

LIFELINES



of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Blessings abound!

I tend to be a pessimist. I have a habit of seeing the glass half empty. Even when things are good, I can usually figure out a way to dwell on what isn't perfect. But even with that being the case, recently, when it comes to church, I've been running out of things to complain about (which, let's face it, is how I ought to be anyway!)

After a long strange year of pandemic, most of our regular attenders have returned to in-person worship. Bible class has returned to Sunday mornings and attendance in the services is up. Vaccinations have allowed people to feel that they can go out in public without taking a great risk. Holy Week and Easter are upon us and I think even more plan to return to worship to celebrate the high feast of Christ's resurrection. On Easter we will once again kneel when receiving the Lord's Supper. In many ways, things feel like they are getting back to normal. But not everything is going back to the way it was. We actually have some exciting changes taking place at Lord of Life.

Recently we have had a good number of folks who are interested in joining the congregation and are taking the new member class. Many of them are younger folks too, which is exciting and bodes well for the future of the congregation. Another positive change is that our congregational debt continues to shrink. In spite of low church attendance, our members have faithfully contributed offerings this past year and we have not had to let go of any staff or make any drastic cuts to our budget. In fact, we have managed to bring the building debt down to \$180,000. (For some perspective on that number, I believe it was around 1.2 million when I began serving here 8 years ago.)

One year ago, we were trying to figure out what pandemic life would be like. We all had to deal with a lot of fear and come to some conclusions about how we would exercise our faith and be involved in our church community in light of the pandemic. Technology afforded us some measure of connectivity and while it has its place and serves its purpose, I think most will admit it is a poor substitute for the real thing. So, one of the many lessons the pandemic has taught us (or perhaps, reminded us of) is that God has made us social creatures and it is not good for us to be alone. And hopefully, this time apart will allow us to appreciate being together even more.

Things are looking really good right now for Lord of Life. God has blessed us each individually, by taking away our sins and giving us hope and the sure and certain promise of never ending life in the kingdom. But God has also blessed our congregation richly and continues to do so. It's important that when we are blessed, we acknowledge it so we can thank God again and rejoice in His good gifts. I've been thinking a lot about God's blessings to our church lately and wanted to share them with you, so you too can share in giving thanks.

See you at church,

PrS

Oh, Magnify the LORD With Me, and Let Us Exalt His Name Together!

My dear friends in Christ,

As I've contemplated the fact that a full year has now passed since COVID-19 began impacting our world, our society, and our congregation, I have found myself reading and reflecting on Psalm 34 again and again. I write today to commend that Psalm to you and to share some of my thoughts about it.

Despite the odd introduction to the Psalm (which points to events described in 1 Samuel 21:10-15) and David's apparent use of pretense to save himself from the king of Gath, it is clear from this Psalm that he credits God rather than his own cleverness with his rescue and his salvation.

As we have now come through this COVID year after implementing any number of personal and societal and church-wide precautions for our safety, and as we can now look back on how our church family has been and is being blessed:

- with our ability to faithfully continue our worship both in person and on-line,
- with no major outbreaks nor serious cases of the illness in our members,
- with our members by and large being insulated from the worst of the economic impacts,
- with our church financial position remaining healthy,
- with our beginning to return to a near normal Sunday morning routine and attendance, and, quite recently,
- with a number of repeat visitors attending worship with us each week and expressing interest in joining our congregation,

Psalm 34

- ¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
- ³ Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶ This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
and saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- ⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
- ⁹ Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no lack!
- ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
- ¹¹ Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- ¹² What man is there who desires life
and loves many days, that he may see good?
- ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.
- ¹⁴ Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry.
- ¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the earth.
- ¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
- ¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.
- ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.
- ²⁰ He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.
- ²¹ Affliction will slay the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
- ²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

it is clear to me that, just like David, we must give God the credit for our blessings rather than any of our own actions.

Beyond giving all credit to God for our rescue and salvation, another aspect of this Psalm that strikes a chord with me is how it seems to emphasize the corporate nature of this praise and giving of credit to God.

The primary purpose of worship is expressed by how we name it The Divine Service - that is, it is about God bestowing upon us His gifts; namely, His word, His forgiveness, His gift of faith, His body and blood, His blessing. Nonetheless, there is a secondary purpose to worship where we acknowledge all that we have received from Him, praising and thanking Him and encouraging one another in our faith in Him (see Hebrews 10:24-25) to which this Psalm seems to speak.

One commentary on this Psalm breaks it down like this:

In verses 1-10, David "praise[s] God for His gracious help, inviting others to share in his experience".

*I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the LORD; let the humble hear and be glad.
Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!
Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him have no lack!*
Psalm 34:1-3,8-9

In verses 11-22, David offers "instruction as to what leads to such heartening experiences; chiefly, living in the fear of the Lord".

*Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.
When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.
The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.
The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.*
Psalm 34: 11,14,17-18 & 22

Along with David and all the people of God, let all those of us who are members here at Lord of Life bless and praise and magnify Him, for we have indeed tasted and seen that He is good. And, as we gather together in worship (see Ephesians 5:19-21 and Colossians 3:16), let us further instruct (remind and encourage) one another to fear the Lord (i.e., to put our faith in Him and only in Him), to seek peace and pursue it, and to look for His redemption and His salvation.

In Christ,
Mike Kunschke, Elder



Thank you to all who joined us at our All Church Work Day! It was a great turn out and so much was accomplished.

The church is beautifully ready to celebrate our Lord's Resurrection.



Lord of Life IMPACT Youth Ministry



Bring your donated items to church during the week of May 10 - 14 and place them in the game room. (Room 121).

Proceeds will benefit the 2021 summer youth trip.



LWML Dal-North Spring Event

“Lutheran Women in Witness”

Speaker – Pastor Mark Taylor

Saturday, April 17th, 2021

3pm – 5pm with dinner following (COVID appropriate)

Faith Lutheran Church, Plano

1701 E. Park Blvd, Plano 75074

- **Registration fee: \$10 requested.**
- **RSVP: None, just come and bring a friend!**
- **Ingathering: Non-perishable food items for local food banks.**
- **Event: Devotion, Guest Speaker, Business Meeting, Free-Will Offering for Mites, Door Prizes and More!**
- **Social Distancing practiced and Masks recommended**

Contact - Charis Bennett

charisbennett@gmail.com or text: 650-759-7759

Lutheran Women's Missionary League
invites you to the

39th Biennial Convention

Thursday, June 24–Sunday, June 27, 2021

Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center • Lexington, Kentucky



Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:1–2).

Convention Goal

Looking to Jesus, we run the race set before us and proclaim the joy of the Lord.

Convention Objectives

Convention attendees will:

- Focus on Jesus through God's Word and Sacrament.
- Joyfully celebrate our salvation with song and prayer.
- Serve our neighbors through witness and mission.

Convention Logo Explanation



The convention logo incorporates the shape of the last letter of the Greek alphabet, Omega, and makes reference to the passage from Scripture, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end"* (Revelation 22:13). The symbol is shaped like a horseshoe, which is appropriate, as horses are a large part of the Kentucky culture.



Ancient Greeks awarded horseshoe-shaped laurel wreaths to victors of competitions. In our logo, the laurel wreath symbolizes our victory in Christ.



The banner was a method of announcing an official proclamation. Our banner proclaims that we are *"Running the Race ... Looking to Jesus."*

Lord of Life Small Groups

EMPTY NESTERS' CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike and Sandra Paradise at (972) 424-2951 or itsparadise.inplano@verizon.net
- † Usually meet one Sat. a month at 2:30 PM

EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com
- † Usually meet one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or speters@planolutheran.com
- † Usually meet one Sun. a month at 5:30 PM

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Chris Oltmann at (972) 727-6330 or Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Usually meet the 2nd Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

MIXED BLESSINGS

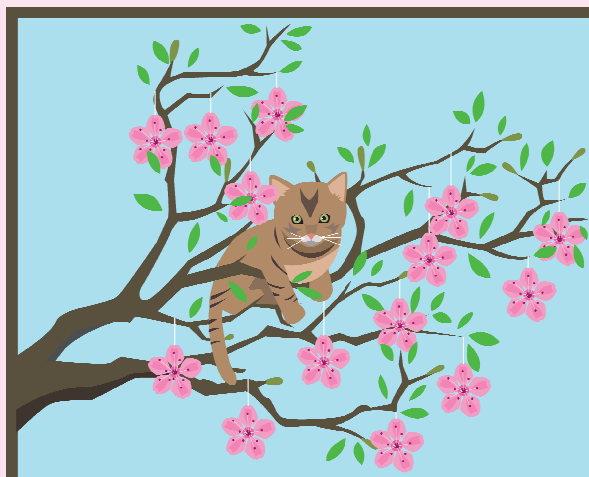
- † For info contact Fred and Ruth Bernhardt at (972) 398-0771
- † Usually meet one Sat. a month at 6:30 PM

TWENTY SOMETHINGS

- † For couples and singles in their twenties
- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com
- † The group is currently in transition, but has usually met on Sundays after late service



APRIL



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Brandon Lund
- 2 Teresa Strecker
- 3 Kathy Hite
- 8 Jon Chumbley
- 8 Brian Wolf
- 11 Grant Kostrzewa
- 14 Bob Helms
- 15 Dudley Hall
- 15 Carl & Jan Carper (45)
- 15 Brooks & Joanna Smith (26)
- 16 Karen Lund
- 17 Jeff Berger
- 17 Luke Reinert
- 19 Lynda Abbott
- 22 Charles & Suzanne Gabriel (21)
- 22 Scott & Christine Messinger (26)
- 22 Rhonda Tabor
- 25 Kathy Helms
- 25 Rix Scarth
- 25 Laurie & Tom George (34)
- 26 Bon & Becky Padgett (24)
- 27 Mike & Sandra Paradise (58)
- 28 Katie Short
- 30 Earl & Karen Lund (33)

prepare for worship in april

April 1: Maundy Thursday, 7 PM

April 2: Good Friday, 7:30 PM

April 4: The Resurrection of Our Lord

Texts: Acts 4:32-35; 1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31
Hymn of the Day: "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds," 465

April 11: Second Sunday of Easter

Texts: Num. 21:4-9; Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:14-21
Hymn of the Day: "O Sons and Daughters of the King," 470

April 18: Third Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 3:11-21; 1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36-49
Hymn of the Day: "With High Delight Let Us Unite," 483

April 25: Fourth Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 4:1-12; 1 John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18
Hymn of the Day: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," 709



SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2 Months Ending February 2021

	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2020 Budget
Contributions				
Regular Offerings	\$97,069	\$94,548	\$2,521	\$581,908
Other	\$48	\$0	\$48	\$0
Total Income	\$97,117	\$94,548	\$2,569	\$581,908
Expenses				
Operating Expenses	\$78,522	\$89,531	(\$11,009)	\$550,845
Mortgage Payment (P&I)	\$5,160	\$5,160	\$0	\$30,960
Total Expenses	\$83,682	\$94,691	(\$11,009)	\$581,805
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$13,435	(\$143)	\$13,578	\$103
Other Information:				
Operating Fund Balance	\$112,710			
Restricted Funds Balance	\$117,831			
Building Loan Balance	\$187,801			