

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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The Gospel of Matthew

The lectionary for this new Church Year will have us reading mostly from St. Matthew's Gospel. My plan is to focus most of my preaching on the Gospel texts for each Sunday, so I thought it might be helpful to go over this Gospel and share some general notes on it.

The authorship of this gospel is not contested. Saint Matthew called Levi, (the tax collector Jesus called to be a disciple,) is its author. No credible alternate names have been put forth and the testimony of the early church is unanimous on this point. It is also thought that this Gospel was written early, around 50 AD perhaps before all the other gospels. Because of its usefulness in teaching, this Gospel was a favorite of the early church and it was read and used for preaching and teaching more than the others. Perhaps this is why it is included first in the New Testament? Others suggest it was included first because it represents the strongest link between the Old Testament and the New. It was also widely believed by early Christians that the Gospel was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, though the oldest manuscripts we have are in Greek. But the connection to the Old Testament is clear; Matthew, more than all the other Gospel writers, is concerned to make connections to the Old Testament letting the reader know how Jesus' words or actions fulfilled Old Testament prophecies (this happens about 35 times).

The work can be divided into three general parts: The first is an introduction to the person and significance of Jesus. Second, Jesus' ministry in Israel and the contrast between those who receive Him and those who oppose Him. Third, the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Like Saint Paul, Matthew, the former tax collector, was a sinner called to serve Christ and His writings reflect this divine grace. Matthew is also deeply interested in disciples. Matthew gives us the fullest account of how the disciples were called and trained and the gospel famously ends with Jesus' command to "go and make disciples..."

Source: Lutheran Bible Companion Vol. 2 CPH 2014

PrS



Inspiration of St. Matthew by Caravaggio, 1602

I know about things Jesus said and did, but I don't know a thing about the Bible.

I'd love to understand the Bible better, but I don't know where to start.

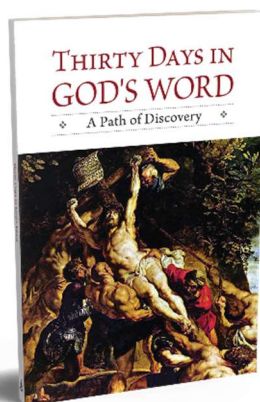
I'd love to attend a Bible study, but I don't want to feel dumb.

Over the years, I have encountered these kinds of statements many times as I have encouraged people to spend time in the Holy Scriptures. If you have ever said these kinds of things or know someone who has, then you should know about a book recently published by CPH, *Thirty Days in God's Word: A Path of Discovery*. This easy, beginner level book is a brief introduction to every book of the Bible organized into a schedule of 30 days. Each day is only four pages and introduces the reader to at least one book of the Bible with a summary of the book's content, well-known quotes from the book, and it also asks and answers the question: *What does this book have to do with me?* Longer books get an entire day's write-up devoted to them, while other days may cover multiple shorter books.

If you or someone you know might be making a New Year's resolution to understand the Bible better, this book would be an excellent basic introduction to all 66 books of the Bible in one month. Available at CPH.org and Amazon.com

From the back cover:

The Bible is God's Word to us. It is a wonderful library of books written in ancient times-which might seem intimidating. But it's not hard to start your personal journey into the Word of the Lord. This study will lead you through each of the Bible's sixty-six books in thirty days. You will read passages from each



book of the Bible and come away with a greater understanding of what each book is about through explanation and commentary.



prepare for worship in December

Dec. 4: Second Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 11:1-10; Rom. 15:4-13; Matt. 3:1-12
Hymn of the Day: "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry," 344

Dec. 7: Midweek Advent 2, 1:30 PM & 7PM

Dec. 11: Third Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 35:1-10; James 5:7-11; Matt. 11:2-15
Hymn of the Day: "Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding," 345

Dec. 7: Midweek Advent 3, 1:30 PM & 7PM

Dec. 18: Fourth Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 7:10-17; Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25
Hymn of the Day: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," 357

Dec. 21: Midweek Advent 4, 1:30 PM & 7PM

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve, 6 PM

Dec. 25: Christmas Day - One Service, 10 AM

Texts: Is. 52:7-10; Heb. 1:1-6 (7-12); John 1:1-14 (15-18)
Hymn of the Day: "We Praise You, Jesus, at Your Birth," 382



A Brief History of the English District of the The Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod



Given our current discussions about possibly partnering with the English District of the LCMS, I found the history listed out on their website to be very interesting. For those who have not read about this yet - here is the brief summary from the About / History page of their website at <https://englishdistrict.org/about-us/history>

The English District is one of 35 districts of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. At one time the English District was an independent Lutheran Synod in North America, organized in 1888 as the "English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri." Its history goes back to colonial times.

In the early days of Lutheranism in the United States, the Henkels, a prominent Lutheran family, provided pastoral leadership for the church in Virginia. The family was concerned about Lutheran confessional teaching. In 1851, the Henkel family published the first English edition of the Book of Concord, the Lutheran Confessions. Members of the family were responsible for establishing several synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. One of those synods, the Tennessee Synod, was organized in 1820 by Pastor Paul Henkel. The Tennessee Synod believed firmly in the authority of God's Word. It insisted on strong catechetical training within the congregations.

Immediately after the American Civil War, Pastor Polycarp Henkel, grandson of founding patriarch Paul Henkel, served as pastor of Zion Church, Gravelton, Missouri. The leaders of the Tennessee Synod learned of the existence of the Missouri Synod, a strong confessional synod headed by Dr. Carl F. W. Walther, with headquarters in St. Louis. Tennessee Synod pastors and laymen in Missouri invited Dr. Walther to meet with them. In August of 1872, representatives of the "German Missouri Synod" met with the pastors and congregations of the Tennessee Synod at Zion in Gravelton. Dr. Walther presented sixteen theses that expressed the confession of the Missouri Synod. While the theses were in English, the discussions were

conducted both in German and English since the Tennessee Synod members did not speak German. As a result of the meeting "The English Evangelical Lutheran Conference of Missouri" was organized. In 1888 the English Conference of the Tennessee Synod in Missouri was organized as a separate synod, the English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri. However, the new English Synod continued attempts to become one organically with "The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States."

Finally in 1911, the English Synod was accepted into the "German Missouri Synod" as a non-geographic synodical district. The "English Synod of Missouri" did not want amalgamation, but it did want to be part of the Missouri Synod because of its confessional and scriptural Lutheran stance.

There are English District congregations in one Canadian province and in 21 U.S. states, from Naples, Florida to Minneapolis, from New York to San Diego, from Pembroke, Ontario, Canada to Lincoln, Nebraska, to Arizona, cities and suburbs. English District congregations minister in 29 different languages including: French, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tigrian, Urdu, Amharic, Nuer, and Sign. The English District serves campuses, human care and other types of ministries.

Today, the District numbers 161 congregations, mission starts, and social ministries.

The English District sees itself in the role of the servant. It is a servant to the congregations, servant to other districts, and servant to the entire Synod. The English District seeks to help in situations and circumstances where other districts cannot carry out their goals and need help. For the Synod, we promote our mutual faith, one in purpose and in organization. Where others will not, or can not, we are ready to serve.

Doug Hite
Board of Elders

Teen Times

Here we are at the beginning of December 2022. We celebrated Thanksgiving Day not long ago, and I feel like the food hangover is still lingering. It was still a great day to spend time with family and friends, and to thank God for the many ways He has blessed us. Now we can look forward to the Christmas and New Year holidays and hopefully have a repeat of the jubilant gatherings that we enjoyed at the end of November. I find that several family members and many of my friends use social media to spread their well wishes when they are reveling in holiday festivities, and yours truly is no different. It seems Facebook is the platform of choice for most people over the age of 30 for a news source while the senior generation uses it for primarily networking and participation in conversations. The younger generation of millennials and Gen Z are more interested in creating an identity on social media. I have mentioned and quoted in previous **Teen Times** articles one of the email newsletters I receive on a weekly basis called "The Culture Translator" from a Christian based group called Axis. A few weeks ago, a portion of their newsletter shared some interesting data on teens and social media.

According to Pew's [survey](#) (which included 1,316 U.S. teens ages 13 to 17), 32% said social media's effect on their lives has been mostly positive, only 9% said it has been mostly negative, and 59% said its impact has been neutral. For some parents and caring adults, this may seem hard to believe. (It's a little hard for us to believe too.) A first reaction might be, "So now teens can't even tell what's positive and what's negative?"

But we should let this be an opportunity to ask questions and try to understand. If social media has truly become a mostly positive experience for the rising generation, we should celebrate that, and thank God for it.

Part of the complexity is that when one teen says "social media," they mean BeReal; when another says "social media," they mean Instagram. The structure and experience of these platforms can differ vastly. Still, in [section 3](#) of Pew's survey, apps like TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp, and Instagram were all mentioned by teens in neutral to positive

terms. Perhaps the overall experience of these platforms truly is changing for the better—or perhaps many teens have simply learned to adapt to their hazards.

Of course, even if every bad side effect could be completely mitigated, it would still be possible to have too much of a good thing. As Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend write in their book [Boundaries](#), "The Bible and all of psychological research affirm an important reality about healthy, fulfilled, happy people: they have something called 'self-control.' Galatians 5 tells us that it is a fruit of the Spirit, and we are called to develop it." It remains possible to use social media in compulsive, absent-minded ways—or in deliberate, purposeful ways. Whatever this survey might reveal about social media usage in your teens, wisdom principles like these can still make all the difference. (AXIS, Vol. 8, Issue 46/November 18, 2022)

The Christmas season is a very popular time for social media users. Instead of sending cards and letters in the mail, which is still the norm for a lot of people, folks can type their season's greetings and attach a family photo from their smart phone on the web. I'm not judging or saying this is wrong, I use it quite often to dote on my family every now and then. Lord of Life even uses social media to reach people within the church or in the community, and Lord willing the effects are positive. We will most likely use it to announce our Advent worship schedule and other upcoming church events. I feel the reference above to "self-control" in Galatians 5 is vital and can make a positive impact on our lives, even in the world of social media. So, whether it's a card in the mail, or a post on Facebook, the point is to be smart and keep it positive. Truth be told, the best kind of social greeting is the good ol' face-to-face Merry Christmas!

Here's wishing you all a blessed
Advent season and a Merry Christmas!

Until next year,
Scott Peters



Lord of Life Small Groups

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 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
- † Will meet Fri., December 9 at 6:30 PM

COLLEGE GROUP

- † For students in college or recent grads
- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com
- † Usually meet after the late service for lunch and Bible study



Thank you to everyone who Contributed to the Comfort Makers quilting group over the last year, and those who contributed to the kits for Lutheran World Relief. A Thrivent Action Team grant was used to purchase some of the supplies. This year's donation from Lord of Life was 122 quilts, 73 personal care kits, 11 fabric kits, and \$100 in cash donations for shipping. The 23 boxes were loaded up into trucks for delivery to the LWR ingathering site at Messiah on November 12th, one of 3 collection sites in Texas. These items will be transported to the LWR warehouse in Maryland and then sent out to help people in need around the world.



- 1 Tim & Alyson Wood (15)
- 4 Mollie Manning
- 4 Monique Phelan
- 6 Bob & Kathy Helms (35)
- 11 Paula Lowery
- 13 Gail Wolf
- 14 Stu Ehrett
- 14 Jack Schrank
- 14 Mark & Susan Knowles (41)
- 15 Eleanor Duff
- 15 Sebastian Shaltanis
- 16 Joel Crumrine
- 17 Marty & Angie Buckmeier (32)
- 18 Stephanie Tabor
- 19 Joel & Kelsey Crumrine [2]
- 20 Alex Duff
- 20 Dave Peters
- 22 Dennis & Linda Delzer (55)
- 23 Nancy Cawood
- 23 Kevin & Cheryl Tyler (29)
- 26 Andrew Buckmeier
- 26 Ben Scarth
- 26 Mariel Tweedie
- 27 Phil Klein
- 27 Randy & Sylvia Rippey (4)
- 28 David & Becky Armstrong (37)
- 30 Dennis Delzer
- 30 Mark Huebel
- 30 Tasie Kade
- 30 Doug & Janet Sanders [45]
- 30 Ken & Rhonda Tabor (39)

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
Summarized Statement of Activity
10 Months Ending October 31, 2022

	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2022 Budget
Contributions				
Regular Offerings	\$466,003	\$472,723	(\$6,720)	\$560,692
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Income	\$466,003	\$472,723	(\$6,720)	\$560,692
Expenses				
Benevolences	\$32,560	\$33,091	(\$531)	\$39,248
Elders	\$312,324	\$321,920	(\$9,596)	\$386,297
Education	\$298	\$800	(\$502)	\$1,000
Outreach	\$94	\$400	(\$306)	\$600
Office Expenses	\$10,041	\$9,950	\$91	\$12,090
Utilities	\$31,500	\$28,945	\$2,555	\$33,415
Property Maintenance	\$28,885	\$31,150	(\$2,265)	\$34,440
Stewardship	\$0	\$350	(\$350)	\$350
Family Ministries	\$5,048	\$4,690	\$358	\$5,290
Youth Board	\$2,779	\$5,600	(\$2,821)	\$6,100
Children's Ministry	\$868	\$5,650	(\$4,782)	\$6,700
Admin Council	\$2,118	\$2,150	(\$32)	\$2,600
Total Operating Expense	\$426,515	\$444,696	(\$18,181)	\$528,131
Mortgage Payment	\$25,800	\$25,800	\$0	\$30,960
Total Expenses	\$452,315	\$470,496	(\$18,181)	\$559,091
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$13,688	\$2,228	\$11,460	\$1,601
Other Information:				
Operating Fund Balance	\$114,918			
Restricted Funds Balance	\$122,969			
Building Loan Balance	\$81,082			