

# LIFELINES

of

## LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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### An Oldie but a Goodie...

I recently reread the "Parable of the Fishless Fisherman" when it was forwarded by Steve Cohen of Apple of His Eye Ministries in his latest newsletter. The parable has been around for decades and (near as I can tell from a quick internet search) was written by a Mennonite minister, John M. Drescher. The parable uses sarcasm to show the folly of Christians who talk about missions but never actually engage in the work. The parable ends with a biting question: Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish?

I thought this would be particularly good for us to consider now since, our Strategic Planning team will be addressing how we can increase our outreach efforts at Lord of Life in the coming days. The parable is a good reminder that all our planning is no substitute for doing.

PrS

### Parable of the Fishless Fishermen

Now it came to pass that a group existed who called themselves fishermen. And lo, there were many fish in the waters all around. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Year after year these who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing.

Continually they searched for new and better definitions of fishing. They sponsored costly nationwide and worldwide congresses to discuss fishing and to promote fishing and hear about all the ways of fishing.

These fishermen built large, beautiful buildings called "Fishing Headquarters." The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. One thing they didn't do, however; they didn't fish.

They organized a board to send out fishermen to where there were many fish. The board was formed by those

who had the great vision and courage to speak about fishing, to define fishing, and to promote the idea of fishing in far-away streams and lakes where many other fish of different colors lived.

Also the board hired staffs and appointed committees and held many meetings to define fishing, to defend fishing, and to decide what new streams should be thought about. But the staff and committee members did not fish.

Expensive training centers were built to teach fishermen how to fish. Those who taught had doctorates in fishology, but the teachers did not fish. They only taught fishing. Year after year, graduates were sent to do full-time fishing, some to distant waters filled with fish.

Further, the fishermen built large printing houses to publish fishing guides. A speaker's bureau was also provided to schedule special speakers on the subject of fishing.

Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded, and were sent to fish. But like the fishermen back home, they never fished.

Some also said they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen.

After one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," a young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it.

So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen. He was also placed on the Fishermen's General Board as a person having considerable experience.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished.

They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the Master who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?"

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who didn't catch fish were really not fishermen, no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish?

### Holy Week and Easter

This is a great time to invite a friend to church. If you are internet savvy, you can use our social media posts on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/lcmsplano) & [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/lordoflifeplano) or you can speak with someone directly and invite them to join you for this special time of worship that focuses on what Jesus did for us in suffering, dying, and rising from the dead.

<https://www.facebook.com/lcmsplano>

<https://www.instagram.com/lordoflifeplano>



2/14 Ash Wednesday/Midweek 1:  
*Accusations* Job 42:1-6

2/21 Midweek 2:  
*Restraint* Luke 22:47-53

2/28 Midweek 3:  
*Testimony* Matthew 26:57-75

3/6 Midweek 4:  
*Misconceptions* Luke 23:1-12

3/13 Midweek 5:  
*Truth* John 18:33-40

3/20 Midweek 6:  
*Sympathy* Luke 23:26-34

3/24 Passion Sunday:  
*Evidence*

3/28 Maundy Thursday:  
*Respite* Luke 22:7-20

3/29 Good Friday:  
Tenebrae Service

3/31 Easter Sunday:  
*Vindication* Mark 16:1-8

Service Times  
during  
**Lent**

Sunday Services	8:00 and 10:45 AM
Wednesday Services:	1:00 and 7:00 PM
Maundy Thursday	1:00 and 7:00 PM
Good Friday	7:30 PM



## prepare for worship in march

### March 3: Third Sunday in Lent

Texts: Ex. 20:1-17; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; John 2:13-22 (23-25)

Hymn of the Day: "May God Bestow on Us His Grace," 324

### March 10: Fourth Sunday in Lent

Texts: Num. 21:4-9; Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

Hymn of the Day: "The Gospel Shows the Father's Grace," 580

### March 17: Fifth Sunday in Lent

Texts: Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 5:1-10; Mark 10:(32-34) 35-45

Hymn of the Day: "My Song Is Love Unknown," 430

### March 24: Sunday of the Passion (Palm Sunday)

Texts Zech. 9:9-12; Phil. 2:5-11; Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-47 or John 12:20-43

Hymn of the Day: "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth," 438

### March 31: The Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter)

Texts Is. 25:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8

Hymn of the Day: "Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart," 708

The Day after Ash Wednesday, the Administrative Council had their February meeting. The following is the devotion/Bible study prepared by Pastor Shaltanis on Matthew 6, the Gospel reading assigned for Ash Wednesday.

### Matthew 6

<sup>1</sup>"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. <sup>2</sup> "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup> "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>7</sup> "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. <sup>9</sup> Pray then like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread,

<sup>12</sup> and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, <sup>15</sup> but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

<sup>16</sup> "And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

## **Bible Study and Opening Devotion for February Admin Council Meeting**

**Q.** According to the underlined phrases, what is Jesus addressing? i.e. what is He trying to teach His disciples or warn them against? [Hypocrisy! As so often is the case. Jesus has in mind those who do righteous acts in order to be seen doing them. That seems to be the overall concern with all these teachings on almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.]

Consider the following: "Our Lord does not want us to act in secret in order that our work may be invisible. Elsewhere He says, 'Let your light so shine before men that others may see your good works and may glorify your Father who is in heaven.' But it is the Lord who will reveal. Every good thing becomes more pleasing when it is hidden by us but revealed by God. If you display yourself, there are few who will praise you, and few will understand, even if you should appear humble. The one who does understand this will lament you rather than praise you." [Anonymous church father cited in ACCS Matt. P. 125]

This passage is a difficult one to practice because it involves doing right things for the right reasons and if we over-think this, we may never get around to doing our righteous acts.

**Q.** Can you give an example of giving that "sounds the trumpet" for others to see? [Putting plaques on objects donated to church. Naming things after donors. Example, the "Ben Scarth Fellowship Hall".]

**Q.** Can you give an example of giving that is done in a way that one 'does not let their left hand know what their right hand is doing?' [Anonymous gifts? Perhaps this refers to not overthinking it, i.e. not measuring every cent to make sure we don't give too much or one penny over 10% -which is seen as a requirement to be met, but rather instead, approaching giving to the poor with a radical generosity and cheerfulness that doesn't keep track or try to measure up to some standard. (**See: 2nd Cor. 9:6-8**)]

**Q.** Speaking of, how much does Jesus say we have to give? Does He lay out a requirement of a tithe here? [He does not do so here or anywhere else, for that matter! He simply assumes it will be done. We may point out that given our current taxes and forced charity, it is easy to justify not giving 10%, but this also takes the charitable act out of our hands. People become entitled to receiving and not grateful for the generosity of others.]

**Q.** Can you think of examples of people who pray in order to be seen by others?

**Q.** Does this mean we should not pray in restaurants? Is there a guide or rule to consider when and where we pray?

**Q.** Do you get the impression that some prayers to God are really prayers spoken to the people in the room? Is this another error Jesus is trying to correct by urging people to pray in secret?

**Q.** Without delving into the deep theology of the Lord's Prayer, consider how Jesus introduces it with a warning against "heaping up empty phrases thinking we will be heard because of our many words." In what way are the petitions of the Lord's Prayer different from a prayer that "heaps up many empty phrases"? [It is concise and to the point and the first 3 petitions direct us to long for things that tend to God's glory and not merely things we need for a better life.]

**Q.** According to Jesus, how often should His disciples fast? [No amount is explained, it is simply assumed that it will happen along with alms and prayer.]

**Q.** The warnings concerning fasting are again directed at not doing it in order to be seen by others. Is putting ashes on our heads exactly what Jesus warns against? [It certainly can be. Some people indulge in this practice in order to be seen by men. They want an outward mark that shows everyone they are religious. It would be better if they wiped the ashes off their face before going out. Others can wear the ashes as a humble reminder that Christ died for them because they too are a sinner in need of repentance and mercy.]

**Q.** Laying up treasures on earth has to do with how our acts can benefit us here and now (for example, we will be seen as religious if we publicly give alms, pray, and fast) but if we do so privately with an eye toward pleasing our Father in heaven these things will be done in a different spirit and with a different goal in mind. Do you think that in our attempts to avoid hypocrisy we might avoid doing acts of righteousness altogether? Ex: I don't fast because it could lead to self-righteousness, or I never pray in public because it could be seen as hypocritical.

**Q.** What can we do as leaders of the church to encourage people to do their acts of righteousness in ways that are faithful and for the correct reasons and that avoid hypocrisy? [Encourage anonymous gifts, don't go over-the-top in publicly acknowledging givers. Pray in ways that model we are talking to God and not merely making announcements. Encourage private fasting. Etc.]

### Closing Prayer:

O Lord, you know all our thoughts and motivations, indeed nothing is hidden from you. In spite of our selfishness, be gracious to us, work in us and allow us to yet accomplish some good so that your name will be praised.

Father in heaven, You have placed us into this calling as leaders in your church on earth; enable us to lead faithfully –with proper action and motivation, seeking not our own glory or the praise of men, but only your approval and reward. Grant that we would be faithful servants and stewards and to that end, grant us wisdom, courage, humility, and strength to carry out the work before us and to further your purposes. Give us a spirit of peace at our meeting this evening and let our work be fruitful.

O God, you have called us out of darkness and into your marvelous light. You have brought us from death to life and on account of Jesus, to life without end. Shine your light in us and through us that we might bring more to glorify you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

## Congregational Work Day



Join the crew on

Saturday, March 23  
9am - 3pm(ish)

Help get our church into top shape in preparation for Holy Week and the celebration on Easter Sunday.

*Lunch will be provided.*

A list of "tools to bring" will be announced over the next two weeks.

*Contact Scott P. for more information.*

# Teen Times

This time of the year generates a myriad of calendar additions when it comes to our Lord of Life Youth Ministry. Planning and fundraising for the annual Higher Things youth conference usually takes center stage, but we also have many monthly youth events that are on the schedule. One of the events that our youth and some parents have attended for the past several years around the end of February is the annual ReThink Apologetics conference. 10 youth and adults from Lord of Life, along with 5 youth from Immanuel Lutheran, spent a Friday night and Saturday last month with approximately 3500 people hearing and seeing great presentations regarding Christian apologetics. The theme this year was “Man vs. Maker” and addressed the issue of what the world says compared to what the Bible says about who we are, how we are made, why we are here, and what we are worth. It’s interesting that the theme for the Higher Things conference this summer is “Who Am I?” It will offer a bit more than basic Christian apologetics and give it a distinctively Lutheran perspective. There are many other events planned this spring like, Sunday morning church swaps, a trip to the Museum of Biblical Art in Dallas, and a pool party, but let’s talk about fundraising.

This year the youth ministry has decided to do something a little different. Rather than offer an evening fundraising dinner event, we are going to serve the congregation a breakfast between worship services on Sunday mornings, March 17 and April 14. Now, this is NOT going to be just donuts and cookies, but a full on brunch type menu that will include breakfast casseroles, pancakes, waffles, fruit medleys, a protein (meat) of sorts, and other morning culinary delights. These breakfasts will also not be just for adults but for the children as well. As always, our fundraising events are free-will offering. Fundraising is always a challenge for youth and parents as we try to think of new ideas and creative ways to generate fiscal support for youth ministry events both large and small. And also as always, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the members of Lord of Life for their financial assistance, to the young people in our youth ministry for their participation and willingness to serve, and to the parents for their involvement in helping make things happen and taking the time to chaperone our events.

Until next time, God bless.

Scott Peters

## 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)
- † Will meet Sun., March 17 at 12:30 PM

### GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., March 9 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

MARCH	
<i>Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	
1	Tammi Chumbley
3	Sam Ziegelbein
7	Caroline Loewecke
8	Jonah Sullivan
9	Karen Ashburn
9	Joanna Smith
9	Bob & Linda Hixson (56)
10	Tom & Carol Read (45)
13	Pastor Joel Shaltanis
14	Shelby Lund
16	Russ & Brooke Wilkerson (22)
18	Greg Kostrzewa
19	Steven & Sara Tweedie (12)
20	Sarah Nuschler
23	Charles Gabriel
25	Steven Tweedie
27	Mark Ziegelbein
29	Cheryl Tyler
29	Alex & Catherine Duff (16)
30	Nevelle Vess



Feeling lucky? Or just hungry?

**Breakfast is served!**

**YOUTH GROUP FUNDRAISER**

March 17th, 9:00 - 9:30am

in the fellowship hall




Please join the Sr. IMPACT for a fundraiser breakfast on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 9 – 9:30am in the fellowship hall. A free will offering will be collected to help the Sr. IMPACT raise funds for their annual trip to the Higher Things Conference this summer in Mequon, Wisconsin.

## Lord of Life Lutheran Church

### Summarized Statement of Activity

### 1 Months Ending January 31, 2024

	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2024 Budget
<b>Contributions</b>				
Regular Offerings	\$51,005	\$53,861	(\$2,856)	\$589,196
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$51,005</b>	<b>\$53,861</b>	<b>(\$2,856)</b>	<b>\$589,196</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Benevolences	\$3,553	\$3,770	(\$217)	\$40,614
Elders	\$32,817	\$32,192	\$625	\$411,841
Education	\$0	\$50	(\$50)	\$1,000
Outreach	\$0	\$50	(\$50)	\$600
Office Expenses	\$181	\$695	(\$514)	\$12,090
Utilities	\$3,706	\$2,870	\$836	\$37,185
Property Maintenance	\$2,088	\$1,520	\$568	\$37,740
Stewardship	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$350
Family Ministries	\$1,705	\$150	\$1,555	\$5,290
Youth Board	\$2,151	\$2,200	(\$49)	\$6,600
Children's Ministry	\$390	\$500	(\$110)	\$6,000
Admin Council	\$192	\$200	(\$8)	\$2,600
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$46,783</b>	<b>\$44,197</b>	<b>\$2,586</b>	<b>\$561,910</b>
<b>Surplus or (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$4,222</b>	<b>\$9,664</b>	<b>(\$5,442)</b>	<b>\$27,286</b>

#### Other Information:

Operating Fund Balance	\$180,339
Certificate of Deposit	\$130,373
Restricted Fund Balance	\$139,972
Endowment Restricted CDs	\$64,366