

LIFELINES

of

LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Acts 2:42**

What do you think of when you hear the word “fellowship”? Potlucks? Quilting? Hanging out with church friends? That is how the word is often used today. For example, we call our room where a lot of social events happen, our “fellowship hall.” To think of “fellowship” as “social activity with friends” isn’t entirely wrong, but when we encounter the word “fellowship” in the New Testament, we see that it means something much more than simply enjoying the company of other Christians.

Writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul uses the word this way: “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” (1st Corinthians 1:9) Paul is speaking of a right relationship with God through Christ. Through Christ, the one and only Mediator between God and men, we can have fellowship with God characterized as a relationship where sin is forgiven and we are not in fear of a holy and wrathful God.

KOINON = Greek, “to share with someone in something” There are several variations of this root word used in different contexts in the New Testament. The word most commonly translated ‘fellowship’ is *KOINONIA*

This relationship between God and man brought about through Christ is not merely something each of us is to have with Him individually. Rather, all of us who are in Christ and have fellowship with God are to also have fellowship with others who are in Christ. This is made clear by the way Saint John uses this word in his first epistle:

“That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” [1st John 1:3-7]

So, why focus on fellowship? What does this have to do with us at Lord of Life?

Our strategic planning committee continues to meet and consider ideas and future plans for Lord of Life. Part of our process involves evaluating our congregation by assessing our strengths and what people love

about our congregation. In thinking this through, one of the strengths we see is that we are a loving community. In other words, we have *Koinonia*/fellowship with one another. We look out for one another by praying for each other and helping one another when a member is in need. We celebrate with each other in times of blessings and share in each other's sorrows in times of suffering. (Just as St. Paul describes in Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.") For many of us, the church is like a second family and this is because we have *Koinonia*.

Those of you who have been involved in churches for a long time, know that *Koinonia* is one of the great parts of being a Christian and belonging to a local congregation. This *Koinonia* is a great treasure and a gift from God not to be taken for granted. It is also what many people are sorely lacking and missing in their lives -even if they do not know it.

Today, people do not participate in churches as in previous generations. Consequently, there are a lot of people who have neither fellowship with Jesus nor with other Christians. At the same time, people are increasingly becoming isolated due to modern technology.

It is ironic, but those who are the most digitally connected (via phones and computers) are also the most isolated and lonely. This happens because they replace genuine in-the-flesh relationships with virtual or online relationships. But these kinds of digital relationships are poor substitutes for the real thing. In online relationships, you only see what the other person chooses to show you and you only reveal what you want to be seen. Consequently, you don't have to be vulnerable online. Without vulnerability, you cannot have intimacy. Without intimacy, you will feel increasingly isolated and lonely.

Such is the case with many today. What they need and deeply desire is *Koinonia*.

Jesus told His disciples on the night he was betrayed: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) Jesus explains that Christians will be in a loving community with each other (*Koinonia*) and people will notice. They will also want to be a part of it.

How can Lord of Life share our community with others? How can we let people know about the fellowship we have so they will want to be a part of it? And above all, how can we bring more people into fellowship with Christ? These are the kinds of things we are thinking about a lot in our strategic planning. If you have any thoughts you would like to share, we would greatly appreciate it.

Finally, please pray for Lord of Life to continue to be a loving community and for us to find ways to share that community with others.

Blessings,
PrS

THANK YOU!

John and I have returned from our long-anticipated trip to Alaska. It truly is a beautiful gem of God's creation. We saw so much, had beautiful weather "most" every day, and enjoyed conversations with other travelers. The sun was rising early in Alaska and I got a few pictures from our deck. The trip through the Inside Passage is fabulous with peaks on either side, and glaciers to be seen in Glacier Bay. The land portion was enjoyable as well, finishing with a riverboat tour on a river in Fairbanks. Thank you to all who helped to make this dream possible!

~ Vicki Frinsko



2 Bill Bennett
2 Candace Klein
2 Fred & Ruth Bernhardt (57)
3 Gail Senter
6 Dave & Dee Peters (60!!)
7 Robert & Heather Padgett (21)
8 Kelsey Crumrine
9 Mary Farmer
9 Mike & Monique Phelan (14)
12 Carrie Ziegelbein
13 Charlotte Reeves
16 Wyatt Horsefield
16 Sarah Kim
16 Andrew Short
18 Ernie & Susan Gromatzky (53)
21 Angie Buckmeier
21 Mike Scaglione
22 Mike Kunschke
22 Gary Nuschler, Jr.
23 Nora Parrent
26 Mirien Senter
27 Jerry Parish
28 James Kade
29 Carl Carper
30 Beverly Moudy



prepare for worship in september

September 1: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Deut. 4:1-2, 6-9; Eph. 6:10-20; Mark 7:14-23

Hymn of the Day: "By Grace I'm Saved," 566

September 8: Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Is. 35:4-7a; James 2:1-10, 14-18; Mark 7:(24-30) 31-37

Hymn of the Day: "Praise the Almighty," 797

September 15: Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Is. 50:4-10; James 3:1-12; Mark 9:14-29

Hymn of the Day: "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness," 849

September 22: Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Texts: Jer. 11:18-20; James 3:13-4:10; Mark 9:30-37

Hymn of the Day: "Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us," 851

September 29: Saint Michael and All Angels

Texts: Dan. 10:10-14, 12:1-; Rev. 12:7-12; Matt. 18:1-11

Hymn of the Day: "Lord God, to Thee We Give All Praise," 522



A Letter from Our Deaconess Intern

Thursday, August 29th, 2024

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Seeing as this is my first “real” addition to our Lifelines newsletter (other than my acceptance letter from our June 2024 newsletter) I thought it might be best to update y’all on whether Pastor Shaltanis was overstating what I would all be doing here at Lord of Life during my internship year. Spoiler alert: he has indeed kept his word! Over my first month here, I have been keeping an activity log of everything I have been doing at LoL. Not because I am organized – but because if it’s not written down or directly in front of me, there is a major chance that I will forget what I have all done, and feel as though I have accomplished nothing whatsoever.

Firstly, please thank Cindy – she does a lot! On the Administrative side of things, she’s taught me how to use Lutheran Service Builder to make bulletins, as well as how to format and update the weekly announcements. She’s also taught me how to run the printer way more efficiently (this technology is too fancy for me!) I have been proofreading said bulletins and our monthly newsletters. Each week, I have designed, cut, folded, signed, stamped, and mailed all of the birthday and anniversary cards for various LoL members. I have likewise been tasked with updating and sending out the prayer lists to our Prayer Partners every Thursday, as well as receiving the altar flowers from the florist on Friday mornings.

As for Education, I have been able to attend two out of the four of our different Care Groups. I have also been participating in the women’s Bible study group that meets every Tuesday. Once we finish up our current study, there will likely be opportunity for me to lead a study in the near future. I have been attending the Midweek Bible study every chance I get as well! Lastly, I have been attending the Special Needs Sunday school class with a lovely bunch of young women, and will get to fill in for Sandy Ehrett when needed this fall. Not many congregations have a Special Needs Sunday school, and not only is this a wonderful ministry for them, they have a ministry of their own going on! These young ladies love to make and decorate cards for our parishioners and their families when a new prayer request comes in, and often jump at the chance to do so. Sandy and the girls are such a joy to be around, and I am looking forward to getting to know them more.

In terms of Mercy Work, I have had the pleasure to visit with about twenty different households over the phone. Of those twenty, I have been able to meet with about half of them in person, either in their homes, or over lunch, or for coffee. I have also had the opportunity to visit with some of our homebound members as well. It has been a joy to meet with them, hear about their lives, and pray with them. If you haven’t received a call from me yet, trust that it is coming! I hope to meet with every member of LoL at least once over the next few weeks and months. On that note, if you would like to meet with me sooner, please stop me after service on Sunday, or feel free to come see me in my office at church during the week. I am always down for a chat!

Other areas I have been involved in include playing piano for the Classical Conversations homeschool group that meets here once a week for their morning openings. As a result of this, I have been recruited by Sara Tweedie (ok, really by her daughter) to lead their Kids Camp on Thursday afternoons. It has been a sweet time, and I am hoping the kids are having as much fun playing as I am coming up with different activities for them. On another fun note, I have had the opportunity to learn how to make “quilts” with the ladies at Comfort Makers. Pastor had told me that this group is one of the healthiest groups to be a part of – and he wasn’t kidding! If you ever have time one of the mornings they meet, swing by the church to join us for some blanket-making, treats, and fellowship.

During all of this, I have still needed to keep up with my Seminary requirements. Believe it or not, as an intern, I am still very much so a student, and still have assignments to complete in order to obtain my Master’s degree. The main one on my radar over this coming year is my Outreach Project to devise and

incorporate here at Lord of Life. Before I can make a proposal to my professor on which type of Outreach Project I will be doing here, I need to do a demographic and asset analysis of the Plano community. In theory, this will help me get a glimpse of who is living in the community immediately surrounding LoL, what kind of needs they may have, and what kind of outreach ministries are already available to them.

These are just some of the pies I have had my hands in while here at LoL – so far! Although I have only been here a month, I have had a lot of opportunities to learn and try new things in order to grow as a soon-to-be deaconess. I always find it very exciting to see how the Lord works in our lives and the lives of those around us, and it has been easy to see where Christ has already made an impact at Lord of Life. I am both very excited and incredibly blessed to see what else our Lord has in store for us over our year together!

In Christ's Love,

Julie Baumann
Deaconess Intern

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., September 14 at 6:30 PM for Bible study

GOOD NEWS CARE GROUP

- † For info contact Mike Kunschke at (847) 951-6974
- † Will meet Sat., September 14 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
- † Usually meets after the late service for lunch and Bible study

Lord of Life hosts several community groups

Many of you are aware of the several community groups or individuals outside of Lord of Life that use our facilities on a regular basis for meetings and special events. Some examples of these include the Classical Conversations homeschool co-op which meets on Thursdays during the school year, the Plano Citizens Coalition about 6 times per year to provide community involvement in local government and policies, as well as various groups like HOAs, musical instructors, and volunteer groups. All of these organizations are screened and given approval to use the facilities by the Admin Council prior to their arrival. They also provide financial compensation through donations to Lord of Life to offset utility and consumables costs.

The newest group to begin using Lord of Life as a meeting place is a homeschool choir program called the Lux Venit Choral Academy. It consists



of approximately 50-60 participants aged K-12, and they will be using Lord of Life's facilities on Tuesday afternoons for music theory and choir rehearsals.

The idea for allowing the use of Lord of Life facilities by outside groups and individuals is that it becomes an avenue of advertisement to many people who would not have known about Lord of Life at all. It also gives our church staff, and perhaps other members of the church, the opportunity to interact with members of these organizations which could lead to new members of our congregation. The Holy Spirit works in many and mysterious ways so who knows? So, if you happen to be at the church on a Tuesday afternoon and hear many young singing voices and their families, be confident that God may have placed them in our midst for a reason, and take a moment to greet and welcome them.

Teen Times

WHEW! We made it! The summer months are behind us and September is here! Cooler weather is just around the corner, right? NOT HARDLY! Most of us know, but some may not, that Texas actually has 12 seasons. From January to December it looks like this;



As youth ministry goes, there is only one season that lasts year round; it's called "adding-more-stuff-to-everyone's-already-crazy-busy-schedule" season. It seems like it wasn't that long ago when we traveled to Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon for Higher Things. Yet here we are more than 2 months later starting to think about next summer already. The plan is to attend Higher Things at Concordia University Nebraska in Seward which means there are already planning discussions, youth events, and fundraising ideas being kicked around. As in the past, on one Sunday night a month, this fall our youth group will meet together with the youth group from Immanuel Lutheran Church, spend time in God's Word, and enjoy food, fellowship, and fun. However, Lord of Life's youth ministry will have our own events as well; in particular, fundraisers. One event this month will include all of the members of our beloved congregation and will happen on Sunday, September 29. That is the 5th Sunday of the month, and normally we would enjoy a potluck meal together after church. However, since we will celebrate Reformation Sunday with a big Oktoberfest style meal just 4 weeks later, there will be another option offered on September 29. The youth ministry hosted two fundraising breakfasts during the Sunday morning Bible class hour last spring that brought rave reviews and requests for more. Well, here you go! There will be a breakfast fundraiser on the 5th Sunday in September to support the overall youth ministry and help us begin our quest to attend Higher Things next summer in Seward, Nebraska. Obviously, to think that far ahead we have to make it through the next 8 or 9 seasons of Texas weather!

To all of our friends and family at Lord of Life and beyond, God bless!

Until next time,
Scott Peters

Stewards, Called to Forgiveness

Human beings were created and redeemed to be stewards. Bearing the image of God (Gen. 1:26–28), the steward was created to reflect the Creator within creation. In a way, stewards are simply mirrors. Mirrors cannot do anything to the image that is placed in front of them.

A mirror was the first item in creation that embodied the computer term GIGO. “Garbage in, Garbage out.” In a computer, if you enter good data, you get a good result. You enter bad data; you will get a garbage result.

In photography, you can run an image through a filter, which can remove imperfections. Myriad apps allow for the option to cut people out, add people in and change backgrounds all in an attempt to make the perfect image. Mirrors cannot do that. They do not provide anything new. Mirrors are created to reflect, not process, an image. They simply reflect the person standing in front of them.

Stewards are like this. Created to reflect, a steward will reflect the God in front of them. The steward will either reflect a godly stewardship that holds that God is the owner of all things (Ps. 24:1) and is the One to whom they are accountable, or they will reflect the god of self and see the created order as something to be possessed, used, and in far too many cases, abused. It is not a question of IF the steward reflects, it is really a question of WHO is being reflected.

For this reason, the Lutheran Service Book has included a necessary hymn worthy of meditation: “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788). Its first verse reads:

*Forgive us, Lord, for shallow thankfulness,
For dull content with warmth and sheltered care,
For songs of praise for food and harvest press,
While of Your richer gifts we’re unaware.*

This is a fitting call to repentance for every steward. Our thankfulness is so often shallow. We get comfortable with the overflowing blessings we have entrusted to us by the Lord. These trusts are so many that the steward often forgets the One who entrusts them. Worse, with so many physical trusts evident, the steward loses sight of the greatest trust: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The failed steward sees so much plenty that they lose sight of the treasure: Jesus!

So, we confess our shallow thankfulness. In absolution, the imperfections of the failed steward are wiped away and a new image is sent into the world. We release our hold on stuff. We rethink our relationship with the created order and recall that it is all to be used FOR JESUS! This keeps the richer gifts in view, for us and for those we know and love who need Jesus.



	Y-T-D Operating Funds	Y-T-D Budget	Variance	Jan-Dec 2024 Budget
Contributions				
Regular Offerings	332,826	335,679	(\$2,853)	\$589,196
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Income	\$332,826	\$335,679	(\$2,853)	\$589,196
Expenses				
Benevolences	41,603	41,956	(\$353)	\$73,650
Elders	196,971	187,040	\$9,931	\$320,639
Education	250	550	(\$300)	\$1,000
Outreach	974	2,420	(\$1,446)	\$3,900
Office Expenses	7,892	7,015	\$877	\$12,090
Utilities	19,635	22,935	(\$3,300)	\$38,245
Property Maintenance	57,536	47,170	\$10,366	\$85,940
Stewardship	0	350	(\$350)	\$350
Family Ministries	2,155	2,365	(\$210)	\$5,290
Youth Board	4,208	5,400	(\$1,192)	\$6,600
Children's Ministry	1,841	3,800	(\$1,959)	\$6,500
Admin Council	1,094	2,900	(\$1,806)	\$5,200
Total Operating Expense	\$334,158	\$323,901	\$10,257	\$559,404
Surplus or (Deficit)	(\$1,332)	\$11,778	(\$13,110)	\$29,792

Other Information:

Operating Fund Balance	\$177,946
Certificate of Deposit	\$130,373
Restricted Fund Balance	\$141,453
Endowment Restricted CDs	\$64,811