

IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 33, Issue 50

December 22, 2024

"S.T.R.E.S.S."

King Jehoshaphat heard that he was about to be attacked by three different armies. Talk about stress! His response is the example you need to follow when life gets overwhelming. His story is told in 2 Chronicles 20. Using the word S.T.R.E.S.S., we learn the following lessons:

S – Seek God's guidance. *'Jehoshaphat...set himself to seek the Lord' (v. 3).* Years prior when his father, King Asa, faced a similar threat, he responded by collecting the silver and gold from the temple and his palace and using it to bribe one of the raiding kings to defect to his side. That solved the immediate problem – but not without negative consequences. Although the invasion endeavor was abandoned, God became angry at his reliance on another king to help him conquer his enemies (see 2 Chronicles 16:1-9). So, He pronounced Asa's punishment for the rest of his reign: *'In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars' (v. 9).* He would live with the stress of constantly being at war because he had not sought after God's counsel first. So, Jehoshaphat, his son, decided that he wasn't going to take that route.

How about you? Do you stress out, attempting to figure out a solution instead of finding out how God wants you to deal with it? Think of the last problem you faced. Did you rely on the opinions of others or on your own ideas, or was your first idea to seek God? God promises this: *'You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart' (Jeremiah 29:13).* So, talk to God about it!

T - Trust what God tells you. *'You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord...Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you' (v. 17).* God's way of resolving our problems can frequently go against our logic. Maybe that is why we are hesitant to approach Him in certain matters.

Why would God instruct Jehoshaphat's army, which was clearly no match for three armies, to show up prepared for a battle they were not intended to fight? That didn't make any sense! God will many times tell us to 'position' ourselves to deal with a demanding task or problem we feel completely inadequate to tackle. Our challenge is to obey Him and position ourselves to win. How do you do that?

1) You 'position' yourself when you choose to go to university, even though you may not have achieved well in secondary school.

2) You 'position' yourself when you resign from a job at God's urging and start a new business, even though a long list of customers or clients isn't waiting in the wings.

3) You 'position' yourself when you sit down at your computer each day to write a book you have always desired to write – without a head full of knowledge but with a heart full of faith that God will join you there with His words.

God's instruction is to position ourselves for victory. He wants us to show up, so He can show Himself strong on our behalf (see 2 Chronicles 16:9).

R - Remember past victories. Notice how King Jehoshaphat prayed: *'Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?' (2 Chronicles 20:7).* If God has ever performed a miracle for you or for anybody else, He can do it again. So, read His Word and strengthen your faith by recalling His great deeds.

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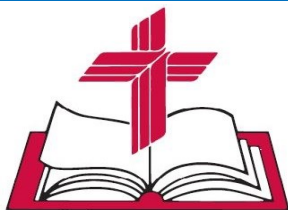
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PRAYER CHAIN

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

This Week at Living Word

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Communion Worship Service	23	24  5:30 pm Christ- mas Eve Service In Person Livestreamed Christmas Break—No	25 10:00am Christmas Day Service In Person Only Office Closed Preschool	26	27	28

Stewardship Snapshot

Church Contacts

Church Contacts

intouchlwlc@yahoo.com

Ministry Support Coordinator, Diana Motel

dianamotel@yahoo.com

Leadership Team

Neal Hartz - President

Ken Marks—Vice President

Bill Merchantz - Treasurer

Diana Motel - Secretary

Members at Large

Paul Huang

December 15th

43 Worshipped

2 Watched Live

10 Watched Later

55 Total

Financial Support

1,220.00 General Fund Deposit

Celebrations



Dec 29

Pam Hostert

Dec 30

Rick Boehm

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 your requests, or join us for 30-40 minutes each week. You can also join on Zoom. With the upcoming Christmas holidays next week, the PUSH Prayer Group will not be meeting on Tuesday, December 24th.

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 *We were therefore buried with [Christ] through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. - Romans 6:4 (NIV)*

Are you taking your walk with Christ seriously, growing in Him daily? Otherwise you will drift; otherwise you will end up taking Christ's sacrifice for granted and becoming enamored of the things of this world.

We are intended to be dead to sin, and alive in Christ. I pray that you would know that life today.

VERSE OF THE MONTH ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."- *Joshua 1:9 (NIV)*

Living Word Endowment Fund

LIVING WORD ENDOWMENT FUND (as of 11/30/2024)

The current value of the fund is \$189,682.70 invested in Thrivent funds. Current market value exceeds cost of investments by \$47,337.77. Since inception (10/12/05), the Fund has earned interest and dividends totaling \$57,364.20. Of this, \$28,682.10 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	47,337.77
	<u>Dividends and interest</u>	<u>57,364.20</u>
	Total market value	\$189,682.70



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

December Celebrations



"S.T.R.E.S.S."

Continued from Page 1

E – Exalt God above the problem. ‘O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?’ (v. 6). In his anguish, Jehoshaphat asked rhetorical questions that exposed how big his God was compared to the problem. Sometimes it’s difficult to look past the problem when the reality of it is so close. If you close one eye and put a coin over your other eye, you can blind yourself to something as big as the sun. Getting the idea?

S – Solicit the prayers and support of others. ‘Jehoshaphat...proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah...they came to seek the Lord’. Jehoshaphat didn’t ask the people for their opinions but for their prayers, because that’s what moves the heart of God.

S – Stand on the promises of God. When you do, you can say like the psalmist, ‘As pressure and stress bear down on me, I find joy in your commands’ (Psalm 119:143 NLT).

That’s God’s formula for stress – now use it.

Living Word News

PRAYER REQUEST OF THANKSGIVING for Pastor John as he is in the regular assisted living building. He was reevaluated again last month. He has expressed that he is up to having some visitors and phone calls again. He is walking around more, he is still very leery to want to go out as he doesn't want to take the risk of falling again. Please keep him and his family in your prayers as they are very concerned about Pastor John, as we all are, and 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. He is in good spirits and alert throughout the day, he is still struggling with having dizziness and falling, but other than that he is doing well. Neal had visited with him this last Wednesday, and while Neal was still there, Diana and I had called Neal, so we were able to say hello to him, and of course Pastor John had told Neal to tell all of us that he sends his best to his Living Word family. Likewise Pastor John, we send you our very best and you are always in our prayers and thoughts. Have a very blessed Christmas Pastor John!

PRAYER REQUEST of thanksgiving for Eleanor Galik. She accidentally tripped last month and has a broken left hip. She is so grateful for all of the prayers that she receives from us all. She has a wonderful therapist in Florida, Marilouise, and she has been working very hard. She played hooky this past Tuesday for prayer group. It wasn't because she was celebrating her birthday too much, her right leg was still bothering her a lot. She went to the hospital and doctor, this week they gave her shot and muscle relaxant and she is starting to feel better. She will have a blood test on Monday just to make sure everything else is fine. You are doing great Eleanor, keep up the hard work, just don't overdo it too much. We love you. If you would like to send her a card or a little note while she is in Florida, come see me for her new address.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES have changed slightly. We will be having our regular Christmas Eve Candlelight service at 5:30pm., that will be both in person and livestreamed, and then Christmas Day service will be at 10:00am, but only in person. We would like to wish everyone a very merry and joyous Christmas holiday.

GOD'S GRACE AND COMFORT for the Lange family. Pastor Lange's mom, Nancy passed away earlier this week. Please join me in keeping Pastor Lange and all of his family in your prayers for comfort and strength as this will be a very difficult holiday for them now. God's blessings to them all.

PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM was last Sunday. The kids did such a great job singing and dancing for us. The three angels and a wise man were very entertaining. Even some future preschool students wanted to help out and join them. You know they're ready for preschool.

Mission of the Month

DECEMBER MISSION OF THE MONTH is The Orland Township Food Pantry. We will be collecting all of December for this very worthwhile organization, who helps provide groceries to the low income families of Orland Park and Orland Hills who need immediate assistance. At the end of December we will have all of your donations deposited into the General Fund and Bill will write a check to them and it will then get mailed to the Village Office.



The Orland Township Food Pantry supplies food to low-income residents who need immediate assistance.

Greetings

Eleanor Galik
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 708. 302.1686

Dear Loved One, & Friends

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a healthy new year!



During the Winter, I'm staying with Karl and Marilouise who have recently moved from Naples to The Villages. We are all enjoying the fun activities that are here.

I'm recovering from a fall in Chicago that cracked my pelvis - but I'm doing well because I'm living with a Physical Therapist. Every day Marilouise works to help me heal and get back to normal.

From April through October I'm living in Orland Park, Illinois with Eileen and Steve. I enjoy working flowers in their yard and floating in their pool! I spend some long weekends also with Cindy and Dan

where we enjoy time together. Karen occasionally drives up from Sothern Illinois to visit, shop and relax Ptogether.

I keep track of all 29 great-grandchildren's; 10 grandchildren's and my own four kids' birthdays and call to sing Happy Birthday to each one. My cup truly overflows.

I pray you will enjoy your celebrations of Jesus' birth and appreciate all God's gifts all year long. I'd love to hear from you!

Merry Christmas and love and hugs,

GiGi

*Eleanor
 Blessing to all*

GREETINGS FROM ELEANOR was received this week. She is doing better day by day, and she sends her Christmas wishes to all of us here at Living Word. Thank you for the beautiful letter and picture Eleanor. We miss you and can't wait till you come back in the spring. Just make sure you bring some of that Florida sunshine and warm temps back with you, lol, and a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year! The actual note and letter is posted on the bulletin board next to the office, and if you need her new address, just let me know.

12-22-2024 Message Outline

“Restore Us, O God!”

Psalm 80 says: “Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.” This Advent we pray, “Restore us, O God...!”

1) Restore us, O God, by Christ’s SHEPHERD STRENGTH!

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” ³Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. ⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth. ⁵And he will be our peace when the Assyrians invade our land and march through our fortresses. We will raise against them seven shepherds, even eight commanders, ...
Micah 5:2-5a

2) Restore us, O God, through Christ’s SIN SACRIFICE.

⁵Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; ⁶with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. ⁷Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.’” ⁸First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. ⁹Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
Hebrews 10:5-10

3) Restore us, O God, with Christ’s SPIRIT SOUND.

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”
Luke 1:39-45

