

# LIFELINES

of

## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### **The Texas District Convention**

I recently attended the convention of the Texas District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in Irving, TX. This is not my first, fourth or fifth, such church convention. And while I know these business meetings are necessary in order to elect officers and vote on overtures, these long and tedious conferences are not what I call fun. Nevertheless, it was good to see so many Lutherans from all over Texas and catch up with friends.

When the district holds its triennial conventions, each congregation is allowed to send one lay and one pastoral delegate. (Greg Moudy, our soon to be installed new elder, did a great job as our lay representative.) With nearly 400 congregations in the district, the number of potential voters at the convention could be over 700, (when you consider that some congregations have a pastoral vacancy and other pastors serve more than one congregation.) In spite of this, there were only about 390 voters in attendance. I am not sure the reason for the low voter turnout, but this seemed to be the case at the prior Texas District convention as well.

Among the major accomplishments at the convention was the election of a new District President, Rev. Dr. Michael Newman. Newman was elected to the position on the first ballot. He succeeds Rev. Ken Hennings who will retire after serving four terms. President Newman is a good man with a heart for mission. He has served as one of the Mission and Ministry Facilitators for the district for the last several years, and before that as a parish pastor. He has also authored a number of books, including most recently *“Hope When your Heart Breaks: Navigating Grief and Loss,”* a book which is in the church library. We prayed for President-elect Newman and will continue to do so that God will guide him and provide our district with faithful leadership.

Another highlight of the convention was the address given by the President of Synod, Rev. Matthew Harrison. If you have never heard President Harrison speak, I recommend you look up some videos on the LCMS website. He always encourages and focuses on Jesus and does so with a unique and winsome style. This charm was on display when he spoke in Irving for an hour and a half. His ability to remain Christ-centered and uplifting was especially impressive given the difficult nature of his message.

President Harrison explained how the LCMS has recently concluded an extensive demographic study done in order to clarify the nature of the decline in our church body that has been taking place for the last 50 years. The decline is not isolated to a specific area but it is consistent across all the districts of the LCMS, with slightly more decline along the coasts. The decrease in our synod is also very similar to the decline in Christianity across all denominations in America. While there are some exceptions here and there, overall, the trend in our synod mirrors the overall trend in America. To put it simply, America is becoming more secular and our church numbers are reflecting this dramatically. For the last three generations only about 35% of Christians who were confirmed in the church have continued in the church. The results of this statistic are sobering. It is predicted that over the next ten years the LCMS will decline by about 500,000 members. (The current membership of the synod is slightly over 2 million.)

The reasons for this are multiple and you can read about them in the report published online:

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2018/message-to-the-church-about-challenges-we-face-and-how-to-face-them/>

In light of this downward trend in Lutheranism and Christianity in general, Lord of Life needs to consider our place in all of this. How will this changing demographic affect the future of our congregation? How will we meet this challenge? Will we put forth effort to find creative ways to engage with the lost and bring the Gospel to them? Will we remain steadfast and stand firm in the truth of God's Word faithfully proclaiming the gospel—even if it falls on deaf ears, goes largely ignored, and the congregation dwindles in numbers? Or, will we cower and compromise and change who we are in the hopes that unbelievers will like us and keep our institution alive? Will we find the whole situation so discouraging that we back away from the challenge and neglect those who do not know Jesus? There are opportunities and temptations ahead as we face this challenge of a dramatically changing culture.

Please pray for God's guidance in all of this. Use the gifts you have been given and consider how you can share the faith with those who have none and at the same time encourage your fellow believers. Pray for our congregation, our district and synod, our country and its culture, asking God to bring about an increase of the Kingdom here and throughout the world.

Blessings,  
PrS

**JOY:FULLY**  
**LUTHERAN**  
1 THESS 5:16-24



## prepare for worship in July

### Sunday, July 1: Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Lam. 3:22-33; 2 Cor. 8:1-9, 13-15; Mark 5:21-43

Hymn of the Day: "In the very midst of life," 755

### Sunday, July 8: Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Ezek. 2:1-5; 2 Cor. 12:1-10; Mark 6:1-13

Hymn of the Day: "O Christ, our true and only light," 839

### Sunday, July 15: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Amos 7:7-15; Eph. 1:3-14; Mark 6:14-29

Hymn of the Day: "Jesus, priceless treasure," 743

### Sunday, July 22: Nineth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Jer. 23:1-6; Eph. 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-44

Hymn of the Day: "The Church's one foundation," 644

### Sunday, July 29: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Gen 9:8-17; Eph. 3:14-21; Mark 6:45-56

Hymn of the Day: "Entrust your days and burdens," 754

## A New Elder!

The Board of Elders and Pastor are pleased to announce that we've asked Greg Moudy to serve alongside us as an additional elder for Lord of Life, and that he has accepted. Please pray for him and for each of us, that we may serve this congregation and our Lord faithfully.

## Beloved, Let Us Love

Do you remember the song, "They will know we are Christians by our Love," from VBS or church camp? The scriptural basis for this song is from the Gospel of John, where Jesus gives the Apostles a new commandment and explains that it is by love that they will be known as His disciples. *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*" (John 13:34-35) As we are also disciples of Jesus, following the teaching and example of the Apostles, we, too, should pay attention to this new commandment and love one another.

Although Jesus calls this a new commandment, these words of Jesus recorded in John were not the first time He pointed out the importance of loving God and one another (i.e., ones neighbors). *And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" (Matthew 22:37-39) As Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, we can see that this call to love and these teachings about loving go all the way back to the Old Testament.

Of course, Jesus did more than just talk about love; He demonstrated it to us by dying for us. *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:8) This is how much He loved us, and it is with a love like His that He commands us to love one another. *"This is my commandment, that you love one another*

*as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. ... These things I command you, so that you will love one another.* (John 15:12-14,17) It is clear; we are to love one another as He loved us.

The Apostle John makes it even more clear just what Jesus' command to love one another means. *By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.* (1 John 3:16) While we may not be called on to literally lay down our lives for one another, this command to love may require that we submit our own needs, desires, and will to God as we bear with and care for each other. For those of us who are members of any community (such as our congregation here at Lord of Life), or who have and live in families, or who interact with others at work and in the world - in other words, for all of us - we know that bearing with and caring for others can sometimes be difficult and test our commitment to love one another.

Yet, the Epistles are full of instructions and encouragements to love. Here are only a small sampling, to remind us of our calling to love one another:

- *Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.* (Romans 12:9-10)
- *Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.* (1 Corinthians 13:7)

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."*

- *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Galatians 5:14)*
- *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)*
- *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:12-14)*
- *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)*

As we all live in the world, we know that human nature and our diverse personalities will inevitably bring us into conflict with one another from time to time. We will experience

everything from annoyances over certain behaviors, to mild differences of opinion, to serious disagreements on important matters. This reality makes it seem impossible to keep Jesus' commandment. Yet, as His church and as individual Christians who wish to be (and to be known as) Jesus' disciples, we must strive to work through these human conflicts with His love.



*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*



Thanks be to God; He has shown us the way, and He promises to abide with and perfect us with His love. *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. (1 John 4:7-12)* Let it be so for us also.

My prayer for myself, for each of you, and for our congregation as a whole is that we be so filled with His love that it overflows and is evident to everyone as we interact with one another, with all who come through the doors of our church, and with all those we meet in our jobs and communities. To conclude, *May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. (Jude 1:2)*

In Christ,  
Mike Kunschke, Elder

# Teen Times

The time has arrived and almost a year of planning and fundraising all comes down to this month. On Monday, July 9, twenty-six youth and adults from Lord of Life will leave for the Higher Things Conference in Carbondale, Illinois for four days of worship, catechesis instruction, and comradery. This trip will have the largest number of participants in the history of Lord of Life to attend a summer youth event. In addition, the group is large enough that for the first time we have had to charter a bus just for our group to travel in. When I was brought on staff at Lord of Life as Director of Youth Ministry nine years ago, the first summer youth event that I helped organize was the 2010 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. On that trip we also chartered a bus, but it accommodated youth groups from four different Lutheran churches in the Dallas area. This year, the Sr. IMPACT youth group will occupy a charter bus on our own! I am so grateful for the opportunity to arrange an event that will have lasting memories for our youth group and will hopefully motivate them to attend Higher Things as well as other youth activities year after year. On that note, I also need to thank you, the parents of youth and members of Lord of Life who have supported our youth ministry and make these events possible.

It takes a great deal of funding to send 26 people on a trip such as this. The success of our fundraising as well as money set aside in the youth budget each year is a big reason we are given the chance to attend Higher Things. The donations received at the annual Valentine's Dinner seem to surpass itself every year. The returns from our restaurant fundraisers at Dugg Burger, Dickey's BBQ, and others are smaller in comparison, but the visible participation from our congregation is a great witness to the community. Along with the other fundraising events over the years like car washes, garage sales, pizza kits, and others, it never ceases to amaze me how the generosity of Lord of Life always comes through. I am always grateful to our church for the support given to our youth ministry, but in the end it is God who directs, controls, and guides all things to the glory of His name. It is His divine power and the work of the Holy Spirit that makes things come to fruition. His hand is constantly at work in the lives of youth to show them the grace and mercy we have through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the next issue of *LifeLines*, I hope to share some of the first hand thoughts and reflections from our youth group about their experience at Higher Things.

Until then, God bless.

Scott Peters



# Sanctified

2018 HIGHER THINGS CONFERENCES

## ***Are You a Slave?***

*Who wants to be a slave? Any takers? I suppose you might want to know who the master is. Is he a good master? Well, whether you want to believe it or not, you are a slave. Who is your master? As Paul says, when you sin your sin enslaves you. You must act according to the master, sin. Because of the law, the punishment for sin is death. There is good news; through Grace, we died with Christ on the cross. We were raised to a new life with Him, in His resurrection. Thus, we are dead to sin and law and alive to the spirit. Sin no longer has the power to kill – unless we allow it to.*

*As Paul also says, I willingly enslave myself to God. He recognized that he could not do anything good by his own power, so he had to learn to stop trying to do it on his own and let God work through him. It's a good thing that the all-powerful God of the Universe lives in Him. As a slave, I have no possessions of my own. I am merely a steward of my master's goods. All that I possess belongs to God. All the good that I've done was done by God. By my nature, I could do no good. I must now act according to my master, God. He's a good master. I'm thankful that I don't have to do it on my own power. That's hard work.*

*That is why I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

These words were reprinted by permission of Dan Fuhrmann, who sent them to Men's Bible Study participants before our June meeting. A great example of how men from St. Paul Lutheran and Lord of Life Lutheran share the Word of God, study the Word together, and provide personal insights into how God's Word strengthens and encourages all who believe. Dan Fuhrmann and Mike Kunscke are our principal study leaders and we meet on the first Sat. of the month with a breakfast that begins at 7:30am. We alternate meeting at St Paul and Lord of Life each month. A one hour bible study follows the breakfast. Attendance usually falls between 20-25 men each month. At times, some fathers have brought their teen-age sons.

All men at Lord of Life are welcome to join us. If you have questions, ask any elder about this event or Mike Paradise, who leads our breakfast team.

Blessings to all,  
Dave Peters





- 1 Don Bunger
- 2 Emily Scarth
- 2 Ana Scarth
- 2 Vincent & Peggy Scagliano (58)
- 3 Nelda Schrank
- 5 Mike Phelan
- 7 Joe Bob Isbell
- 8 Emma Padgett
- 10 Luis Botello
- 10 Brooks Smith
- 12 Susan Grabow
- 13 Carter Bunger
- 13 Sandy Ehrett
- 13 Ethan Hacker
- 13 Garrett Hacker
- 13 Jason & Sarah Sowers (5)
- 14 Carol Nance
- 14 Eric Wilde
- 17 Annie Joseph
- 17 Ben & Melanie Scarth (8)
- 19 Carolyn Moudy
- 19 Emma Ziegelbein
- 19 Noah Ziegelbein
- 20 Don Padgett
- 20 Magdalena Shaltanis
- 23 Charlie & Lynda Abbott (52)
- 24 Jonelle Peters
- 24 Matt Sims
- 26 John Frinsko
- 26 Winona Parish
- 29 Phil & Candace Klein (29)
- 30 Kenneth Tabor
- 30 Charles & Dixie Hacker (24)

## 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. July 21<sup>st</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

### FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or [speters@planolutheran.com](mailto:speters@planolutheran.com)
- † Will meet on Sun. July 8<sup>th</sup> 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 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. July 21<sup>st</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



July 5, 2009 - Kyle Beaudreau

July 3, 2005 - Athan Shaltanis

July 9, 2017 – Luke Sowers



# Serving in Worship in July

	July 1		July 8		July 15		July 22		July 29	
	8:00 AM	10:45 AM	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>	Peters		Ziegelbein		Read		Read		Kunschke	
<b>Assist</b>	Kunschke	Hite			Armstrong	Armstrong			Peters	Ziegelbein
<b>Altar</b>	Sandy Paradise and Kay Oltmann									
<b>Greeter</b>	Martin	Dorak	Schrank	Manning	Martin	Abbott/Moore	Vess	Barnes	Vess	Barnes
<b>Sound</b>	Hacker	Hite	Botello	Selvaraj	Wilkerson	Pittson	Wolf	Raj	Hacker	Selvaraj
<b>Usher</b>	Scarth Shaltanis Bunger	T Ozlowski D Ozlowski Loewecke Ziegelbein	Paradise Read Frisko	Moudy Carter Cruz	Bunger Scarth Messinger	Berger Parish Oltmann	C Hacker E Hacker Schrank	Short Crabtree Buckmeier	Scarth Shaltanis Bunger	T Ozlowski Loewecke M Ziegelbein S Ziegelbein

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### January - May, 2018

		ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	<b>Regular Offerings</b>	\$224,435	\$247,970	(\$23,535)
	<b>Other</b>	\$115	\$0	\$115
	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	\$224,551	\$247,970	(\$23,419)
	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	\$243,939	\$250,014	(\$6,075)
	<b>RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES</b>	(\$19,389)	(\$2,044)	(\$17,345)

#### OTHER INFORMATION

1. General Operating Fund Balance	\$107,113
2. Dedicated Funds Balance	\$147,491
3. Building Note Balance	\$327,349

**DEADLINE FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES IS THE 20TH — [lol.newsletter.editor@gmail.com](mailto:lol.newsletter.editor@gmail.com)**