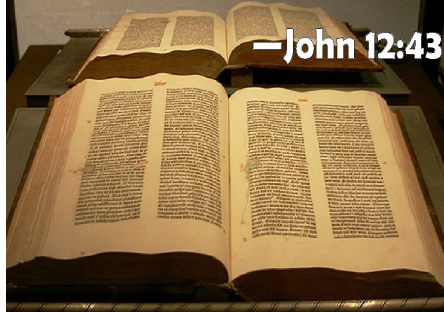


For they loved the praise
of men more than the
praise of God.

—John 12:43

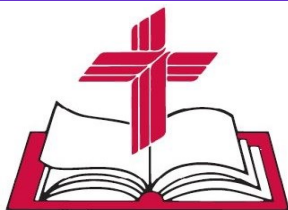


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PRAYER CHAIN REQUESTS

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

livingwordorland.org
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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 12

March 24, 2024

"Palm Sunday"

The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going" (John 12:35b). These words from Jesus in our text stood out to me more than usual this year. The reason is obvious.

Jesus was not talking about the coronavirus, of course. He was talking about Himself and about reality for those who live apart from Him. But the light/darkness metaphor is always apt for those who live by faith and it is a prominent theme throughout John's Gospel. So, without reading present circumstances haphazardly into the text and without taking this half-verse completely out of context, you might consider preaching a Palm Sunday sermon by reflecting on the reality of what we *do not* know. If the pattern continues, we will stumble into Holy Week this year unsure about many things we have been taking for granted for a long time, which is a disconcerting thought, but it is also honest. We may be hesitant to acknowledge it, and we often do a fairly good job of convincing ourselves otherwise, but much of life is unknown. Indeed, *most* of life is lived without knowing exactly what comes next.

The crowds on Palm Sunday were in such a situation. They had gone out to meet Jesus because He had raised Lazarus from the dead. But they did not understand why He had come or where He would lead them. Their disappearance later in the week reveals their ignorance. The disciples were similarly unaware. John explicitly tells us they did not understand what Jesus was doing as He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey, and this was not the first time John describes what the disciples did not know about Jesus. In both cases, they were in the dark until after His resurrection. Only in the light of Easter did they understand who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him.


This could be a helpful connection for your hearers today. More this year than most, we are acutely aware of our ignorance. Like the crowds and disciples at the beginning of Holy Week, we do not know what is coming next. But, also like the disciples in John 2:22 and 12:16, we have heard about Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. We believe, having been lifted-up, He is in the process of drawing all people to Himself (12:32). That is why we continue to gather (in person and on-line) to celebrate such things as Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. We are witnesses of His glorification through His suffering, death, and victory over the grave. Our God-given faith, despite our lack of sight, has made us sons and daughters of light (12:36) who walk in the light even during dark times.

As you consider the questions and fears that characterize your hearers' lives these days, I would suggest you help them begin Holy Week this year by naming and facing directly their present uncertainties. Invite them to identify with the disciples who were in the dark all week long. The disciples did not see the resurrection coming, and as a result they spent much of the week in fear and confusion.

But we know, and you have the privilege of proclaiming, the resurrection was coming. Indeed, that it has come! Which means we know where the present situation will lead. We do not know how, or when, or what will take place in the short-term. But we do know, and you will proclaim clearly and confidently, that Jesus has risen from the dead. More than this, He promises resurrection for all who trust in Him. No amount of social-distancing, or quarantining, or stay-at-home orders, or anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the resurrecting love of God in Christ. He has made us sons and daughters of light and He sends us to live in and share His light with a world struggling through darkness and uncertainty.

This Week at Living Word

Page 2

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
24 9:15am Adult Bi-ble Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service 11:30am Easter Egg Hunt	25	26 <div style="text-align: center; color: #00B0F0; font-weight: bold;">Spring Break—No Preschool</div> 10:00am Push Prayer	27	28	29 6:00pm Good Friday Tenebrae Service 	30

March Celebrations

Happy Anniversary



March 25 Peter & Donna Wasilkoff

Stewardship Snapshot

March 17th

17 Worshipped
 3 Watched Live
10 Watched Later
 30 Total

Financial Support
 Offering was not counted last week

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 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 March 26th.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88083132715?pwd=YUVORXRUEURaQjE1YzY5ejU5NU8rZz09>

Meeting ID: 880 8313 2715 Passcode: 717772

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,88083132715#,,,,*717772# US (Chicago)

+13092053325,,88083132715#,,,,*717772# 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

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK *For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. - 1 John 2:16 (NIV)*

Although we remain in the world, we are called to not love it. As the Father's love fills us, we are able to resist the desire to love this world more than the next, the desire to dwell in lust, covetousness, greed and pride, to look to ourselves rather than God. Nurturing our relationship with Christ is the key to doing this.

VERSE OF THE MONTH *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those that love Him. James 1:12*

JOIN US FOR GOOD FRIDAY The Good Friday Tenebrae service is this Friday, March 29th at 6:00pm. Please join us both in person and/or livestreamed via Facebook or YouTube.

EASTER MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE will be at our regular time on Sunday, March 31st.

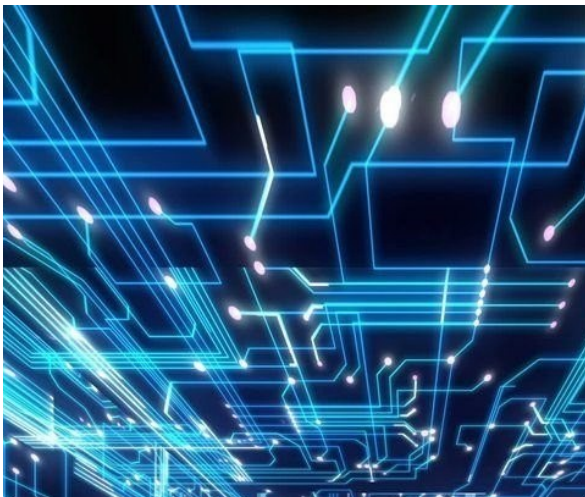


March Mission of the Month

March Mission of the Month

Technology Fund

For the month of March, we will be collecting donations to update some of our technology. We will be installing a new security camera system and also updating some of our computers. Bev's computer needs to be replaced. As we love to help other organizations and our community we also need to do some updating around the church. You can bring your donation to church, mail it, or use our giving page and select Mission of the Month. Thank you for all your continued support.



Living Word News

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.

OUR PRESCHOOL IS GETTING BIGGER AGAIN!!! She had another tour last Saturday, they have their 3 year old daughter registered for next fall. Also, the family that just registered Margot last month, registered their son now, who has just turned 5, he will come Tuesdays and Thursdays, as he goes to the park district the other 3 days, so he can be prepared for kindergarten next year. He started this week, who is the 9th student. A mom and her daughter came for tour, and she will be the 10th student that started on Wednesday. Plus she now knows that 3 or 4 of her students will be returning for sure next year. This is now her biggest class yet since the fall of 2019. 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 crafts they have made this month. She has changed everything out last weekend, as it is a new month, so it's a new theme for her students. The theme is underwater and under the seas. Make sure you check out her "aquarium" in the Dramatic Arts Play Room. The kids will love learning all about sea life and all the mammals and animals that live under the sea. They are also learning about submarines, and what they do. And they found out that they can make their own little aquarium.

NEED A CHRISTMAS TREE? Please contact me in the office if you're in need of a different Christmas Tree for next year. With all of the truly generous Christmas donations within the past couple of years, we are looking to pass the generosity forward to anyone who is need of a tree. It is never too early to think about Christmas and decorating for the festive holiday, lol.



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 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 can participate in, just as long as he has someone with him. His new room number is at the bottom of this page. 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 improved condition. If you would like to send cards or well wishes or to call him, here is the complete address: John Bucka, C/O Victorian Village, **Rm #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.



OUR ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT is today right 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 120 kids signed up for the event. This is our largest Egg Hunt yet. Depending on the weather of course, we usually only 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. We may need people to help direct the cars as to where they can park. 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 other shoes so that if they get wet or muddy, you can change into your regular shoes so your feet will still be dry, lol. She has already received her first order of Easter eggs, and she has placed a second order seeing how many have registered for it. Diana has now closed registration in order for everyone to be able park safely and drive thru the parking lot safely.

Preschool Easter Egg Hunt



"The Gate of the Lord"

Today we pray with Psalm 118: *"Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks... This is the gate of the Lord..."*

1) The gate of the Lord opens from bondage to **FREEDOM**.

⁹ Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you. Zechariah 9:9-12

2) The gate of the Lord opens through humility to **GLORY**.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:5-11

3) The gate of the Lord opens past death to **ETERNAL LIFE**.

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. ²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. ²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴ The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?" ³⁵ Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. ³⁶ Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them. ³⁷ Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. ³⁸ This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: "Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" ³⁹ For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: ⁴⁰ "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them." ⁴¹ Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. ⁴² Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

John 12:20-43

