

# LIFELINES

of

## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Vol. 37, No. 12

Plano, Texas

December 2023

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### My Dad's Passing

As I write this, I am behind in a number of tasks, recovering from a whirlwind month. As most of you know, my father passed away in November. Losing a parent with the attendant grief that follows is never easy. The timing of my Dad's death was unexpected but we were not completely surprised. He had been slowing down for some time, losing strength and just generally getting weaker over the past several months. The week before he died I went to Des Moines to check on him in the hospital. He had been taken in as he could not stand on his feet and they discovered at that time that his kidneys had also shut down. His legs and arms were filled with fluid and eventually his lungs too. Though all of these things were serious, the doctors and nurses were all positive and we spoke about leaving the hospital for a rehab center and a nursing home. None of them spoke as if death was imminent. Indeed, in the days after I left, Dad rallied and improved considerably. He celebrated his 85<sup>th</sup> birthday in the hospital on October 31<sup>st</sup>. But the next day he took several steps back. It was All Saints' Day and his pastor brought him Holy Communion in the morning. As the day wore on, his strength continued to fade until later that day he passed away. His wife and my oldest brother were by his side. All in all, it was not a bad way to go, it just was not something we were expecting so soon.

We had his funeral on November 12 and I was tasked with preaching the sermon. Some say it is a bad idea to preach the funeral of a close loved one—better to sit and grieve with the rest of the congregation. I don't disagree with that advice, but I also think I was able step up and deliver one of my better sermons for the occasion. I shared some fond memories that got everyone laughing, but also tried to honor my dad and especially the way he raised my brothers and I, and, of course, I spoke about what our Lord has done for my dad and for all of us. If you are interested, you can find the service here: [http://youtube.com/watch?v=sqZjm\\_wS4c](http://youtube.com/watch?v=sqZjm_wS4c) sermon begins at 37:53.

### Thank You

My sincere thanks to all who sent sympathy cards and shared many kind words. I appreciate it. There's not much you can say to someone when they grieve other than a kind word of sympathy or a word of Gospel encouragement. Many of you did just that and simply knowing that people can relate because they also know something about loss and what you are experiencing, helps. If for no other reason, it helps by assuring you that you will make it through as well.

While I'm on the subject of saying thanks, let me add another 'thank you' for all who sent kind words and generous gifts for Pastor Appreciation month. What a surprise that was! Thank you especially to the giver of the large anonymous gift—you know who you are- I appreciate it very much.

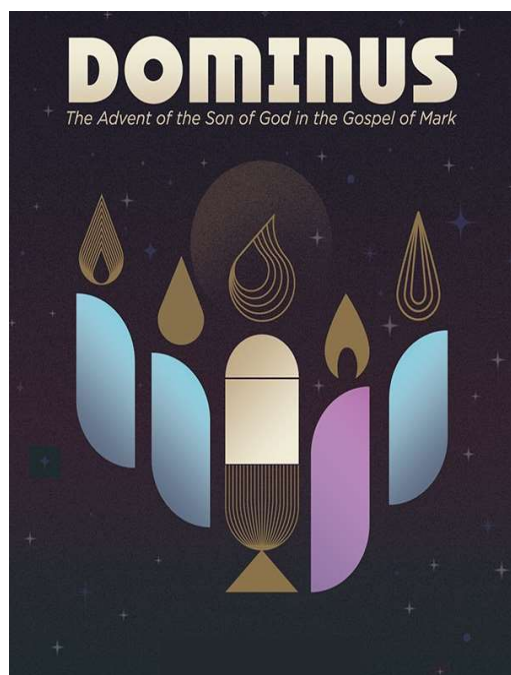


### New Books

As new books are published by Concordia Publishing House, I try and pick up things I believe will be of interest for our members and add them to our Library. Two recent titles are: *Martin Luther on Mental Health: Practical Advice for Christians Today* by Stephen M. Saunders, PhD and *Battle of the Soul: Luther Reforms Vice and Virtue* by Michael T. Fiebert. These two and a few others are laying out on a credenza near the office area of church. Help yourself, but put them back when you are done and we will add them to the Church Library eventually.

### Mission Trip

I hope to have an exciting story to share with you very soon about some mission work we are supporting in the Caribbean. I'll leave it at that for now, but stay tuned in the days ahead.



### Advent

I purchased another Advent series this year and it also looks to be a good one. Written by a friend of mine, the Rev. Dr. David Lewis of Concordia seminary, it is called “Dominus” and is about the Lord’s dominion over sin, death, and the devil as recorded in St. Mark’s Gospel.

Here is a description in Professor Lewis’ own words:

There is no mention of Jesus as a child in Mark’s narrative, and so, it seems, there is not much use for Mark’s Gospel in the season when many in our culture—even outside of the church—focus upon the birth of a baby. ... In this time of the year Americans await the birth of a baby, and this baby is then often viewed through the lens of sentimentality. He is harmless and inoffensive. He represents God’s love for everyone apart from any deep focus on fallen creation. Or for some he represents generally “the miracle of birth and new life.” He poses no threat to anyone.

The people of Israel, however, were not looking for a baby, but for a mighty ruler who would crush their enemies. This Messiah would pose a deadly threat to all of the enemies of God—including those within Israel itself.

... Advent means arrival, and in Mark Jesus does arrive ... Yes, he arrives as an adult in Mark’s narrative, not as a baby, but he does arrive. Then at his baptism Jesus receives the Holy Spirit, is demonstrated to be the Messiah and Lord, is declared to be the Son of God, and then is thrown out into battle against Israel’s enemies—not the Romans—but the devil, sin, and death. In this version of our Lord’s advent, the dominion of these spiritual powers is defeated, we are freed, and Jesus alone has become Lord.

Week one: Our Lord’s Authority over the Satanic Realm (Mark 1:21–34) Week two: Our Lord’s Authority over Sin (Mark 2:1–17) Week three: Our Lord’s Authority over Death (Mark 5:21–43)



## Kymberly Vess

Kymberly Vess passed away on November 15 at the age of 62. It was not a big secret that Kim struggled with an addiction to alcohol. Consequently, we didn't see her too often at Lord of Life and she missed out on many opportunities and blessings. Nevertheless, unlike too many with drug and alcohol addictions, Kim did not forsake her Lord or abandon her faith. In fact, she did daily prayers and devotions with her parents. I also ministered to her many times, praying with her, leading devotions, and giving her the Lord's Supper. Like the rest of us, Kim was far from perfect, but whatever struggles she had in this life have now come to a permanent end. She is at perfect peace with Jesus. Kim was given one final gift from our Lord and that was a peaceful death. Kim went to sleep and never woke up—a death most of us would choose if we could.

Kim's parents, Tony and Nevelle, have now lost both of their daughters (Stephanie, their only other child, passed away several years ago.) Tony and Nevelle are still members at Lord of Life and as many of you know, they were very active and involved for many years. Tony was an elder and Bible study leader, and Nevelle was a member of the altar guild. Nevelle's health has deteriorated recently, as she suffered a stroke the day after Kim's funeral and is now in a rehab hospital. They will soon have to face some difficult choices about where they will live in the days ahead. Fortunately, they have a loving and supportive family with two nieces in particular who have stepped up to help them in their time of need. Please keep them in your prayers and give some thought to how you might be able to support them in the days ahead.



## prepare for worship in December

### December 3: First Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 64:1-9 1 Cor. 1:3-9 Mark 11:1-10 or  
Mark 13:24-37

Hymn of the Day: "Savior of the Nations, Come," 332

### Dec. 6: Midweek Advent 1, 1:30 & 7 PM

Texts: Mark 1:21-34

Hymn of the Day: "'Away From Us!' the Demon  
Cried," 541

### December 10: Second Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 40:1-11 2 Peter 3:8-14 Mark 1:1-8

Hymn of the Day: "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist' Cry,"  
516

### Dec. 13: Midweek Advent 2, 1:30 & 7 PM

Texts: Mark 1:21-34

Hymn of the Day: "Jesus Sinner Doth Receive," 609

### December 17: Third Sunday in Advent

Texts: Is. 61:1-4, 8-11 1 Thess. 5:16-24 John 1:6-8,  
19-28

Hymn of the Day: "Hark! A Thrilling Voice is  
Sounding," 508

### Dec. 20: Midweek Advent 3, 1:30 & 7 PM

Texts: Mark 1:21-34

Hymn of the Day: "O Christ, Who Shared Our  
Mortal Life," 552

### December 24: Fourth Sunday in Advent

Texts 2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16 Rom. 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38

Hymn of the Day: "The Angel Gabriel," 356

### Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols, 6 PM

### Dec. 25: Christmas Day, 10 AM

### December 31: First Sunday after Christmas

Texts Is. 61:10-62:3 Gal. 4:4-7 Luke 2:22-40

Hymn of the Day: "In His Temple Now Behold Him,"  
940



## The Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8–11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is not a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?



## Lord of Life Small Groups

### 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)
- † Usually meet one Sun. a month at 5:30 PM

### GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., December 16 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

### COLLEGE GROUP

- † For students in college or recent grads
- † For info contact Pastor Shaltanis at [PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com](mailto:PastorShaltanis@yahoo.com)
- † Usually meet after the late service for lunch and Bible study



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Tim & Alyson Wood (16)
- 4 Mollie Manning
- 4 Monique Phelan
- 6 Samuel Short
- 6 Bob & Kathy Helms (36)
- 10 Evelyn Tribble
- 11 Paula Lowery
- 13 Gail Wolf
- 14 Stu Ehrett
- 14 Jack Schrank
- 14 Mark & Susan Knowles (42)
- 15 Eleanor Duff
- 15 Sebastian Shaltanis
- 16 Joel Crumrine
- 17 Marty & Angie Buckmeier (33)
- 18 Stephanie Tabor
- 19 Joel & Kelsey Crumrine (3)
- 20 Alex Duff
- 20 Dave Peters
- 21 Lizzy Short
- 22 Dennis & Linda Delzer (56)
- 23 Kevin & Cheryl Tyler (30)
- 26 Andrew Buckmeier
- 26 Ben Scarth
- 26 Mariel Tweedie
- 27 Phil Klein
- 27 Randy & Sylvia Rippey (5)
- 27 Andrew & Rebecca Short (20)
- 28 David & Becky Armstrong (38)
- 30 Dennis Delzer
- 30 Tasie Kade
- 30 Doug & Janet Sanders (46)
- 30 Ken & Rhonda Tabor (40)

**Lord of Life Lutheran Church**  
**Summarized Statement of Activity**  
**10 Months Ending October 31, 2023**

	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2023 Budget
<b>Contributions</b>				
Regular Offerings	\$482,440	\$472,723	(\$9,717)	\$560,692
Other	\$47	\$0	(\$47)	\$0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$482,487</b>	<b>\$472,723</b>	<b>(\$9,764)</b>	<b>\$560,692</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Benevolences	\$33,670	\$33,091	(\$579)	\$39,248
Elders	\$323,435	\$321,920	(\$1,515)	\$386,297
Education	\$35	\$800	\$765	\$1,000
Outreach	\$1,253	\$500	(\$753)	\$600
Office Expenses	\$9,966	\$9,950	(\$16)	\$12,090
Utilities	\$33,306	\$28,945	(\$4,361)	\$33,415
Property Maintenance	\$33,829	\$31,150	(\$2,679)	\$34,440
Stewardship	\$0	\$350	\$350	\$350
Family Ministries	\$1,463	\$4,690	\$3,228	\$5,290
Youth Board	\$5,686	\$5,600	(\$86)	\$6,100
Children's Ministry	\$3,020	\$5,650	\$2,630	\$6,700
Admin Council	\$1,731	\$2,150	\$419	\$2,600
Total Operating Expense	\$447,394	\$444,796	(\$2,598)	\$528,131
Extraordinary Expense	\$2,435			
Mortgage Payment	\$12,036	\$25,800	\$13,764	\$30,960
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$461,865</b>	<b>\$470,596</b>	<b>\$8,731</b>	<b>\$559,091</b>
<b>Surplus or (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$20,623</b>	<b>\$2,128</b>	<b>(\$18,495)</b>	<b>\$1,601</b>
<b>Other Information:</b>				
Operating Fund Balance	\$155,956			
Restricted Funds Balance	\$132,585			