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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 33, Issue 5

February 4, 2024

"Who Is Like Thee?"

We humans know our language cannot communicate the greatness of the divine, but we try anyway. We love to use the prefix omni, which takes a common adjective and expands it to the size of the universe: omnifarious, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, omni-loving, omni-merciful, omni-cool. The omni words are reserved for God and God alone.

The prophet Isaiah has an omni-tough assignment. He's been called to proclaim hope in the midst of despair, to tell the exiles in Babylon that God is on the way to deliver them just when they have begun to seriously doubt it. In a risky but effective homiletical strategy, Isaiah proclaims the greatness of the Lord in contrast to the insignificance of the people. Who are they to question God's ways, God's abilities? Earlier in this sermon he asks, "Whom does God consult for enlightenment? . . . Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales." Here is a metaphor of our smallness compared to our omni-everything God.

The universe is beyond our comprehension, and we wonder how much we still have not discovered or experienced. We realize that we are the speck of inconsequential dust on the scales, as Isaiah described.

This prophet is a master at putting God and humankind in perspective. He asks wonderful rhetorical questions: To whom will you compare me? Who is my equal? When we're posed such questions, we know the liturgically correct response, and yet the questions in our souls persist.

The truth is we compare God to ourselves. We measure divine actions against our own. We think we know what we would do, what we would enact or change if we were omni-everything.

Like Aladdin with a lamp we think we would make wonderful wishes. People would have all the riches they wanted. There would be an end to all strife and disease, and death would be banished from the earth. Do we not all wonder from time to time, from funeral to funeral, from war to war, why God does not fire up that omnipotence and straighten things out?

Isaiah reminded the people that their ways were not God's ways, neither were their thoughts divine thoughts. It's hard for us to believe that our measures of what is just, what is merciful and what is best are not in sync with the mind of God. They seem good to us. But we are not omni, Isaiah says. We have some perspective, but not the omni-perspective of God, who knows the movement of all history toward all futures, who knows our place among those billions of galaxies. For all we know, our struggles with cancer are part of an evolutionary process within God's billion-year scheme to create a posthuman being. We speak matter-of-factly about the evolutionary process behind us, noting that creatures climbed from the sea onto land, that gills became lungs. But what did these creatures go through one by one over all those years as the Creator continued creating? Can we believe that God is still creating man and woman into something, we know not what?

When the calculations comparing our smallness with God's greatness are finished, we can react to our position in the universe in several ways. We can slink away in despair and denial or we can crawl back into God's big saving hands. Isaiah proclaimed, and the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus confirmed, that this God who knows all, creates all, controls all and plans all also loves all. God has no inconsequential creatures or untended corners of the universe. God tells us how precious we are in God's sight.


The proclamation is always a shock because it's not the way we operate. We who counsel each other to let the little things go, we who can only manage a limited number of details are amazed by God yet again. God has the whole world well in hand. I for one am happy to live inside a wrinkle of God's palm, content to be a part of an ongoing creation process, amazed to be so loved and, most days, unafraid of what it all means.

This Week at Living Word

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Traditional Worship Communion Service	5	6 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer Preschool Tour with new family	7 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	8 9:00am—12:00pm Preschool	9	10

February Celebrations

Stewardship Snapshot

<p>Church Contacts <i>intouchlwlc@yahoo.com</i> Ministry Support Coordinator, Diana Motel <i>dianamotel@yahoo.com</i></p> <p>Leadership Team</p> <p>Neal Hartz - President Ken Marks—Vice President Bill Merchantz - Treasurer Diana Motel - Secretary</p> <p>Members at Large Paul Huang</p>	 Feb 4 David Holloway Feb 5 Phil Hauze Feb 5 Anita Meier Feb 6 Delores Urbank	<p>January 28th</p> <p>31 Worshipped 5 Watched Live 13 Watched Later 49 Total</p> <p>Financial Support \$3,460.00 General Fund 133.00 Mission of the Month \$3,593.00 Total General Fund Deposit</p>
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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 easier for you to find the email with the link 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 6th.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87036211813?pwd=YUN6NXYwY09yQXd4QkRwMnJraWpPUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 3621 1813 Passcode: 769800

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,87036211813#,,,,*769800# US (Chicago)

+13092053325,,87036211813#,,,,*769800# 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 *Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me."* - John 21:22 (NLT)

When envy attacks us, Jesus calls us back to Himself, reminding us that our job is to follow His leading for us, and not to be concerned about how He is leading someone else. Being content in our own relationship with God is a great blessing,

Living Word Endowment Fund

LIVING WORD ENDOWMENT FUND (as of 1/31/2024)

The current value of the fund is \$170,765.12 invested in Thrivent funds. Current market value exceeds cost of investments by \$31,258.84. Since inception (10/12/05), the Fund has earned interest and dividends totaling \$54,525.55. Of this, \$27,262.78 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	31,258.84
	<u>Dividends and interest</u>	<u>54,525.55</u>
	Total market value	\$170,765.12



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

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 21 kids signed up for the event. You can see on the following 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

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.

JANUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH was Gideons Bible Ministry. We had collected \$133.00 plus Phil had some people drop off additional cash in his collection box that he had here on the table. Thank you so very much for the generous donations that you had given throughout this month.

ANOTHER THANK YOU NOTE was received from Lutheran Bible Translators this past week. They were our Mission of the Month recently. The card reads: *"Thank you for your gift. We appreciate your partnership in mission that others can be reached with God's Word through their own language. Jesus be with you, Elva"* The post card can be found on the bulletin board.

Preschool News



OUR PRESCHOOL IS GETTING BIGGER!!!

Mrs. Diana had the 6th student had started this month when they returned from Christmas break, Cooper is fitting in very nicely. She already has had 2 tours the last two weeks, so her 7th student is starting on Tuesday, the class will be welcoming Margot, she is 3 1/2. Her 8th student will be starting February 27th, right after she turns 3. She has another tour scheduled for next week. Also, the family that just registered Margot to start on Tuesday, is hoping to register their son, who has just turned 5, but they would like for him to come on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 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 will be changing everything out this week, as it's a new month, so it will be a new theme for her students.

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 find any discrepancies in the statements, please give me a call or see me in the office.

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 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 last month, and we have made several meals and bought snacks and frozen meals to John and Jay Gabrielson last month 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.



"My Delight"

Psalm 147 says: *"The Lord delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."* Where do I find my delight...?

1) My delight comes from KNOWING.

²¹Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? ²²He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. ²³He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. ²⁴No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. ²⁵"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. ²⁶Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. ²⁷Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. ²⁹He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. ³⁰Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; ³¹but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:21-31

2) My delight comes from GROWING.

¹⁶For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel. ¹⁹Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. ²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Corinthians 9:16-27

3) My delight comes from GOING.

²⁹As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³²That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon possessed. ³³The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. ³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" ³⁸Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Mark 1:29-39

PAUL SURE IS ABOUT ADAPTABILITY. ABSOLUTELY



SHARING THE GOSPEL WAS PARAMOUNT FOR HIM. HE STOPPED AT NOTHING.



I FEEL LIKE RICH PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT JESUS.



It's a sacrifice that we're willing to make.