

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Plano, Texas

January 2023

A blessed and Happy New Year to all! I have various thoughts and updates to share with you this month beginning with a prayer for the New Year from the first president of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

-PrS

Prayer for the New Year ¹

Eternal, living, unchangeable God! You are the same, and Your years have no end. We, however, are born and die, come and go, and wander from one year to the next.

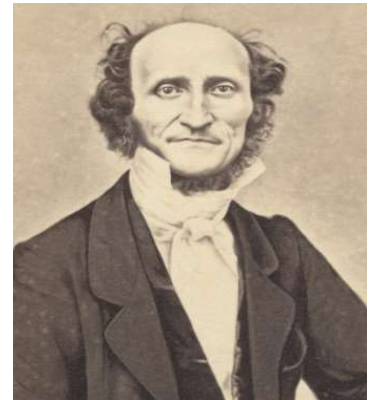
We come to You, the eternal and unchangeable, in this morning of a changing year to offer You, the ruler of our life, thanksgiving and praise and glory and adoration for all the good things which You have sent us. Your goodness has preserved us in the old year, Your love providing all necessities, Your faithfulness shielding us from all danger, Your help delivering us in all need, anxiety, and trouble, and Your patience carrying us despite our countless sins. Great things, yes, great things You have done to us whereof we are glad, Oh Lord, do not disdain the wretched praise of our sinful hearts and lips. Receive in Christ the thanks we bring.

Behold, O heavenly Father, today we again come into Your holy presence with prayer and supplications. Do not remember –this we pray above all- do not remember our guilt of the old year in the new which we are entering; blot them out like a cloud, and let them vanish like a fog, that they will never, never be remembered. Do not change Your Fatherly heart toward us; give us again in the new year, grace and rule us with new forbearance.

The only reason You have permitted us to see this new year is that we might glorify You and seek eternal life. Oh, permit us all to reach this blessed goal.

We especially pray, O God, bless this congregation planted here by Your mercy; bless it in temporal and eternal things. Let each one be honorably successful in his earthly affairs this year. Lay on no one a greater burden than he is able to bear and serves for the salvation of his soul. Give all married people love and faithfulness for a blessed, peaceful marriage. Grant all parents wisdom and zeal to give their children a God-pleasing education. Bestow on all children, young men and women a God-fearing, heavenly-minded, chaste, and obedient heart. Comfort all widows and orphans. Have mercy on all sick, miserable, and tempted. And if according to Your will any of us must die, do not seize him violently in his sins, but graciously prepare him for death, and finally permit him to fall asleep confessing Your name.

Protect our schools and teachers as the apple of Your eye; make them nurseries of Your heavenly kingdom. Be graciously present in our voters meetings and the meetings of our elders. Give them good counsel to carry out Your will. O Lord, help us, O Lord, prosper us, and we will also in that world, where no changes of the year take place, sing a new song with new tongues forever and ever. Amen.



¹ This prayer by C.F.W. Walther serves as the introduction for his sermon for the festival of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus. It was written circa 1860. Originally published in German by CPH in 1870, this translation is by Donald E. Heck in Walther's Works: Gospel Sermons Volume 1, CPH 2011, p. 53-54

Lord of Life and the English District

In December, our congregation voted unanimously to leave the Texas District and join the English District of the LCMS. The transition process will take some time as it requires the Board of Directors of each district to approve this transition. I have been in contact with Rev. Dr. Michael Newman, president of the Texas District, and will be submitting a proposal for the Texas District board of directors to consider when they vote on whether or not to release us. I have also been in contact with the secretary of the synod, Rev. Dr. John Sias, on this matter and have learned from him what the synod requires from congregations who desire to change districts. I will keep you up to date as the transition plays out.

The president of the English District, Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy, will be visiting Lord of Life this month on the 15th. He will preach for both services that Sunday and will also give a presentation that evening on the English District. If you would like to learn more about this non-geographical district of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, (what we hope will be our district in the near future,) please plan to attend. As a show of good Texas hospitality, we will have a BBQ dinner for President Hardy at 6:00 PM with the presentation to follow at 7:00. If you would like to participate in the dinner, please click the following link to the required RSVP: planolutheran.com/RSVP

Wednesday Morning Bible Class

We will resume our study of 2nd Corinthians on Wednesday January 11 at 10:00 (ish). For those who are curious about our Wednesday study and haven't been, here's what you can expect: We typically get started around 10 with coffee and some kind of food. We go around the room and get an update from everyone on "what's new" and then turn to study. We are using a commentary on 2nd Corinthians and all of us have a copy. I highlight certain things in the book and read those sections, but also raise questions about the text and make connections for today. It is a good combination of relaxed study and fellowship. If you resolved this year to spend more time in the Word, consider spending it with friends at church on Wednesday mornings.

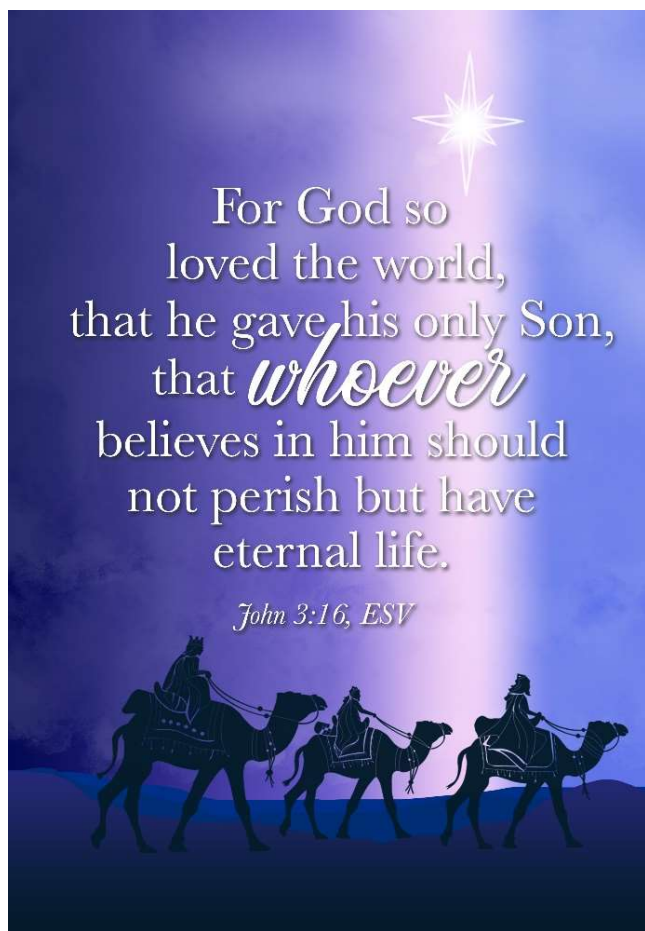
The Martyrdom of Polycarp

For our last Sunday morning Bible Study of 2022, we did something different and read, *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*. For those of you who don't know this story or haven't read it, it is an inspiring story about an early Christian martyr from the middle of the 2nd Century AD. Polycarp, an old man of 86, was threatened with death when he refused to renounce Jesus and worship Caesar. He responded, "Eighty-six years have I been His servant, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" The account is allegedly written by his friends at the church of Smyrna who revered their beloved bishop who stayed faithful to the end. It is in the form of a letter from one group of Christians to another, both facing intense persecution and both resolved to be faithful. To those who themselves might have to face death for their faith at any moment, the examples of the martyrs are of the utmost importance. In their account, they mention how some accused them of wanting to worship Polycarp even suggesting that they will worship him instead of Christ, to which they responded "... it will be impossible for us either to forsake at any time the Christ who suffered for the salvation of the whole world of those that are saved -- suffered though faultless for sinners -- nor to worship any other. For Him, being the Son of God, we adore, but the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord we cherish as they deserve for their matchless affection towards their own King and Teacher."

If you want to know more, I had a 12 page handout and would be happy to share it with you if you did not get one.

Many thanks to all of you for the nice Christmas bonus. It is truly appreciated.

Thanks,
PrS



prepare for worship in January

Jan. 1: Circumcision and Name of Jesus

Texts: Num. 6:22-27; Gal. 3:23-29; Luke 2:21

Hymn of the Day: "Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love," 900

Jan. 8: The Baptism of Our Lord

Texts: Is. 42:1-9; Rom. 6:1-11; Matt. 3:13-17

Hymn of the Day: "To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord," 407

Jan. 15: Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Is. 49:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:29-42a

Hymn of the Day: "The Only Son from Heaven," 402

Jan. 22: Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Is. 9:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:10-18; Matt. 4:12-25

Hymn of the Day: "O Christ, Our True and Only Light," 839

Jan. 29: Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Mic. 6:1-8; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Matt. 5:1-12

Hymn of the Day: "Son of God, Eternal Savior," 842

Reducing Our Debt UPDATE

Note Balance 2/20/2022	\$148,208
Principal Paid since 2/20/2022	\$85,891
Note Balance 12/31/2022	\$62,317



What will 2023 bring us?

The events of the last few years (including Covid, heated elections, difficult economic conditions, etc.) have some people looking ahead to the new year with trepidation.

However, whatever 2023 brings us, we need not be anxious or fear anything, for we know that our lives are within God's care – His providence.

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-12

Be comforted! God has plans for us. Plans for our welfare. Principle among those plans are for us to know Him and to place our faith in His Son Jesus.

The following are adapted from daily devotions at <https://www.lutheranchurchcharities.org/> on December 19th & 20th.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will Ephesians 1:11

God said, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end' (Revelation 22:13). God determines the end result He wants, then starts at the beginning and works towards it. He 'always does what he plans'. Joseph discovered that even when your family turns against you, God's plan is still in effect. Looking back, he said, 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good' (Genesis 50:20). But don't confuse 'good' with 'comfortable'. When God corrects or redirects you, it does not always feel good. But it is good! David said, 'When you corrected me, it did me good because it taught me' (Psalm 119:71).

If you're not sure of God's plan, seek Him until He shows it to you. James writes, 'ask God' (James 1:5) and 'Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.' (James 4:8a).

There is no situation Satan can devise for which God hasn't already made 'the way of escape' (1 Corinthians 10:13). Paul reassures us: 'God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it' (v.

13). It's in your times of testing that you discover 'God is faithful'. He will stretch you, but never beyond your breaking point.

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6

Paul writes, 'God is the one who began this good work in you, and I am certain...he won't stop before it is complete' (v. 6). You will notice that Jesus regularly took time out of His busy schedule to pray. In fact, He sometimes prayed all night. And He tells us why: 'The Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing' (John 5:19-20). Under the weight of our sins, He cried from the cross, 'My God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46). And His words teach us three important things: 1) We can be following God's plan and still feel overwhelmed and alone at times. 2) When God doesn't answer, we must practice standing on the promises He gave us in His Word. 3) The pain we're feeling will eventually give way to the joy that awaits us on the other side of it.

When you feel like you have reached the end of your rope, do what Jesus did and pray, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23:46). In other words, turn it all over to God. Trust Him to do what you can't do and to bring you through.

To conclude, we remind ourselves that God knows us and our needs better than we ourselves do, and that He is working good for us that will exceed our expectations. We also remind ourselves that all the glory in whatever this coming year brings us is to be God's alone.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21

In Christ,
Mike Kunschke
Elder

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
- † Will meet Sat., January 14 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

MIXED BLESSINGS

- † For info contact Fred and Ruth Bernhardt at (972) 398-0771
- † Will meet Sat., January 9 at 3:00 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

Karen Reynolds is back in the Nursery on Sundays during the 9:30 Bible Class hour and during the late service. Welcome back, Karen!



THANK YOU to all of the Meals for Moms volunteers who supported our family when we brought Lottie home from the hospital. A special thank you to Elisabeth Bennett for organizing it all.

Kevin, Jessica,
& Charlotte Ann Reeves



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Stu & Sandy Ehrett (35)
- 4 Alexis Starr
- 5 Nolan Helms
- 8 Lauren Moudy
- 8 Linda Tischler
- 10 Sandy Paradise
- 11 Donovan & Nancy Cawood (15)
- 19 Elizabeth Beisert
- 21 Brian Hahn
- 22 Lora Frinsko
- 22 Linda Hixson
- 23 Curtis & Sydney Peters
- 24 Kymberly Vess
- 28 Amy Kunschke
- 30 Karl Olsen



Lord of Life Lutheran Church
Summarized Statement of Activity
11 Months Ending November 30, 2022

	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2022 Budget
Contributions				
Regular Offerings	\$510,904	\$509,347	\$1,557	\$560,692
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Income	\$510,904	\$509,347	\$1,557	\$560,692
Expenses				
Benevolences	\$35,710	\$35,654	\$56	\$39,248
Elders	\$345,027	\$354,112	-\$9,085	\$386,297
Education	\$367	\$850	-\$483	\$1,000
Outreach	\$94	\$550	-\$456	\$600
Office Expenses	\$10,847	\$10,645	\$202	\$12,090
Utilities	\$33,988	\$31,370	\$2,618	\$33,415
Property Maintenance	\$30,371	\$32,720	-\$2,349	\$34,440
Stewardship	\$0	\$350	-\$350	\$350
Family Ministries	\$5,771	\$4,790	\$981	\$5,290
Youth Board	\$2,831	\$5,700	-\$2,869	\$6,100
Children's Ministry	\$868	\$6,050	-\$5,182	\$6,700
Admin Council	\$2,310	\$2,350	-\$40	\$2,600
Total Operating Expense	\$468,184	\$485,141	-\$16,957	\$528,131
Mortgage Payment	\$28,380	\$28,380	\$0	\$30,960
Total Expenses	\$496,564	\$513,521	-\$16,957	\$559,091
Surplus or (Deficit)	\$14,340	-\$4,175	\$18,515	\$1,601
Other Information:				
Operating Fund Balance	\$117,473			
Restricted Funds Balance	\$138,598			
Building Loan Balance	\$78,764			