

# LIFELINES

of



## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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On a recent hunting trip to Mason County, I saw something on the way back that caught my eye. While driving past a farm outside a little town, along one of the roads a little lamb was frantically running up and down the fence line –not inside the fence, but outside. Somehow this little one slipped through the barbed wire fence and was separated from the rest of the flock on the other side. Several times it tried to get back through the fence, but the openings seemed too tight and it couldn't find the way in. Unfortunately, the fence was pretty close to the road and if the lamb got spooked and ran into the road, I could imagine things ending badly. We rushed past the lamb heading for home and I don't know how it turned out. But my mind started wondering about it as I sat in the truck for the long ride home.

Many times in the Scriptures God's people are called or compared to "sheep", while He is our shepherd (ex: Psalm 23, John 10.) There are even several examples of lost and wandering sheep: Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 2:25; Matthew 18:12 & Luke 15:4. But the thing about this particular lost sheep that I saw alongside the road was how desperate it seemed to get back to the fold. As I thought about the scene and related the metaphor to it, I couldn't help but wonder how many "lost sheep" there are desperate to get back into the sheepfold, that is, the Holy Christian Church from which they wandered away. This seems to be the sentiment of the Psalmist when he pleads for God to rescue him: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant, for I do not forget your commandments." Psalm 119:176

It got me wondering what we in the Church can do to help the lost find their way back in and how, if we aren't mindful, we could inadvertently be setting up "barbed wire" barriers to people who want to be in the church. What can we do to be sure that we are ready and to receive someone who is trying to get back to the Church? Do we welcome the stranger, the outsider, the one who maybe looks like he or she doesn't belong?

Perhaps you can think of someone who has wandered off? A friend or family member who no longer faithfully attends church and maybe has lots of questions and doubts about God and life. Do you know if this person has ever tried to get back in? –Granted, it isn't the case with many who have left the flock, but maybe some who have left really do want to get back in?

Perhaps this year you can resolve to pray for someone who has left the fold and then look for an opportunity to encourage them and do everything you can to help them find their way. After all, in the Church we are safe, we are fed and nourished, we have no reason to fear, for the Good Shepherd watches over us and leads us beside still waters. He laid down His life for the sheep, and no one can snatch them from Him.

Thankfully, it isn't as though finding and saving the lost sheep is entirely up to us. We know our Lord wants us to work toward this end, (being mindful of the lost,) but we do not work alone. Whenever a sheep is returned to the fold, it is always ultimately, the work of the Good Shepherd. He seeks and finds the lost sheep and returns them, but consider that He might want to use you to do this.

Blessings on the New Year,  
Pastor Shaltanis

# Teen Times

Looking back at 2017, here are 25 things that I am thankful for:

1. My family
2. My wife, Jonelle, who makes a difference in kids' lives as a teacher
3. The way she takes care of me and keeps our house organized
4. Two sons, Marcus and Curtis, who are grounded in the Christian faith
5. A new daughter-in-law, Cassie
6. Parents who taught me how important it is to serve in the church and leading by example
7. A roof over my head
8. Food on my table and to enjoy cooking it with Jonelle
9. My in-laws who live close by, and have a pool
10. A brother and sister who know how to have a good time at family gatherings
11. My health
12. A great place to work
13. April, our dog, who has been a faithful companion for almost 15 years
14. Cell phones (yes I know that's weird but they sure come in handy)
15. Our church home whose members care for each other
16. My God given talents that I use to serve Him with
17. The opportunity to serve as the Director of Youth Ministry at Lord of Life
18. Higher Things
19. Youth nights
20. Seeing how God changes the lives of the young people I am privileged to be associated with
21. Having parents of youth who step up to help out in so many ways
22. The gifts of musical talent that many of my family members have
23. A pastor who is passionate and dedicated to great preaching and teaching of the Gospel
24. My faith that is nurtured by the Holy Spirit
25. A God who loves me and sent his Son to die on the cross for my sins

What does your list contain? How many can you come up with? With all of the ups and downs, highs and lows, ins and outs, and the pressures of daily life, we sometimes forget just how many things we should be thankful for. I am sure that if I thought about it for a while longer I could add another 25 things to this list. We must realize that with everything going on in this crazy, mixed up, fallen world we live in, God is in control. He has carried us through 2017 and he will do the same in 2018. I hope and pray that God will grant you peace, prosperity, happiness and a newfound appreciation of how much He loves us. His love is so great that he sent Jesus to pay for our sins with his death on the cross, and He gives us the hope of eternal life through His resurrection. All of the things on my list and yours are a blessing from our Heavenly Father. God bless you in 2018!

Scott Peters



THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Missouri Synod

November 30, 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

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

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RECEIPT FOR YOUR RECORDS

DATE:

11/14/2017

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

We thank God for you and your gifts to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod totaling: **\$6,000.00**

They will be used in support of: **Rev. Joel & Clarion Fritsche & Rev. Ryan & Emily McDermott**

Receipt Number: **703749, 703771, 703775**

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.

As a convenience, this section provides space for your comments and is an easy way for sharing an extra thank-offering at any time to help those in need.



THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Missouri Synod





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 fourth of the seven "T's" and we will examine the others in coming articles.

### TISSUE

TISSUE refers to the care and use of our bodies. St. Paul reminds us of some important truths in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, ***"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, Who is in you, Whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body."***

With the Psalmist we declare that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139). Each one of us is special to God, endowed just the way He wants us to be endowed, so that we can be His instruments for good in this world.

The stewardship of TISSUE involves many things, such as, proper nourishment, exercise, grooming, and other related items. It also refers to such issues as organ donations and transplants, various kinds of medical care, and the whole spectrum of life issues from before birth until after death.

Viewing ourselves and others as special creations by God encourages us to have the utmost respect for life at every point of the spectrum. On the last day when the King says, ***"Well done, good and faithful servant"*** (Matthew 25:21), He will be referring also to our stewardship of our physical needs as well as those of others.



### THANK YOU

*Many thanks for the generous bonus this year. It is my pleasure to serve as your pastor and I appreciate your support as expressed by this kind gift. I will do my best to put it to good use.*

*Blessings in Christ,  
PrS*



Thank you for the opportunity to serve our Lord through His congregation here at Lord of Life this year. And thank you as well for your generosity in our Christmas bonus.

Lord of Life Staff

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we reach the end of 2017, I meditate one more time on the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of his 95 theses. My thoughts go to his first thesis, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "Repent" [Mt 4:17], he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

I remind myself that **repentance** does not just mean having sorrow for sin as it is sometimes understood, but it means turning away from our sin and turning toward God.

Thus, it encompasses recognizing that we are subject to a sovereign and Holy God, acknowledging our sinfulness and being sorrowful and seeking forgiveness, and, finally, it means earnestly desiring to conform our lives to His will in obedience to His commandments (even though we will never be able to do so perfectly). I pray that I will, indeed, do this my entire life.

Then, I consider what other words beside **repentance** would fit in this sentence.

***The entire life of the believer should be one of \_\_\_\_.***

Here are some words that come to mind:

**faith** - The writer of Hebrews says, "We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end." and "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess." Thus, the gift of faith that God has given us through the working of the Holy Spirit is not just a one time thing to bring us to Him initially, but it is meant to last a lifetime, as we are to hold firmly to our faith until the very end.

**prayer** - Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Thus, it is His will for us to pray without ceasing, as it is rendered in some translations. Note that God does not need our prayers; rather, His admonition to pray regularly is for our benefit as it reinforces our faith and strengthens our connection with Him.

**studying the Word** - Jesus is quoted in John, when He criticizes those who disbelieve, saying, "You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me," Therefore, let us learn from this

example to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the scriptures from a position of belief rather than one of disbelief, so that we may indeed "come to [Him] to have life".

**forgiving** - Jesus teaches in Matthew, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." and Paul says in Romans, "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord." It is clear from these verses that we are expected to pass along to others the forgiveness that we have first received from Him. And, just as we have not merited the forgiveness we have received from Him, the attitude and worthiness of the offender to receive forgiveness is irrelevant. As believers, our attitude must be to forgive whenever we have been wronged, and to leave judgment to God.

**doing good works** - Paul writes in Ephesians, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." and in Philippians, "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose." Of course, this is not to suggest that we merit forgiveness or salvation through our works, but from this we can conclude that, in response to what He has done for us and in accordance with His prompting, we are to be God's hands and feet and voice in the world.

**giving** - Jesus teaches in Luke "Give, and it will be given to you." and David prays in 1 Chronicles, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." As believers, we understand that nothing we have is truly our own. It is all on loan to us from God, and we are no more than stewards of God's possessions. With this perspective, may we generously share our time, talents and treasures with our Church, with one another, and especially with those in need.

As you've read this, I pray that you are blessed by my musings. May God be with us, guide us and sustain us throughout 2018 as He has done in 2017 and before.

In Christ,

Mike Kunschke, Board of Elders

## 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. January 20<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
- † Will meet on Sat. January 13<sup>th</sup> 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

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES IN JANUARY

- |    |                              |
|----|------------------------------|
| 1  | Bob Nance                    |
| 2  | Stu & Sandy Ehrett (31)      |
| 5  | Hannah Greer                 |
| 5  | Nolan Helms                  |
| 6  | Pat Montalbo                 |
| 8  | Lauren Chumbley              |
| 8  | Lauren Howe                  |
| 8  | Linda Tischler               |
| 8  | Jim & Donna Roberts (35)     |
| 10 | Abigail Beaudreau            |
| 10 | Sandra Paradise              |
| 17 | Jonathan & Holly Bowman (18) |
| 21 | Brian Hahn                   |
| 22 | Lora Frinsko                 |
| 22 | Kara Prescott                |
| 23 | Noah Reinert                 |
| 24 | Kymberly Vess                |
| 28 | Amanda Kunschke              |
| 30 | Karl Olsen                   |

NEW ADULT BIBLE CLASS STARTING JANUARY 7

THE BOOK OF

# HEBREWS

MIKE KUNSCHKE WILL LEAD THIS STUDY IN THE LIBRARY  
SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:30AM



# Serving in Worship in January

	January 7		January 14		January 21		January 28	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	8:00 AM	10:45 AM
<b>Elder</b>	Lutek		Peters		Kunschke		Ziegelbein	
<b>Common Cup</b>	Peters	Hite			Lutek	Ziegelbein		
<b>Altar</b>	Lynda Abbott, Amanda Kunschke, Nelda Schrank							
<b>Acolyte</b>	Madeline P.	Will G.	Athan S.	Hayden C.	Cadence T.	Noah Z.	Emma Z.	Hayden C.
<b>Greeter</b>	Martin	McVicker/Abbott	Schrank	Dorak	Ehrett/Vess	McVicker	Martin	Barnes
<b>Sound</b>	Hacker	Hite	Wolf	Raj	Botello	Selvaraj	Wilkerson	Pittson
<b>Usher</b>	Scarth Bunger	Ozowski Loewecke Ziegelbein	Paradise Frisko	Moudy Cruz	Bunger	Oltmann Berger McVicker	Schrank Hacker	Buckmeier Short Crabtree

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### January- November, 2017

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	<b>Regular Offerings</b>	\$572,499	\$662,387	(\$89,888)
	<b>Other</b>	\$3,666	\$200	\$3,466
	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	\$576,165	\$662,587	(\$86,422)
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$590,417	\$647,506	(\$57,089)
	<b>RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES</b>	(\$14,252)	\$15,081	(\$29,333)

#### OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$83,211
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$143,058
3. Building Note Balance	\$339,194