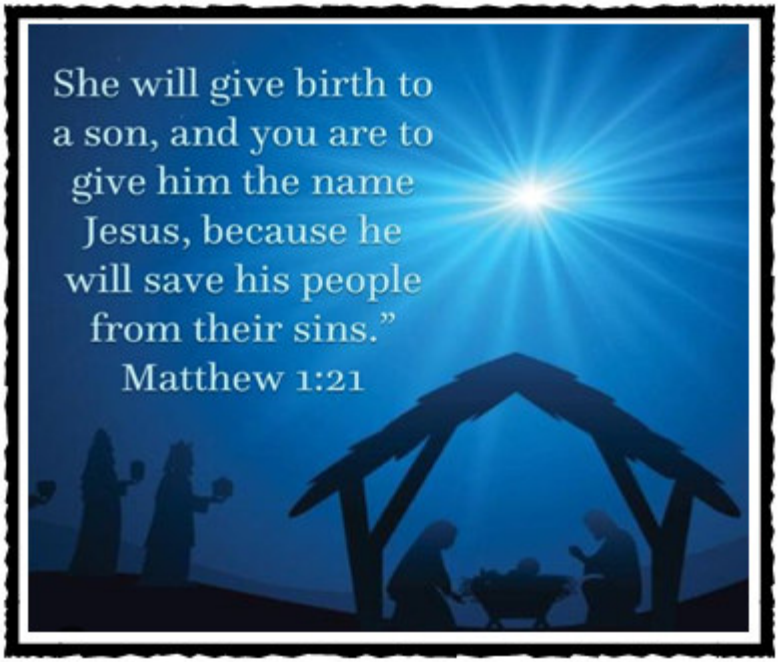
Living Word
Lutheran Church
LCMS



December 2025 Newsletter

"Communicating the Love of Jesus"

Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service: 10:00 a.m.

Living Word Lutheran Church

PO Box 242, New London, MN 56273
Located north of the New London Township Hall on Cty Rd 9 NE
Phone: 320-354-4637
Email: pastor@livingwordlutheran.net
Website: www.livingwordlutheran.net

Questions for Pastor...

"Why does Jesus have so many other names, like Immanuel and Christ and Lord."

And those three are just the beginning! God's Son really only has one actual name, the rest are titles and "nicknames." His name is the one the angel instructed Joseph to give Him:

"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."
Matthew 1:20-21

"Jesus" is actually the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua." Both mean the same thing: "Yahweh saves"

(Yahweh being God's personal name - the name He revealed to Moses when Moses asked "What should I say when they ask 'What is the name of the God who sent you?'" God's reply: "You must say this to the Israelites, 'Yahweh—the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my name forever...')

Every time someone spoke or heard the name "Jesus" it would remind them:

1) who He is (Yahweh - God in the flesh) and
2) what He came to do (save).

As I mentioned, some of the names Jesus is referred to are actually titles that show what position He holds, like Christ (the Greek form of Messiah) which means "Anointed one." Jesus is the One God had chosen to send to save His people. "Lord" is another title, one of honor. You could consider it comparable to how we would address a judge as "your honor."

"Immanuel" (Old Testament spelling) or Emmanuel (New Testament spelling) is more of a "nickname." Nicknames usually tell something important about a person. Immanuel literally means "God is with us," and reminds us that in the person of Jesus, God has come to be with us -

as one of us!

There are lots of other "nicknames" for Jesus that tell something about who He is or what He came to do. "Prince of Peace," "Lamb of God," "the Word," "King of Kings," and many more. The month we celebrate the birth of Jesus is an appropriate time to focus more on the meanings behind His name, titles and nicknames, so I'll be doing that in our daily devotions during December.

matter what situation you find yourself in.

Thanks for asking
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship...

Wednesday,
December 24 @ 5:00 pm

- The entire service is done by candlelight.
- The Christmas Story from Luke chapter two is interspersed with Christmas Carols
- The Lord's Supper is Celebrated

Please pray about who you can invite to join you!

Communion Notes...

The Lord's Supper will be celebrated in August on the normal First and Third Sundays **(December 7th & 21st)**, as well as Christmas Eve **(Dec 24th).**

Reminders:

- Wine - is in the two outer rings of the individual-cup tray
  Grape Juice - is in the inner ring of the individual-cup tray
- **Gluten-free bread wafers are available** for those who have gluten-sensitive conditions. You will find these wafers in a separate cup in the communion tray.
- Those who are not comfortable coming to the altar should inform an Elder or Usher, and communion will be brought to you in your pew.

Mark Your Calendar...

Mission & Ministry Team
Thursday, December 11th @ 6:30 p.m.
Elders' Team @ 5:30 prior to MMT

Building Committee Meting
Tuesday, December 16th @ 5:30

Ring Bells & Sing Carols...

...with our Youth
at "Light of the World"
on Robbins Island

December 10 from 7:30 - 10:00pm
(You don't have to be there the whole time)
Please Sign Up at Church

Chili Cookoff...

SAVE THE DATE!

2026 Chili Cook Off
is scheduled for
January 17th.

This is a Living Word outreach event, so please invite friends to eat (and compete)!

Fall Voters' Assembly...

...Met on November 16th and approved goals and budget for 2026

Upcoming Fellowship Outings...

Birthday and Supper
Fellowship Outings
will be back in January

Thot for a day: To the optimist, the glass is half full. To the pessimist, the glass is half-empty. To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

Who Can You Invite?

Two of the prophesies about the Messiah talk of Him as being a "Light to the Gentiles." People who are living without Jesus are living in the dark - and that's no way to live!

Those of us who believe that Jesus is truly the "Light of the World" (and our only Savior) have the privilege of being like "mirrors" - reflecting the Light of Jesus to those around us.

One great way we can reflect that Light is by a simple invitation to friends, neighbors, relatives. Invite them to join you for one of our special services this Christmas.

Who can you invite? Pray about it. Ask God to give you the words and opportunity. Then just do it. Ask them to come with you. Offer to pick them up. (And if they don't take you up on your invitation,, keep praying for them and for another opportunity to invite.)

- **The Sunday School Christmas Program** -
  December 14 @ 10:00 a.m.

- **Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship** -
  December 24 @ 5:00 p.m.

Make-A-Meal Program...

One of the best (and simplest) ways to share Jesus' love is by taking a meal for someone who is going through a tough time.

Please grab some meals from the freezer at church to take to someone who needs to know Jesus cares!

Thank-offering...

Your special Thank-offering can still be given:

We're were each encouraged to bring a special freewill offering in proportion to how God has blessed us this past year.

Please pray about your Thank-offering proportion. Use the special Thank-Offering envelope to make your Thank-Offering. (Your yearly Thank-Offerings can be given any Sunday, if you are not able to attend the Thanksgiving Eve service.)

"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 you, Lord...

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings. Thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible. Thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising. Thank you, Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned, tempers are short, and my children are so loud. Thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the picture in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced. Thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job often is monotonous. Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest. Thank you, Lord, for life.

Thot for a day: Every time I close the door on reality, it comes in through the windows.

LWML Lutheran Women's Missionary League

LWML Meeting & Women's Study:

There will be no December LWML meeting, or Bible study at church.
Instead ... we will have a

Christmas Luncheon

10:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 10th,
at Bonnie Hansen's home
(354 Lake Avenue South, Spicer).
For details contact Bonnie at 796-5605.

SHOES FOR MISSIONS:

A huge thank you to all who have donated! This is an on-going fund-raiser for Lutheran Island Camp. Please continue to bring your good used shoes, slippers, or boots to church. Collection tote is in the entry of the church.

Confirmation News...

6-7th Confirmation classes:

- Dec. 3 - Class
- Dec. 10 - Christmas Program Practice
- Dec. 17 - Class
- Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Service
- Dec. 31 - Youth Lock-In

Sunday School News...

Children's Christmas program:
Sunday, December 14, at 10:00
"The Signs of Christmas"

Program practice:
Sunday mornings @ 9:00.
We will also practice on Wednesday, December 10.
Pizza at 5:30 and practice from 6:00 - 7:00

No Sunday School December 21 or 28th.
Class will resume on January 4, 2025

Opportunities for Growth...

Sunday Morning Bible Study
The Book of Revelation
Every Sunday @ 9:00
Please join us for coffee and God's Word

Men's Study
Family Relationships
Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.
(pre-study meat at 6:15)

Monthly Morning Women's Study:
There will be no December Bible study at church.
Instead ...we will have a
Christmas Luncheon (see page 7)

Simple Ways to Give Your Spiritual Life a Lift...

Share the Love of Jesus This Month

During the busy weeks prior to Christmas thoughtful Christians go out of their way to show their love for others. In fact, "Sharing the Love of Jesus in Practical Ways" is one of our Core Values at Living Word. Here are a few suggestions. You may think of more. The possibilities are limited only by your creativity.

- Babysit for a mom (or dad) while they shop.
- Shovel snow for someone who could use the help this winter.
- Invite at least one person to join you in worship Christmas Eve.
- Drive others to church for worship.
- "Adopt" someone in a care center or group home, not just for Christmas, but for an indefinite period of time.
- Use your special talents (what are they?) where needed.
- Invite someone over for dinner who will be alone on Christmas.
- Ask the Lord for guidance in using you in meaningful ways to bring glory to Him - He will direct you.

Read ... Passages about the coming and birth of our Savior.
(Or listen to Pastor read the passages that show.... He will text or email you a link to each day's recording)

You'll find the readings listed on our Daily Readings page

Thot for a day: I've got stained glass windows in our house. Stupid pigeons.

Living Word's 2026 Goals Update...

- Continue the Make A Meal program.
  We made more meals Saturday, Nov 15th @ 10:00
- Continue the monthly Fellowship outings: Birthdays and Supper
  (We will take the busy month of December off)
- Continue the Birthday Card/Anniversary ministry
  Ongoing
- Challenge every member to bring a guest this year
  Be praying about who you can invite to join you for the Christmas program and Christmas Eve
- Enlist Youth and Young Adults to help with our
  "Visitors (and members) Coffee Cart"
- Initiate the "Prayer D-Fence" Program
  (Adults "adopting " a kid to pray for, send cards etc....)
  We'll kick this off after Christmas!
- Enlist younger members to help with the Building Project **Early 2026**
- Host Tuesday's Table
  Coming September 2026
- Chili Cook-Off
  Next Cook-Off is January 17th
- Host another Block Party or Community Festival
  This will depend on our building project
- Focus on the National Youth Gathering event for youth
  7 youth attended the Gathering in July
- Coordinating with Redeemer, Willmar and St. John, Atwater to host joint youth events **Ongoing**
- Continue growing our active Youth numbers
  Bell ringing & Lock-In this month
- Offer support and encouragement to the Parents of Youth
  Ongoing
- Keep the church yard looking nice and continue to de-clutter the storage areas inside. **Ongoing**
- Parking Lot maintenance
  After the Building Project is complete
- Encourage participation in Sunday School
  Christmas Program on December 14th

Email Inspiration...

from Aaron Abramson
Executive Director of Jews for Jesus

When Jesus commanded us to make disciples, he knew it would cost everything. For many Jewish people today, choosing Yeshua as Messiah means losing family, community, and security—but it also means finding life.

While we rejoice every time we see a Jewish person come to faith in Jesus, what happens next is just as important. Jewish people often face unique obstacles and opposition to their faith, so it is an essential part of our ministry to walk alongside and support new believers through their most vulnerable first months—or even a year. We pray together, delve into God's Word, and share the weight of their struggles. This is where we get to see lives not just touched but transformed by the gospel. Talia's* story is a great example of that.

Talia is from a Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) background. A little over a year ago, she found our website and connected with us through our chat feature. She wrote, "When I was a child, G-d spoke to me: 'One day you will know Me by My name.'"

This was a shocking confession by Talia because in Haredi communities, it would be considered incredibly disrespectful to speak to (or even about) God by name. Talia was taught to refer to God as Hashem (Hebrew for "the Name") out of reverence for him. This is also why many Orthodox Jews substitute a dash for the letter "o" when writing the word "God." So, for Talia, the promise that she would know God by name was the promise of a close, personal relationship that was unheard of in her community. God had clearly been calling Talia long before we met her!

As an adult, Talia was drawn to Yeshua (Jesus) and began to sense that he is the Messiah. She didn't know what to do about it, since Jews who believe in Jesus are considered apostates. So she went to a mikvah (ritual bath) and whispered, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, and he is Jesus." No one knew, but heaven heard.

At that moment, something in Talia's heart changed. Soon she was seeing Jesus everywhere: in the weekly Torah portion, at her Shabbat table, and in the Jewish holidays. She realized that God had kept his promise that she would know him by name, and as she later told us, "That day came on the first day of Sukkot. I knew for certain that Jesus is the Jewish Moshiach (Messiah)." God's timing could not have been more perfect. Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, is also known as

Thot for a day: There is no such thing as a grouchy old person. The truth is, once you get old, you stop being polite and start being honest.

Z'man Simchateinu, the Season of Our Rejoicing.

Talia could not share the joy she had found in Jesus with anyone in her community, so she reached out to Jews for Jesus. When she told us about her new faith, she said, "It's like I've had an altar inside me waiting to be set aflame, and now with Yeshua, this little fire has become a forest fire."

At that point, Talia needed discipleship from people who could understand her unique challenges, and that's when we had the privilege of stepping into her life. But this road has not been easy. Throughout many long conversations, Talia has asked deep, challenging questions. She sheds tears over the very real possibility of being cut off from her family and friends because of her faith.

Because of your faithful prayers and support, our missionaries were there when Talia reached out—ready to answer her questions, pray with her, and walk with her through the hardest decisions of her life.

It's been a little over a year now, and as Talia's faith grows, so does her courage. She chooses Yeshua daily, saying, "I want a relationship with God, not just the law. I feel like Father Abraham, who was called to leave everything and was terrified to do it. But I want to follow the one true God."

These aren't just poetic reflections; they are the cries of a woman being deeply transformed. Just a few months ago, Talia was baptized. The gospel has taken root. Still, there are many challenges to overcome. So, please keep Talia in your prayers, and pray for us as we continue walking alongside her.

We cannot share many details when it comes to serving seekers and new believers in Haredi communities, but this work would not be possible without partners like you. In this season of Thanksgiving, I am grateful for you. Thank you for praying and helping Jewish people like Talia learn to follow Messiah Jesus daily with joy, courage, and truth.

**Name has been changed to protect privacy.*

Smoke-Detector Battery Outreach

The Confirmation Students and Pastor handed out 50 batteries in November -

Another simple way of Sharing the Love of Jesus in a practical way.

From The Link...

We are currently in need of shoppers for Christmas Joy 2025!!!!!

The Link partners with the NL-S School District and also takes information from families shopping in The Food Pantry to receive information from families that need some support in bringing their children some Christmas Joy.

With the increased cost of living, there are many families in need this holiday season and need your help!

Are you interested in spreading some Christmas Joy and helping one of your neighbors in need? Please reach out to Ashley by responding to this email or by calling 320-354-5465 and we will get you information based on what size family you'd like to shop for!!!

There are no spending restrictions or requirements and you can choose how many individuals you would like to shop for.

We currently have 15 families on our wait list-- some shoppers choose to just shop for the children, while others take a list for the whole family-- it is completely up to you! You can choose anything between 1 child to a family with 6 children!

Gifts are due back to The Link on or before December 12th, unwrapped.

If shopping isn't your thing, you can also donate monetarily and we do the shopping for you! You can donate online at www.youarethelink.org and put "Christmas Joy" in the comment section, you can mail a check to PO Box 823, New London, MN 56273, stop in and see us at 20 Central Ave E, New London OR donate via Venmo @the-link-1.

Thank you for your continued support! YOU are The Link!

Join Us Sunday Mornings for...

Thot for a day: When a man marries a woman, they become one; the trouble starts when they try to decide which one.

Opportunities to Serve...

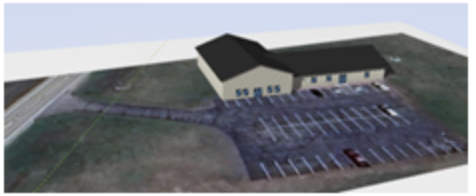
Remember to use our "We Prayed for You" program...
We'd like to send out a card or two each week to people we prayed for during worship.
We are currently in need of a volunteer to mail the cards.
If you could help, talk to Pastor David

Help Record our Worship Services . . .
that we livestream and later upload our YouTube channel (New London Living Word). Talk to Pastor David if you can help out with this - just one Sunday a month. (Hint: It's really not difficult - even Pastor figured it out!)

Teal's Rebate Program...
...has been discontinued. Thanks to everyone who saved receipts.

Custodian Volunteers Needed.
For any month in 2025 or 2026
Pick Your Month for you (or your family) to be our Church Custodian.
We are still in need of volunteers. Talk to our Trustee, Lonnie Robbin, to sign up or find out more details.

Building Committee Update...



Check out the new computerized drawings on the table by the entry door at church.

We've had a generous challenge:
As soon as we raise and additional $70,000 the "challenger" will donate $100,000 !!!

"Challenge" Money Raised: 100 % !!!!

Money in CDs and Building Account: $155,000
A HUGE "Thank You" to everyone who has made a pledge !!!

The BUILDING TEAM will meet Tuesday, December 16th @ 5:30 to begin putting together some specific plans!

December 2025 - Daily Readings

We finish our readings in the book of Romans. The rest of the month our **readings focus on the coming & birth of Jesus the Messiah (and why He came).**
Pastor records the readings (along with devotions based on the readings).
To receive these audio recordings daily, just email him: pastor@livingwordlutheran.net.
NOTE: Email or text Pastor with questions you have on something you read.

WEEK OF NOVEMBER 30 (We finish our devotions from Romans)

Dec 1 **Romans 12:3-8** _____
" _____
Dec 2 **Romans 12:9-21** _____
_____
Dec 3 **Romans 14:** _____
_____
Dec 4 **Romans 15:3** _____
_____
Dec 5 **Romans 15:13** _____
_____

WEEK OF DECEMBER 7 (Prophecies of the coming Messiah)

Dec 8 **Genesis 12:1-3** _____
_____
Dec 9 **Deuteronomy 18:14-22** _____
_____
Dec 10 **Isaiah 42:1-9** _____
_____
Dec 11 **Isaiah 61:1-3** _____
_____
Dec 12 **Malachi 3:1-4** _____
_____

WEEK OF DECEMBER 14 - (Remember to attend the Christmas Program today)

Dec 15 **Luke 1:5-25** _____
_____

Recordings of the Daily Readings can also be found on our website at:
https://www.livingwordlutheran.net/devotions.htm

Dec 16 **Luke 1:26-38** _____
_____
Dec 17 **Luke 1:39-45** _____
_____
Dec 18 **Luke 1:46-56** _____
_____
Dec 19 **Luke 1:57-80** _____ _____
_____

WEEK OF DECEMBER 21 (God's Son Comes Into Our World)

Dec 22 **Revelation 12:1-5** _____
_____
Dec 23 **John 1:1-14** _____
_____
Dec 24 **Matthew 1:18-25** _____
_____
Dec 25 **Luke 2:1-20** _____
_____
Dec 26 **Luke 2:21-38** _____ _____
_____

WEEK OF DECEMBER 28 - (Jesus tells why He came to Earth)

Dec 29 **John 18:33-40** _____
_____
Dec 30 **Luke 4:42-44** _____
_____
Dec 31 **Matthew 20:28 & Luke 19:9-10** _____
_____
Jan 1 **John 3:16-18** _____
_____
Jan 2 **John 10:7-18** _____
_____

December 2025 - Living Word Lutheran - Calendar of Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov 30 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP 11:15 - FELLOWSHIP	1	2 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	3 6:00 - CONFIRMATION 7:00 - YOUTH GROUP	4 **Lord's Supper Dates** • Sunday, December 7th • Sunday, December 21st • Christmas Eve, December 24th	5	6
7 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP w/communion 11:15 - FELLOWSHIP	8	9 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	10 10:00 - WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON @ Bonnie Hansen's 5:30 - PROGRAM PRACTICE 7:30 - BELL RINGING	11 Mission & Ministry 5:30 - ELDERS' TEAM 6:30 - MISSION & MINISTRY TEAM	12	13
14 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM 9:00 - SUNDAY SCHOOL - ADULT STUDY 10:0 - WORSHIP 11:15 FELLOWSHIP	15	16 9:00- CIRCUIT PASTORS at Living Word 5:30 - BUILDING COMMITTEE 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	17 6:00 - CONFIRMATION 7:00 - YOUTH GROUP	18	19	20
21 9:00 - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP w/communion 11:15 - FELLOWSHIP	22	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5:00 - CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE w/communion	25 OUR SAVIOR IS BORN !!! 	26	27
28 9:00 - ADULT STUDY 10:00 - WORSHIP 11:15 - FELLOWSHIP	29	30 6:30 - MEN'S STUDY	31 6:00 - YOUTH LOCK-IN	Jan 1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	Jan 2	Jan 3

Upcoming Schedules...

After-Worship Fellowship

We will have coffee / water and cookies at 11:15 after worship .Please join us when you can! ...and, if you can, please sign up to serve coffee and goodies some Sunday.

Usher Schedule

Dec 7	Jim & Torasie Larson
Dec 14	Open
Dec 21	Jason & Levi Miller
Dec 24	Pam Johnson & Linda Van Meter
Dec 28	Larry Levin & Gerry Butler

USHERS NEEDED

We are still in need of more ushers to help collect offering. Please sign up at church if you could take a turn. Thanks!

Elders

Dec 7, 14	Dan & Scott
Dec 21, 24, & 28	Kevin & Duane

Custodian

December	Alison Sarsland

Altar Guild

December	Mona Hjelle

Accompanying Musicians

Dec 7	Sharon Willen
Dec 14	Scott Wachter
Dec 21	Sharon Willen
Christmas Eve	Scott Wachter & Sharon Willen
Dec 28	Scott Wachter

"Participate" in Worship from home...

If you can't be here in person: Watch on our YouTube channel with Sunday services being livestreamed at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCG9eU-VvIJEU22yCYxbhwjg/featured

Thot for a day: Stop telling God how big your storm is. Instead, tell your storm how big your God is.

Thank God For...

You've seen our sign board out by the road with the beginning of a sentence: "Thank God For... " Each week we'd like to change the ending of that sentence to encourage people who drive past to remember that God is the giver of all good things - especially things we take for granted.

In November we thanked God for...

- **Deer**
- **Our Veterans (and Their Families)**
- **Everything**

Let Pastor know how you'd complete that sentence in December.

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 a back table. The Altar Guild will take care of it and place it around the altar.

Seen on Church Signboards...

JESUS BROUGHT THE

CHRISTMAS PRESENCE

WE ALL REALLY NEED

December Discipleship Verse...

"She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

Email Wisdom...

From God's Book of "Practical Wisdom for Everyday" (Proverbs)

- How much better to get wisdom than gold, to choose understanding rather than silver. Proverbs 16:16
- Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. Proverbs 16:18
- Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD Proverbs 16:20
- Better a dry crust with peace and quiet, than a house full of feasting with strife. Proverbs 17:1
- Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam, so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. Proverbs 17:14
- A friend loves at all times, a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17
- A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Proverbs 17:22
- A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered. Proverbs 17:27
- The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it, and they are safe. Proverbs 18:10
- He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD. Proverbs 18:22
- A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11
- Houses and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the LORD. Proverbs 19:14

Thot for a day: You don't have an attitude problem. They just have a perception problem.

Operation Christmas Child...

Operation Christmas Child
DEDICATION SUNDAY was November 16th !

Thank you to all who packed a shoebox!

There are 38 kids that will be blessed with a box and feel the love of Jesus!

Thank You...

To Randy, Mary, Wendy, and Lonny for putting up the nativity!

If you have someone you'd like to thank, please email webmaster@livingwordlutheran.net

Just for Pastor Dave...

"This week's sermon is about how we all need to simplify our lives. Unfortunately, I lost the whole thing when my computer crashed."

Youth Group Calendar...

DECEMBER 2025

Check out our website for links to the monthly newsletters, streaming church services, daily devotions, and more!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 6pm Confirmation 7pm Youth Group	4	5	6
7 10am Church	8	9 Birthday Lunch Celebration	10 6pm Confirmation 7pm Youth Group	11 7am The Well Breakfast	12	13
14 10am Church	15	16	17 6pm Confirmation 7pm Youth Group	18 Congregation Supper	19	20
21 10am Church	22	23	24 No Youth Group - Merry Christmas!	25	26	27
28 10am Church	29	30	31 7pm Lock In!	HAPPY NEW YEAR		

notes

Dec. 3 - Youth Group: Bible Study

Dec. 9 - Congregation Lunch, all ages welcome, expense is on your own, RSVP with Marcia

Dec. 10 - Youth Group: Bell Ringing at Celebrate the Lights in Willmar, time will be different than usual

Dec. 11 - The Well breakfast at Peace Church - open to all area youth, free

Dec. 17 - Youth Group: Bible Study

Dec. 24 - No Youth Group/Christmas Eve

Dec. 31 - Youth Group: Lock In! Goes from 7pm until 10am New Years Day. Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, and friends!

If you would join our parent group, you would have access to our communications. Feel free to use any photos or dates from that group.

Click here: https://groupme.com/join_group/101771809/iJuNXP4k

A Minute for Couples...

(from the Prepare-Enrich blog)

How Gratitude Transforms Your Marriage

You probably say "thank you" many times each day, but gratitude is about more than simply uttering these two words out of habit. It's about feeling that sense of gratefulness deep within your heart, internalizing it in a way that shapes your entire mindset and perspective– and your marriage, as well. The positive effects of gratitude have the power to send positive ripples throughout your relationship – here's how:

1. You'll appreciate each other more.
You'll more easily able to focus on all the good they bring to your life and how you can best cherish each other every day.

2. You'll counteract resentment.
Regularly expressing gratitude to each other can temper the little annoyances and resentments that have a way of building up over time and can help both of you let go of irritation that might take root if you rarely express that appreciation

3. You'll feel more satisfied.
Various studies in recent years have found that when partners feel more gratitude toward each other, they also feel more satisfied in their relationship.

4. You'll keep a healthy perspective.
In situations in where annoyance or anger would be the easy response, a lens of gratitude helps you zoom out to see the whole picture, instead of zeroing in on the negatives. For example, if your spouse has a tendency to go overboard with holiday decor, you might shift your perspective to see their good intention: creating happy memories and a sense of tradition.

Those things all sound great, but how do you actually cultivate that grateful mindset all year round?

Begin to notice the little things.
Start to see the seemingly small things your spouse does for you throughout the day to show their love. Maybe they always brew the coffee, keep your car filled with gas, or save the last muffin for you. Consider what your life might be like without these things or what it would feel like to experience them after being deprived. Try to be more aware of these expressions of love and affection. Notice them, relish them, and fully immerse yourself in the intention behind them.

Thot for a day: Christmas is not a date. It is a state of mind & heart.

Reflect on what you're grateful for daily.
You might already set aside time each day for prayer or meditation, either with your spouse or separately. If reflecting on what you're grateful for isn't already part of that habit, it's an easy addition to make. Consider journaling or jotting down your thoughts. It's not only convenient to look back on when you need a boost, but also makes it easier to share with your spouse. That's right – share your gratitude lists with each other! This is a great way to build emotional intimacy and strengthen your connection. Plus, it helps you both focus on and internalize what you're grateful for, lending to a mindset of gratitude that becomes second nature.

Make a point to express your gratitude.
How often to do you take the time to really thank your spouse in a way that they truly sinks in? Whether it's for something specific they've done recently or a general appreciation for who they are, give them your full, heartfelt attention. The idea here is that outwardly expressing the gratitude you feel takes it "full cirde." It kicks off a reciprocal effect in your relationship that helps you both feel happier and more grateful.

Email Humor...

A speeding motorist was caught by radar from a police helicopter in the sky. An officer pulled him over and began to issue a traffic ticket.

"It seems everyone is out to get me lately. How did you know I was speeding?" the frustrated driver asked.

The police officer pointed somberly toward the sky.

"You mean," asked the motorist, "that I'm not just being paranoid? Even "He" is trying to get me?"

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FIVE BEST THINGS TO SAY IF YOU GET CAUGHT SLEEPING AT YOUR DESK

NUMBER 5: "They told me at the Blood Bank this might happen."

NUMBER 4: "This is just a 15 minute power nap they raved about in the time-management course you sent me to."

NUMBER 3: "Whew! Guess I left the top off the glue. You probably got here just in time!"

NUMBER 2: "Did you ever notice sound coming out of these keyboards when you put your ear down real close?"

NUMBER 1: (Raising your head slowly) "...in Jesus' name, Amen"

Miscellaneous Notes...

Food Pantry Reminder
Please remember to bring your donations for the Food Pantry on the 2nd Sunday of each month. Place them in the purple container by the door at church. Thank to everyone for donating!

Check out our "Free Stuff" Table
Here's just a sampling of what you'll find :

- Kid's books
- December Newsletters
- October-December Portals of Prayer
- Smoke Detector batteries

Recorded videos of Sermons
Sermons can be found in on our Living Word YouTube channel (**New London Living Word**) at
https://www.youtube.com/@newlondonlivingword8097/streams

Nov 2 "Getting Ready for the Darkest Time of the Year"
Nov 9 "Attitudes Jesus teaches in the Lord's Prayer petition: Give us this day our daily bread."
Nov 16 "Attitudes Jesus teaches in the Lord's Prayer petition: And forgive us our sins for we forgive those indebted to us."
Nov 23 "Attitudes Jesus teaches in the Lord's Prayer petition: And lead us not into temptation."
Nov 30 "Thanksgiving - It's Not Just the Day Before Black Friday"

Still Available: Direct Deposit for Your Offerings

Living Word has the option of an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking or savings account .

Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis. An authorization form and a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer are available from the church office.

Thot for a day: He who has no Christmas in his heart will never find Christmas under a tree.

Prayer...

Remember to use "The Prayer Force"

Please continue to call, text (320-220-1816) or email (pastor@livingwordlutheran.net) prayer requests to Pastor David for the Prayer Force prayer chain to include in their prayers. Thanks!

And an Invitation to Join our "Prayer Force"
Being a part of our prayer chain is a HUGELY important - and very simple - way you can serve God and His people! When a request to pray comes in, Pastor forwards it via text message (or email for those who don't have a cell phone). Then you simply include that request in your prayers. Text Pastor today and tell him "Yeah, I can do that!" Thanks!

Please Remember to Pray At 11:09 Every day

(inspired by Luke 11:9: *"So I say to you, Ask and it will be given to you; Seek and you will find; Knock and the door will be opened to you"*)

Remember to take a time-out to PRAY for things like... these VBS Prayers:

- Thanking God for helping us meet our initial Building fundraising goal!
- People you can invite to the Christmas Program (Dec 14) or the Christmas Eve Service (5pm Dec 24)
- God to open people's hearts to the Hope, Peace and Joy of Jesus
- Thanking God for sending His Son to live among us!
- Thanking God that Jesus is still Immanuel - God with us!
- An "Attitude of Gratitude" everyday - not just on Thanksgiving Day
- Safe travels over the Christmas holiday
- Asking God to open people's eyes to see that Jesus is what they need
- For God to continue giving comfort and peace to those grieving.
- Asking God for courage to follow where He guides
- For all those who are home-bound or in nursing facilities
- Continued wisdom for guidance and decisions (BIG and small)
- Thanking God that His Word is Truth amidst the lies of the world.
- Protection from the deceitful messages Satan sends your way
- Asking God for faith to stand for His Truth like Daniel's 3 friends !
- Asking God to humble you, seek Him and repent (2 Chronicles 7:14)
- God's protection, wisdom & courage for government leaders
- The ministry of the Jastrams in Japan

After-Worship Prayer Ministry

We have people who will pray with you or for you after Sunday service. They gather for prayer near the piano, just meet them there.

Also, we're always looking for a few more people who have a passion for praying!!!

Monthly Music Videos...

Here is some great new music from the month of November...

- We The Kingdom just released a song that will soon be a hit, "Dear Jesus"... https://youtu.be/ZB0XC0jbwCs
- "Make It Well" is the latest song from MercyMe... https://youtu.be/guXZK0GBp3s
- The Band Reeves (brothers and pastor's kids) released "Front Porch Church"... https://youtu.be/iZhHusw990A
- Jamie MacDonald released a new song called "My Family"... https://youtu.be/diM75vf-_u4
- "The Church Is On Fire" is new from Tauren Wells... https://youtu.be/2-dSFH-ZkBE
- Consumed by Fire just released a new song called "Letters To Heaven"... https://youtu.be/fSZcuSCVIRA
- New artist, John Smith has a new song, "God and Me"... https://youtu.be/TZ5lVKPZunA
- "Cling To The Cross" is new from Seph Schlueter and Matt Maher... https://youtu.be/nmSXl1_v34w

The rest of this month's list will feature some new Christmas songs:

- Gabby Barrett released "Where Are You Christmas"... https://youtu.be/CLyGGY23Auw
- "Comfort & Joy" is new from Jason Gray with Point of Grace... https://youtu.be/017GDMjWwnQ
- The metal band, Stryper released their first Christmas album featuring "On This Holy Night"... https://youtu.be/FjpTk9evrwU
- "Born In Me" is a new release from Hope Darst... https://youtu.be/z7aF9Pc1CQc
- "The Moment the Whole World Changed" is the latest from Danny Gokey... https://youtu.be/Fk7MKGLEaZ0
- Forrest Frank and JVKE have released a new song, "Christmas Morning"... https://youtu.be/wStwsaL4wCs
- Good Weather Forecast released a new song, "Little Christmas"... https://youtu.be/3XRk4DR_ugg
- Holly Brand and Warren Peay released a new version of the Amy Grant song, "Tennessee Christmas"... https://youtu.be/ZgRmvOVESLg

Thot for a day: The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.

- I like this new song from Larry Fleet "That Spirit of Christmas"... https://youtu.be/RwjHIgNm6Bg
- "The Greatest Gift" is new from Justin Radford... https://youtu.be/C1rcJs_Ufzs
- "Christmas All Year Long" is a great song from Tasha Layton... https://youtu.be/blwtrBazlLA

BONUS VIDEO: Not a new song, but one of my favorites... 30 years ago Steven Curtis Chapman released his first Christmas Album and one of my favorite songs was called "Christmas Is All In The Heart" recorded with CeCe Winans. Now Steven and CeCe has teamed up again on the 30th anniversary to re-release this song... https://youtu.be/vUDUd9RBcJw

Story Behind The Song...

"Silent Night" is such an iconic Christmas song that it's hard to imagine it's not some ancient folk tune that wafted out of the mist one wintery night. But the song did not spring from some holly- and ivy-lined fairy glade, instead the origin of the peaceful song comes over 200 years ago during a turbulent time in Europe.

The continent was reeling in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. Financial scarcity and insecurity abounded, further stoked by fires, floods and famine. But the conflict was, at least, finally over. In 1816, Josef Mohr, a Catholic priest from Oberndorf bei Salzburg, which had just come under Austrian rule, went for a walk and he looked out over a very quiet, winter-laden town before writing a poem called "Stille Nacht" to commemorate the coming of peace. Then, he put the poem aside for two years.

He returned to the poem in the winter of 1818, when a river flooded into Mohr's parish church of Saint Nicholas. So the congregation could have music on Christmas Eve, Mohr asked school teacher and church organist Franz Xaver Gruber to set his poem to music to be sung by two voices and a guitar. Gruber wrote the arrangement in an afternoon. Because guitar was not an instrument approved by the Church, the duo waited until the conclusion of Christmas Eve mass before debuting the song. Mohr sang tenor and strummed the guitar while Gruber sang bass, with the congregation coming in on the chorus.

The song might have remained a one-night wonder, but when the organ repairman Karl Mauracher arrived, he heard the song and took the sheet music home with him to Tyrol, an area known for its choirs. The choirs began singing the tune, and eventually it was translated and

spread around Europe. In 1839, it came to the United States when the Rainer Family Singers toured the New World.

Perhaps at no time in the song's history was the song's message of peace, even in the midst of suffering, more important than during the Christmas Truce of 1914, when, at the height of World War I, German and British soldiers on the front lines in Flanders laid down their weapons on Christmas Eve and together sang "Silent Night." https://youtu.be/UnZ09QUMXAE

Translated into at least 300 languages, designated by UNESCO as a treasured item of Intangible Cultural Heritage, and arranged in dozens of different musical styles, from heavy metal to gospel, "Silent Night" has become a perennial part of the Christmas soundscape.

The song is commonly sung with the first three verses of Mohr's original six verses...

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth

Silent Night! Holy Night!
Brought the world gracious light,
Down from heaven's golden height
Comes to us the glorious sight:
Jesus, as one of mankind,
Jesus, as one of mankind.

Silent Night! Holy Night!
By his love, by his might
God our Father us has graced,

Thot 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?

As a brother gently embraced
Jesus, all nations on earth,
Jesus, all nations on earth.

Silent Night! Holy Night!
Long ago, minding our plight
God the world from misery freed,
In the dark age of our fathers decreed:
All the world redeemed,
All the world redeemed.

Lots of great performances. Here are some of my favorites;
The original German version... https://youtu.be/MbhxZOOXLvU
The Irish version (for Pastor Dave)... https://youtu.be/iF53BUBpsb8
From sisters, Lucy & Martha Thomas... https://youtu.be/UyXsWGNCJbA
From Home Free... https://youtu.be/U1dWXE-B4sw
From BYU Vocal Point... https://youtu.be/I6vG43-j8EA
Maybe the best from Dan & Shay... https://youtu.be/XbAnIpgrNIA

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson