



## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Vol. 31, No. 12

Plano, Texas

December 2017

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### Christmas Quotes

As we are nearing Christmas and the end of this 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the start of the Reformation, I thought it might be fitting to share some Christmas quotes for Martin Luther. The following are from his Church Postils of 1521. These “sermon studies” were not actually preached by Luther, but were published and intended to be used by pastors to help prepare their own sermons. I have used these postils many times over the years for their valuable insights. While some of the material is dated and no longer applies, much of it still relevant and worthwhile as you can see from these quotes from Luther’s postils for Christmas Eve.

The first is concerning what it means that Christ was born for us.

“Christ has a pure, innocent, holy birth. Man has an impure, sinful, damned birth, as David says in Psalm 51[:5]: “Behold, in sin am I fashioned in the womb, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” There is no remedy for this except through the pure birth of Christ. Now the birth of Christ cannot be distributed physically even as that would not be of any help either. For this reason it is distributed spiritually, by means of the word, to everyone, as the angel says, so that all who firmly believe that it is given to them in this manner shall not be harmed by their impure birth; this is the manner and means to become cleansed from the stain of the birth we have from miserable Adam. Christ willed to be born so that we might be born in different manner as he says in John 3[:3–6]. This happens through that faith, as James 1[:18] says: “He has born us of his own will through his word of truth, so that we begin to be his new creation.” In this manner Christ takes to himself our birth and absorbs it into his birth; he presents us with his birth so that we become pure and new in it, as if it were our own, so that every Christian might rejoice in this birth of Christ and glory in it no less than if he, too, like Christ, had been born bodily of Mary. Whoever does not believe this or has doubts about it, is not a Christian.”

A proper celebration of Christmas is more than simply remembering the Nativity story:

“To us, to us, born to us and given to us. Therefore see to it that you derive from the Gospel not only enjoyment of the story as such, for that does not last long. Nor should you derive from it only an example, for that does not hold up without faith. But see to it that you make his birth your own, and that you make an exchange with him, so that you rid yourself of your birth and receive, instead, his. This happens, if you have this faith. By this token you sit assuredly in the Virgin Mary’s lap and are her dear child. This faith you have to practice and to pray for as long as you live; you can never strengthen it enough. That is our foundation and our inheritance; on it the good works are built.”

A blessed Christmas in the name of Him who was born for you!

PrS

## GRACE AND MERCY\*

*2 John 1:3--Grace, Mercy and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love.*

Grace and Mercy often appear together in most pastors' sermons. Based up 2 John 1:3, they are also frequently used in greetings before a message is delivered or in closings after the message is concluded. It's easy to think they are one in the same but THEY ARE NOT.

Let's consider the difference between "mercy" and "grace". For example, imagine you've fallen behind six months of car payments, your house payments or your credit card bills. You sense what is going to happen. Those to whom you owe the money are going to want to be paid! Perhaps at first, they ask nicely for their money, if not paid in full, they get a little more forceful, if still not paid, they may take you to court. You refuse to pay at this time. There's no question you owe them money, since you have an unpaid debt. Here's where mercy and grace come in, mercy is when you are guilty of owing beyond a shadow of a doubt. Pretend you are in court; you turn to the judge and ask him not to pronounce the punishment you deserve for your lack of payment (sin), and you ask him to set aside the law and forget about justice in this matter. That's not something a good judge should do. Still that is what happens if you ask for mercy from God.

Grace on the other hand is different. In the same scenario grace would be given if the judge said, "You don't deserve it, but I'm going to have somebody else make all of your payments." Grace is when the judge says, "I'm going to have somebody else pay the price for what you have done!"

Note the difference: Let's make it clearer, MERCY is NOT GETTING what you DO deserve and GRACE is GETTING what you DON'T deserve.

On occasion you may see a judge who has seen some kind of extenuating circumstance offer

mercy to someone who is guilty, but seldom will you see a judge give grace. You will never see a judge sentence his son for the sin of someone else. It would be unthinkable. It wouldn't make sense. It wouldn't be fair. But that is what must happen if grace is to be given. God's gifts to us are GRACE AND MERCY. We have sinned and we committed crimes against our Lord which we can never make right. There is no question of our guilt or that we deserve to be punished. In spite of what we have done, God, our divine judge, decides to extend His MERCY and His GRACE and He doesn't give us the punishment we deserve. Furthermore, He extends forgiveness which we haven't earned with His Mercy and Grace. Our Lord couldn't set aside His laws. The price for our sins had to be paid. So it was that we might have His mercy and grace thru the sacrifice of His sinless Son for us on the Cross. God sent His Son to live a perfect life, to fulfill the laws we could not, and to die a death that we deserved. Our sins are great, but God has shown us that He is greater.

OUR PRAYER IS: Dear Lord, may we give thanks for Your many gifts which are undeserved. Through Jesus' sacrifice we have been given forgiveness, a home in heaven, and the promise of being with our Redeemer forever. May we share our joy with others who still do not know of Your Grace and still are unacquainted with Your Mercy. In Jesus Name, we ask it. Amen

*\*Adapted from Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries, August 25, 2017*



## Teen Times

We are only a few days removed from celebrating the Thanksgiving holiday and as I sit in my office chair pondering what to share with you in this article of Teen Times, it dawns on me that we are nearing the end of 2017. This past year has seen some exciting things happen in our youth ministry at Lord of Life for which I am truly grateful. It amazes me how God continues to bless our youth ministry every year in many ways.

First, to the parents of our Jr. and Sr. High youth; thank you for being committed to getting your children to worship and Bible class on Sunday mornings, youth nights, and confirmation classes on Wednesday evenings. As a parent of two very active boys in school, sports, social events, and church (yes, they have been out of high school for several years now), I understand the demand on time and family schedules that everyone contends with. I am sure you have said the same thing that Jonelle and I did many times; "there are not enough hours in the day," but I am so glad to see your kids involved in the youth ministry. It's what drives me to continue to do what I do. I pray that God will keep your hearts motivated in making Sunday worship, Bible class, and youth events a priority in the lives of your children.

Second, many thanks to the volunteers which help the youth ministry function. The leaders and teachers of Sunday morning Bible class, chaperones on youth trips, drivers who transport kids to youth events, the kitchen crew at the annual Valentine's Dinner, and the music leaders who keep our kids engaged in worship, you play vital roles and make sacrifices that our kids will appreciate in the years to come. I am sure there are some that I have not named but be assured that I appreciate you every day.

Third, even though our congregation is sustained financially through tithes, offerings, donations, and memorials from the church members, the youth ministry is supported even further through fundraising efforts that allow the youth to enjoy the things that help maintain a healthy youth ministry. The summer trips to the Higher Things youth conference for Sr. High, Higher Things weekend retreats for Jr. High, youth nights with plenty of food and fun, progressive dinners, and extracurricular events to Main Event or Whirlyball for example, are just a few of the things we are able to do. It takes a substantial financial commitment to make these things happen and we could not do it without your generosity. Thank you!

Finally and most importantly, to our Heavenly Father, creator of all things, to our Savior from sin, Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit for keeping us in the one true faith, all things are by Him, through Him, and for Him. I believe God will continue to bless Lord of Life and all of our ministry efforts in his time and his fashion. I pray that we all continue to seek his will and his direction for the final month of 2017, 2018, and beyond.

Until next time, God's blessings this advent season!

Scott Peters





November 2, 2017

Lord Of Life Lutheran Church  
3601 W 15th St  
Plano, TX 75075-7741

My dear fellow redeemed:

I have been blessed to know people who experience profound, life-changing JOY when they tell others about Jesus through their sacrificial giving. I pray you are one of them. There is something intensely personal and full of meaning in a gift like the one you have joyfully given. Thank you.

St. Paul said it best: *"I thank God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."* (Philippians 1:3-6, ESV)

Please let me know if there is anything we can do to serve you better.

In service to our Lord, Jesus Christ,

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison  
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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888-930-4438 • [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org)

RECEIPT FOR YOUR RECORDS

DATE:

10/12/2017

Lord Of Life Lutheran Church  
3601 W 15th St  
Plano, TX 75075-7741

We thank God for you and your gift to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod of: **\$6,020.00**

It will be used in support of: **General Hurricane Relief**

Receipt Number: **695963**

Your gift is tax deductible as allowed by law. You have received no goods or services in exchange for this gift, other than intangible religious benefits. Please consult your attorney or a financial advisor when using this receipt to prepare your income taxes.



## SEVEN "T'S" OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Time, talent and treasure have long been the "favorite three" items of Christian stewardship. But even those three do not exhaust the meaning and impact of Christian stewardship. Here is the third of the seven "T's" and we will examine the others in coming articles.

### **TOUCH**

The stewardship of TOUCH refers to the relationships we have with God and with each other. It is similar to what St. John wrote about in 1 John 1:3-4, ***"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete."***

TOUCH also refers to the relationships we have with our families, neighbors, coworkers, and others in our communities and society. We are to adopt the role of a servant in our dealings with each other (John 13:14-15), provide for our family members (1 Timothy 5:8) and carry each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2). In short, ***"we are to use every opportunity to do good to others, especially those who belong to the family of believers"*** (Galatians 6:10).

While here upon earth in visible form Jesus went about everywhere doing good to all He encountered--those who loved Him as well as those who hated Him. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus said, ***"I tell you the truth, whatever you did [fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, clothed the naked, and visited those who were sick or in prison] for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me."***

How blessed it is to have many opportunities to "touch" others in so many positive ways. What joy we will have when the King declares to us, ***"Well done, good and faithful servant,"*** (Matthew 25:21) because you took the time and made the effort to touch one of the least of My brothers.



### **Special Services this Month**

Wednesday, December 6  
7:00 PM  
(Soup Supper 5:30 PM)

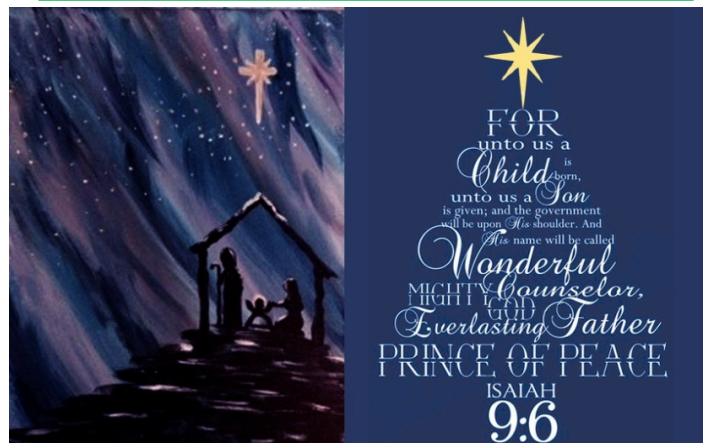
Wednesday, December 13  
7:00 PM  
(Soup Supper 5:30 PM)

Wednesday, December 20  
7:00 PM  
(Soup Supper 5:30 PM)

Sunday, December 24  
One morning Service, 10:00 AM  
Christmas Eve, 5:00 PM  
Christmas Eve, 7:00 PM

Monday, December 25  
Christmas Day, 10:00 AM

Note: No special service New Year's Eve, just regular services that morning.



## **New Playground Project for Lord of Life**

Recently Lord of Life has received memorials designated for a playground. On behalf of the Board of Children's Ministry, Scott Peters and Charles Hacker have been researching and developing a plan to install a new playground for Lord of Life. The initial budget target for this project was set at \$40,000. Depending on the financial support through the memorial contributions, member donations, and outside grants, the budget could be increased which would allow more features and/or a larger play space. We have collected estimates from two local playground supply and installation companies that have done projects in the Plano and North Dallas areas. The ideal scenario to complete this new playground project on the Lord of Life campus would require full funding by the end of December 2017 or mid-January of 2018. Installation would be finished by March, 2018.

Why a new playground? Here are some main reasons and benefits:

1. It provides an emphasis for youth or children activities which was Paul Stueckler's wish.
2. It would provide a means of activity from a number of ministry viewpoints including:
  - A. Children's Ministry – utilized for VBS or other new children's ministry opportunities in the future. It would make a statement: "we have something for children here."
  - B. Outreach – a permanent visual tool when placed on the property that is visible to all passersby on 15<sup>th</sup> Street and guests to Lord of Life.
  - C. Can be an attractive benefit for the home school co-op programs that use our facilities.
  - D. Would be a long term alternative to temporary rented activities (inflatables) that are used for special events.
  - E. Would be attractive for families with children to possibly become more involved in after-worship activities such as pot-luck meals.

This is one example of the many options that are being considered for a new playground structure .



Please prayerfully consider supporting this endeavor for enhancing our ministries to the glory of God at Lord of Life.



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## 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)
- † Will meet on Sat. December 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 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

### 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 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. of each month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

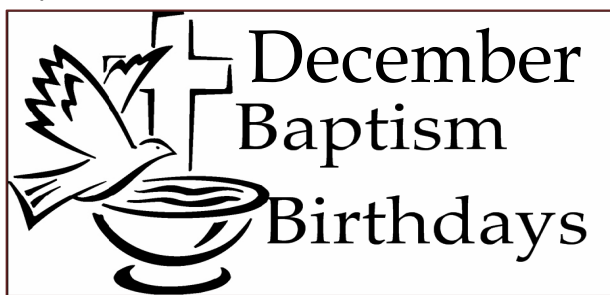
### TWENTY SOMETHINGS

- † 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

### NEW SMALL GROUPS FORMING

- † Watch for information about new small groups starting in 2017
- † One will be led by Tim Ozlowski and aimed at people in their late forties and early fifties. Times and dates TBD

In the works: a group for professionals without kids, a group for folks in their fifties, and a Gen X group



Elijah Isbell – 12-11-11  
Sebastian Shaltanis – 12-27-06  
Lizzy Short – 12/29/13  
Samantha Howe – 12/30/07

## *Birthdays and Anniversaries in December*

- 1 Tim & Alyson Wood (9)
- 3 Joyce Bamsch
- 4 Mollie Manning
- 4 Monique Phelan
- 5 Helen Dolan
- 6 Steve Klausing
- 6 Frank & June Edelmann (36)
- 6 Bob & Kathy Helms (30)
- 9 Amanda Belcher
- 11 Paula Lowery
- 13 Gail Wolf
- 14 Stu Ehrett
- 14 Samantha Howe
- 14 Jack Schrank
- 15 Holly Bowman
- 15 Sebastian Shaltanis
- 15 Phyllis Summer
- 17 Jonathan Bowman
- 17 Marty & Angie Buckmeier (29)
- 17 Joe & Laura Isbell (7)
- 18 Mickey Greer
- 18 Stephanie Tabor
- 19 Luis & Barbara Botello (24)
- 20 Dave Peters
- 21 Lizzy Short
- 22 Dennis & Linda Delzer (50!!!)
- 23 Katie Howe
- 23 Shirley Sparks
- 26 Lauvenia Barry
- 26 Andrew Buckmeier
- 26 Ben Scarth
- 27 Phil Klein
- 27 James Schutz
- 27 Andrew & Rebecca Short (14)
- 28 Jennifer Beaudreau
- 28 Steve & Hillary Klausing (42)
- 30 Dennis Delzer
- 30 Dori Stofer
- 30 Ken & Rhonda Tabor (34)



# Serving in Worship in December

	December 3		December 10		December 17		December 24	December 31	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	10:00 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
<b>Elder</b>	Peters		Ziegelbein		Read		Kunschke	Kunschke	
<b>Common Cup</b>	Read	Ziegelbein	Lutek	Hite	Womack	Ziegelbein	Lutek	Peters	Hite
<b>Altar</b>	Lynda Abbott, Amanda Kunschke, Bette Martin, Kay Oltmann, Nelda Schrank								
<b>Acolyte</b>	Ashley S.	Sarah L.	Cadence T.	Jonah C.	Athan S.	Hayden C.	Noah/Will		
<b>Greeter</b>	Ehrett	McVicker	Schrank	Barnes	Martin	Abbott/McVicker	Manning	Schrank	Dorak
<b>Sound</b>	Wilkerson	Pittson	Hacker	Raj	Wolf	Hite	Botello/Selveraj	Wilkerson	Pittson
<b>Usher</b>	Bunger Scarath	Oltmann Ziegelbein	Frinsko Read Paradise	Cruz Moudy	Ozlowski Bunger	Berger McVicker Oltmann	Short Crabtree Buckmeier		Oltmann Berger McVicker

## Midweek Advent Services

December 6

Sound Tech: Botello

Elder: Hite

December 13

Sound Tech: Hacker

Elder: Peters

December 20

Sound Tech: Wolf

Elder: Read

## Christmas Eve

5 PM Elder: Lutek

Ushers: Hacker, Schrank

Sound Tech: Hite

7 PM Elder: Kunschke

Usher: Cruz

Sound Tech: Wolf

## Christmas Day

Elder: Peters

Ushers: Paradise, Frinsko

Sound Tech: Wolf

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## January- October, 2017

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	<b>Regular Offerings</b>	\$533,969	\$597,141	(\$63,172)
	<b>Other</b>	\$3,640	\$200	\$3,440
	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	\$537,609	\$597,341	(\$59,732)
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$545,051	\$588,811	(\$43,760)
	<b>RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES</b>	(\$7,442)	\$8,530	(\$15,972)

## OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$91,120
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$155,661
3. Building Note Balance	\$344,084