

The Lamp Lighter
December 2021
The Newsletter of Living Lord Lutheran Church
Real God. Real Faith. Real Life.

Mission Statement

As the body of the Living Lord, Jesus Christ, we seek to reflect and share God's grace, love, and forgiveness with one another near and far.

Vision Statement

We are a community of faith committed to strengthening faith, strengthening lives, strengthening relationships, strengthening families, and thus, strengthening the community into which God has placed us.

Living Lord Lutheran Church
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SUNDAYS
ADULT FORUM AT 8:45 AM
WORSHIP SERVICE AT 9:30 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:30 AM
CHOIR PRACTICE AT 10:30 AM

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, AT 4:00 PM

From Interim Pastor Larry Klinker...The last Sunday in November was the First Sunday in Advent. With the four Sundays in Advent, we are preparing, waiting, and anticipating the coming of Christ our King in three specific ways. Most common to our preparations is our focus on the birth of the Christ Child on Christmas. This preparing for the birth of the Christ child for many of us so dominates our thinking, planning, and preparing that we want to focus all our preparation solely on the birth of Jesus. In fact, for many, we lose the Advent season completely and want to jump forward into Christmas around Thanksgiving. I do not know how many times I have heard after singing a rather difficult Advent hymn people say, "Why do we have to sing these Advent hymns? Why can't we just sing Christmas carols?"

I want to encourage us to keep the four Sundays of the season of Advent in our preparation for our Christ-mass for an important reason. You see, there are two other comings we are preparing for in the season of Advent.

The second coming we are preparing for comes as a holdover from the final days of our previous church year and the celebration of Christ the King Sunday where we focus on the goal of all history being the coming of Christ to reign as King. So, this second coming we are preparing for is the return of Christ as King whereas the Letter to the Philippians states: "So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The return of Jesus Christ as King is often referred to as the second coming or the Parousia.

The third coming that we prepare for in the season of Advent is the actual ministry of Jesus. The second and third Sundays of Advent with focus on John the Baptizer helps with that focus as he prepares the way for the coming of the ministry of Jesus. In fact, all of the Epiphany season will be an exploration of the ministry of Jesus.

Here is an important pattern I want you to see in our church liturgical year. The church year is divided up between two cycles: The Cycle of Light (Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany) and the Cycle of Life (Lent, Holy Week and the Three days, Easter, and Pentecost season). Common to both cycles is the pattern of Expectation (Advent and Lent), Fulfillment (Christmas and Easter), and Proclamation (Epiphany and Pentecost). These patterns and these seasons each have their own individual focus and important aspects of the message of God to us as Jesus Christ is revealed to us. This is why I encourage them as best we can knowing that the culture is no help to us in preparing for the birth of the Christ Child in our hearts.

Come join us on the journey as we prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Story of the Week...One of the things that we, as Christians, who are people of the Book (Bible) really could use is a disciplined way for us to learn the many core Bible stories from the Scriptures. The book "Bible Stories for the Church Year" by Kristen Johnson Ingram does just that by tying Bible stories to the Sunday lectionary we use every week as part of worship. We will continue to offer a Bible story each week that is read as part of our liturgy to be learned called The Story of the Week. At some point, with more children present, we can even use these stories as the basis of children's sermons and a Sunday School program. We plan to put out about ten copies each week and as the demand grows, we will make more copies available.

The Story of the Week for December:

December 5: Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25, 57-76)

December 12: John the Baptist Preaches (Luke 3:7-18)

December 19: The Annunciation to Mary (Luke 1:39-45)

December 26: The boy Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)

January 2 - Epiphany Sunday: The coming of the Wise men (Matthew 2:1-12)

Mid-Week Bible Study...We are reading together the Gospel of Luke, which will be the Gospel starting in Advent of this year on Wednesday mornings at 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. If you are interested, just bring a version of the Bible you are comfortable working with. We are still in early chapters of the Gospel of Luke, so you haven't missed much if you still would like to join us.

Thrivent Members...If you are a Thrivent member and would be interested in using your Thrivent Choice Dollars to support the ministries of Living Lord Lutheran Church, please call Pr. Klinker at 330-550-0077 or the church office. If you would be interested in using Thrivent Action Grants to help support the ministries of Living Lord, please also call Pr. Klinker or the church office. Pastor will meet with you to discuss how to go about setting up these support systems.

Pastor Larry's Bible Blog...Pastor Larry offers you an opportunity to read your way thru Scriptures with him each day at his Bible Blog. The readings alternate between readings from an Older Testament book and then a Newer Testament book. We start the month of December reading the Older Testament book of Jeremiah's Lamentations. Then we will read briefly the Newer Testament book of the third letter of John. Then we will start reading the Older Testament book of Ezekiel on Pastor Larry's Bible blog online at: <http://klinkerld-pastorlarrysbible.blogspot.com/>. Join us online.

Interim Pastor Larry Klinker's Office Hours...Pastor Larry will be in the office on Wednesdays from 9:30 am to noon. You may reach him at 330-550-0077 or email him at klinkerld@att.net.

From the President, Nancy Walters...

Church Information...Please remember that you can obtain church information from the monthly Lamplighter Newsletter, the Constant Contact emails you receive, on the church website (www.lllc.org), on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/Living-Lord-Lutheran-Church-493806727349110/>), and postings on the church bulletin board. Church Council Meeting minutes are posted on the bulletin board and sent out via Constant Contact. We would like to see a better "open rate" when we send information to you via Constant Contact so that we know you are being informed of the activities that are occurring at the church. If you have any other suggestions on how best to reach out to our parishioners, please see a Council member.

From the Finance Committee, Treasurer Dave Henderson...The books are closed for October 2021. Receipts for October 2021 totaled \$7,066.38 and expenses were \$7,317.72, for a net loss of \$251.34. Year-to-date through October, income is \$82,532.98 and expenses are \$76,585.59, for a gain of \$5,947.39. We continue to hold our own because we do not have a permanent pastor on payroll. We need to build a pretty good surplus for the time when we do have a pastor's full salary. If you can, please keep your pledges up to date. Again, thank you to all who continue to help us keep going financially and spiritually! Let's hope and pray that 2021 continues to be a better year!

From the Call Committee Chairperson, Robert McKinney...The Call Committee and Church Council met with Rev. Julianne Smith from the Synod office on October 21, 2021. Rev. Smith reported that Bishop Barbins' goal and the Synod's goal is to get a trained minister or a trained lay minister in every church by 2023. She suggested that churches should focus on not just the number of members, but also how many people the church is connecting with through their ministries. Rev. Smith shared two resources as a response to questions raised. One was about vital congregations that strengthen their relationship with God, nurture relationships with members, and establish a strong community presence. The other was about the growing young wheel that presents ways to welcome young individuals into the church. Examples were given by Rev. Smith about the ways churches in the Synod have filled the pulpit in non-traditional ways, such as a co-op congregation,

multiple congregations sharing a pastoral pool, a yoked parish approach, and an anchor church approach. When the question was asked about the time it normally takes to fill a pulpit, the response was historically about 18 months. Bob McKinney reported that the congregation would like to find a part-time pastor and that we are seeking assistance from the Synod's Pastor Mitch Phillips. Specific follow-up regarding the possibility of Pastor Delk's interest in a three-quarters role was requested. Rev. Smith reported that she would discuss this with Pastor Phillips. Rev. Smith also seems to be working with Pastor Phillips on the use of shared pastors. She reported that she would work with Pastor Phillips to develop a strategy for Living Lord and to make him aware of updates in our ministry profile. She identified our next step as clarifying the church's purpose with a Christian center and to continue seeking the instruction provided by Healthy Congregations. A question was raised about utilizing pastors from other denominations, with the United Church of Christ, Moravian, Methodist, and Episcopal denominations identified as being in compliance. The group expressed their desire to keep the communication open with Rev. Smith and the Synod. Rev. Smith was thanked for meeting with us, and the meeting was adjourned.

From the Fellowship Committee Chairperson, Donna Wright... Thanksgiving has come and gone. I hope everyone had a great day with family and friends. Fellowship Coffee continues each Sunday. Don't forget to sign up to make coffee and clean up afterwards. A new sheet has been posted. Please take a moment to pick a certain Sunday. December Fellowship is December 19. Stop by and have a special holiday treat! Merry Christmas to everyone! And a Happy New Year!

Fellowship Sunday...We will have Fellowship after the 9:30 am service on the third Sunday of each month (December 19).

From the In-Reach Committee Chairperson, Lorraine Bell...Please notify Lorraine Bell at 330-219-5881 (cell) or 330-372-0227 (home) (or the church office) of any members who are hospitalized, ill, etc., so a card can be sent from the church.

Prayer Chain...We have started our prayer chain with five members (if I forgot someone, please let me know): Camille Allen (330-503-1817), Karen Bandy (330-856-4835), Pam Boothe (740-395-3564), Karin McKinney (330-469-6083), Jacquie Thomas (330-609-9805), and Lorraine Bell (330-219-5881). Please call one of the women with the name needing prayer and any concerns you feel are relevant. Be sure to have the permission of that person. That person will pass it on to the next one and it will go on to the next person, etc., so that we are all praying.

From the Nominating Committee Chairperson, Robert McKinney...Your Nominating Committee is looking for people to fill the following Council positions: Fellowship Chair, Finance Chair, and Property Chair. If you are interested in filling one of these positions, please see Nancy Walters, Bob McKinney, or any member of Council.

From the Outreach Committee Chairperson, Judy Shaffer...
Thanksgiving Food Baskets Update...The Outreach Committee handed out 15 Thanksgiving Food Baskets to people in our surrounding community. We would like to thank everyone who made monetary donations, donations of food items, and/or helped pack the food baskets. We could not do this without your generosity.

From the Parish Education Committee Chairperson, Raymond Boothe...

Adult Forum...The Adult Forum meets each Sunday at 8:45 am. We plan to begin the video series “Gospel of Luke” and the Christmas Story in December. Please plan to join us!

Sunday School...Sunday School for children is offered during Sunday morning worship at 9:30 am. We will be using The Story of the Week based on the worship service’s Scripture lesson.

From the Stewardship Committee Chairperson, Robert McKinney...

2022 Stewardship Program - Where Your Heart Is – What master do you serve? *“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”* Matthew 6:24.

You really couldn’t blame them. It was the 1980s after all. Excess was in. In comparison to a lot of people, they weren’t living excessively. Just excessively for them. Keeping the whole thing afloat consumed them. They bought as much as they could afford, and worked hard to manage the lifestyle they had chosen for themselves. They lost ground. Soon the home with all its “must-haves” became a burden. Debt became a nasty master. It was a miracle that they could hear God’s voice at all amid all the adrenaline-producing anxiety that kept them running. They gathered their senses, quieted their spirits, and began to ask the necessary questions. What is important to us? What do we really need and want? Whom do we serve? It led them into worship. First confession and then the indescribable gift of forgiveness and the ability to start again, serving one God instead of many. Luther said there are three conversions: “First the heart, then the head, and finally the purse.” He wasn’t looking for a big offering that day. He was a realist. Luther understood the human heart. He hated to see us ripped up. When our hearts are divided or cluttered, it is difficult for our minds to see clearly and even more difficult for us to release our grip on those “things” that seem important. With hands clenched tight around our possessions, we have a hard time opening them in service.

From the Worship Committee Chairperson, Karin McKinney...Attendance has been stable at 40 to 50 at each service. There are still regular members we have not seen, and we hope they are in good health and would feel safe in returning to church. When the church is cleaned, we are still fogging the building. On November 7, All Saints Sunday, we recognized the passing of six loved ones with a white carnation, their pictures, and the ringing of the bell. On November 12, a memorial service was held for Edie Holmstrom. I would like to thank Bonnie Sanzenbacher and Barb Wright for their help in the preparations for the memorial service.

Thank you...To the Faithful at Living Lord, Thank you for your gift of just over \$2,000.00. Our work and ministry together -- and your continued support and part in that -- is making Christ known in the world. Peace, Bishop Barbins

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

Sunday, December 5 – **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**

Wednesday, December 8, 10:00 am – Trustees Meeting in Pastor's Office

Sunday, December 12 – Council in Activity Room

Sunday, December 19 – Fellowship After Service

Friday, December 24, 4:00 pm - Christmas Eve Worship Service

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

1 = Gianna Altieri
6 = Hannah Miller
8 = Judie Welter
10 = Donna Wright
11 = Reginal Rooks
17 = Cheryl Lauka
21 = Jeanne Zingale
25 = Rich Baringer
26 = Julie Taiclet
27 = Jennifer Babinchak
28 = Shelly Chopko
29 = Wendy Clagett
30 = Meghan Miller

Anniversaries

18 = Taiclet, Warner & Norma
19 = Walters, Rollie & Nancy

Council Members

President – Nancy Walters
Vice President & In-Reach Committee Chair –
Lorraine Bell
Finance Committee Chair – Bob McKinney
Secretary – Pam Boothe
Evangelism/Membership Committee Chair –
Jacquie Thomas
Fellowship Committee Chair – Donna Wright
Outreach Committee Chair – Judy Shaffer
Parish Education Committee Chair – Raymond
Boothe
Property Committee Chair – Vacant
Worship Committee Chair – Karin McKinney
Youth & Family Committee Chair – Darlene Altieri

