

The Lamp Lighter
December 2024
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.

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SUNDAY WORSHIP & SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:30 AM
ADULT FORUM AT 8:45 AM

From the Pastor, Gerald Gammon...December already? Time sure flies! December is an exciting month for church! December 1, 2024, marks the beginning of the Advent season. We will busily prepare to celebrate the birth of our dear lord Jesus! The world around us seems to be getting busier too during this season. Many folks will be hustling and bustling to get the perfect gift for their loved ones, buying groceries to use in the preparation of a Christmas feast, and some will be traveling from afar to join family and friends to share memories and make new ones. Yes, things seem to change around Christmas. Often it seems that there may just be a little more love in the air! How wonderful it is to encounter people smiling and being more courteous than usual against the backdrop of Christmas music playing. Unfortunately, not all of us get to experience the joy of the season in the same manner as most of us. There are those that are serving our country and cannot come home to be with loved ones. There are those who have lost dear family members and friends that will be missing some of the most important people in their lives. There are those that are financially challenged to

purchase food, shelter, and other necessities, let alone gifts for others. We, as Christians, are called to minister to those in need. We can do so through prayer, giving of our time and resources, and by just being present with others who might otherwise have nobody to share such a joyous time with. If we think about what a gift this season is to us, we certainly should be willing to share our joy with others. So, my Christmas challenge to you all is this: find someone that you can share the joy of the Advent/Christmas season with that is not part of your normal circle. Together, we just might be the life-giving gift this world needs. On behalf of my wife, Marian, and our family, I wish you all a joyous Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year!

From the President, Bob McKinney... Well, here we are close to the end of the year, and we have a lot going on as usual. Let me outline some areas of importance for your information:

1. **Constitution and By-laws:** As you know, the Trustees went through both documents and eliminated any reference to the ELCA. We also removed other items that did not seem necessary any longer. We added new items that conform to our new status as an Independent Lutheran Church. After our review, we turned this information over to our attorney for his review and any comments he might have. We then met with him to go through the entire rewrite to make sure we were all on the same page. Once that was done, the Church Council reviewed and approved the rewrite and will now pass it on to the congregation. I am calling a Special Congregation Meeting in December to pass on this rewrite. I can tell you this was quite the process, and I appreciate the Trustees and Church Council for their help.
2. **Our stewardship drive for this year is in the final phase.** We have sent out the last letter to remind members who have not returned a pledge card to please do so. The numbers are not good so far this year. We are at 28 pledges out of 73 mailed for a total of \$47,224.00. Last year our final numbers were 33 pledges for a total of \$60,036.00. So you can see we are way behind in what our numbers need to be for a realistic budget. I must tell you this is not one of my favorite items to work on, but it is one of the most important in the life of the church. I almost feel that Neal L'Amoureux, Stewardship Committee Chairperson, and I are begging for money, and that is not the case. If anyone has any ideas how to improve these numbers, please let Neal or I know.

These are some of the major items of importance I wanted to bring to your attention. There are conversations to be had and tough decisions to be made for the wellbeing of our church. On an upbeat note, our Thanksgiving Food Baskets were again successful this year. Thanks to all who donated to this worthy cause. You folks are the best!

Christmas Party...Our Christmas Party will be held on **Saturday, December 7**, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. This will be a potluck dinner with the church providing chicken and potatoes. Please bring a side dish to share. We will have a gift exchange with a gift limit of \$15. We will sing Christmas carols with May Love on piano. We will have additional games during the party. Please sign up on the bulletin board what you are bringing and how many are coming so we can plan accordingly. Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

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 2024. The receipts for October were \$8,105.65 and expenses were \$8,827.98, for a loss of \$722.33 for the month. Year to date numbers through October had receipts at \$76,077.05 and expenses at \$71,309.49, for a gain of \$4,767.56. Year to date we are still positive. However, we will continue to have challenges with our budget. Let's try and keep current on our pledges during 2024.

**From the Evangelism/Membership Committee Chairperson, Barb Wright...
Transportation Team...**Do you have an appointment and your car won't start? Do you want to come to church but your car is in the shop? You want to worship with your friends at Living Lord, but you have no way to get to church? Well, we have some wonderful volunteers to drive you if you are unable to drive to your destination. If you are in need of transportation, please call one of the following: Darlene Altieri (330-856-9704 or 330-984-7797), Ernie Gerbetz (330-856-7506 or 330-647-3008), Pam Gerbetz (330-856-7506 or 330-647-3138), Neal and Joyce L'Amoureux (330-824-1643), or Karin McKinney (330-469-6083). You may call one of the volunteers listed and make arrangements with them for your needed trip. Discuss thorough and precise plans and enjoy the service provided. Thank your provider and God!

From the Fellowship Committee Chairperson, Pam Gerbetz...The holidays are always a joyous time and a time for us to be thankful for all of God's blessings. He has provided us with a new pathway this year and we pray for his continued guidance and blessings. I want to wish everyone good health, peace, prosperity, and happiness for the holidays and in the New Year.

Christmas Party...Please join us for our Christmas Party on **Saturday, December 7**, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. It is a potluck, so the sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board. Last year was a lot of fun and we plan on making it a tradition each year. The church will provide Buena Vista chicken and a potato dish of some sort. Come join the fun!

Monthly Women's Breakfast...Please join us at our monthly breakfast at Vasilio's in Cortland on the second Thursday of every month (**Dec. 12**) at 10:00 am. All are welcome!

From the Mission Endowment Fund Committee Chairperson, Michael Taiclet...Success! Hi everyone! MEF Award Sunday was a huge success! We had a great turnout, and everything went well. This year was one of our large donations to date. It was a combined \$4,000.00. We donated \$2,000.00 to the Warren Family Mission and \$2,000.00 to the American Red Cross – Hurricane Relief Efforts. I want to thank everyone who had a hand in making this day possible. Special thanks to the Fellowship ladies for making Fellowship possible. With the Fellowship Hall set up for Election Day, they were able to set up in the main hallway and still had a wonderful Fellowship. Thank you! If anyone knows of any groups/organizations that would benefit from our MEF Award, please let me or any MEF Committee member know as soon as possible. We will be making our selection at the beginning of the year (around March or April) and need the candidates' applications returned to us prior to that meeting. After a discussion at our last meeting, the MEF Committee agreed to try a digital approach. For those who don't know me, I have an associate's degree in information technology in the fields of Website Design, Computer Science, and Database Management. You can say I know a thing or two about computers. Just don't ask me any questions about Networking. That's all French to me! My networking questions go to my friend down in Mississippi. That's his field. He has a whole network set up in his house with servers and other devices where he runs his own equipment and website. I'll leave the networking to him! I am now in the process of making a digital process of notifying our candidates. This way we can hopefully get

a quicker response from them or even get a response in general. In turn, I would like to have a higher return rate on our applications that are sent out. Usually, I send out between 5-8 applications with a formal letter, via the United States Postal Service, to all the chosen candidates. Unfortunately, I am only receiving about 1-3 applications back. With everything moving to the digital age, I think it is time we do the same! Along with the digital process, I will continue sending the applications with a formal letter via the USPS as well. I think the more options the better! Speaking of going digital, I have created an interactive MEF display. Those who attended the MEF Award Sunday have already got a sneak peak of it, but for those who did not, don't worry, it will return for our next event. I am also in the process of creating a mini website for the MEF. It will contain a tribute page to the MEF's creator, Lee Sanzenbacher, a committee member page, a page featuring our MEF wall currently in the church, a history page on the MEF, a page for all the MEF Award Recipients, a page for the MEF charter, and a few more surprises. I hope everyone will like it! I will keep everyone updated on all our progress and events to come! Thanks again to everyone for a great MEF Award Sunday! Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

From the Outreach Committee, Member Pam Boothe...

Thanksgiving Food Baskets Update...The Outreach Committee would like to thank everyone who donated to the Thanksgiving Food Baskets. We were able to provide assistance to 15 families due to your generosity.

From the Worship Committee Chairperson, Nancy Walters...

Unhanging of the Greens...Unhanging of the Greens will take place on **Saturday, January 11**, beginning at 9:00 am. Please let Nancy know if you are able to assist. More hands make less work!

Thank you...Dear Living Lord Lutheran Church, Thank you for reaching out and sharing with the less fortunate men, women, and children in your community. Your donation of \$2,000.00 on November 5, 2024, is providing for those in need in Trumbull County and its surrounding areas. We could not do any of the work we are doing without your support, prayers, and generous donations that keep us going. It is only through your caring and faithful support that the Warren Family Mission can continue offering vital programs that create positive and lasting changes. Thank you again; you have truly made a difference. May God bless you for caring! Caitlin Gilger-White, Executive Director, Warren Family Mission

EVENTS IN DECEMBER

- Sunday, December 1, 10:30 am – Advent 1/**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
- Saturday, December 7, 4:00-7:00 pm – Christmas Party Potluck
- Sunday, December 8, 10:30 am – Advent 2
- Sunday, December 15, 10:30 am – Advent 3
- Sunday, December 22, 10:30 am – Advent 4
- Tuesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Worship Service at 4:00 pm
- Wednesday, December 25 – Merry Christmas!
- Tuesday, December 31 – New Year's Eve

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

1 = Gianna Altieri
8 = Pr. Gerald Gammon & Judie Welter
10 = Donna Wright
17 = Cheryl Lauka
25 = Rich Baringer
26 = Julie Taiclet
27 = Jennifer Babinchak
28 = Shelly (Chopko) Anderson
29 = Wendy Clagett

Anniversaries

19 = Walters, Rollie & Nancy

*Merry Christmas
&
Happy New Year
From the
Council & Staff of
Living Lord Lutheran
Church*