



IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

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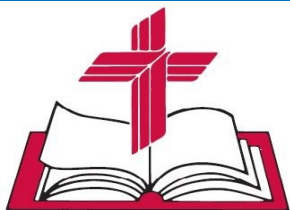
"Good News? - Yes, Really!"

Inside this issue:

"Good News? - Yes, Really!"	1
This Week at Living Word/Celebrations	2
Stewardship Snapshot/Devotional Time	2
Preschool News & Pics	3
Living Word News	4
Mission of the Month	4
1-12-2025 Message Outline	5
Community Event	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

It sure did not sound like good news. If I were to describe his preaching, I would choose other words to summarize what he said. Dire warnings, serious threats, harsh judgments; these seem more accurate. As a revered homiletics professor once said about a sermon in which the Law was preached particularly sternly, John the Baptist "drilled without Novocain." The drilling began at verse 7: "You brood of vipers... Bear fruit... The axe is at the foot of the tree... Share your tunic and your food... Do no extort... Be content..." By the time he got to the end, the image of a winnowing fork, a threshing floor, and an unquenchable fire ensured no one could have heard him without squirming.

Which is why Luke's description of his preaching in verse 18 is a little surprising. Luke tells us John "preached good news to the people." Really? "Good" news? The first part of verse 18 and its reference to "many other exhortations" seems a little closer, but Luke knew what he was doing, and so did John. Preaching the Law is like that. It is never a comfortable experience because sin is that bad. The Law always accuses, and its accusation reaches to the core of our being. Much worse than a thin layer of plaque which can be gently scraped away once every six months, sin is a cancer that poisons our hearts, relationships, and ability to live as the crown of God's creation. There is only one thing to do with sin, which is nothing short of complete and uncompromising extraction. Such extraction is uncomfortable when you have grown comfortable with sin. And let us be honest, we have ALL grown comfortable with sin. How could we not? It is the only existence we have ever known. Each of us has been turned in on ourselves in our own unique way since birth. For some of us, it is our inability to acknowledge the possibility that we might be wrong (we call that pride). For others, it is the refusal to let go of the grudge or forgive the person who has wronged us (we call that unforgiveness.) For still others, it is the continual thirst for more and more and more until we are satisfied with less and less and less (we call that discontent.) At their root, these are all the same problem: Idolatry. We fear, love, and trust something, anything, more than our Creator.

This tragic condition is the beginning of the good news John preached. "The Gospel is bad news before it is good news. It is the news that man is a sinner, to use the old word, that he is evil in the imagination of his heart." It is not until we see how bad things are that we will appreciate how gracious God is.

Which brings us to the words of the Father at Jesus' baptism in verse 22. God was not pleased with every other human. Beginning with His own chosen people who had wandered so regularly and so repeatedly, God was displeased with His human creatures. But instead of washing them away as in the days of Noah, God used water in this text to begin His mission to save. "You are My beloved Son," He said to Jesus. "With you I am well pleased". He would continue to be pleased as Jesus brought healing to the sick, sight to the blind, forgiveness to the guilty, and life to the dead. The Father would remain pleased even as Jesus was rejected by His own people and even as they hung Him on a tree. He was pleased with Jesus as He made His own Son to become the very sin which infects us all. It sure did not seem like the Father was pleased with Him at that point. But in hindsight, when the pain was in the past and Jesus was raised from the dead, the pleasure of the Father with His Son was clear. God is pleased with us, too. Not because we have made ourselves pleasing to Him, but His grace and mercy, freely given to us in our own baptisms, has changed us. He has healed us. This is exceptionally good news, indeed. It is the good news (along with healthy, Christian exhortations). Do not hold back on our great need for forgiveness. Even more, the good news that, because of the baptized One, the crucified and risen One, the returning One, the Father is pleased with us, too.

This Week at Living Word

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
12 9:15am Adult Bible Study 10:00am Blended Worship Service Baptism of Our Lord	13	14 9am–Noon Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	15 9am–Noon Preschool	16 9am–Noon Preschool	17	18

Celebrations



Stewardship Snapshot

January 5th 16 Worshipped, 15 Communed 7 Watched Online 23 Total Financial Support 1,890.00 General Fund Deposit
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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 your requests, or join us for 30-40 minutes each week. You can also join on Zoom.

PUSH PRAYER will be available on Zoom now for any of our out-of-towners and/or shut-ins to join us., I will email the link on Monday afternoons or Tuesday mornings, 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 January 14th.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84076099900?pwd=d3BxLBWbTlZRVpuSGhgTXc2dGRldz09>

Meeting ID: 840 7609 9900 Passcode: 427470

Join Zoom Meeting—One tap mobile

+13126266799,,84076099900#,,,,*427470# US (Chicago) +13092053325,,84076099900#,,,,*427470# US

DEVOTIONAL OF THE WEEK But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Acts 20:24 (ESV)

VERSE OF THE MONTH ⁵³ Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. ⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life¹⁰ and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.— *Isaiah 53 (NIV)*

Preschool News and Pics

PRESCHOOL'S DINOSAUR MUSEM is open, lol and the kids are having fun learning all about dinosaurs this month. They have been listening to stories about what had happened to them and what they eat. The Dinosaur Museum in the Dramatic Arts Play Room has several different dinosaurs visiting Living Word. The kids have been learning which ones are herbivores and which ones are carnivores. Mrs. Diana pulled up some dinosaur videos for the children to watch as they have snack time. They also have been able to go on their own dinosaur digging adventures. Its only their first week back and they have been very busy already. They're even making their own dinosaurs. Be sure you come and check out the museum before the end of the month.



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 #128**, 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 very well. Keep up the good work Pastor John, we miss you!

PRAYER REQUEST of thanksgiving for Eleanor Galik. She accidentally tripped early in her back yard in November and has a broken left hip, which is now starting to heal some. 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 had to go back to the emergency room and doctor this past week as she now has pneumonia. Please keep her in your prayers that she gets over this bout of illness quickly, and that she can start enjoying her time in sunny Florida. You are doing great Eleanor, keep up the hard work, just don't overdo it too much. We love you. As always, she sends her love and her wishes to us and keeps us and our church in her prayers everyday. 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.

OFFERING STATEMENTS for 2024 are available, and in the box on the desk in the fellowship hall. Due to getting a new computer this past year, our outdated Servant Keeper software was not compatible with the brand new computer, I had to reload all of the offerings into Excel. So please double check your statements to see if there are any errors. I have all of the offering envelopes from each week, and I have the Excel spreadsheets for all of the weekly counts, so it will be easy to verify the information.

ORLAND PARK FOOD PANTRY will be receiving a check from us for \$145.00. Thank you so much for your generous contributions and support. I am sure it will help them greatly to replenish their shelves after their holiday meal programs.

CHURCH UNDECORATING from Christmas will be today after service. We will be helping Kyle out with his service hours for his belt testing for taekwondo. I'm glad we waited a week, lol.

Mission of the Month

JANUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH is Faith Comes By Hearing. We will be collecting all of January for this very worthwhile organization, who helps provide God's Word to the veterans and the service members, not only the ones who are out in the field, but to those also suffering from emotional and psychological disorders from all they have sacrificed for our freedom and for our nation. At the end of January 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 their headquarters.

January 2025 Mission of the Month



Faith Comes By Hearing

God's Word in audio provides our service members and veterans with hope during dark times. From field recordings to Oral Bible Translation, we record God's Word in the languages of the world.

1-12-2025 Message Outline

“Ascribe to the Lord”

Psalm 29 says: “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name...”

1) Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Spirit's LEADING.

But now, this is what the LORD says—he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. ² When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. ³ For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead. ⁴ Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. ⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. ⁶ I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—⁷ everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Isaiah 43:1-7

2) Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Son's LIFE.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him 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. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6:1-11

3) Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his Father's LOVE.

¹⁵ The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸ And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them. ¹⁹ But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, ²⁰ Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison. ²¹ When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Luke 3:15-22



BINGO

BONANZA

**SUNDAY,
January 19, 2025**

Doors open at 2:30 p.m.
Bingo begins at 3:00 p.m.

Marian Village

15624 Marian Dr. • Homer Glen
www.marianvillage.org

Light lunch included. American Legion Post 2011
will offer water, pop, beer, and wine for purchase.

**RSVP by Friday, January 15th to Ailish Doherty
at adoherty@franciscancommunities.org
or 708-226-3786**

**Event is for players 62 and up. A family member
or friend may attend to assist the player.*

**Admission:
\$5 per
player**

Memory Support COMING SOON



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Franciscan Ministries sponsored by the Franciscan Sisters of Chicago

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