



From the Pastor

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins." - Matthew 1:76-77

As I write this message to you, dear friends, I am still anticipating the first Sunday in Advent and planning for our Advent services. Advent is a time of waiting, watching, and preparing for the coming of the Christ Child of Christmas, and it is a time that invites us to be intentional about how we wait and watch and prepare. Each week during Advent we light a candle on the Advent wreath denoting a particular theme. I thought I'd share those themes with you, here, as a way of helping us all to embrace this season with renewed enthusiasm, as ones with high expectations and hopes. I thought I'd offer this in the form of a devotion that you can use each day...

HOPE is the first week's theme. We will say a prayer as we light that first candle on Sunday, November 29th.

Dear God, As we begin our Advent pilgrimage, grant us the courage to hope. Hope for your presence, Hope for your peace, Hope for your promise. Amen.

For what do you hope this year? How might taking time each day to soak in God's presence change us? How might we be an extension of Christ's peace for our world? How might we renew our faith in the promise of salvation that enters the world in a manger?

PEACE is our theme for week two. We will pray,

Dear God, As we journey down this Advent road, grant us the courage to make peace. Peace in our hearts, Peace in our homes, Peace in our communities. Amen.

(continued)

What does peace look like this year? Today? In this moment? How might peace in our hearts be revealed as we open ourselves up to time with God each day? How might that understanding of peace, which surpasses all understanding, make us instruments of peace in our homes and in our community? How might God be calling you to be an instrument of peace this Advent?

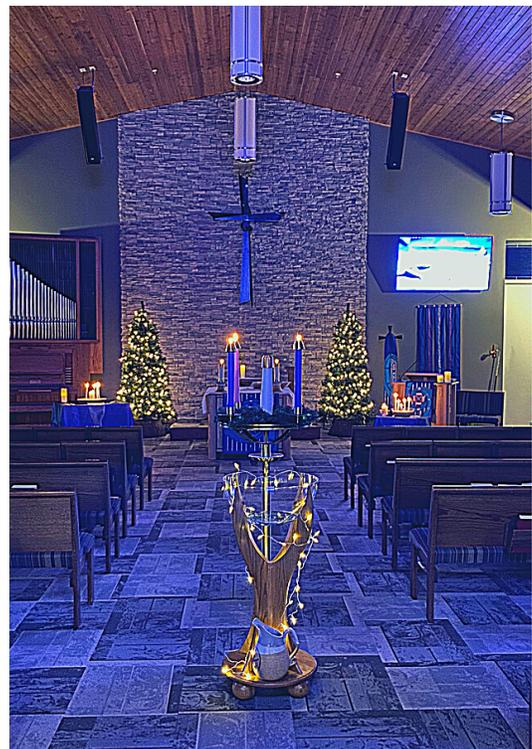
JOY is our week three theme. Our prayer for the third Sunday in Advent will be, Dear God, In the height of our Advent walk, grant us the courage to experience joy. Joy in the face of apathy, Joy in the face of sorrow, Joy in the face of uncertainty. Amen.

God knows we have had our share of sorrows and uncertainties in 2020. We've faced down apathy in ourselves and others. What does it mean, God, that you invite us to have courage enough to experience joy in the face of all of this? I have seen joy in sullen faces in the past months. Sounds strange, right? The joy comes in the midst of great sorrow when we remember the promise of salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. Yes, things may be difficult now, but that does not change the timeless promise of God for the people of God. How can we remember that joy, even as we suffer? How might you remind yourself of this promise each day so that when adversity strikes, you will still recall joy?

Week four's theme will be **LOVE**. We will pray,

Dear God,
As our Advent pilgrimage draws to completion, grant us the courage to share your love. Love for the unexpected challenge, Love for the vulnerable one. Love for the presence of God. Amen.

Love is such a powerful word. There are many ways to think about love, a burning passion and yet, love for our brothers and sisters in this world. Love can be difficult at times, even at this time of year. What do you need to confess to God about your failure to love others? What do you need to confess to God about your failure to love yourself? Hear that God loves you, forgives you, and wants the best for you. How might God be calling you to share Christ's love in a new or unexpected way? How might God be inviting you into a more vulnerable presence in your relationship with God?



May God bless you with this Advent journey as we prepare for the Christ child of Christmas.

DECEMBER 2020

Christmas Eve Services

This year will look decidedly different than years past, but we are fully embracing the celebration of Christmas this year and we invite you to do so as well. Your Worship and Music Team has been hard at work planning for Christmas Eve. We will offer a service in the parking lot, assuming the weather cooperates, at 4:00pm. Knowing that sunset is about half way through this service, we have some special plans to "light up" the service for you. We think you'll love it!

We will also live stream our traditional Christmas Eve service from our sanctuary at 6:00pm via Zoom, our website, and Facebook page. YouTube will follow on a time delay. We are working on creative ways to include special music, and this service will be the culmination of our sermon series The Glory of Christmas. Why not invite family and friends from near and far to join you in worship this Christmas Eve?



Worship in person in our parking lot! **Christmas Eve, December 24th at 4:00PM.** We will move our musicians inside and Pastor Paul will still lead from outside. If the weather is bad that day, ie, snowing hard or raining, we ask that you check our website for updates.

Sign up today at our website: www.lordoflife.online.

Advent Services

Join us each Sunday morning for the Season of Advent! We will also be offering midweek services featuring **Holden Evening Prayer each Wednesday at 7:15pm LIVE** from our sanctuary. We hope you will find these services helpful and meaningful as we wait together.



Join us on **Sunday mornings at 9am during Advent** as we follow the behind the scenes adventures of a church as it prepares its Christmas Eve pageant. You'll laugh, you'll cry, and in the end, we'll all find a new appreciation for the journey to Christmas through the story of these characters. Fun for all ages is guaranteed with The Glory of Christmas.

From the Council President

Blessings to you all during this Advent season!

The church is decorated and we even put some lights on the pine tree in front of the church. Come and visit at night to see! We will continue to worship online and remotely but we are still the church and worship still happens. I hope all of you are able to enjoy the season of anticipation that is Advent. I'm sure a lot of us are anticipating when COVID-19 is behind us. We'll get there.

The Church Council has been working on our 2021 budget and we have put together a 5-year look ahead budget to address the wants and needs of the congregation. The council has recommended this budget and we'll be sharing that with the congregation. The annual meeting will be done differently due to covid. It will be held online January 23rd at 10:00 am after worship. We'll share the zoom link on our website www.lordoflife.online. We continue to work on nominations for LOL Church Council positions. If you are interested in serving on council, contact me at jwdienst@gmail.com.

Our 2021 Stewardship Campaign will be kicking off in early 2021. This will be a 3-phased approach where we are doing Stewardship for the year, a Debt Reduction Campaign and an Endowment Campaign. The council is working with Pastor Mike Ward with GSB. GSB is a fundraising consultant that will assist in our campaigns so we can hit our goals. GSB has worked with Luther Manor and Wartburg on their campaigns. Pastor Mike used to work with Wayne Sampson. Some of you may remember Wayne and Julane. More to come on this.

Blessings to you all. See you in Church.

Peace to you,

Jon



In our prayers...

Please pray for your fellow Lord of Life members and families. We have a email prayer chain that you are welcome to join. Please send an email to office@lordoflife.online to be added to the list. We also have a prayer group as part of our Facebook presence. Contact Pastor Paul to be added there.

There are many in need of prayer in these days. Please continue to pray for Dan, John, Tonia, and all those working toward healing. Please pray for Luther Manor and staff as the work diligently to stem the tide of COVID-19, and please pray for our hospitals and staffs, especially healthcare workers who place themselves in harms way to deliver care.

From the Treasurer

Lord of Life Financial Update

<u>OCTOBER YTD</u>	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2020 Budget	2020 Total Budget
Member General Giving	204,693	198,159	216,670	260,000
Hunger	1,542	888	1,250	1,500
Lent/Advent	1,071	913	1,000	1,300
Other Giving/Income	1,958	749	2,070	2,400
Total Income	209,266	200,710	220,990	265,200
Benevolence	16,983	15,844	17,420	21,000
Evangelism	1,649	0	3,050	3,750
Stewardship	953	854	1,040	1,250
Music & Worship	16,738	19,756	18,340	22,013
Faith Formation	3,486	269	13,550	16,700
Ministry/Pastoral	92,617	97,508	97,050	115,761
Church Home	40,469	31,132	40,130	46,800
Administration	33,185	27,503	28,530	34,230
Total Expenses	206,082	192,868	219,110	261,504
Net Gain (loss)	3,183	7,841	1,880	3,696
Mortgage - (\$6,252/month)	62,520	62,520	62,520	75,024



Everyone is invited to hang around online after worship during coffee hour on Sunday, December 20th. At 10 am there will be an Instant Christmas Pageant on Zoom that will be interactive and cross-generational! Young and old alike can join in and hear and help tell the story of Christmas. It will be about 15 minutes long and LOTS of fun. We will use the worship Zoom link. More information will be available closer to the date.

DECEMBER 2020

Sunday School News

From Maria Troftgruben

Sunday School Advent kits were distributed to many families at the end of November. Families will continue to receive devotions by email during Advent.

Sunday School will resume meeting by Zoom at 10 am on December 6th, and 13th using the usual link and format. Sunday, December 20th will be our Instant Christmas pageant. On this Sunday we will be telling the Christmas story on zoom and invite the congregation to join. It will be an interactive, cross-generational meeting! It will still be about 10 to 20 minutes long. More details will be coming out later about how it will work. We will use the worship link for this Zoom meeting.

We will not have Zoom Sunday School on December 27th and January 3rd.



Caring for Our Community...

A note from a guest at our November drive through food pantry. Please read.

"I wish to thank you for the food I received on November 21st. It really helps out, I live on Social Security. Also, I would like to thank the two men who helped me when my care didn't work. Thank you for being there for me." - L.H.

"Thank you for being there for me." Friends, that says it all. God has entrusted to us the love of our neighbor and a call to feed them when they are hungry, to give them something to drink when they are thirsty. I thank God for all of you who support the ministry we share at Lord of Life. Especially during the pandemic, Lord of Life people are making a difference!

Your financial support makes so many wonderful things possible as we respond to the great need of our congregation, our community, and our world. As we near the year-end, won't you please consider what that support might look like in the form of a special gift to your congregation?

God continues to bless us with opportunities to serve. Thanks be to God!

- Pastor Paul

Worship on the Web

Join us for worship and coffee hour every Sunday using the information below!

As before, you will be able to click on the Worship button on our website, or go to: <https://bit.ly/3iHLydh>
If prompted to enter a password, use: Luther

To join over the phone, dial 1(312)626-6799 and use:

Meeting code: 563 582 7371

Password code: 456037.

Bible Study

Pastor Paul invites you to join him for a reading of the lessons for the week ahead. A handout is provided on our website each week, along with a link to join the Zoom meeting. Join him on **Monday, December 7 & 14** only at 7:00pm. Be sure to check out all of the resources available via our website! www.lordoflife.online

A Word of Thanks

John Cocayne, recovering from major cancer surgery and doing well, asked us to share a word of thanks for all of the prayers and thoughtful notes and cards you sent. We are truly in this together. Caring for our congregation looks like this. Thank you!

Older Wiser Lutherans (Online!) December 15th

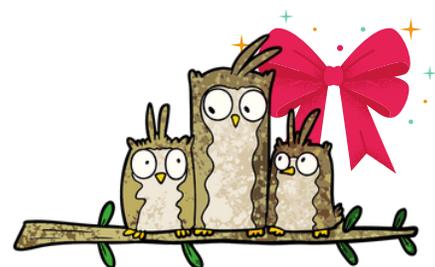
Pastor Paul is inviting YOU for an online social gathering with our Older Wiser Lutherans group on **Tuesday, December 15th at 1:00pm**. So grab your snack and beverage of choice and join the fun of being together online.

Go to our website and click the OWLs Online link to join the Zoom call.
Need to phone in? No problem.

Dial : +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 563 582 7371

Passcode: 456037



O.W.L.s

(Older Wiser Lutherans!)

Creating a Sacred Space for Worship at Home

You may have heard Pastor Paul invite you to light a candle before worship. During Advent, we have the added opportunity to include an Advent wreath as part of our space for worship at home. Advent wreaths are readily available at craft stores and online, but if you have 5 candles in holders you have what you need already. We believe that actively planning for worship at home includes acknowledging that we are in a holy space as we offer our worship and praise. We think that you will find it helpful, especially as we move through Advent. We look forward to seeing you in worship.

In the Mail...

Though we primarily share resources and updates electronically, if you are unable to access the Internet, please contact the office to arrange to have items mailed.



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Lutheran Church

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