

# LIFELINES

of

## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### COVID-19, Quarantine, and Online Worship

Thanks to so many of you for all your prayers, well wishes, meals and cards. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity. These last few weeks spent in quarantine have been unpleasant, but made far better by the support we received from our friends. Phaedra continues to recover well and her only remaining symptom is fatigue. The children and I have not had any symptoms and are all doing fine.

One opportunity this quarantine provided us that we would not have had otherwise, was the occasion to worship online. I know many have been doing this for a while now, but this was our first crack at it and my experience confirmed my suspicions. Here's what I discovered.

First, attending church in sweatpants while sitting on the couch already sets the wrong tone. How one dresses for worship says something about how they value the event. Getting up early, getting cleaned up and dressed in your best clothes, driving to the church—all of this prepares one for the experience of worship. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad anyone comes to church wearing whatever, but I also know that I dress up for things that are important and then there are clothes I wear when I'm just going to be lounging around the house. When "church" is in the living room, I don't bother dressing up any more than I would for watching TV!

When the service came on the TV, we ended up watching more than participating. As you probably know, I love to sing. I love to sing my favorite hymns. Sometimes I get so moved by a particular melody or phrase that I tend to blast them pretty loud in the front of the sanctuary. So, did I sing that way when I watched some of my favorite Reformation hymns on TV? Nope. I just nodded along or at best hummed a few bits and pieces. Ditto for much of the sung liturgy. Why is this? I don't know exactly. I suspect it has something to do with the way the organ actually encourages and supports singing in church, whereas trying to sing along with music coming through a small TV speaker feels

awkward. It probably also has to do with safety in numbers, that is, if everyone else is signing it doesn't feel weird. Whatever the reasons, the end result of watching rather than participating is that the experience becomes almost entirely passive, rather than active.

Incidentally, this was a point addressed by the Reformation. One of the critiques Luther made about worship in his day was that the people only watched the clergy and choir lead church and they themselves did not actively participate. His liturgy and hymns encouraged people to be much more active in the worship service and to this day, much of our liturgy is like a dialogue with things spoken back and forth between the liturgist and the congregation. Why participating in this dialogue is difficult to do over the internet, I don't know. But it just is. It is awkward and weird. That being said, having church on TV wasn't a total wash.

It was encouraging to see our faithful friends on the screen and I really appreciated the sermons. I also didn't feel nearly as distracted when listening to the readings and sermon or participating in the prayers as I did with the other parts of the service. For example, when the communion came on, I could not participate so I all but checked out at that point.

When it was finally over, I have to say that it didn't feel like I had been in worship. It felt more like a home devotion with the family or something along those lines. Still, I was glad to see friends on the screen and to listen to the sermons and pray along. I am glad for the technology, for those who provided it and for those who run it every Sunday. I am glad for the opportunity it can provide for those who are truly unable to attend church. I am glad we have it... in times of crisis. But it's no substitute for the real thing.

I'm looking forward to being back this Sunday,

PrS

## Thoughts on Courage and Fear

Have you ever tried to define courage? How might a Christian understand courage differently from the world's perspective? The following is an attempt at such a definition.

Courage does not mean one is unafraid. Someone may not have fear because they are foolish or cannot see the danger. Also, merely talking tough in the face of fear is hypocrisy, not bravery. An uncritical and reactionary "bravery" is really rashness or foolhardiness; it too is not really courageous.

Courage is to act appropriately in the face of fear. To not be overcome by fear so much that one fails to do their duty to love and serve their neighbor. One with courage can act honorably in the face of danger fulfilling their obligations and continuing to carry out their duties, whereas a coward runs and abandons them at the slightest hint of trouble. As Aristotle would put it; to act nobly and not shamefully in the presence of some danger.

Fear is the enemy of courage. Fear leads one to think and act irrationally. Fear is corrosive and contagious; it creates panic. Excessive fear in the face of some danger will lead one to not act appropriately; to "play it safe," they claim, or to cower.

Christian courage is born of faith in God. In the Scriptures we are told again and again "do not be afraid." (See below\*) Our ability to heed that imperative is due to the One who gives it. He does not want us to live in fear. He gives courage and bravery to those who trust in Him so we can live out that faith. ("...for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." 2 Timothy 1:7) If we live and act as our Lord would have us live and act, we will not be afraid and we will not be ashamed.

\*Merely a few of the places where Scripture directs us to not be afraid:

**Isaiah 41:10** - Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

**Psalm 56:3-4** - When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

**Matthew 10:31** - Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

**Luke 12:32** - "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

**John 14:27** - "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."



*Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)*

Lord of Life members, there are so many things going on in the world today and unfortunately, most of them are troubling and even frightening to us. We have little confidence in the near term and mid term future of our life on earth. That's a bit scary!

I subscribe to a daily devotion and today's had special meaning to me. We get so wrapped up in today's events that we sometime forget that our future is already planned for us, even into life everlasting.

Our Day of Judgement is upon us!

I hope you enjoy this reading!

Tom Read, Lord of Life Elder

## "Give Him Glory"

*Revelation 14:6-7 - Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come, and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."*

I don't know about you, but when I think of Judgment Day, I'm not usually looking forward to it. It sounds so scary. All the people who have ever lived, standing before God, with nowhere left to hide and no way of concealing any of the bad things they have said or thought or done ... Yikes!

And yet, that is not what the angel is saying in today's reading. He says, "Fear God and *give Him glory*, because the hour of His judgment has come." Give Him glory—why? Glory is something we usually give on account of good things. For example, you win a race at the Olympics, and we give you glory. You save a city from fire or flooding, and we give you glory. But this?

The angel is right, of course. Because God's Judgment Day is a good thing for those of us who belong to Jesus—for all of us who have been forgiven, washed clean, made fresh and new. When we come to that day, we will not need to be afraid. We have already been acquitted—found "not guilty"—pardoned, set free, rescued from all our evils. Jesus has done that for us, through His suffering and death on the cross. His death and resurrection have taken us out of judgment and brought us into the glorious relief and safety of the children of God. This is for everyone, without exception—everyone who trusts in Jesus.

So what does God's judgment mean for us, then? It means an end to evil—the final uprooting of wickedness—the moment we open our eyes after a long, terrible nightmare. It is like the doctor pronouncing you healthy after a long illness—like the police calling to say they caught the perpetrator who did you harm—like a text or voice message that lets you know your family is safe and well after an earthquake or hurricane. It is the final mopping up of God's war against evil, which Jesus won for us when He died on Calvary, and rose again from the dead three days later.

Now begins the new life, the new heavens and earth. Now begins happiness, peace, and joy—a life that no human being has had since Adam and Eve messed up in the Garden of Eden. This is the life God intended for humanity—a life that is whole, abundant, blessed, joyful. And it is ours from the Day of Judgment forward. Why? Because of Jesus.

**THE PRAYER:** Dear Lord, help me to look forward to Judgment Day, trusting and rejoicing because You have already had mercy on me. Amen.

(Taken from: <https://www.lhm.org/dailydevotions/default.asp?date=20201020>)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

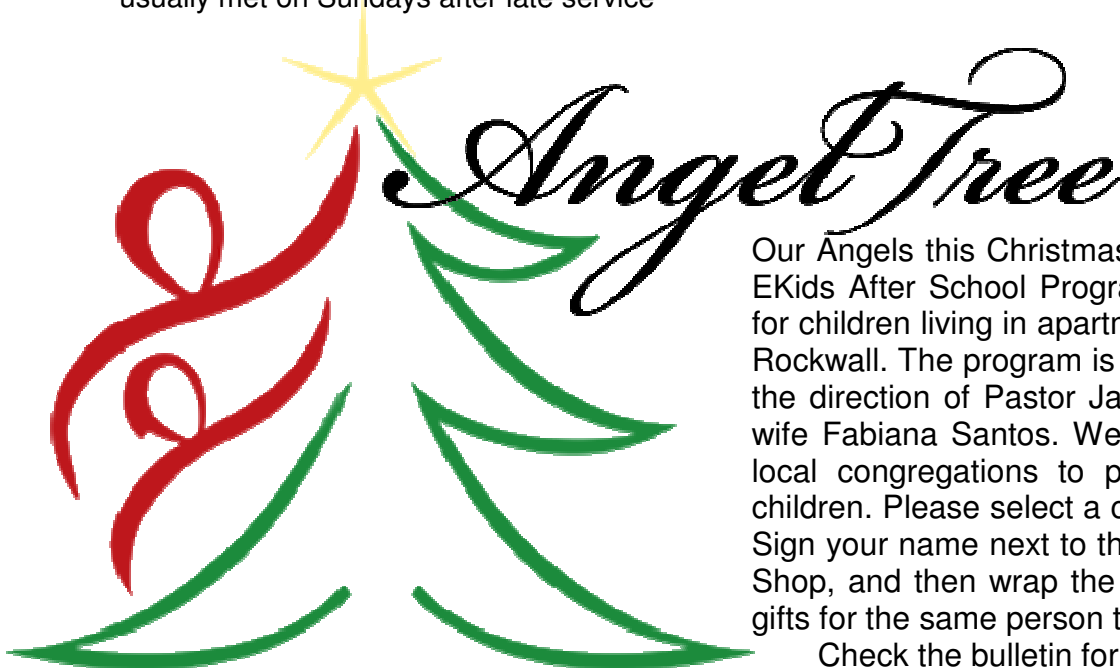
### TWENTY SOMETHINGS

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

## NOVEMBER

### Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 Duncan Bennett
- 3 Jeff Loewecke
- 4 Caitlyn Moudy
- 4 Peggy Stagliano
- 5 Peyton LaPlante
- 6 Isabel Frazier
- 7 Leo & Nora Parrent (51)
- 9 Jacob Hacker
- 9 Brooke Wilkerson
- 13 Ken Tabor
- 14 Stephan LaPlante
- 21 Stephani Cramer
- 21 Al Martin
- 22 Linda Delzer
- 22 Joe Isbell
- 22 Katherine Sowers
- 23 Cameron Klein
- 23 Nate Reinert
- 24 Tom Ashburn
- 24 Dick Hemingway
- 25 Melissa Kunschke
- 26 Evelyn Buckmeier
- 28 Russ Wilkerson
- 28 Al & Norma Martin (63)
- 30 Haley Moore
- 30 Arlene Munden



Our Angels this Christmas are children from the EKids After School Program. This is a program for children living in apartments in Carrollton and Rockwall. The program is Christ centered, under the direction of Pastor Jaime Gonzalez and his wife Fabiana Santos. We are joining with other local congregations to provide gifts for these children. Please select a child and their wish list. Sign your name next to theirs on the master list. Shop, and then wrap the gifts, keeping multiple gifts for the same person together and label.

Check the bulletin for more information.

## prepare for worship in november

**Nov. 1: All Saints' Day**

Texts: Rev.. 7:2-17; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12  
Hymn of the Day: "For All the Saints," 677

**Nov. 8 Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost**

Texts: Amos 5:18-24; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Matt. 25:1-13  
Hymn of the Day: "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying," 516

**Nov. 15 Twenty-four Sunday after Pentecost**

Texts: Zeph. 1:7-16; 1 Thes. 5:1-11; Matt. 25:14-30  
Hymn of the Day: "The Day Is Surely Drawing Near," 508

**Nov. 22: Last Sunday of the Church Year**

Texts: Ezek. 34:11-16, 20-24; 1Cor. 15:20-28; Matt. 25:31-46  
Hymn of the Day: "The Head That Once Was Crowned with Thorns," 532

**Nov. 29: First Sunday in Advent**

Texts: Isa. 64:1-9; 1Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37  
Hymn of the Day: "Savior of the Nations, Come," 332



**Lutheran World Relief Health Kit and Fabric Kit Assembly.** All are welcome to help assemble kits for LWR on Saturday, November 7 at 4:30 pm at church in the fellowship hall. This event will be held with social distancing and masks. The kits will be shipped out the next week.

*Thank you to everyone who has donated items for these projects!*



## SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 9 Months Ending September 2020

	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2020 Budget
<b>Contributions</b>				
Regular Offerings	\$426,806	\$426,452	\$355	586,549
Other	\$1,330	\$0	\$1,330	0
<b>Total Income</b>	\$428,137	\$426,452	\$1,685	586,549
<b>Expenses</b>				
Operating Expenses	\$387,572	\$413,480	(\$25,908)	\$552,379
Mortgage Payment (P&I)	\$30,914	\$25,569	\$5,345	\$34,092
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$418,486	\$439,049	(\$20,563)	\$586,471
<b>Surplus or (Deficit)</b>	\$9,650	(\$12,598)	\$22,248	\$78
<b>Other Information:</b>				
Operating Fund Balance	\$108,714			
Restricted Funds Balance	\$124,691			
Building Loan Balance	\$203,046			