

LIFELINES



of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Happy New Year!

Three Gifts

The season of Epiphany starts on January 6th. This is the day the Church recalls the visitation of the Magi and the three gifts they presented to Jesus. This episode also reinforces what the prophets had foretold that the Messiah would be the Savior of the Nations and not only of Israel. The readings throughout the season of Epiphany teach us that Jesus is more than a man, He is the long anticipated Messiah and the one and only Son of God.

Incidentally, Lord of Life received three gifts recently, not gold, frankincense, and myrrh but, three reproductions of famous paintings by the Dutch master, Rembrandt van Rijn. They are hanging in the Green Room for now and you are invited to stop by and take a look.

Sacred Art

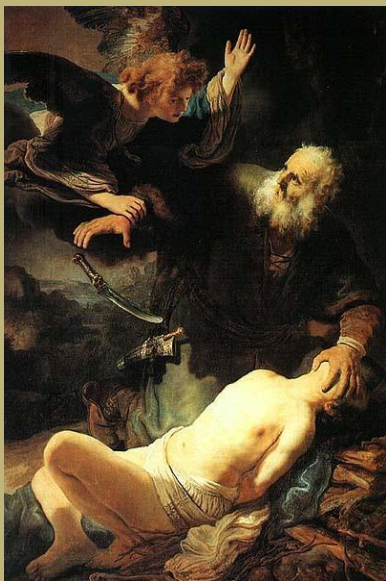
These paintings are great examples of sacred art. That is, they are not simply romantic paintings that deal

with a religious subject and aim at sentimentality (ex: Thomas Kinkade's paintings of churches in a dream-like setting.) Rather, what these paintings seek to do is teach the Scriptures and draw the viewer into a deeper meditation on the Word of God. The arts have long been used to accomplish this function. Music, of course, does this by having us sing God's Word, like the canticles and Psalms that are literally singing a sacred text. But there are countless other ways that music teaches us Scriptural truths and leads us to think deeply and share with an artist's insights into the holy. Sacred visual art can do the same thing in a profound way. It can teach eternal truths and draw one closer in devotion to God and understanding and appreciating what He has done. For this reason, paintings, icons and other church art have been referred to as "The Poor Man's Bible," meaning, those who could not read or write, could look at the paintings or the stained glass

and still learn what God has done for us in Christ.

As an aside, I experienced just how powerful sacred art can be years ago when I attended an interfaith service in the aftermath of 9/11. The various clergy who spoke that day had little to offer in the way of hope or Good News. Instead, they chose to share heart-wrenching stories of people who lost loved ones in an attempt to stir up our emotions. However, in the old church where the service was held, Christ was clearly and wonderfully proclaimed through the intricate stained glass windows. There, one could see beautifully portrayed the death and resurrection of the Son of God for us sinners. That eternal truth presented in pictures was a stark contrast to the emotional manipulation that was shared from the lectern and I became even more convinced that day of the power of good art to convey the Gospel.

The next page has a little bit of explanation of the three paintings in the Green Room.



The Sacrifice of Isaac

This painting portrays the moment when the angel stays Abraham's hand and keeps him from sacrificing his son Isaac in obedience to God's command (Genesis 22). The old man Abraham is shedding tears as he places his hand on the head of his young son exposing his neck for the sacrifice. But he is wonderfully surprised by an angel who grabs his hand and the knife falls. The picture reminds us of the profound faith of the patriarch and his total commitment. The entire story causes the Christian to think ahead to Christ, when God would sacrifice His own Son for the world. Unlike Isaac, Jesus was not spared.



The Return of the Prodigal Son

A famous art critic has called the original, "... the greatest picture ever painted." A popular Christian writer wrote a devotional book on the masterpiece. One of the last paintings of Rembrandt, it is considered by some to be his greatest. The painting shows the disheveled and tattered prodigal on his knees before his father, with his father embracing him, a look of peace on his face. In the distance, barely noticeable, is a woman, possibly the mother, and to the right looking down on his brother with hands crossed is the self-righteous older brother. The most beloved painting draws the viewer into what is for many the most-beloved parable about forgiveness of a father who loves his wayward children. (Luke 15)



Jeremiah Lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem

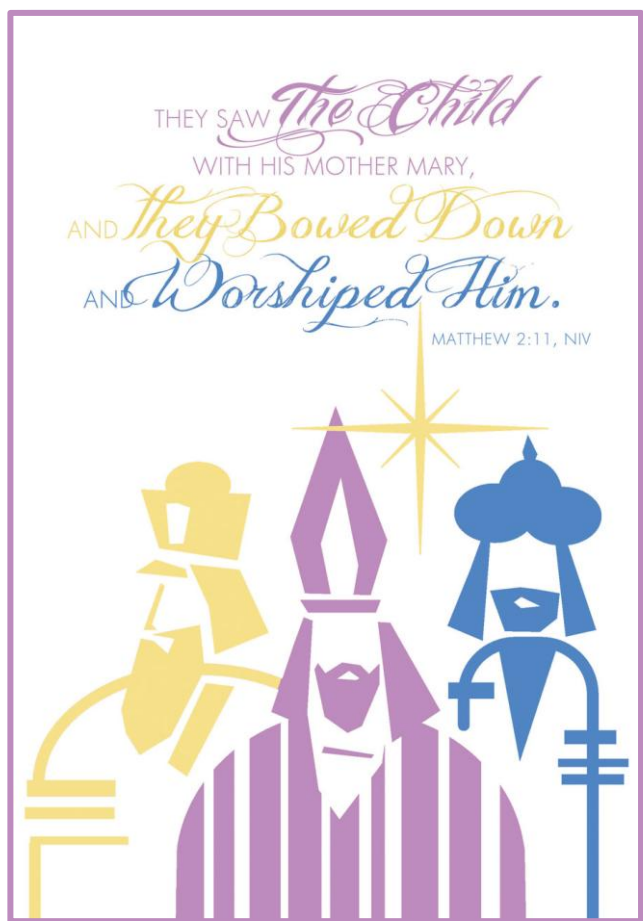
This classic portrait is of the distraught prophet considering all his unheeded warnings for the holy city of Jerusalem. In the distance, the temple burns and people are suffering, but the artist draws our attention to the man of God who saw it all years in advance. Now a gray and elderly man, Jeremiah can only sit pensively with his head in his hand bemoaning the inevitable destruction of his beloved homeland.

Thank you

Thank you very much for the very generous Christmas bonus this year! I was happily surprised and truly appreciative of this gift. I intend to put it to good use. I am so happy to serve as your pastor.

Thanks again,

PrS



prepare for worship
in january

Sunday, Jan. 6: The Epiphany of Our Lord

Texts: Is. 60:1-6; Eph. 3:1-12; Matt. 2:1-12

Hymn of the Day: “O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright,” 395

Sunday, Jan. 13: The Baptism of Our Lord

Texts: Is. 43:1-7; Rom. 6:1-11; Luke 3:15-22

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

Sunday, Jan. 20: Sec. Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Is. 62:1-5; 1Cor. 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

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

Sunday, Jan. 27: Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Neh. 8:1-10; 1Cor. 12:12-31a; Luke 4:16-30

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

Dear Member of the Frontlines of Lutherans For Life,
In 2019, we hope to produce a new “For Life” promotional video project about Lutherans For Life—and we hope you can help!

- Do you have personal experience with life issues?
- Have you or anyone you know ever been through a surprise pregnancy, adoption, miscarriage, infertility, prenatal disability diagnosis, abortion, or terminal diagnosis?
- Do you or a family member work as a medical professional who has been involved in a situation like this?
- Has the Word of God made a difference for you in facing these circumstances?
- Have you participated in a particularly meaningful conversation, interaction, or relationship with somebody else about life issues?
- Did the Gospel-motivated message of Lutherans For Life have a significant impact for you?
- Would you be willing to share your reflections about it on camera with an interviewer to help others?

Please let us know! For this new video project, we want the voices of those LFL has served to be heard!

All suggestions are welcome (though a story's proximity to Chicago will elicit special attention).

We're looking to film in early 2019, so drop us a line at lhighb@lutheransforlife.org.

We truly look forward to hearing from YOU!



Lutherans
For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be
Gospel-motivated voices For Life

Puzzle!

The 10 words below are spelled correctly but are missing the letter O. Use them to complete the Bible verse below, where you'll find all the missing O's.

S, NE, JHN, ANTHER, GD,
LVED, UGHT, T, ALS, LVE

Dear friends, since 0 0

0 us, we 0

0 0 0

0 0

1 0 4:11, NIV

RESOLUTIONS

The New Year is when many people resolve to lose weight, learn something new or spend more time doing a certain activity. While thinking about what I wanted to improve on in the coming year, I came up with four resolutions that I feel will improve every aspect of my life and help me become a more grateful, compassionate, committed husband, father and friend. So, here they are...

1. Come to Church

To help us be faithful and hear the good news of salvation in the Gospel, the Lord has given us an exceptional pastor and a caring, supportive congregation. We are blessed to hear His word with fellow Christians, our Lord of Life family. We are blessed to all join at the altar for the celebration and reception of Holy Communion. We are blessed to be able to freely join together for fellowship, celebration and support, but to be a part of it means we must show up! Satan tries hard to keep us from Christ, using many distractions, but I will be in God's house, with his people, more often this year.

2. Bible Study

Other than the church service itself, Bible study (Sunday, Wednesday, small group, etc) is one of the best resources our church has to offer, and yet only about half of us make use of it. Everything cannot be covered in the sermons, which aren't the same thing as a Bible study anyway. It's a wonderful opportunity to dive deeper into the Word (sometimes spending months on one commandment) and ask important questions. The donuts and coffee are an added bonus. So, this year I will continue to grow in my knowledge and faith by taking advantage of the many Bible studies our church has to offer.

3. Daily Prayer/Devotions

Being a Christian is more than just Sundays. We must feed our faith with daily prayer and meditation. It doesn't have to be complicated and there are many resources out there to help guide us and keep us focused. This year I'm going to start each morning by using the "Portals of Prayer" booklets, available free in the narthex. The one-page daily devotions have Scripture readings, a Psalm and close with a brief prayer. It's a great starting point to help me stay in God's Word throughout the year.

Tom Reed inspired my last resolution. In the short time I've been on the Board of Elders, I've seen him diligently reach out to members that are no longer able to make it to church for various reasons. He is sincere and caring while spending time with them, and letting them know they are loved and missed.

4. Reach out to a missing friend

Do you ever come to church and notice that someone you usually see isn't here? Do you wonder if maybe they are sick or out of town? Why not give them a call? It's amazing how far a personal touch like this can go toward encouraging our fellow believer and letting them know that our church family cares for them. Even if the person is fine, it's always nice to know when you're missed.

May God be with you, guide you and bless you through 2019.
Greg Moudy

Meals for Moms Ministry

Meals for Moms is a fun family ministry at Lord of Life. Our purpose is to reach out to new parents with dinner meals to help them through the transition time after a new baby has been born. It has been a joy for our team to welcome three new babies to our church family over the past few months! We delivered meals to the Barnes (Josephine), the Bennetts (Duncan) and the Sowers (Katherine).

From personal experience, I remember receiving meals from friends at Lord of Life after each of our kids were born many years ago. It meant a lot to me that people would cook and drive all the way to our house in Farmers Branch to bring us dinner! Our parents and family members lived far away so this ministry was a huge help to us.

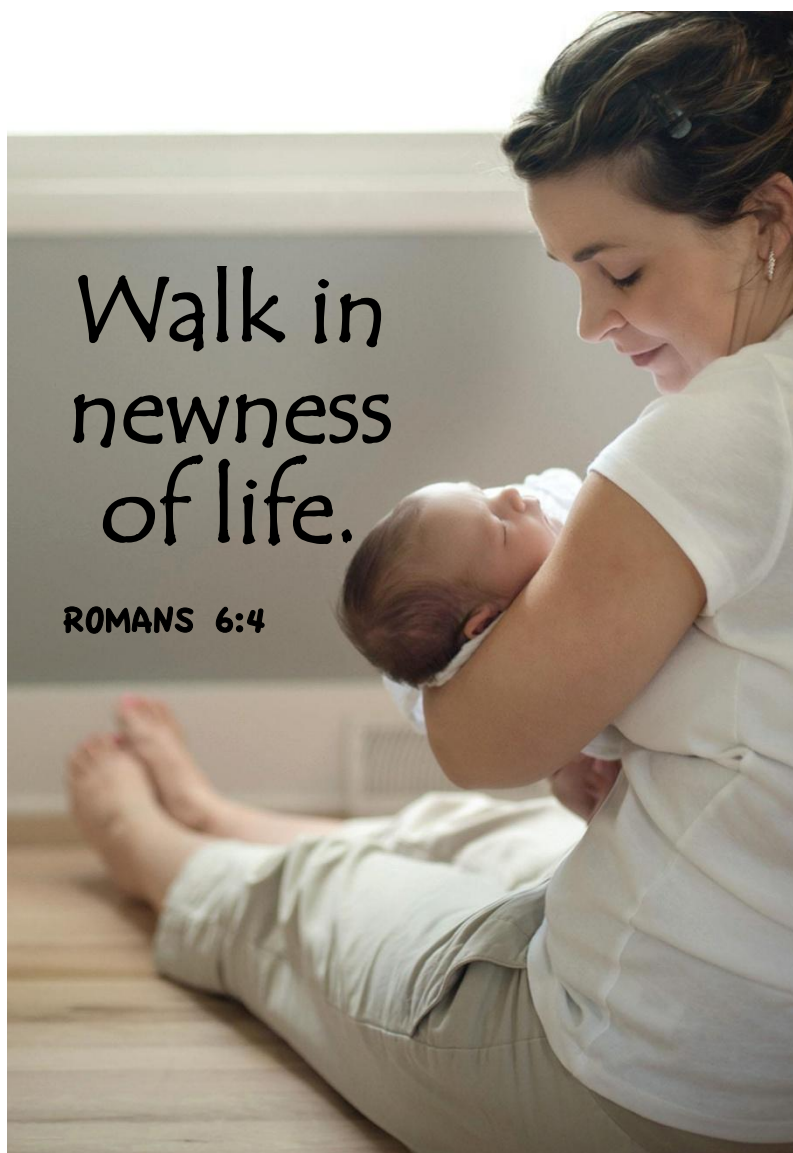
We work on an as-available basis. When a new baby is born, the Coordinator contacts the parents to determine their needs and dietary restrictions, then e-mails the team with details. Team members sign up on dates they are available, then prepare and deliver their meals to the home of the new parents. We usually deliver four or five meals in the month following the baby's birth. It's a great way to get to know folks and always fun to see the new baby!

Something new - We are working on an extension of our ministry to provide occasional meals to elderly members at LOL as we would love to reach out to help these families at the other end of the age spectrum (some of them are Moms too!). It's another opportunity to share the love of Christ.

Thanks so much to the many individuals who have served on the Meals for Moms team over the past year: Carol Ozlowski, Charise Bennett, Christi Hampton, Laurie George, Melanie Scarth, Mollie Manning, Monica Heffner, Sandy Ehrett, and Suzan Grabow. And thanks to many others who have served in past years.

We always welcome new members, so if this is a way you would love to serve, just contact the church office or get in touch with me directly and we'll put you on the team list.

Laura Lutek
Meals for Moms Coordinator





On Dec. 11, 2018 , several LOL friends of Phyllis Summer gathered to celebrate her 97th birthday which was on December 15. Punch and sweet treats were served to all and Phyllis lead attendees in singing Christmas carols. The afternoon event closed with prayer and thanksgiving for Phyllis who continues to be active and a friend to several other residents who live at Brookdale Spring Creek Gardens. Her Christian spirit is a blessing to many at Brookdale Gardens.



Melissa Kunschke and Abby George have been helping the Comfort Makers with a special project the past few months. They have been assembling pet pillows made from donated fleece scraps and stuffed with quilt batting scraps. Recently, 9 pillows were delivered to the Plano Animal Rescue Shelter by the girls and their moms. Their help is much appreciated both by the Comfort Makers and the cats and dogs at the shelter who receive them.

Teen Times

Happy New Year everyone! A new year brings new opportunities and challenges for our IMPACT youth ministry. Once again the planning is already underway for the summer 2019 youth ministry trip. This year we are attending the Higher Things youth conference on the campus of Concordia Nebraska in Seward, NE. during the last week of July. Back in 2015 we attended a Higher Things conference at Concordia Nebraska, and in my opinion it was one of the best trips we have taken during my time as Director of Youth Ministry. I am certainly looking forward to going back this summer. The theme for this year is "Concordia" inspired by these words;

"The Word of the Lord endures forever." (1 Peter 1:25)

Once again, Lord of Life will have a rather large group of teens and adults attending this conference. The latest count puts us over 20 participants; hence the fundraising season is getting into full swing starting with our annual Valentine Dinner on Saturday, February 9. Put this on your calendar as it is always a fantastic time with great food and fun fellowship! Watch for more details in the Sunday Worship bulletins this month.

Until next time, God Bless,
Scott Peters
Director of Youth Ministry



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
- † Will meet on Sat. Jan. 19th at 6:30 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 meets 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
- † Will meet the Sat. Jan. 12th 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



- 1 Bob Nance
- 2 Stu & Sandy Ehrett (32)
- 5 Hannah Greer
- 5 Nolan Helms
- 6 Pat Montalbo
- 7 Carter Suarez
- 8 Lauren Chumbley
- 8 Linda Tischler
- 10 Sandra Paradise
- 17 Bonnie Holtzman
- 21 Brian Hahn
- 22 Lora Frinsko
- 22 Kara Prescott
- 23 Noah Reinert
- 23 Luke Sowers
- 24 Paloma Schaub
- 24 Kymberly Vess
- 28 Amanda Kunschke
- 30 Karl Olsen

Answer: Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:11, NIV



Everyone on the staff
would like to thank you
for our bonus this year.
It is so generous of you
to bless us in this
manner.

Happy New Year!

Serving in Worship in January

	January 6		January 13		January 20		January 27	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
Elder	Peters		Moudy		Read		Ziegelbein	
Common Cup	Kunschke	Hite	Lutek	Ziegelbein	Rev. Fritsche			
Altar	Lynda Abbott, Amanda Kunschke, Charis Bennett							
Acolyte	Athan	Jonah	Josh	Nate	Kaitlyn	Ashley	Sebastian	Emma
Greeter	Martin	Dorak	Schrank	Manning	Hampton	Bennett/Tyler	Vess	Abbott/Moore
Sound	J Hacker	Hite	Moudy	Wolf	Wilkerson	Shaltanis	G Hacker	Reinert
Usher	Scarth Shaltanis D Ozlowski Bunger	Ziegelbein T Ozlowski Loewecke	Paradise Read Frinsko	Cruz Moudy Carter	Prescott Messinger Bunger	Parish Oltmann Berger	C Hacker E Hacker G Hacker Schrank	Crabtree Buckmeier Short

FINANCIAL REPORT

January - November, 2018

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
RECEIPTS:	Regular Offerings	\$522,725	\$540,558	(\$17,833)
	Other	\$233	\$0	\$233
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$522,958	\$540,558	(\$17,600)
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$478,778	\$535,439	(\$56,661)
	RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	\$44,180	\$5,119	\$39,061

OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$105,317
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$139,826
3. Building Note Balance	\$269,495