

GOOD NEWS

DECEMBER 2020

Lord of Life
Lutheran
Church
(ELCA)

Worship Schedule
Sunday 9:00 am
Streaming
Wednesday 6pm
Streaming

Office Hours
Monday-Friday
By appointment

Ministers
The Lord of Life
Family of Faith

Pastors
Steven J. Rye
Erika R. Nilsen

Contact Info
Phone:218-828-9374

Email:
office@lolbaxter.org
www.lolbaxter.org

Advent 2020

A year or so ago a dear friend of mine who was in the midst of a lot of upheaval in her life, who has an penchant for being real, and who often wonders about what on earth is going on in the world, all the while quite certain that God is at work, that what we do matters even though sometimes it's just so hard to understand it all, said that when she dies – just put the image of a woman with her shoulders shrugged and her hands up in the air on her tombstone.

In solidarity – truly wondering myself sometimes what on earth is going on and what am I supposed to be doing, I went looking for an image of Mary [my friend is catholic at heart and loves her saints and especially Mary] and low and behold, I discovered an icon of Mary with her hands in just that position, and Jesus on her heart. Perfect.



Most icons of Mary have her holding the baby Jesus, placing her hands on her own heart, or in some she has three hands! How brilliant is that! What mom hasn't wished for three hands at some point in her parenting? Even the mother of God!! But in this icon, her hands are up and the look on her face seems to be one of dismay or resignation or maybe an honest acceptance of what is, saying, "Here am I, do with me according to your Word and by the way, you got this, right?" With hands in the air, she offers her life and the life of the one she loves to the work of God in the world, with no guarantees other than the promise that God is with her.

Maybe that's what Advent is about in part ... throwing our hands up and letting go of our need for the world to be a certain way, for our lives to be a certain way, for the ones we love and the ones we don't love to be a certain way. Maybe Advent is about shrugging our shoulders at what the world currently looks like and feels like and believing and living and knowing deep in our bones that there's hope for more, there's a peace that passes all understanding, there's joy to be known and experienced even in the midst of challenge and heartbreak, there's love that has the power to make all things new and while it is coming to us once again, it also resides in our hearts – Emmanuel. God with us.

There isn't a theme or catchy phrase or preaching series that could even begin to summarize or get at what we need from Advent right now – this now of pandemic and hyper politicization and protest – this now of fear and frustration – this now of distance and diminishing light and dismay. So maybe we shrug our shoulders, throw our hands in the air and sing, "O come O come Emmanuel."

Pastor Erika Nilsen

LOL Families! If you didn't pick up your Advent Blast in a Bag kit – it's not too late!



ADVENT BLAST

Believe-Learn-And-Seek-Together

IN A BAG



Email Pastor Erika at erika@lolbaxter.org and we'll make sure you get a kit to help you make this Advent a bit more meaningful!

Make a Joyful Noise with your NOISY OFFERING!!

Once a month, we were able to gather for worship - the kids of the congregation would joyfully take up a noisy offering! These dollars and coins would be given to the Soup Kitchen in Brainerd - an offering of love - a response to God's call to care for the hungry and the lonely - a faithful stewarding of our own gifts. In 2019 we gathered \$2,634.07. In 2020 we have gathered 876.74

We encourage you to gather a noisy offering THROUGHOUT the season of Advent and bring it to the church the week of Christmas so that we might do just as Jesus desired when he said "as you have done for the least among you , you have done so unto me."

** Be watching in your mail for a can/jar wrapper you can use to remind yourself to give a noisy offering each day!! You can also give online at <https://ppay.co/bnL4cdD5mbc>

SERVICE OF GRIEF AND HOPE

Monday, December 21st, due to Covid-19 restrictions, we will not be having this service in person at church. ***BUT*** we will seek a way to connect on Monday, December 21st – the longest night of the year and in the darkness of that night we'll name our grief and pray for the light. Look for more information in our weekly announcements, on our website and facebook page.

Council Members

President - Dan Tupy
Vice President - Steve Schaitberger
Secretary - Laura Campbell
Treasurer - Chris Adamson
Youth Council Member - Emmy Holcomb-Smith
Mission Upward - Darcy Dwyer
Mission Inward - Pam Caughey
Mission Outward - Lori Rehnblom
Mission Ground - Brian Orlovski

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Due to the Covid pause, places and times are yet to be determined. Check the Lord of Life website lolbaxter.org for more information.





Year End Tax-Deductible Contributions Deadlines -

- **In Person:** 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 31, 2020.
- **Via USPS:** Post-marked no later than December 31, 2020.
- **Online:** Must have an "approved" status by December 31, 2020.
- **Stock:** If you wish to gift Stock to Lord of Life, please contact Anne Laechel for more information. Transfer of ownership must be completed by Thursday, December 31, 2020 to be considered a 2020 gift. As the process can take 1-2 weeks, requests should be initiated by Tuesday, December 15th.
- Any gift received or post-marked on or after January 1, 2021 will be credited to 2021.

OH NO! SNOW!

ARE YOU WILLING TO SHOVEL SOME WHITE STUFF?

If so, Lord of Life has just the volunteer opportunity you've been looking for! AND, the job just got easier! Thanks to Dick Rodseth's generosity, we now have an electric-start, gas-powered snow blower, stored in the new garage.

If you'd like to volunteer to shovel or blow Lord of Life's sidewalks for one or more weeks this winter, please contact Lolly Kalinoski, 218-829-8207, lollykadlec@hotmail.com. I will give you the code for the small garage door and other information when you contact me.

Thank you for considering this need! ~ Lolly Kalinoski

Prayers for Strength, Comfort and Healing for...

Donna Whalen and family as they grieve the death of J. P.

Les & Kathy Hall - please go to his caring bridge site for updates from the family.

<https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/leshall>

Sonja Nefstead and family and faith community as we grieve the death of Mel Nefstead.

Wayne & Carrie Nelson who lost their home in a fire

Effects of Covid in this community - as the people we know and love are getting sick.

THANK YOU for prayers of healing and the prayer shawl during my recent back surgery. There **IS** power of collective prayer

Karen Erickson

Sunday's Lessons

December 6 - Second Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 13- Third Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20 - Fourth Sunday in Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

December 27 - First Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 61:10—62:3; Psalm 148
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40



TRUST
yourself
TO THE
God
WHO MADE YOU

On Sunday November 1st, All Saints Day, these 20 young people affirmed their Baptism. They publicly spoke words of faith and made a commitment to continue to grow in their relationship with Jesus. It was a beautiful celebration of faith and life – filled with the gifts and promises of God. The theme of the sermon was “Gifts for the Journey.” These young people are some of our greatest gifts for this journey we share together.



Josh Albright, Emma Balsley, Emily Bastian, Isabella Bennett, Keegan Davidge, Hannah Drietz,, Allie Dwyer, Emily Ehlert, Micah Halbersma, Gavin Hoelzel, Chase Koop, Drew Larson, Brody Lund, Samuel Mattson, Sophia Mattson, Gretchen Paysse, Cally Robertson, Tyler Stoen, Anna Tupy, Keaton Walkowiak

First Communion Class Schedule

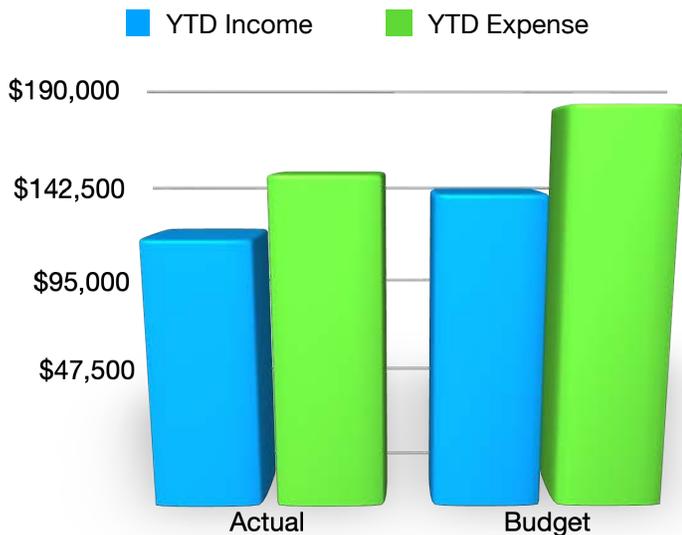
12/16 - Making bread with the “Ryes”
12/30 - Optional making wine

More details to follow

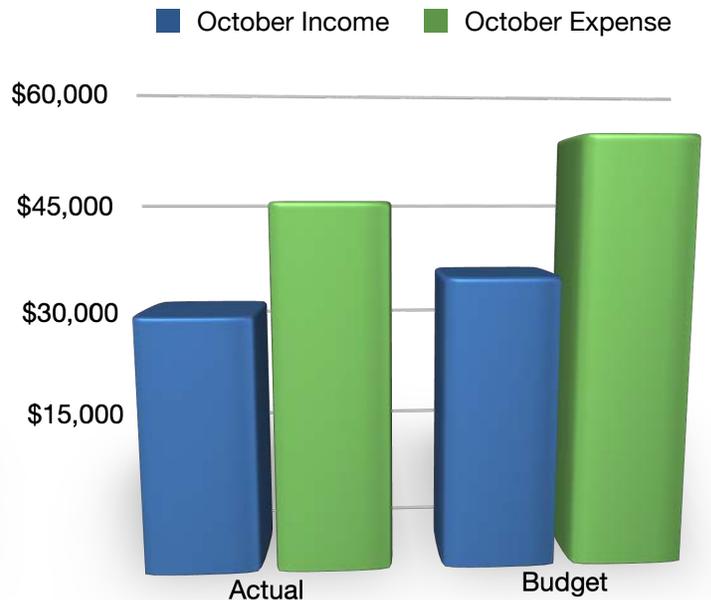
Well - we've never had a 3rd grade Bible class like this before! Thanks to the wonders of technology - 13 3rd Grader and their parents were able to spend 3 weeks together getting to know one another, God's word and Jesus. It's a beautiful thing we can explore God's word together and come to know God's love all the more! Congratulations 3rd graders! Keep reading and growing and discovering more and more about Jesus and his love for you and this world.



July 2020-October 2020 YTD - General Fund



October 2020 General Fund





December Youth Ministry Update:

It is hard to believe that we have reached the season of Advent and also the last month in the year 2020! This is a year none of us will ever forget. Thank you for taking the time to check in on the youth programs happening throughout each month and for your continued support! This month's article will take a look back at November and also let you know of important updates for this month!

A Look Back at November!

November 1st, 2020 was a special day at Lord of Life where we gathered together our 10th grade confirmation students and families for their affirmation of baptism service. I want to take a moment to thank everyone who was a part of making this day a special one! It took lots of planning and many different people helping to make this service a safe and enjoyable experience for those gathered near and far.

For the most part Wednesday night programming has remained online with our current confirmation class and also Club 56. Although this is not ideal, I want to thank families who continue to show up, work through the element of distant learning and connect with us each week! It is a blessing during this time to continue to connect with all of you.

Our high school youth group has battled the weather elements and continued to meet outdoors for a socially distanced campfire. Snow and cold temps did not stop this small group from wanting to meet outside this past month! What a blessing it is to have such a nice church yard & campfire ring where we can gather around safely!

Youth Ministry: Happening This Month:

7th-9th grade Confirmation

We continue to explore the NEMN Synod Journey Curriculum online via Zoom. The focus for the month is on being "Deeply Rooted in Christ Jesus". We will be taking a break from our studies over Christmas. December 16th will be our last class before Christmas break!

Club 56 Session 2: Health & Wellness

5th & 6th grade families are taking a moment to explore Bible stories and conversations around health and wellness this month! Our class runs Wednesday nights from 5pm-6pm with a short check-in on Zoom before we let you go for dinner and conversation! 5th and 6th grade families, It is not too late to join this class! For more information please visit our website or contact me!

December Class Dates: December 2nd & 9th

(There will be more classes throughout the school year)

Important Calendar Dates:

Confirmation: No class on December 23rd or 30th

Teen's Upstream: No youth group December 23rd or 30th

Although this Advent season and Christmas will look different for many, I hope it is a special one for you! Stay safe and healthy, all of you!

Blessings,
Tim Slinger
Youth Director



Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

MINISTRY FROM AFAR – A STEPHEN MINISTRY DEVOTION

Stephen Ministry is, by nature, in-person care. When your care receiver (or friend or family member) is hurting, there is no substitute for being fully present with him or her— physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Likewise, many other parts of a congregation’s ministry, such as coming together to worship, are also typically done in person. During this time of social distancing, though, being physically present with others isn’t possible. To preserve the safety of those they serve, churches everywhere—and the Stephen Ministry at these churches—are having to make some challenging adjustments, ministering from afar much more than usual.

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

The Apostle Paul often needed to minister over a distance, as well, which he did through his many letters to scattered groups of Christians. Through these letters, we can gain insight into how Paul related to believers when he couldn’t actually be with them.

Most scholars believe that Paul’s earliest surviving letter is the one we know as 1 Thessalonians. This letter demonstrates some important principles to keep in mind in this challenging time.

First, Paul’s ministry was built on in-person relationships. Because of his prior, face-to-face ministry, Paul could tell the Thessalonians, “We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well” (1 Thessalonians 2:8a). These relationships were built on Christ-centered love and compassion. That same foundation helps us keep our relationships strong when, for a time, we can’t meet face to face.

Second, we learn from 1 Thessalonians that ministering from afar was not Paul’s first choice. He says, “When we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again” (2:17–18a). We can take comfort in knowing that Paul, too, found it challenging to be apart from those he cared for. But when it became necessary to minister over distance, he did so wholeheartedly, using the tools he had to address this growing church’s needs. For us, although caring from afar may not be ideal, we can accomplish real ministry using the tools available to us.

Third, while Paul’s letters met real needs, he always looked forward to meeting his fellow believers again. He wrote 1 Thessalonians, in part, to comfort the church following the deaths of some in the faith community (4:13–14). Even as he offered that care, though, he expressed his eagerness for the day he could support them in person: “Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith” (3:10). We, too, can look ahead to the time we will meet our care receivers (friends, family members) in person once more.

IN ANTICIPATION OF COMING TOGETHER AGAIN

If Paul were here today, we can only imagine how he might make use of the devices and apps we have now, just as he made extensive use of letters in his own time. Of course, these tools wouldn’t be a replacement for his in-person ministry, but they could still serve as a powerful means of ministry between visits—or at times when visits just weren’t an option. Likewise, we can be grateful for the technologies we have today that enable us to stay connected with our care receivers when we are not able to be physically present with them. And we can seek to use those tools in the best ways possible, anticipating the time when we can resume our in-person care.

A PRAYER WE CAN ALL JOIN IN SAYING DURING THIS TIME:

Lord God, the Scriptures say that when we call, you answer. You are always there for us, hearing and responding to every thought and every need. Thank you for the privilege and power of providing in-person care, as well as for ways to stay connected when we can’t be physically present. Guide us during this unique time, helping us exercise wisdom and discernment in using the communication tools available today. Amen.

Lord of Life Lutheran Ministry Opportunities

Connecting to Christ

TUESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY continues to meet the first and third Tuesdays of the month. At this time we are meeting online using Zoom. A phone-in option is available as well. We decided to do something different starting in November. We will be discussing the book "God in You...Releasing the Power of the Holy Spirit in Your Life", by David Jeremiah. If you would like to join us or have any questions, please call Claire Rud at 218-330-5420.

Connecting to our Community

Habitat for Humanity - Scott Hall, (w) 828-8517-
scott.hall@lakesareahabitat.org

Those Older Folders -

I feel so bad that we cannot be back in our old routine. It seems like it has been so long ago since we were together. I am hoping, as time goes on, our group will be needed in some way. In the meantime, we will be ready when our time comes. Keep safe, be happy and wear your mask.

Bobbie Fredstrom

LOL Ministry Teams - Congregational Life, Children's Education, Adult Education, Evangelism, Finance, Property, Social Concerns, Stewardship, Worship, Youth
- Pastor Erika 828-9374 erika@lolbaxter.org

NEW STEPHEN MINISTRY TRAINING CLASS TO BEGIN

Since we have begun using the Stephen Series here at Lord of Life, we have seen the great value of lay caring ministry. The need for trained and commissioned Stephen Ministers to provide one-to-one support for folks experiencing hardships of all kinds has never been greater than at this time of COVID-19.

Another training class will begin in early February, 2021. Please give prayerful and serious consideration to this question: "Would my God-given gifts and talents be put to good use as a Stephen Minister?" If your answer (either immediate or eventual) is "Yes!" please contact one of the Stephen Ministry Leaders, listed below, who will be happy to answer your questions. We will send you an application, and you'll be scheduled for an interview with our team early in the new year. The deadline for applications is January 15, 2021. We plan to begin the 50 hours of training in early February via Zoom, taught by our Stephen Leaders. The Zoom meetings will take place one afternoon or evening per week, for 2-1/2 hours per class, to be completed in mid-June, 2021.

Please pray for the individuals God may be calling to join our Stephen Ministry here at Lord of Life!

LORD OF LIFE'S STEPHEN MINISTRY LEADERS:

Deb Bergstrom 701-678-4053
deb.bergstrom@lolbaxter.org
Lolly Kalinoski 218-829-8207 lollykadlec@hotmail.com
Pr. Erika Nilsen 218-828-9374
erika.nilsen@lolbaxter.org
Pr. Steve Rye 218-828-9374 steve.rye@lolbaxter.org

For updated information on the above events,
check out our website: <http://www.lolbaxter.org>



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The **Good News** is published monthly.
Articles for the January Newsletter
are due December 16.

CONTACT THE CHURCH...828-9374

- ❖ When you or a family member is hospitalized or will be hospitalized.
- ❖ When there is a birth or death in the family.
- ❖ When there is a crisis.
- ❖ When you change your address.
- ❖ When new neighbors move in near you and they are looking for a church home.
- ❖ When you have good news to share.
- ❖ When you have a suggestion to make or a comment to share.
- ❖ If you do not wish to receive our newsletter.
- ❖ If you have a college or post high-school young person no longer living at home.

Your pastors are available to walk with you in times of sadness and joy. Please contact the church office by phone at 828-9374.

The pastors can also be reached via email:
Pastor Steve: steve@lolbaxter.org Pastor Erika:
erika@lolbaxter.org

Lord of Life Office & Program Staff

Ministry Operations Manager	Anne Laechel anne@lolbaxter.org
Communications Coordinator	
Youth Director	Tim Slinger tim@lolbaxter.org
Senior Choir Director	Sarah Aamot sarah-lundin@hotmail.com
Parish Nurse	Deb Bergstrom deb@lolbaxter.org
Custodians	Karen & Paul Erickson kde12112@gmail.com bags1819@yahoo.com
Worship Director	Jennifer Person jennifer.person@lolbaxter.org
Children's Ministry Coordinator	



Christmas Poinsettia/Decorations 2020

I wish to give \$ _____
for Poinsettias and other decorative Sanctuary enhancements.

Cost per poinsettia is \$10.00 ___ I will take my poinsettia(s) home.

Given by: _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

*Place your completed form and payment in the offering box or mail to the church
at 6190 Fairview Rd, Baxter MN 56425 by Sunday, December 13th
Additional forms will be available in the black box outside of the church.
Do not place poinsettia orders in the black box outside of the church as that is not a secure location.*



We realize that many people are struggling with finding new patterns for worship in these COVID times. The following order of worship is offered as a suggestion for your daily devotions. You may want to arrange for the delivery of a hymnal for your own personal use during this time. Email the church <office@lolbaxter.org> and we will make arrangements to get one to you.

You may find a list of readings that follows along with our prayerLIFE@12:45 devotionals here: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/daily.php?year=A>

Morning Prayer for Individual Use:

Opening:

O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Psalmody:

A morning psalm of praise—
Psalm 95:1-7a (the Venite),
Psalm 63:1-8,
Psalm 67 (below),
Psalm 100, or another suitable psalm—may be prayed.

May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.
Let your way be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations on earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has brought forth its increase;
God, our own God, has blessed us.
May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

A time of silence for reflection may be kept. The psalmody may continue with one or more additional psalms, and each may be followed by silence.

The reflection may conclude with the following:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days God has spoken to us by silence.

A hymn or song may follow.

Word (Readings)

One or more scripture passages may be read, followed by silence for reflection. The reflection may conclude with the following:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days God has spoken to us by the Son.

Gospel Canticle

The gospel canticle for morning, the song of Zechariah, may be prayed.
"Holy God, we praise your name" (p. 261) may be used as an alternative.

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free. You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of your servant David. Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us, to show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant. This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship you without fear, holy and righteous before you all the days of our life. And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, or you will go before the Lord to prepare the way, to give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins. In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Prayers

The following or another form of the prayers may be used. Specific, personal prayers may be offered after each petition.

Mighty God of mercy, I thank you for the resurrection dawn, bringing the glory of our risen Lord who makes every day new.

Especially I thank you—

for the sustaining goodness of your creation . . .

for the new creation in Christ and all gifts of healing and forgiveness . . .

for the gifts of relationship with others . . .

for the communion of faith in your church . . .

(Other thanksgivings may be added.)

Merciful God of might, renew this weary world, heal the hurts of all your children, and bring about your peace for all in Christ Jesus, the living Lord.

Especially I pray—

for those who govern nations of the world . . .

for the president of the United States and all who lead . . .

for the people in countries ravaged by strife or warfare . . .

for all who work for peace and international harmony . . .

for all who strive to save the earth from carelessness and destruction . . .

for the church of Jesus Christ in every land . . .

Other intercessions may be added. One or more of the following or other appropriate prayers may be prayed:

Almighty and everlasting God, you have brought me in safety to this new day. Preserve me with your mighty power, that I may not fall into sin nor be overcome in adversity. In all I do, direct me to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ my Lord.

Amen.

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give me faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where I go, but only that your hand is leading me and your love supporting me; through Jesus Christ my Lord.

Amen.

I give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected me through the night from all harm and danger. I ask that you would also protect me today from sin and all evil, so that my life and actions may please you. Into your hands I commend myself: my body, my soul, and all that is mine. Let your holy angels be with me, so that the wicked foe may have no power over me.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

The sign of the cross may be made in remembrance of the gift of baptism.

God the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit watch over me,
and direct my days and my deeds in peace. Amen.

Lemon Sunshine Cookies

Thanks to Allie Dwyer for the recipe!

Ingredients for Cookies (24 cookies)

2 cups all purpose flour	2 tsp baking powder	1/2 tsp salt	10 Tbsp softened butter
1 cup + 2 Tbsp sugar	2 1/4 tsp lemon extract	1 egg + 1 egg yolk	1 1/2 Tbsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp vanilla extract	yellow food coloring (optional)		

Ingredients for Icing

1/2 cup white chocolate chips	1 Tbsp + 1 tsp milk	1/4 tsp lemon extract
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Directions (Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit)

1. In a mixing bowl whisk together flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
2. In a new mixing bowl mix/whip together butter and sugar until pale and fluffy (using an electric mixer works better)
3. Mix in egg and egg yolk. Add lemon juice, vanilla extract, 2 1/4 tsp lemon extract and 5 or more drops of yellow food coloring and mix until combined.
4. With mixer on low speed, slowly add in dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
5. Scoop dough out about 1 spoonful at a time and roll into balls, then place on a parchment paper lined baking sheet, spacing them about 2 inches apart.
6. Bake for 10-13 minutes.
7. After cookies have cooled, melt icing ingredients together in microwave in 30 second intervals, stirring in between. Melt until smooth. Drizzle over cookies and allow to cool.