

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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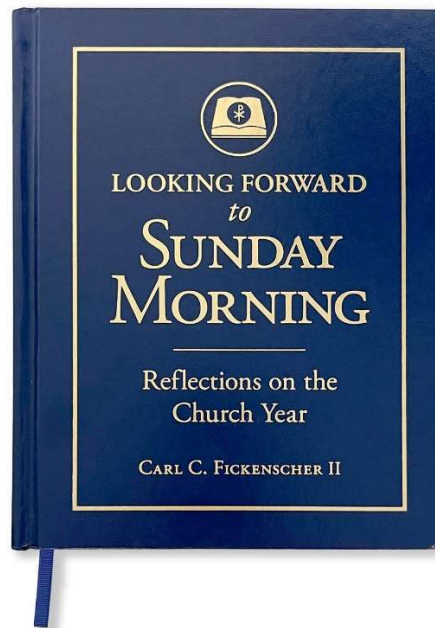
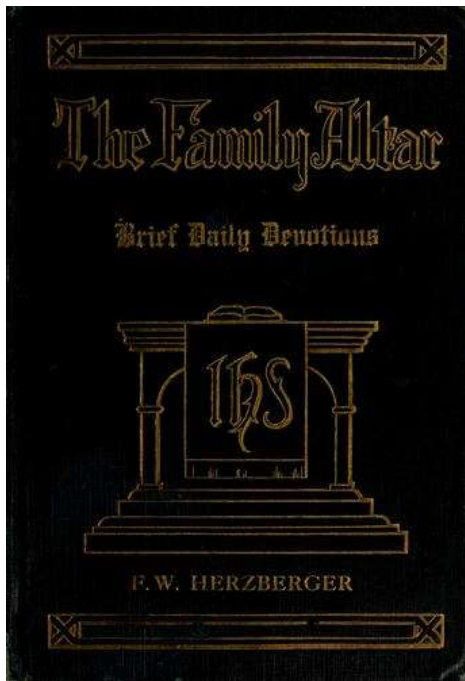
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Plano, Texas

April 2026

You should be receiving this newsletter on Holy Week, so here's your reminder about our upcoming services: Maundy Thursday (1:00 and 7:00 pm) and Good Friday (7:30 pm.) On Easter Sunday, we will have a special breakfast served between the 8:00 and 10:45 services at 9:30. See you there! -PrS



I write to you a tale of two books; one old, one new.

The first book I want you to know about is over 100 years old. Written by Rev. F.W. Herzberger (1859-1930) it is called *The Family Altar*. It is a collection of daily devotions and, as the title suggests, it is for families to use in the home. Each devotion is one page. There is a Scripture verse and often hymn verses or prayers at the end of each meditation. The author was a parish pastor and city-missionary with lots of experience communicating the Gospel to people of every walk of life. He writes in a way that is easy to understand and his work still holds up a century after it was written.

Herzberger was a fascinating individual and churchman who also happens to have a Lord of Life connection –he is the great grandfather of our own Suzanne Smith! When Suzanne first told me she was related to Herzberger, I recognized the name right away as the author of *The Family Altar*. The reason is, as a seminarian and young pastor, I had the opportunity to

inherit books from many retiring pastors who gave away their libraries: every single one of them had *The Family Altar*. This book influenced many pastors and laymen in our synod for a lot of years.

Suzanne can share with you some interesting stories about her great grandfather and someone else has written a biography about Herzberger on a blog if you want to learn more about him. It is available here:

<https://crossings.org/part-one-f-w-herzberger/>

This book has gone through many printings, (I have a version from 1926 that is the 3rd edition!) but there is even one still available from Concordia Publishing House as a print-on-demand book for \$45 (plus tax and shipping.) <https://www.cph.org/the-family-altar-brief-daily-devotions>

You can also find used copies rather inexpensively (around 10 bucks) from AbeBooks.com, which I recommend.

https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?ds=20&kn=Herzberger%20F.%20W.&ref=ds_ac_rk_0&sts=t

And if for some reason owning a physical book isn't your thing, or you just want to check it out to see if it is something you might be interested in, you can even find the entire work online at the following link:

<https://archive.org/details/familyaltarbrief00herz/page/n5/mode/2up?ref=ol>

Now let me tell you about a new book.

Looking Forward to Sunday: Reflections on the Church Year was published last year by Concordia Publishing House. The author is Rev. Dr. Carl C. Fickenscher II, a professor of homiletics (preaching) at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, and just a great guy. His book is a series of devotion-studies (his term) for every Sunday of the Church Year. That is, in four pages, he has well-written studies that can be used for devotions and they are designed to help you prepare for the coming Sunday. He compares this to doing research about some historical place before you go there for vacation or studying or reading the book before attending the lecture. His point is, when we show up prepared in advance for something, we often appreciate it much more. (Putting something into it helps you get more out of it.) In the same way, knowing in advance the way in which all the readings, prayers, psalms, and hymns revolve around a common theme helps you to know what to listen for on Sunday morning. Rather than showing up and getting surprised, you are prepared and ready.

The book is beautifully published and very accessible. It is also the kind of thing that should be easy to fit into your schedule. If you struggle to do a devotion every day, this is something that doesn't require a lot of time, and you can do it all at once, or split it up over a couple of days. The book is nearly 750 pages and is a good deal at \$35. I highly recommend you look into getting one if you would like to try something new for your devotional life.

Available directly at CPH:

<https://www.cph.org/looking-forward-to-sunday-morning-reflections-on-the-church-year>

Or, if you prefer Amazon, you can find it there as well

What is the connection between these two books and why mention them together? *The Family Altar* was a book found in the homes of many LCMS Lutherans for generations. This work helped many families to stay grounded in the Word. I think *Looking Forward to Sunday Morning* may serve a similar purpose for future generations of LCMS Lutherans and I hope that it too will find its way into the homes of faithful Lutherans for years to come.

-PrS



A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

Social Media Update

One of the main things I have been doing here at Lord of Life since beginning my internship has been expanding the church's social media presence. Jessica Gavit has done a beautiful job creating platforms with reach on both Facebook and Instagram, and my task has been to maintain what she had built up and expand our content scope. The goal is to improve reach and engagement analytics to push Lord of Life further into the digital world and reach both the lost who are considering Christianity and the found who are looking for a church home.

I will admit that I am not a numbers person at all. I very much enjoy creating content, but when it comes to understanding how it performs across algorithms, I need help. Ben Slater has been a great resource for me on how algorithms work in pushing content out. Jessica also built a social media reporting tool to track data across all our platforms, including our website! With their help, I can see which posts the algorithm has been liking, what time of day is best to post, what lengths of video do well, what types of pictures capture people's attention, and what we can do to improve what we have.

So far, I have been experimenting with picture posts (standard picture-and-caption social media posts) and video posts (short-form videos under 2 minutes) to see what entices people to click on our socials and learn more about Lord of Life. This Lent, I have been using Pastor's Lenten Midweek sermon series as a little experiment to see which types of posts the algorithm likes better. For simplicity, I looked at Instagram's view counts for each post. Now, the views on a post just mean someone stopped scrolling for at least 1 second on it. They could choose to scroll on, or they could stop and watch the whole thing. Either way, it counts as a view. For the Season of Lent, starting with our Ash Wednesday post, our picture posts averaged 111 views. Comparatively, our video posts averaged 294 views. If I'm doing my math correctly, that means our videos have about 2.65 times as many views as our picture posts. Based on those simple numbers, we can see that people tend to view video posts more than picture posts. So, our time would be best spent on creating engaging videos for the community to view to learn more about Lord of Life and Christianity as a whole.

The question that we are trying to answer from here is: what content can we produce that keeps people engaged to watch our videos, hopefully in their entirety, while spreading the Gospel and keeping true to the mission of Lord of Life as a confessional LCMS church? I believe one thing that would help people engage with our content is to feature real people and foster that human connection. Right now, our posts are largely art-based, which tends to come off as generic. Showing real people who really worship here shows the community at large that we are a friendly community of believers that hopefully they would like to be a part of. The idea of a media day has been tossed around to help facilitate this goal. I have learned from past mistakes and would really like to be respectful of people's privacy, so this media day would be something that you sign up for. If you're fine with your face representing Lord of Life on the internet, I would encourage you to consider participating in a media day in the future. Nothing has been set in stone yet, but I'd like the idea to be out there for when the time comes. Other ideas that have

been tossed around in Outreach meetings include longer-form YouTube videos, short, fun reels aligned with current trends that the algorithm will pick up (these trends would be heavily vetted for appropriateness), interview-style videos, and videos showcasing Lord of Life as a church and community.

I look forward to continuing work on our social media to reach the lost, find the found, and evangelize to the greater community at our fingertips. If you haven't already, please follow our socials on Facebook (Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Plano), Instagram (@lordoflifepiano), and YouTube (Lord of Life Lutheran Church of Plano Texas). Liking, sharing, and commenting on any of our posts helps boost them and push them out to the community. So, if you have any of these social platforms, please give us a follow. These things really do help!

Teen Times

(With some property and facility tidbits)

I'd like to share some things that took place in the month of March regarding our property and facilities at Lord of Life that can also be applied to our journey of faith and our walk with Christ. This is a subject that not only applies to teenagers, but also with anyone who leads a Christian lifestyle, with the help of the Holy Spirit. An important aspect of our beliefs, as well as the general condition of the physical structures of our church, is *maintenance*. Regular upkeep and inspections are crucial to maintaining the health and well-being of ourselves, our church, and our faith. Think of it as eating properly, exercising regularly, and getting physical check-ups to make sure everything is in working order. The following are just a few examples of the property and facility maintenance items that are addressed on a regular basis.



Annual inspections are performed on certain systems to ensure they are operating as they should be. The fire alarm system, the fire suppression system (sprinklers), and the burglar alarm systems must be checked once a year and be repaired or upgraded as needed. The church's kitchen has a grease trap that must be cleaned out twice a year. Now that spring has arrived with warmer weather in store, the lawn care is getting cranked up, hedges and trees will need to be trimmed, and the irrigation system must be checked for leaks and proper operation. The heating and air conditioning systems need to have filters replaced twice per year, and when required, have worn out parts replaced. Consistent use and weather conditions call for new mulch to be added to the playground every couple of years, which will happen in the month of April. And of course, there is the ongoing routine of cleaning the inside of our church facility that happens several times per week. There are many things that need regular attention to keep them in good shape. Just like our homes or our physical selves, our faith is no different. It needs to be maintained as well.

Regular attendance in worship services, Bible study, and fellowship with other believers is vital to keeping our faith healthy. Of course these are not things we do on our own or should brag about, but the work of the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace (Word and Sacrament) that keeps us in the faith; keeps us spiritually healthy and well-maintained. Just as Jesus taught in the Gospel of John, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides (or remains) in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Maintenance is something that is applied to many things, in fact almost everything that we have in our lives, which are all gifts from God. Our church, our homes, our cars, our education, technology, relationships, our own physical bodies, and most important our faith essentially require it. As we begin the recognition and celebration of Holy Week, ask God to keep you maintained through faith in Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. Until next time, God bless.

Scott Peters

Director of Youth Ministry and Director of Property and Facilities.



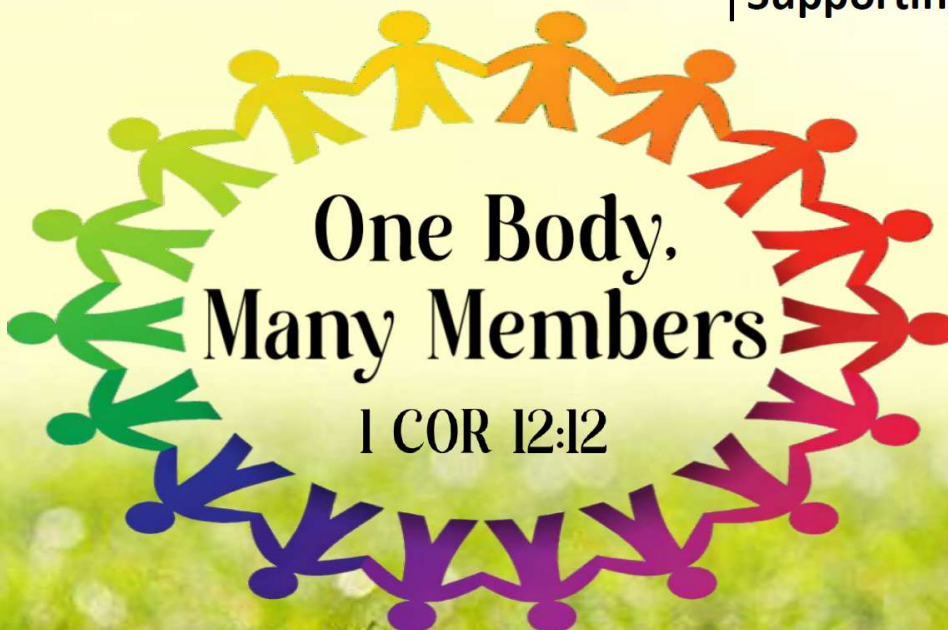
LWML Dal-North Spring Event Sat, April 18, 2026

09:00 - 09:30	Registration (\$15)
09:30 - 10:00	Welcome, Devotion
10:00 - 11:00	Coventry Reserve
11:00 - 11:10	Break
11:10 - 11:45	Business Meeting
11:45	Lunch

Hosted By:
Faith Lutheran Church Wylie

Location:
Faith Lutheran Church Plano
1701 E Park Blvd, Plano, TX

Ingathering:
Supporting Coventry Reserve



RSVP By:
Sat. April 4, 2026
To Hannah Dysart:
hannahnicolenewsom
@gmail.com
(662) 401-8342

A Better Way

The most common question about stewardship is not whether a Christian should give to their church. Of course Christians should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Rather, the question asked most is, “How much should I give?” But this question really means, “Should Christians give a tenth of their income to their local congregation?”

Here are some common reasons against tithing. Some say tithing isn’t necessary because it isn’t expressly commanded in the New Testament. There is no “Thus saith the Lord,” or “should” concerning tithing. Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these together with treasures (money) add up to more than a tithe. Still others say that they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church. And then there are those who think Christians shouldn’t tithe because of some fear. They are afraid that if they tithe, their gift will be misused, or that after tithing, there won’t be enough left over to get the things that they use, want or need.

Here are some reasons why Christians should tithe. Even though the New Testament doesn’t specifically command Christians to tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to. And on top of this, St. Paul often describes giving a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of one’s income — terms similar to a tithe (2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here’s another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? This tithe was intended to support the ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry. What does it say in the New Testament? “The Lord commanded

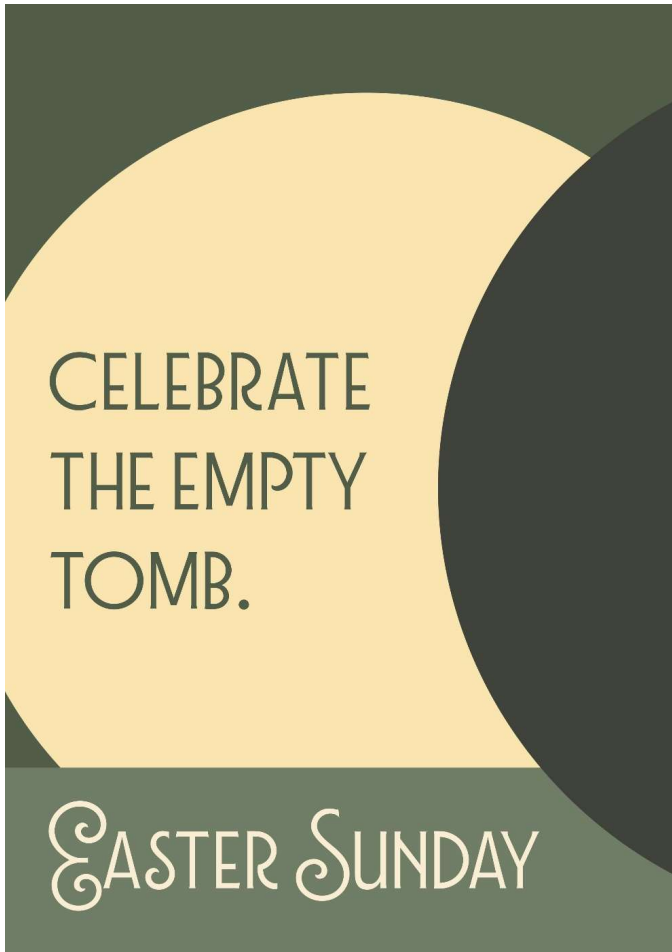
that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther used in the Small Catechism’s Table of Duties to explain what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we’re not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let’s answer this by asking a different question. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? After all, there is no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest verse we have, and it states simply that Christians should not neglect gathering together. And even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? The conversation might go something like this. I’m glad you’re still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God’s promises of forgiveness, life and salvation, and to receive His gifts in Word and Sacrament. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I’d really like you to try to attain it.

We should approach the topic of tithing with a similar conversation. The tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, we’re ecstatic that you’re giving, and that you’re giving in all these various ways — time, talents and treasures. But there is a better way. And that will only be a blessing to you, just as the Word of God — Old and New Testament alike — promises. Can you try increasing your gifts over the coming weeks, months and years? Can you put your trust in the God who sent His Son to take away your sin and give you everlasting life? And if He did this for you, if He did not spare His only Son, how will He not give you all things? He will not disappoint.



Join us Sunday, April 5 as we celebrate the empty tomb at 8AM or 10:45AM with Divine Service.

In between services, we will have lots of yummy treats to share at our annual Easter Breakfast Potluck.

April BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Brandon Lund
- 3 Phoebe Cave
- 3 Kathy Hite
- 6 Benjamin & Grace Slater (7)
- 7 Bob Hixson
- 8 Brian Wolf
- 11 Grant Kostrzewa
- 15 Dudley Hall
- 15 Louetta Sistik
- 15 Brooks & Joanna Smith (31)
- 16 Karen Lund
- 17 Jeff Berger
- 18 Paul & Karol Rice (34)
- 22 Scott & Christine Messinger (31)
- 22 Rhonda Tabor
- 23 Heather Padgett
- 25 Rix Scarth
- 25 Laurie & Tom George (39)
- 27 Margaret Chambers
- 27 Mike & Sandra Paradise (63)
- 28 Sylvia Seymour
- 28 Katie Short
- 29 Mike Montgomery
- 29 Gideon Selvaraj
- 29 Mark & Madison Conrad (3)
- 30 Adam Azzelio
- 30 Earl & Karen Lund (38)



“Don’t be alarmed,” he said.
“You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified.
He has risen!
He is not here. See the place Where they laid him.”
 Mark 16:6

Lord of Life Small Groups

EPIC PARENTING

- † For 30ish couples with kids
- † For info contact Ben Scarth
BenjaminScarth@yahoo.com
- † Usually meets one Sunday a month in the afternoon or evening

FRUITS OF THE VINE CARE GROUP

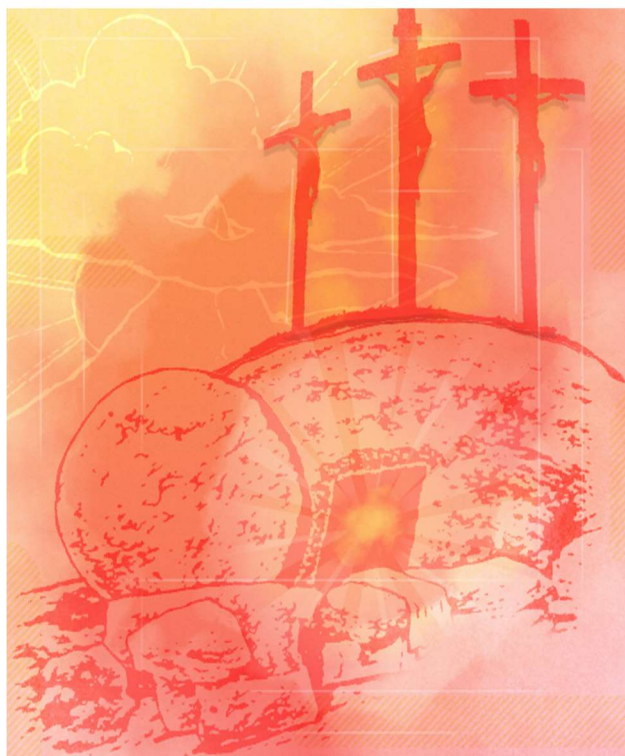
- † For info contact Scott Peters at 972-898-3351 cell or speters@planolutheran.com
- † Will meet Sat., April 17 at 6:00 PM for Bible study

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., April 11 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

YOUNG ADULTS

- † For those in their 20's and 30's
- † For info contact Lauren Moudy at laurenemoudy@gmail.com or (214) 415-8939
- † Will meet Sun, April 19 at 6 PM for Bible study and dinner



PREPARE FOR WORSHIP

In April

April 5: Resurrection of Our Lord

Texts: Acts 10:34-43 or Jer. 31:1-6; Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 28:1-10

HotD: "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands," 458

April 12: Second Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 5:29-42; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

HotD: "O Sons and Daughters of the King," 471

April 19: Third Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 2:14a, 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-25; Luke 24:13-35

HotD: "With High Delight Let Us Unite," 483

April 26: Fourth Sunday of Easter

Texts: Acts 2:42-47; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10

HotD: "The King of Love My Shepherd Is," 709



Children 10 and under are welcome to look for eggs in between services on Easter Sunday!