



IN TOUCH

with the ministry and people of Living Word

Volume 34, Issue 5

February 2, 2025

"Being Blessed"

"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked." —Psalm 84:10

The book of Psalms is a collection of 150 lyrical poems that cover a wide array of topics—from songs of thanksgiving and joy to laments for suffering and pain. Psalm 84 is not a song of triumph or joy; it is a cry of desperation. The psalmist longs to be in Jerusalem, worshiping at the temple in the presence of God's people. "My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord," he writes. He wants to be there so badly that he's even jealous of the birds who have made themselves homes near the altar. It's unclear why he can't embark on the pilgrimage, but this much is certain: he's not where he wants to be.

Yet, even though the writer is clearly contending with deep disappointment, there's something special in his words—something that made the British preacher Charles Spurgeon call Psalm 84 "the Pearl of the Psalms—one of the most sweet of the Psalms of peace." And though it was written thousands of years ago, Psalm 84 offers three timely lessons for us.

1. The Difference in Blessed and #Blessed

What are we to take away from this about what it means to be blessed? To be sure, God can and does shower tangible blessings on us in all kinds of ways. What happens, though, when the latest thing he's handed you is not a picture-perfect trip abroad but, say, a pandemic? A pay cut? A fractured relationship? What's the hashtag for that—#cursed? Thankfully not. In the twelve short verses of Psalm 84, the psalmist talks of being "blessed" three times:

"Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you."

"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage."

"Blessed is the one who trusts in you."

Those who praise God, who find their strength in God, who trust in God . . . those are the ones Psalm 84 tells us are blessed. And for Christians, the spiritual meaning of "blessed" only intensifies after Jesus arrives on the scene. Out of 112 New Testament references to being blessed, do you know how many refer to material blessing? **Zero.**

That's astonishing. And it demonstrates that being truly blessed runs so much deeper than the concept of #blessed that we see plastered beside pretty photos on social media.

2. The Importance of Following God, Not Your Heart

In verse 5, the psalmist writes: "Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage"—or as some translations put it, "in whose heart are the highways to Zion."

Just like the biblical definition of being blessed, this language is strikingly countercultural today. The world is constantly telling you to look within yourself, to study the compass of your heart, to follow wherever your passion leads. "You do you," we love to say. True joy, it insists, is not having an internal compass that says, "Follow me," but one that says, "Follow God."

Happy is the heart that isn't a cul-de-sac of self-regard—that says, "I must discover myself, express myself, be true to myself"—but rather that contains highways leading out of that congested city in pursuit of God and in service to others.

When we pursue God's will over our own will, we are blessed.

3. God Provides Strength for Anxious Souls

Have you ever feared that you would not have the strength to face a particular scenario? I sure have. And, according to the Bible, we cannot face the future . . . yet. "Remember one is given strength to bear what happens, not the 100 and 1 different things that might happen." And when will the strength you need arrive? Just in time. As the psalmist describes it, those on pilgrimage will "go from strength to strength." And our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. God will not be rushed, and our growth cannot be sped up with a microwave shortcut. The Christian life is a long pilgrimage to the temple, made one trusting step at a time.

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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

16301 South Wolf Road
Orland Park, IL 60467

livingwordorland.org
intouchlwc@yahoo.com

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
2 10:00am Worship Traditional Communion Hymnal Service	3	4 9am–Noon Preschool 10:00am Push Prayer	5 9am–Noon Preschool	6 9am–Noon Preschool	7	8

Celebrations

Stewardship Snapshot



*Birthdays
of the Month*

Feb 2	Kyle Motel
Feb 4	David Holloway
Feb 5	Anita Meier
Feb 5	Phil Hauze
Feb 6	Delores Urbank



*Happy Baptism
Birthday!*

Feb 1	Beverly Hodo
Feb 28	Petra Wasilkoff

January 26th

20 Worshipped
3 Watched Online
23 Total Worshipped

Financial Support

1,050.00	General Fund Deposit
7,000.00	Annual General Fund Deposit
2,000.00	Pastor Lee Disaster Relief Fund
<u>160.00</u>	Mission of the Month Deposit
\$10,210.00 Total 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 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 February 4th.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84076099900?pwd=d3BxLBWbTizRVpuSGhgTXc2dGRldz09>

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 *So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. - Romans 7:4 (NLT)* The law shows us our sin, but obeying it enough to earn our salvation is impossible. Therefore, Jesus Christ, through His sinless life, His death and resurrection, has earned our salvation for us, and we are now free and empowered to live as children of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

VERSE OF THE MONTH 53 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²He 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. ³He 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. ⁴Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵But 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. ⁶We 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. ⁷He 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. ⁸By 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. ⁹He 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. ¹⁰Yet 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. ¹¹After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore 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)*

Missionary of the Month

JANUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH was Faith Comes By Hearing. We collected 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. We will have all of your donations deposited into the General Fund and Bill will write a check for \$1160.00 and it will then get mailed to their headquarters. As always thank you for all of the generous support and contributions.

FEBRUARY MISSION OF THE MONTH is Voice of Care. They are a ministry group that aids people with disabilities and are now engaged with becoming Spiritual Respite Companions and will be providing workshops for families, care givers and individuals who need it most. As usual, we will collect all month long and then send them the check for the total amount of donations that has been collected.



February 2025 Mission of the Month



Voice of Care has been presented with an incredible opportunity last month to partner with **Lutheran District Offices across the Midwest** to provide **Spiritual Respite Companion Care Workshops**. This partnership will enable them to bring much-needed respite care support to individuals, families, and caregivers throughout the region.

Our support will help them:

- **Train Spiritual Respite Companions** who provide care and connection to those who need it most.
- **Equip Churches** to embrace and support families impacted by disabilities.
- **Expanding Their Reach** across the Midwest, creating stronger, more inclusive church communities.

Your generosity has always made a difference, and you have the chance to extend that impact even further. Let's strengthen the Church and lift up families in need.

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. Her pelvis is now healing nicely. 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 is also feeling much better after the pneumonia. Please keep her in your prayers that she remains healthy and that she can start enjoying her time in sunny Florida, even though before this week it had been cold there for Florida. And this week, she has at least been able to enjoy the sun on their lanai. You are doing great Eleanor, keep up the hard work. 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.



CONGRATULATIONS to Diana for winning Living Word Church the Best Church Website of the year award. This is a recurring event and award for us thanks to Diana for all of her hard work and continually updating our website to incorporate all of her outreach activities and community events.

VBS 2025 is now being posted and advertised on the website and Facebook, and several of our past VBS families have already commented and liked the new update!

VBS 2025

 The logo features a large silhouette of a bear's head and neck. Inside the silhouette is a vibrant landscape with snow-capped mountains, a blue lake, and evergreen trees under a colorful sky. Below the bear silhouette, the words "TRUE NORTH" are written in large, 3D, wood-grain textured letters. A small compass rose is integrated into the letter "O" in "NORTH". At the bottom, a blue banner with a white border contains the text "Trusting Jesus in a Wild World" in a white, sans-serif font.

VBS 2025

Save the date!

Living Word Lutheran Church
Orland Park, IL
July 21st-25th

2-2-2025 Message Outline

“Blessed Are Those...”

Psalm 84 says: “Blessed are those who dwell in your house...”

1) Blessed are those who fulfill their VOWS.

²¹ When her husband Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, ²² Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, “After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always.” ²³ “Do what seems best to you,” her husband Elkanah told her. “Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his word.” So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him. ²⁴ After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. ²⁵ When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, ²⁶ and she said to him, “Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. ²⁷ I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. ²⁸ So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there. 1 Samuel 1:21-28

2) Blessed are those who receive our High Priest's HELP.

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:14-18

3) Blessed are those who see God's SALVATION.

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.” ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” Luke 2:22-32



Community Event

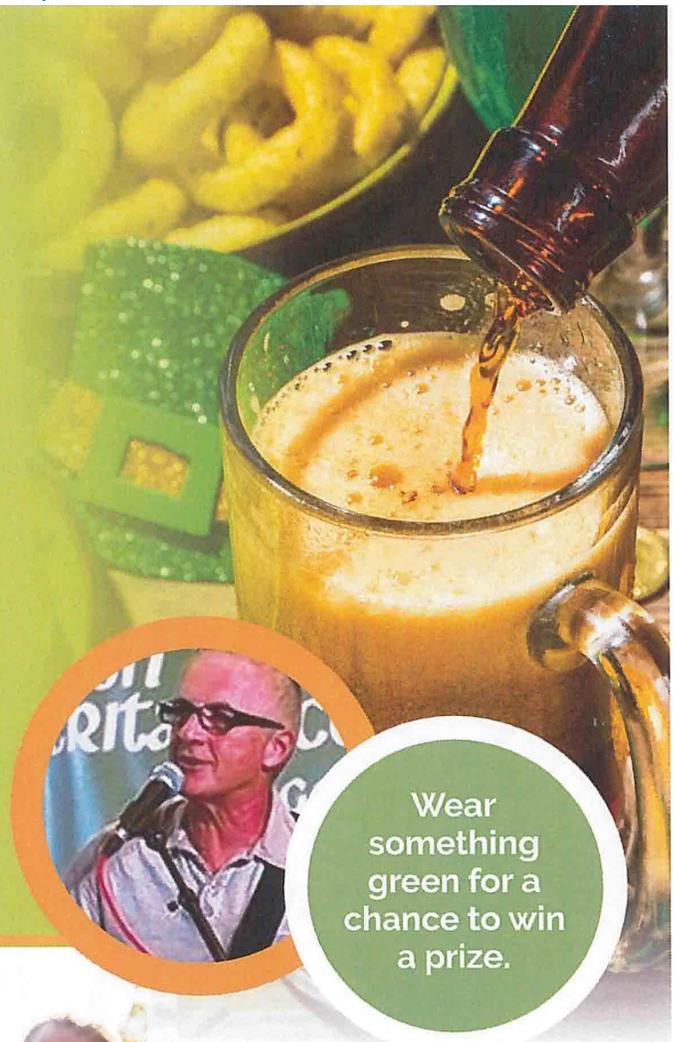
YOU'RE INVITED TO GOOD TIMES AND GUINNESS

Saturday, March 8 | 2:00 P.M.

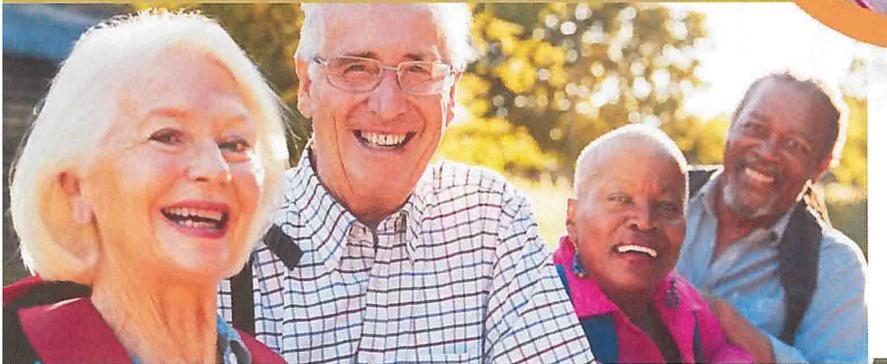
Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Marian Village!
Enjoy traditional Irish music performed
by Gerry Haughey and Irish dancing by the
Hughes-Farrelly School of Irish Dance while eating
tasty fish and chips, with a glass of Guinness beer.

Join us for a tour following the program.

RSVP by March 1 to 708.226.3786 or
adoherty@franciscancommunities.org



Wear
something
green for a
chance to win
a prize.



At Marian Village in Homer Glen, nothing is too small for us to celebrate!
Each day is filled with possibilities and good times because that's how we
choose to live and serve.

Marian Village

is a warm and inviting senior living community offering
Independent Living and Assisted Living.

Call 708.226.3786, to learn more!



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