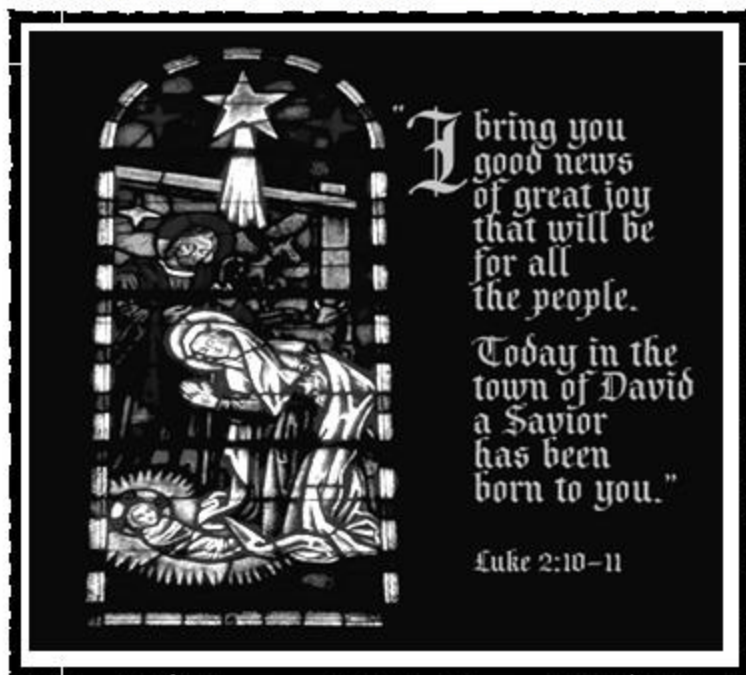


Living Word Lutheran Church LCMS

December 2009 Newsletter
"Communicating the Love of Jesus"



Worship Hours:
Christian Growth Hour: 8:45 a.m.
Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Living Word Lutheran Church

Located on the West of Spicer on Cty Rd 10
in old Prairie Meadows building
PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273
Phone: 320-796-0742
Website: www.livingwordlutheran.net

What we aim to do:
Make disciples for Jesus - as we go, wherever we go.
What we aim to be:
A joyful, caring, Christ-centered family of God.

Question for Pastor...

How do I deal with all the crazy relationships during the holidays?

This is a great question - one that I'm sure more than one person would like to have an answer for. The people we have to deal with at various gatherings is the thing that seems to cause the most stress during the Christmas season. Things such as divorce, sibling rivalries, controlling parents and meddling in-laws can make life difficult at any time of the year. But they really 'throw a wrench' into life during December, because of all the opportunities we have to face the people in those difficult relationships.

I'm sure I don't have all the answers - every situation is unique - but here are a few general 'rules of thumb' from God's word:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Ephesians 6:12

Principle #1: People are not the enemy. Satan is. He's the one we are in a battle with. He simply works through the sinful natures of people (including us) in an effort to totally mess up our lives. You are in a battle, but it is with Satan and our sinful natures, not with other people. Remember, you aren't in competition with your siblings, your "ex" or anyone else. Even if they still act like that's the case, you don't have to play that game.

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. James 1:5

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Principle #2: Don't go into the battle armed with just your emotions. Plan ahead. You have a good idea of who is going to stress you out at a certain function - and why. Ask God ahead of time for the wisdom to know what to say and how to deal with that person.

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; [23] to be made new in the attitude of your minds; [24] and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

[25] Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. [26] "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, [27] and do not give the devil a foothold. [28] He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

[29] Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. [30] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. [32] Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:22-32

There are a bunch of principles in that passage...

Principle #3: You can't control how other people are going to act - or react. But you always have control over how you act and react. Make sure your actions and reactions are ones that God would want. [v24]

Principle #4. One thing you always have control of is your attitude. [v23] Do an attitude check before you head out the door for one of those functions where you are going to see one of those people who cause you relationship stress or anxiety. Again, pray and ask God to give you the attitude you need.

Principle #5. Learn to bite your tongue - not just the Christmas cookies. Emotions run high when you have to see people who have given you trouble or hurt you in the past. One of the common emotions is anger. As the passage reminded us anger isn't a sin, it is a natural

reaction to things that aren't right or don't fit our expectations. The problem is that anger most often leads us to sin. And the majority of those anger-sins are "unwholesome talk coming out of our mouths." Take the "high road." If someone wants to "start something," you don't have to allow them to drag you down to the "low road."

Principle #6: Forgive. It is truly the most Christ-like thing you can do. And, remember this: When you don't forgive, the person you are holding a grudge against is still controlling your life (by making you bitter). When you forgive, you have set yourself free from their influence and from your own bitterness. That may be the greatest gift you can give yourself this Christmas.

(Keep in mind that "I forgive you," is not the same as "It's ok." If someone hurt you it is NOT ok. Forgiveness is literally the cancellation of a debt or bill. When someone hurts you "they owe you one." And our human nature is to want to make things "even" again by getting back at them - making them pay. When we forgive we are saying, "What you did is not "ok", but I'm not going to get back at you. I'll leave that to God if He thinks it's necessary.")

One final thing to keep in mind: You will be setting an example for your kids. They will learn to deal with troubling relationships the same way you do. Make it your goal to follow God's principles and set them a positive example.

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Sunday School News...

- Thank you to everyone who helped with our Thanksgiving outreach. 5 turkey dinners were delivered to the food shelf and brightened a table on Thanksgiving.
- The Sunday school children have received their parts for the Christmas program.
- Christmas Program practice: Saturday December 5, 12 & 19 from 9:30-11:00
- Christmas Program - December 20th at 4:00

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That for a day: What did Adam say on the day before Christmas? It's Christmas, Eve.

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Opportunities for Growth...

How would you change if you spent just a couple minutes a day getting to know God through His Word? Join us in finding out.

Check out the "What Does God Have to Say About...?" Daily Readings. And make a commitment to find out how God will change you through reading just a couple minutes a day. (See pages 10 & 11)

Sunday Morning Adult Forum - 9:00

We'll continue to highlight the insights God gives us in our Daily Bible readings for the previous week. Join us even if you weren't able to do the readings.

Tuesday Noon Study at Geneva Olson's in NL

Colossians: How does Jesus stack up against all the other religious ideas? That's not a question that has just recently surfaced. It was a question Christians had in the first century. The book of Colossians is an answer to that question.

Mom's Study - Wednesday mornings @ 9:30

"The Five Love Languages"

See page 19 for details

Women's Study - Wednesdays @ noon

"Five Things God Uses To Grow Your Faith"

See page 19 for details

Men's Revelation Bible Study

1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the Month @ 7:00 p.m.

Couples Bible Study

Saturday, Jan 9th @ 6:30

See page 19 for details

All Stars 4 Jesus

Wed., Dec.16: A fun evening for 3-6th Graders

The Confirmation Students will again assist with Craft and Game time. Pastor will lead the Bible story time. Rides can be provided and friends can come. Just let us know. We'll start at 6:30 and conclude by 8:00

Parenting Young Children - 8:45 each Sunday

A special class for parents of pre-school through 4th grade children

So That The World May Know...

As noted in the November newsletter, the Building Committee met to look at construction bids and to plot a 'Where do we go from here' course.

Here's the "Where do we go from here" plan:

1. Meet on during December to analyze contractor bids in order to determine a fairly accurate cost estimate of moving the church building from Appleton.
2. Collect input from congregation, so we can address concerns people have with the church building from Appleton. (++see below for details)
3. Hold a congregational information session where the Building Committee presents its recommendations along with all the factors taken into consideration in coming up with that recommendation.
4. Hold a special Voters' Assembly to vote on the Committee's recommendation.
5. Proceed with the decision

Here are the details on point #2:

We've all been praying for God to give us direction in our building plans. The Building Committee feels that God has directed us to "do the math" and come to a decision on the "move-a-building" option that is currently in front of us. Some signs pointing us in that direction...

- The simple fact that God brought this opportunity to our attention after we'd hit a cost roadblock in the build-new design we'd been working toward.
 - The renewed excitement this opportunity has generated for getting out of the school and getting into our own building
 - Building Fund receipts have increased since we've started considering moving the Good Shepherd building.
 - The Appleton congregation's willingness to help us with some of the expenses of moving.
 - The number of other congregations that are praying for this to happen.
- We take these (and other) signs as God directing us to research and consider the option of moving the Appleton building. But we also know that moving this building is

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That for a day: Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

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not a perfect solution. As mentioned in previous newsletters, moving this building has both pro's and con's.

In coming up with a recommendation on this "building-moving option" your Building Committee wants to take into consideration what adjustments will need to be made to that building in order to correct some of the negatives. Here's one example of an area of concern that we've already discussed making adjustments for:

Moving the existing building poses a handicap-accessibility problem that would not have existed with a single-level, build-new structure. The adjustment we've planned for to correct this: Inclusion of a wheelchair lift to take people from sanctuary level to the lower-level classroom area.. We have also planned for the lower level to be accessible via a walk-out entrance.

Some other areas of concern that we people have brought up ...

- The lower energy efficiency compared to build-new structure.
- The need for a fellowship area on the same level as Sanctuary
- The dimness in the Sanctuary due to lack of natural light and sufficient lighting
- The need for a restroom on the main floor.
- Exterior that will need to be "freshened" so it looks inviting and updated instead of old
- Consider the cost of repairs that will likely be needed within the next five years.

We want your thoughts on other areas that you see need to be addressed in order to make the existing building as functional as a new one. Please use the space below to give us those thoughts and ideas (or just email them to Jamie Iverson jamie@beadiam.com or Pastor David dvdauk@tds.net)

Thanks for your prayers and input.

THANK YOU...

...for help with **Operation Christmas Child**

(We collected over 20 shoe boxes filled with the love of Jesus! Thank You!)

E-Mail Wisdom...

Subject: THE OLD FISHERMAN

Our house was directly across the street from the clinic entrance of Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. We lived downstairs and rented the upstairs rooms to out-patients at the Clinic.

One summer evening as I was fixing supper, there was a knock at the door I opened it to see a truly awful looking man. "Why, he's hardly taller than my eight-year-old," I thought as I stared at the stooped, shriveled body.

But the really appalling thing was his face, lopsided from swelling, red and raw. Yet his voice was pleasant as he said, "Good evening. I've come to see if you've a room for just one night. I came for a treatment this morning from the eastern shore, and there's no bus 'till morning." He told me he'd been hunting for a room since noon but with no success; no one seemed to have a room. "I guess it's my face. I know it looks terrible, but my doctor says with a few more treatments..."

For a moment I hesitated, but his next words convinced me: "I could sleep in this rocking chair on the porch. My bus leaves early in the morning." I told him we would find him a bed, but to rest on the porch.. I went inside and finished getting supper. When we were ready, I asked the old man if he would join us. "No thank you. I have plenty.." And he held up a brown paper bag. When I had finished the dishes, I went out on the porch to talk with him a few minutes.

It didn't take a long time to see that this old man had an oversized heart crowded into that tiny body. He told me he fished for a living to support his daughter, her five children, and her husband, who was hopelessly crippled from a back injury. He didn't tell it by way of complaint; in fact, every other sentence was prefaced with thanks to God for a blessing. He was grateful that no pain accompanied his disease, which was apparently a form of skin cancer. He thanked God for giving him the strength to keep going.

At bedtime, we put a camp cot in the children's room for him. When I got up in the morning, the bed linens were neatly folded, and the little man was out on the porch. He refused breakfast, but just before he left for his bus, haltingly, as if asking a great favor, he said, "Could I please come back and stay the next time I have a treatment? I won't put you out a bit. I can sleep fine in a chair." He paused a moment and then added, "Your children made me feel at home. Grownups are bothered by my face, but children don't seem to mind." I told him he was welcome to come again.

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That for a day: Christmas is weird. What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?

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On his next trip he arrived a little after seven in the morning. As a gift, he brought a big fish and a quart of the largest oysters I had ever seen. He said he had shucked them that morning before he left so that they'd be nice and fresh. I knew his bus left at 4 a.m., and I wondered what time he had to get up to do this for us.

In the years he came to stay overnight with us there was never a time that he did not bring us fish or oysters or vegetables from his garden. Other times we received packages in the mail, always by special delivery; fish and oysters packed in a box of fresh young spinach or kale, every leaf carefully washed. Knowing that he must walk three miles to mail these and knowing how little money he had made the gifts doubly precious.

When I received these little remembrances, I often thought of a comment our next-door neighbor made after he left that first morning. "Did you keep that awful looking man last night? I turned him away! You can lose roomers by putting up such people!"

Maybe we did lose roomers once or twice, but, oh! if only they could have known him, perhaps their illness would have been easier to bear. I know our family always will be grateful to have known him; from him we learned what it was to accept the bad without complaint and the good with gratitude to God.

Recently I was visiting a friend who has a greenhouse. As she showed me her flowers, we came to the most beautiful one of all, a golden chrysanthemum, bursting with blooms. But to my great surprise, it was growing in an old dented, rusty bucket. I thought to myself, "If this were my plant, I'd put it in the loveliest container I had!"

My friend changed my mind. "I ran short of pots," she explained and knowing how beautiful this one would be, I thought it wouldn't mind starting out in this old pail. It's just for a little while, till I can put it out in the garden."

She must have wondered why I laughed so delightedly, but I was imagining just such a scene in heaven. "There's an especially beautiful one," God might have said when He came to the soul of the sweet old fisherman. "He won't mind starting in this small body."

All this happened long ago -- and now, in God's garden, how tall this lovely soul must stand.

Please remember this Christmas - and always:

The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

December - Daily Devotionals

We start the month with readings about PEACE, then in the wake of a state football championship we look at what the Bible says about SPORTS, then in time for Christmas we read about CHRIST'S BIRTH and whether the Bible ever credits JESUS BEING DIVINE. God will bless your readings!

Nov 29 **What God Says About ... PEACE & CONTENTMENT**

Nov 30 Isaiah 32:17-18 _____

Dec 1 Proverbs 17:1 _____

Dec 2 1Thessalonians 4:11-12 _____

Dec 3 1 Timothy 2:1-4 _____

Dec 4 John 14:25-27 _____

Dec 5 Philipians 4:10-13 _____

Dec 6 **What God Says About ... Sports** (the only direct references compare life to a track meet)

Dec 7 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 _____

Dec 8 Philipians 3:12-16 _____

Dec 9 Hebrews 12:1-3 _____

Dec 10 2 Timothy 4:6-8 _____

Dec 11 Galatians 5:7-10 _____

Dec 12 Psalm 19:1-6 (espec. V5) _____

Dec 13 **What God Says About ... Sports** (an example of a 'worldly' activity that can 'crowd out' God)

Dec 14 Matthew 6:19-21 _____

"What Does God Say About...?"

Dec 15 Matthew 16:26-27 _____

Dec 16 1 John 2:15-17 _____

Dec 17 Galatians 6:14 _____

Dec 18 Colossians 3:1-2 _____

Dec 19 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 _____

Dec 20 **What God Says About ... The Coming and Birth of Christ**

Dec 21 Luke 1:26-38 _____

Dec 22 Luke 1:39-45 _____

Dec 23 Luke 1:46-56 _____

Dec 24 Luke 2:1-20 _____

Dec 25 Matthew 1:18-25 _____

Dec 26 John 1:1-14 _____

Dec 27 **What God Says About ... Jesus Being God** (not merely a man)

Dec 28 John 1:1-2, 14 _____

Dec 29 Colossians 2:6-9 _____

Dec 30 Hebrews 1:1-3 _____

Dec 31 John 10:30-33 _____

Jan 1 John 20:26-29 _____

Jan 2 John 8:53-59 _____

December 2009 - Living Word Church Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 Youth Lead Worship 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour Adult Forum - Key Chapters Sunday School Parents' Study 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	30	1 NOON Bible Study "Colossians" @ Geneva Olson's 6:30 Building Agenda-Setting Committee 7:00 Elders Team	2 9:30 Mom's Study "The 5 Love Languages" Noon Women's Study "5 ways to grow faith" 6:00 Advent Prayer Svc 6:30 Youth Mtg & Study 7:00 Men's Study (Rev.)	3 NL-S Ministerial	4	5 9:30 Christmas Pgm Practice 11:00 - 2:00 Bake Sale Fundraiser @ Kandi Mall
6 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour Adult Forum - Key Chapters Sunday School Parents' Study 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 11:15 Fellowship Outreach Mtg. 1:00 Youth candy making	7 Circuit Pastors' Conference	8 NOON Bible Study "Colossians" @ Geneva Olson's	9 9:30 Mom's Study "The 5 Love Languages" Noon Women's Study "5 Ways to grow faith" 6:00 Advent Prayer Svc 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 LWML	10	11	12 9:30 Christmas Pgm Practice 11:00 - 2:00 Bake Sale Fundraiser @ Kandi Mall 11-4 Childcare While U Shop
13 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour Adult Forum - Key Chapters Sunday School Parents' Study 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	14	15 NOON Bible Study "Colossians" @ Geneva Olson's 7:00 Mission & Ministry Team	16 9:30 Mom's Study "The 5 Love Languages" Noon Women's Study "5 Ways to grow faith" 6:00 Advent Prayer Svc 6:30 Confirmation 7:00 All Stars 4 Jesus Men's Study (Rev.)	17	18	19 9:30 Christmas Pgm Practice 11:00 - 2:00 Youth candy sale @ Kandi Mall
20 CHRISTMAS PGM SUNDAY 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour Adult Forum - key chapters Sunday School Parents' Study 10:00 Worship w/Lord's Supper 4:00 Christmas Program 5:00 Christmas Dinner	21	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 9:00 Christmas Worship W/Lord's Supper	26
27 8:45 Growing in Christ Hour Adult Forum - Key Chapters Sunday School Parents' Study 10:00 Worship 11:15 Fellowship	28	29	30	31	1 New Years' Day	2

Upcoming Schedules...

If you aren't able to serve on your Sunday, please call someone and switch with them. Thanks!

Scripture Readers

Dec 6	Allan Fuglie	796-6975
Dec 13	Scott Wachter	796-6222
Dec 20	Bryson Wachter	894-6378
Dec 27	Jack Kuppich	254-8355

Jan 3	Wendy Robbin	354-9049
Jan 10	Mona Hjelle	354-4315
Jan 17	Kevin Welsh	796-6840
Jan 24	Linda Dilley	235-0235
Jan 31	Phil Iverson	354-4932

Feb 7	Mark Fuglie	796-6975
Feb 14	Tammy Fuglie	796-6975
Feb 21	Lu Kiehm	979-0097
Feb 28	Tammy Wachter	796-6222

Fellowship Servers

Dec 6	Laurel Iverson	354-4932
Dec 13	Tammy Fuglie	796-6975
Dec 20	Mona Hjelle	354-4315
Dec 27	Stacy Olson	212-9647

Jan 3	Violet Dauk	220-0344
Jan 10	Lu Kiehm	979-0097
Jan 17	Linda Dilley	235-0235
Jan 24	Bonnie Hansen	796-5605
Jan 31	Youth	

Feb 7	Wendy Robbin	354-9049
Feb 14	Nancy Jo Wendt	354-2398
Feb 21	Pam Johnson	354-3545
Feb 28	Laurel Iverson	354-4932

Usher & Greeter Schedule

	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Greeter</u>
Dec 6	Tim Geer & Allan Fuglie	Lu
Dec 13	Mona Hjelle & Pam Johnson	Laurel
Dec 20	Jamie Iverson & Phil Iverson	**
Dec 27	Troy Hansen & Bryson Wachter	**

Jan 3	Jamie Iverson & Jason Miller	Lu
Jan 10	Jack Kuppich & Lonny Robbin	Laurel
Jan 17	Duane Hansen & Chuck Wefflen	**
Jan 24	Kevin & Noah Welsh	**
Jan 31	Joe Johnson & Becca Dauk	Mariah

Feb 7	Mark Fuglie & Brady Sharp	Lu
Feb 14	Linda Dilley & Lu Kiehm	Laurel
Feb 21	Tim Geer & Allan Fuglie	**
Feb 28	Mona Hjelle & Pam Johnson	**

** Please talk to Pastor David if you'd like to be a greeter

Children's Church Schedule

Dec 6	Mona Hjelle	354-4315
Dec 13	Halee Lucas/Mykala Geer	354-5035
Dec 20	Emilie Fuglie	796-6975
Dec 27	Mariah Welsh	796-6840

Jan 3	Joe Johnson	354-3545
Jan 10	Kasey Nieland	354-2036
Jan 17	Becca Dauk	354-4103
Jan 24	Mona Hjelle	354-4315
Jan 31	Halee Lucas/Mykala Geer	354-5035

Feb 7	Emilie Fuglie	796-6975
Feb 14	Mariah Welsh	796-6840
Feb 21	Joe Johnson	354-3545
Feb 28	Kasey Nieland	354-2036

Elders

Dec 6	Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter
Dec 20	Troy Hansen & Kevin Welsh
Jan 3	Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter
Jan 17	Troy Hansen & Kevin Welsh
Feb 7	Jason Miller & Bryson Wachter
Feb 14	Troy Hansen & Kevin Welsh

December Discipleship Verse...



But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."
Luke 2:10-11



The LINK Update...

linking people
building community

Advocacy & Resource Network- December 2009 Update

As the year winds down, we reflect on our progress and accomplishments, as well as lessons learned. Since May, we served about 70 people and engaged over 150 volunteers. We coordinated events such as Just the Basics, and the Winter Wear Distribution. We partnered with the food shelf to bring a new location to our community. We received and distributed over \$5000 in basic needs assistance. We are so thankful for the support of the community and look forward to 2010! Plans for the new year include building new relationships among neighbors through community meals, special events, and projects that fill gaps in services to people in need.

Thanksgiving Service

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Thanksgiving service such a success! The music was beautiful and the message was clear- we have much to be thankful for- Thanks be to God! Through the offering, we received \$1500 towards assisting families over the Christmas season.

The Give of Love

Share your gift with people in need this Christmas. You can sponsor a family this Christmas in honor of a loved one. Give a gift of \$25, \$50, or \$100 to The Link in someone's name and we will send you a card to give them explaining how their gift helped a local family this Christmas season. Funds will be used to purchase gift cards to local retailers to help families purchase food and gifts.

Food Outreach Event

Tuesday, December 8th 5-7pm at Faith Lutheran Church in Spicer

Bring a box, and fill it up with food! In partnership with Second Harvest Heartland and the Willmar Area Food Shelf, we will be hosting an event that can serve over 500 households- they served 550 in Willmar last month! Volunteers are still needed- contact Faith to sign up 320-796-2522.

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Thot for a day: Do those same "Slow Children at Play" grow up to be the "Slow Men at Work"?

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Upcoming Events...

Advent Midweek Prayer Service

Wednesdays: December 2, 9 & 16

Advent Midweek Worship continues THIS Wednesday December 9 @ 6:00. The first three Wednesdays of December we will gather for a time of prayer and devotion followed by a time to put together special gifts for people others may overlook: Heidi - our Compassion child, deployed soldiers, etc... Please make time in your schedule to come and pray and make a gift December 2 & 9 & 16 @ 6:00

NOTE: A light supper will be served prior to each prayer service from 5:15-5:45

"Child Care While You Shop"

THIS Saturday, December 12, from 11:00 - 4:00

In an effort to give families with young kids a time to go Christmas shopping without the kids, the Living Word youth will offer free child care on December 12. Space is limited, so sign your kids (or grandkids or neighbor's kids) up right away.

Sunday School Christmas Program

Sunday, December 20

Christmas Program and Christmas Dinner

Program: @ 4:00 p.m.

Dinner: @ 5:00 p.m.

(Program practice Saturdays 9:30-11:00, Dec. 5,12,19)

Christmas Eve

Candlelight Worship 5:00 p.m.

The entire service is held in candlelight.

The Christmas story in Word and song, plus celebration of the Lord's Supper.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas Worship: 9:00 a.m.

Poinsettias Welcome...

Everyone is welcome to bring a poinsettia plant to place in the sanctuary for Christmas. You may bring the plant any time and set it on the counter. The Altar Guild will take care of it and place it around the altar.

What Do We Believe...

What Do Missouri Synod Lutherans Believe?

Pastor is planning a class that covers the basics of our faith. We'll tackle questions like the ones listed below and also attempt to answer whatever other specific questions you have about what we at Living Word believe.

- What do we believe about God ?
- What do we believe about prayer ?
- What are the goals of Living Word?
- What do we believe about the Bible ?
- What is the purpose of the Church ?
- What do we believe about heaven and hell ?
- What do we believe about sin and forgiveness?
- What do we believe about creation and evolution?
- What do we believe about baptism and communion?
- What do we believe about eternal life - who will get it and how?
- What do we believe about current issues facing Christians - like abortion and same-sex marriages?

This class also serves as the instruction class for those interested in discipleship (membership) here at Living Word. Please talk to pastor if you have questions about the class or would like to attend.

The current plan is to hold the class during the Sunday School hour beginning Jan. 10.

E-Mail Humor...

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five- and six-year-olds.

After explaining the commandment to "honor" thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat, one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered, "Thou shall not kill."

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Thot for a day: This is the message of Christmas: We are never alone.

Couple's Study...

Pastor and Violet will host the kick off of the study on Saturday, January 9 at 6:00 p.m. at their home. Please let them know if you are planning to attend, so they can order a study guide for you. Thanks!



The Details: Couples will meet at our home at 6:00 for the study (and snacks), then we send everyone off on their dates. It doesn't matter if you've been married 6 months or 60 years, you will find this study to be very helpful in strengthening your marriage and your commitment to each other.

Topics that will be covered in the study:

- "He Said / She Said" - appreciating the God-designed differences between men and women
- "He First Loved Us" - God's love for you and how it enables you to love others
- "Love for a Lifetime" - marriage as a lifelong covenant
- "Breaking Free" - freeing yourself from the temptations that can destroy marriage
- "Forgiveness" - Giving and receiving pardon
- "A Better Way of Loving" - Unconditional love

Women's Study...

Wednesday Women's Study Topic

"Five Things God Uses to Grow Your Faith"

What would it be like to have perfect faith? Find out in Andy Stanley's dynamic group study! The six sessions will spark discussion about approaching each day with unshakable confidence; belief in God's control; and trust in his purposes. Discover how God uses practical teaching, relationships, private disciplines, personal ministry, and pivotal circumstances to grow your faith. Starting Wednesdays at noon.



Mom's Study...

9:30 a.m. Wednesday Mornings

"The Five Love Languages"

Join us for this popular study that looks at the five basic ways to say "I love you." Each of which speaks to different people.



Story Behind The Song...

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

This tune was written by Phillips Brooks who was a pastor in Philadelphia and Boston in the 1800's. As a boy his parents taught Phillips and his brother to memorize hymns. On Sunday evenings they would spend time reciting those hymns as a family. Later in college Phillips recalled that he could repeat over 200 hymns. Even later, after he became a pastor, he would frequently refer to them in his sermons. It isn't too surprising that Phillips started to write hymns on his own.

Rev. Brooks was recalled as "a giant of a man who loved children." It is said that he liked nothing better than to get down on the floor and romp with them. *O Little Town of Bethlehem* was a song he wrote for his Sunday School children to use in their Christmas program in 1868. Brooks penned the carol recalling memories of his own visit to Bethlehem three years earlier.

Brooks gave his organist, Lewis Redner, the task of composing a tune that would be easy for the children to sing. One night, not long before the program was to take place, Mr. Redner woke up from his sleep with the tune in his head. He quickly wrote down the familiar melody *St. Louis*.

It took quite awhile after the children had sung Brooks' words and Redner's tune for the song to become popular on a larger scale. It wasn't until 1892 that *O Little Town of Bethlehem* was printed in their hymnal.

You'll notice an unfamiliar verse (4). It was in the original Christmas program song, but Brooks left it out of later editions of the song.

*O Little Town of Bethlehem, How still we see Thee lie!
Above Thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee to-night.*

*For Christ is born of Mary - and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wond'ring love*

*O morning stars together Proclaim the holy birth
And praises sing to God the King And peace to men on earth.*

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That for a day: We had cured ham for Christmas dinner. We all wondered what illness it was cured of.

*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear him coming, But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will Receive Him, still the dear Christ enters in.*

*Where children pure and happy Pray to the blessed child
Where misery cries out to Thee Son of the mother mild
Where Charity stands watching And faith holds wide the door
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks And Christmas comes once more*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today,
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
Oh come to us abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel.*

Special Thank-Offering Can Still Be Given

God commanded the Israelites to come to the temple once a year for a joyful celebration of the blessings God provided in the harvest. This harvest festival was called The Feast of Weeks.

Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the Lord your God has given you. Deuteronomy 16:10

In keeping with the example of the Israelites, on Thanksgiving Eve we came together for a special joyful celebration of the blessings God has provided us. We also brought special Thank-Offerings to the Lord in proportion to the blessings He has given us this past year. If you weren't here for the Thanksgiving service, you can still give your Thank-Offering during the month of December. Please use the special "Thank-Offering" envelope and simply place it in the offering at worship.

"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." King David in 1 Chronicles 29:14

THANK-OFFERING UPDATE

To date we have received over \$1550 (toward our goal of \$3000) in Thank-Offerings. Thank you !

Opportunities to Share the Love of Jesus In Practical Ways...

Wish Heidy a Happy Valentine's Day

As most of you know, Heidy is a young girl from Ecuador that we have been supporting through Compassion, Int'l. Last year after one of the Advent services we made Christmas cards to send to Heidy. Only one problem: it takes two months for correspondence to get from us to Compassion, be translated and sent to Heidy. With that in mind, this year we will be making Valentine's cards for Heidy, so she'll actually get them by Valentine's Day. We'll also get a chance to share our faith with Heidy by including in the cards "The Thing I Love Most About Jesus:" If you weren't able to make a card after the Advent Service, you can still put one together after worship the first two Sundays in December. Thanks!

Be Part of our 'Make-a-Meal' Team

Do you have a heart for helping people in need? We're in the process of updating our list of people who can serve as either "meal makers" and "meal takers" (or both). Our "Make A Meal" program is a great way to show the love of Jesus. Please talk to Pastor David if you can serve on our Make A Meal Team. Thanks!

Plan and Organize Fellowship Activities

One of the goals we set for the coming year is to provide more opportunities for members to get to know each other outside of church. In order to accomplish that goal we need someone who enjoys organizing activities that "get people together." Things like 'fun nights' or service projects or outings. Please talk to Pastor David if you would like to help in this way.

Do It Because of Jesus

During the busy weeks prior to Christmas thoughtful Christians go out of their way to show their love for others. Here are a few suggestions. You may think of more. The possibilities are limited only by your creativity.

- * Babysit for someone while they shop.
- * Shovel snow for someone this winter who could use the help.
- * Invite at least one person to join you in worship Christmas Eve.
- * Drive others to church for worship.

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Thot for a day: What flies and goes "OH OH OH!"? ----- Santa flying backwards.

- * "Adopt" someone in a care center, not just for Christmas, but for an indefinite period of time.
- * Use your special talents (what are they?) where needed.
- * Invite someone who is alone for the holidays over for dinner.
- * Ask the Lord for guidance in using you in meaningful ways to bring glory to Him - He will direct you.

Invite Someone To...

...Our Christmas Program

(Dec. 20 @ 4:00 p.m. with Christmas Dinner served afterwards)

...or Christmas Eve Worship

(Candlelight Worship at 5:00 p.m.)

It's a very simple way to share Jesus with someone.

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



While the shepherds were speechless in the presence of the newborn baby Jesus, Sal the Sheep summed up that first Christmas night very nicely.