feet, Jesus says, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so *I am*". This *I Am* statement—again employing *ego eimi*—misses our count because, for one, it's not imagistic like "bread" or "light." Secondly, it's not a unique claim. Of course Jesus is a teacher; everyone called him "Teacher." Unlike the other statements, saying he's a "teacher" doesn't highlight Jesus' deity. Or does it? After all, Israel has many teachers, but the main one, *the teacher*, is YHWH himself. As the Psalmist says, "Make me to know your ways, O YHWH; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long". By claiming the moniker of "teacher," Jesus is certainly aligning himself with God, the great instructor of sinners. Consider Jesus' appearance to Mary after the resurrection. At first, she doesn't recognize him, thinking him to be one of the gardeners. But after he says her name, she realizes who he is: "Rabboni, which in Aramaic means *teacher*". Central to Jesus' identity, just as important as his being *the resurrection* or *the good shepherd* or *the vine*, is his being our *teacher*.

Learning What To Do Next

Today, many Christians have a form of Christianity in which Jesus is their savior, perhaps even their "lord." But he is not their *teacher*—that is, he doesn't tell them what to do, guide them through life, or correct them when wrong. The commands of Jesus are not taken seriously, nor are they required for belief. No, that would be "works," or worse, "legalism." There's a history to this. The Protestant Reformation rightly placed the locus of salvation with God himself. Man cannot save; only God can. But one of the caricatures of Protestant preaching today is that "you don't need to do anything to be saved ... Jesus has done it all." The result is an entire generation of Christians who prayed a prayer of faith alone but who didn't learn what to do next. The Bible doesn't commend this approach. When the listeners asked Peter, "What must we do to be saved?" he didn't say, "Nothing! Jesus did it all! Isn't that great news?" No, he said, "Repent and be baptized ..." and then they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching". In other words, change your beliefs and allegiances, give up living for yourself, join God's family, receive his forgiveness, and start following the commands of Jesus.

Doing What We Have Learned

This is why the apostles can so easily move between talking about God's grace and mercy and forgiveness to talking about our obedience and response, and obedience and works. To the apostles, these things were not separable into tidy categories like "justification" and "sanctification." No, it is *all* the work of God. Even me learning to obey his teachings is *his* work, because after all, he's the teacher! In the passage from John 13 cited above, Jesus goes on to say, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet". His point is that real "faith" looks like obedience to his teachings. If Jesus is not our teacher, then he's not really our lord at all; and he's likely not our savior. "Only the obedient truly believe, and only the believing truly obey."

The Blessing Inherent in Both

If we don't regard Jesus' primary identity as our *teacher*, we will miss out on perhaps the most significant part of his relationship to us. Jesus came to seek and save, to die on the cross for sins, to grant forgiveness, and to give eternal life. **He also came to instruct us in how we should live. That's what a teacher—or in the Jewish context, a Rabbi—does. He forms a community of followers who learn how God designed them to live.**

This Week at Living Word

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|-----------|--|--|--|----------|--|
| 25 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service | 26 | 27 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer | 28 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 29 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 1 | 2 1:00pm Preschool Tour with New Family |

February Celebrations

| | |
|--|--|
|  Feb 29 Michele Boehm |  Feb 28 Petra Wasilkoff Mar 1 Pam Hostert |
|--|--|

Stewardship Snapshot

February 14th Ash Wednesday

9 Worshipped, 9 Communed

4 Watched Live

1 Watched Later

14 Total

Financial Support

\$140.00 General Fund Deposit

February 18th

21 Worshipped, 19 Communed

4 Watched Live

10 Watched Later

35 Total

Financial Support

\$1,515.00 General Fund Deposit

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 shut-ins to join us. Diana will email the link out to before leaving church on Sunday with the worship link, so it would be easier for you to find the email in your inbox. Just click on the link and it will connect you to the group. **Please see below for the Zoom info for the PUSH PRAYER on February 27th.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86258184087?pwd=NVdpMHJhc0JpbTIZU0pDSE44b3ZZZz09>

Meeting ID: 862 5818 4087 Passcode: 665003

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,86258184087#,,,,*665003# US (Chicago)

+13092053325,,86258184087#,,,,*665003# 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.

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK *But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. - 1 John 1:7 (NLT)*

Sin lives in darkness; when we are in darkness, we can sometimes even convince ourselves that God doesn't know what we're doing (as if anything could be hidden from God). John implores us to deliberately live our lives in the light of God, so that our sin can be revealed to us as sin, and can be confessed, and can be forgiven by God for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ.

March 2024 Calendar

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 1:00pm Pre-school Tour |
| 3 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Worship Traditional Communion Hymnal Service | 4 | 5 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer | 6 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 7 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 8 | 9  Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour |
| 10 Daylight Savings Begins 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service | 11 | 12 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer | 13 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 14 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 15 | 16 |
| 17 St. Patrick's Day 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Communion Worship Service  | 18 | 19 First Day of Spring Election Day (No Preschool) 10:00am Push Prayer | 20 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool | 21 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 7:00pm Council Meeting | 22 | 23 |
| 24 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service Palm Sunday 11:30 Easter Egg Hunt  | 25 | 26 10:00am Push Prayer Spring Break—No Preschool | 27 | 28 | 29 6:00pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service  | 30 |
| 31 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service EASTER Sunday |  | | |  | | |

Living Word News

CHANGE IN SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES: Even though we are now in the month of February, and the council has reviewed everyone's worship survey feedback forms, they have decided to drop the informal service every month, but will continue the traditional hymnal service since that was what most people had indicated on the forms, they did not like the informal service every month but did enjoy the traditional service once a month. For the remainder of the Sundays, we will continue with our regular blended service.

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available and on the desk in the fellowship hall, if they already have been put away, please see me, they are in the office then.

2023 CONTRIBUTION TAX STATEMENTS have been printed out and available on the desk in the fellowship hall. If you have not already picked them up or notified me that you will pick them up this week, I will mail them out next Friday. If you find any discrepancies in the statements, please give me a call or see me in the office.

TRANSITION TEAM will be hard at work once again, since Pastor Ziemann has declined our call. He did not want to disrupt his family more than they have already been through over the past several years. If you would like to step up and volunteer to be on the committee, please just let Diana know. She has emailed President Buss and his assistant and Pastor Schauer with our request for another list of names of pastors that we can talk to.

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 5 volunteers, and we will always accept more people to step up to give a helping hand. We don't need you to have to cook anything, one will donate money when need be. If you are interested in volunteering, please let me or Diana know. There is a sign up sheet on the desk in the fellowship hall as well. We have already made a meal for Ken Marks' mom late last year, and we have made several meals and bought snacks and frozen meals to John and Jay Gabrielson at the end of the year also. Thank you in advance for your service and support towards this ministry.

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 couple of months 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 and won't get too overwhelmed. 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 for Victorian Village is 708-578-7091, so just ask for Pastor John Bucka when they answer.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL had their monthly meeting last Thursday. Among the topics that were discussed was the congregation to vote on our worship services, financials, preschool, security cameras, call committee updates and our constitution. The notes from the meeting are on the next page.

OUR PRESCHOOL IS GETTING BIGGER!!! Mrs. Diana had the 7th student had start this month. Her 8th student will be starting next week, right after she turns 3. She has another tour scheduled for next week. Also, the family that just registered Margot, is hoping to register their son, who has just turned 5, but they would like for him to come on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so he can be prepared for kindergarten next year. He should be starting in March. Plus she already knows that 2 or 3 of her students will be returning for sure next year. This may end up being her biggest class yet. Please keep spreading the word about what a wonderful teacher Mrs. Diana is and what a wonderful program that she has at the preschool. Check out all of the transportation crafts that they have made so far this month. There is another transportation craft on her bulletin board, she has changed everything out this month, as it was a new month, so it's a new theme for her students. The theme of course, is love and all the ways we show how we care for and love people.

Living Word Council Meeting

Living Word Lutheran Church

Council Notes

Thursday, February 15, 2024, at 7pm

Attendees- Diana M, Bill M, Phil H, Neal H, and Ken M

The meeting was opened with a prayer from Phil at 7:05 pm.

We began the meeting with financials. Bill did move over the \$11,000 we agreed on last meeting to the growth fund. Right now, in our general fund, we have \$79,462.99. Neal has talked with Proven about getting a copier instead of us paying a monthly fee for one. We also talked about how we may need to get a new phone for Bev's office. All other financials looked good.

Diana then let everyone know that the 8th preschooler will start on Feb 26th. She will also have a preschool open house on Saturday, April 13th from 11:00 to 12:30. She did have to buy a new potty seat for preschool as some of her smaller students struggle with our bigger toilets. She will need to buy snacks soon.

For our mission of the month, Children's Ministry Diana has purchased eggs for the Easter Egg hunt. So far, we have 59 kids signed up. She will still need to get candy for the eggs. She will also be ordering the VBS curriculum soon. The date has been set for July 22nd – 26th.

For the call committee update Diana has reached out to the district to get a new list of pastors so they will be working on that. Neal spoke with Pastor Schauer about doing an evaluation of the church for the district. He said that they have 27 SMPs graduating and 92 seminarians this year. Someone also came to Diana asking if we were able to change our constitution so that if we close our doors, we can have a say in where the money goes instead of giving it to the district. Neal said this is something he talked about to Pastor Whitby and Pastor Schauer when he became president, and the church was built with funds from the district so it is the districts and can't change it. This includes any funds in the bank accounts or endowment fund.

Pastor Lee would like to take some time off in the summer and also take Feb 25th. He will work with Bill on doing a sermon. As a council, we have agreed that if Pastor Lee is writing or working on part of a sermon for a service even if he is not going to be there, he will get ½ of his pay.

A few people have approached Diana about the services and how we should now vote on what services we do. It was previously mentioned that due to feedback from the surveys filled out, people did not like the informal service, and a few didn't seem to always want a traditional service. We had talked at the last meeting that we would just now do a traditional service on the 1st of the month and the rest blended. Diana mentioned that the reason people did not like the informal service was due to it not being what they thought it was going to look like. Diana brought up that maybe the sermon for an informal service could not have bullet points and just be more of a discussion sermon. The council agreed and Bill will speak with Pastor Lee about that. Bill will see if Pastor Lee could try and change that service up a little and give some people more time to experience that. We would inform the congregation that we are going back to the drawing board a little and will keep testing out the services and then the congregation will vote on what service they would like to see or attend.

Neal is having a company come out and look at placing a better security camera system around the church as the ones we have now are just not very reliable. This company could also change our fire alarm batteries.

Neal also let the council know that he will have someone come out and survey the property to see where all our property lines are. This way we can also make sure that the neighbor who has the trampoline is not on our property. Then we also know for sure where our property starts and ends.

Bill did say that Eleanor had made a donation and would like \$25 of that donation to go to the Children's Ministry. Diana made a motion that the \$25 be moved and Neal 2nd. The council voted unanimously.

Bill closed the meeting with prayer at 8:41 pm.

Mission of the Month



February Mission of the Month 2024

We will be collecting donations all month long to help fund special projects for our children's ministry. This includes supplies for our Easter Egg Hunt and VBS.

Easter Egg Hunt

OUR ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT will be on Palm Sunday, March 24th, shortly after our service. Diana has sent out the emails to all of our past Easter Egg Hunts and to the families who have participated in our VBS programs each year. So far, she already has over 60 kids signed up for the event. You can see on the bottom of this page, she is dedicating the month of February for our Children's Ministry as the Mission of the Month. Donations that will be collected will go towards supplies that she needs for the both the Easter Egg Hunt and VBS. Depending on the weather of course, we usually have anywhere from 60—80 kids that sign up for the event, so if you are able to stay after service that day to help check in the families and direct them to the designated areas according to the children's ages, it would be very much appreciated. Also, if you happen to be able to come a bit earlier prior to service, she will be distributing the eggs in each of the areas. You might want to wear boots or shoes that if they get wet or muddy, your feet will still be dry, lol.



Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, March 24th @ 11:30 a.m.

Ages 1-13

Registration is required please see our children's activities tab on our website