

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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On a 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

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*

Teen Times

Happy New Year!

So, how many of you fulfilled the New Year's resolution that you made on January 1, 2024? How many of you actually REMEMBER what your resolution was? If you were able to meet your resolution, do you feel it made a significant difference in your life last year? Maybe we should look at what the word means; resolution. According to the Oxford Languages, the first definition is "a firm decision to do or not do something." The second definition is "the quality of being determined." And the third, "the action of solving a problem, dispute, or contentious matter." Ok, if you make a New Year's resolution then it's usually because you are determined to do or not do something about a problem or circumstance that you want to fix or improve upon; makes sense. I believe that is where many of us are deficient in our January promises. We decide to do something different, or not do something the same, but for one reason or another, fall short of our goals or fail altogether. We may not realize it but we do this at least once a week. How? We come to worship services on Sunday mornings, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, and hope to lead a more godly life. We resolve to be better Christians, but then we walk out the doors of the church and back into the world full of ungodliness. Wham! Our resolve is compromised.

Thankfully, we have a gracious and merciful God who loves us so much that He came to earth in human form to be born, live, and die a horrible death having done nothing wrong himself. Jesus made a resolution to give up his life for us to pay for all of the sins we commit and the promises we break. He resolved to die and be raised to life on the third day in order to defeat death and give us the hope of eternal life with Him when we are called to our heavenly home. If you consider Oxford's third definition of resolution, "the action of solving a problem," then it is quite obvious that Jesus Christ is our resolution! Whatever your resolution is that you apply to your earthly life, make sure that Jesus is part of it so you will be with him in your heavenly life!

Christ the Savior is born!

Until next time,
Scott Peters



Lord God, eternal Father and Giver of every good gift, we commit to Your mercy the year now ended. Forgive us our sins where we went wrong, work in our hearts true repentance and faith, and redeem us from all the evil of this past year. You have preserved our

congregation in the faith for another year. We give You thanks for Your blessings and continued guidance. Grant that, by Your grace, we may continue to serve You at Lord of Life. Lead us according to Your Word, and renew in us clean hearts that trust You and show love toward our neighbors. Lord God, heavenly Father, abide among us in this new year with Your Holy Spirit, that we may always trust in the saving name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen



prepare for worship in January

January 5: Second Sunday after Christmas

Texts: 1 Kings 3:4-15; Eph. 1:3-14; Luke 2:40-52
HotD: "Within the Father's House," 410

January 12: The Baptism of Our Lord

Texts: Is. 43:1-7; Rom. 6:1-11; Luke 3:15-22
HotD: "To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord," 407

January 19: Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Is. 62:1-5; 1 Cor. 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
HotD: "The Only Son from Heaven," 402

January 26: Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Texts: Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Cor. 12:12-31a;
Luke 4:16-30
HotD: "O Christ, Our True and Only Light," 339



for everyone that contributed to our
year-end bonuses so generously.
It is truly appreciated!

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
- † Usually meets on Saturday a month at 6:30 PM for Bible study

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

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

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

- † For students in college or recent grads
- † For info contact Lauren Moudy at laurenemoudy@gmail.com or (214) 415-8939
- † Will meet Sun, January 19 at 6 PM for Bible study and dinner



2	Kristof Nuschler
2	Stu & Sandy Ehrett (38)
5	Nolan Helms
8	Lauren Moudy
8	Linda Tischler
10	Sandy Paradise
19	Elizabeth Wilde
22	Lora Frinsko
22	Linda Hixson
22	Cecy Solano
23	Curtis & Sydney Peters (4)
30	Karl Olsen