

# GOOD NEWS

January  
2021

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](mailto:office@lolbaxter.org)  
[www.lolbaxter.org](http://www.lolbaxter.org)

## HOPING FOR A POLITICAL RESET

It may surprise you to read this but I am absolutely convinced that most of the time, government is not the solution to our society's problems. This is true, especially when it comes to the federal government. Attempts at a one-size-fits-our-entire-country are often carried out in ways that might make sense at a national level, but do not make sense at a local level. While at Purdue University I became concerned about many examples of waste and senseless spending that takes place within government entities. More recently I've been made aware of how inefficient social services can be at delivering care to those in need. I give preference to local and regional control. I guess that makes me a conservative at heart.

But I am also convinced that government is the solution to some problems. For example I would not want a privatized solution to the care of our national road system. We are rapidly approaching a time when the technology will allow for the private sector to bill you for every mile you drive. It's quite possible we could privatize the streets and roads in our nation and never pay another governmental assessment for them. Wouldn't that be nice? Never pay a road tax? Cheaper gas. Lower property taxes. But that does not mean they would be free. Just that the government would be cut out of the picture. Would we, in the end, pay less or more? Would the roads be better or worse? Hard to tell, and I don't want to gamble on that.

We could also rely on non-governmental solutions for everything from the fire-department, to law enforcement, to care for the elderly, the unemployed, our veterans, and even (if we really wanted to be radically conservative) to our national defense. We don't because some of the things we must come together to do should not be driven by a profit motive.

I believe that list should include a basic level of health care for all. I'd love it if our community-owned hospital, had a community-owned ultra-sound machine, and could operate it without having to pay the exorbitant costs of malpractice insurance. Then, expectant mothers could monitor the growth of their child every month—like they do in Europe. I don't like the fact that insurance companies dictate the frequency of care. There are a lot of other examples I could give. I guess that makes me a liberal.

For most of my career, I have carried out my ministry being about as publicly a-political as you can be. This was not out of fear of offending, but out of a genuine sense that it's one thing to talk about God's priorities as found in scripture. It's another thing to seek to embody them in this world. The pulpit is the place for the former. Small group discussion and individual initiatives—informed by solid, biblical preaching—is the place for the latter.

Continued...

Recently, I was commended by a parishioner for some bold liberal public stances that I had taken. This struck me hard. Especially because when compared to most ELCA clergy, I feel far more on the conservative than on the liberal end of the spectrum. In reflecting on that comment further, I believe I have been driven to speak out at certain times in recent years because of the strange politics of our day. Just as people now look back on the anemic response that pastors in pre-war Germany had to their political situation, I have recently felt that we pastors will be judged in the future by whether or not we took a public stance during this time that so clearly calls for a public witness.

I write this with the hope, the yearning, for a political reset in our nation. One that will allow me to go back to what feels more normal and right. One that will allow me to take a step back to my previous focus. I am not under the illusion that a new administration will be the cure, but I do hope that the political shocks and the wedging will subside in time so public discourse can again bud and eventually flourish. More than ever we need respectful 1-on-1 and small group conversation among people who hold diverse political opinions. At previous times in my ministry I have counted on them taking place. More of them need to again. That will take a political reset.

Only then will the fullness of God's desire for this world be made manifest. Only then will we take great strides to deepen and enrich our connection to Christ, our community, and each other.

God bless you wherever you are, physically and politically. May we come together to bless each other. And let it start at the communion table.

Pastor Steve

### **Prayers for Strength, Comfort and Healing for...**

Becky Beckerleg and family as they grieve the death of her husband, Mark Beckerleg, on December 24, 2020

The family of Donna Whalen, who passed away on December 22, 2020

Terry Hermanson and family as they grieve the death of Terry's mother who passed away on Thursday, December 10th after a brief battle with COVID-19.

Jerry Kuehn who is transferred to Good Samaritan in Pine River for recovery.

Bryan Barrer and family as they grieve the death of his father Norman.

Gary Engelmann and family on the death of his great-nephew.

Les & Kathy Hall - <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/leshall>.

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

### **Worship at Lord of Life**

In order to live out our mission to deepen and enrich our connection to our community, and in support of our local healthcare providers, businesses and schools, Lord of Life is ceasing our Sunday 10:30 am In-Building Worship Service until further notice. We will continue to live stream our 9:00 a.m. worship service on Sundays and our 6:00 p.m. worship service on Wednesdays on YouTube and Facebook.





## Welcome to Tyler Jensen, Lord of Life's New Communications Specialist!

Lord of Life Lutheran Church is pleased to announce the hiring of Tyler Jensen as the congregation's new communications specialist.

Tyler is no stranger to Lord of Life, having been confirmed in the church. He was a member of the Men's Breakfast group, volunteered in the nursery and participated in a number of the church's activities and service projects as a teenager.

After graduating from Brainerd High School in 2013, Tyler attended Minnesota State University Moorhead and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Multimedia Journalism. During his studies, he wrote for MSUM's student newspaper and helped produce its award-winning television news program.

After college, Tyler worked as a staff writer at the Morrison County Record in Little Falls for almost four years. During this time, he honed his skills in writing, social media, videography and photography. In 2019, the Minnesota Newspaper Association awarded one of Tyler's photos first place for news photos in non-daily papers with more than 7,000 readers.

At the end of 2019, Tyler moved to Austin, Minn., to work for the Austin Daily Herald, where he helped produce the paper's 2020 Progress magazine.

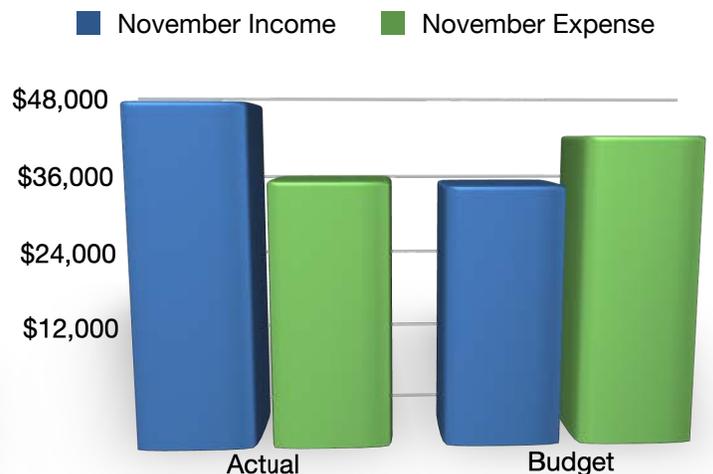
Coming home to Lord of Life is a humbling and amazing experience for Tyler. He plans to do everything he can to help spread the Word of God and make the church the best it can be. He is deeply touched by the trust shown to him by the congregation and its leadership and promises not to let them down.

As a member of the Boy Scouts of America's Eagle Scouts, Tyler enjoys spending time helping others and hopes to contribute to the success of the many community service projects Lord of Life and its congregants perform around the community.

### July 2020-November 2020 YTD - General Fund



### November 2020 General Fund





## **Come and take a holy walk in the dark, immersed in the Light!**

Thanks to the wonderful work of Jennifer Pedersen and her husband Darrell, along with Rick and Jeanine Zumbrunnen, there is a beautiful labyrinth outside, on the west lawn of the church. It will be lit up every night throughout the winter. Think of it as a gift to your soul to step out into the cold, into the dark, into the night and step into the presence of God in an intentional way. You'll find some guiding words for you to consider as you walk in and out of the labyrinth - but here are some other ways to think about it:

**Labyrinth** -- an ancient way of walking meditation.

There is only one way in and one way out.

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to walk this path.

Use it as a way to "unwind your mind."

Use it for prayer.

Use it as a symbolic journey.

Use it as a way to examine your life.

Use it to "be present" to the questions or wonder in your life.

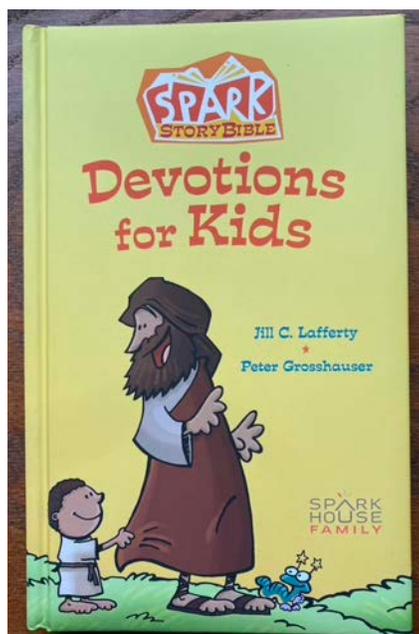
Use it to open your heart, your mind, your spirit.

**May this holy walk in the dark be a gift to your soul.**

## Waiting Until God Is Heard

We're often taught that prayer is speaking to God. And of course, that's part of it. It's good to pray for the well-being and needs of others — even Jesus prayed for his disciples. It's okay to pray for our own growth in faith and love. It's a wonderful, powerful thing, modeled especially by the Psalmists, to give God thanks and praise. And God welcomes our cries of pain and sorrow, offering the Spirit's help when words fail us (Romans 8:26).

But through the ages, many deeply faithful followers of Christ have practiced contemplative prayer, centering prayer and other forms of stillness before God. Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) expressed it this way: "To pray does not mean to listen to oneself speaking. Prayer involves becoming silent, and being silent, and waiting until God is heard."



## 2021 100 Bible Story Challenge!

**"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105**

On January 6th - the day of Epiphany we're inviting all 2nd - 4th graders and their families to a step into the new year by opening up their Bibles and spending time in God's word.

We'll be guided by this wonderful devotional that was given out to families this summer. If you didn't receive a devotional - we'll be delivering one to you! If you already read through all of the stories — this is a chance to read them again! God's Word never gets old!! And if you can't find yours - call the church office and let us know and we'll get you a new one!!

January 6th is the beginning of the season of Epiphany - the season of light! May God's word light your path and shine in and through you in wonderful ways in this new year.

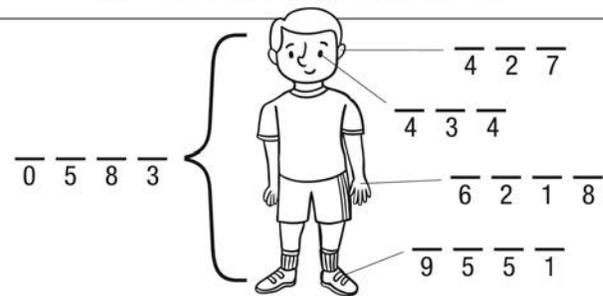
2nd - 4th grade families - keep your eyes open for an email with more details!

# PUZZLE

## WORKING IN UNISON

Just as body parts work in unison, the church — the body of Christ — is to work together for God's purposes.

*Directions: Fill in the letters for each body part. Add up each part's number total, and use those totals to complete the Bible passage.*



Now if the  $\frac{\quad}{20}$  should say, "Because I am not a  $\frac{\quad}{17}$ , I do not belong to the  $\frac{\quad}{16}$ ," ... And if the  $\frac{\quad}{13}$  should say, "Because I am not an  $\frac{\quad}{11}$ , I do not belong to the  $\frac{\quad}{16}$ ," it would not for that reason stop being part of the  $\frac{\quad}{16}$ . If the whole  $\frac{\quad}{16}$  were an  $\frac{\quad}{11}$ , where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole  $\frac{\quad}{16}$  were an  $\frac{\quad}{13}$ , where would the sense of smell be? ... As it is, there are many parts, but one  $\frac{\quad}{16}$ .

1 CORINTHIANS 12:15-17, 20, NIV

Answer: body = 16, eye = 11, ear = 13, hand = 17, foot = 20

## January Youth Ministry Update:

**Ready...Set... Go... 2021** has arrived and it's kind of hard to believe, at least for me. 2020 had a lasting impact on all of us on so many levels. I am thankful for the new year and am hopeful with what this year could bring for you and me. I look forward to the ministry opportunities that are before us and the opportunities to continue to walk beside each of you in faith in the year ahead. Here is a look at the youth ministry opportunities happening during January! It's never too late to join in, and I hope to see you as we launch into this year together!



### Club 56 Session #3 Launches January 20th

Join us as we launch our 3rd session of Club 56! All 5th & 6th grade families are welcome to join in. This class focuses in on connections with your church family and friends. Each session consists of 4 classes on Wednesday nights from 5-6pm. We spend time exploring more about who you are, your faith and important faith milestones! Each week it is a time to connect as a family and have meaningful conversations around the dinner table. Want to learn more about this class or how to sign up please contact us or visit: <https://lolbaxter.org/ministries/middle-school/>

### Confirmation 7th-9th Grade Class Resumes January 6th

In December, it was a blessing driving around the Brainerd Lakes Area and connecting with many of our Confirmation families. To check-in and spend time in prayer. After a break over the holidays, I look forward to gathering back with families as we continue to explore more about being "Deeply Rooted in a Boundless God". Class at this time will continue to meet over Zoom on Wednesday nights from 7-8pm. Continue to check your email for updates and important class information as classes resume!

### Teen's Upstream Campfires!

Throughout the month of January, we will be continuing our weekly campfires at (church weather permitting) for our high school youth group. Space is limited and there are safety measures in place. Here is a great way to connect with friends, take a break midweek and grow in faith together! You must be registered prior to attending. Please visit our church website for more information!

If you have any questions about the youth programs listed above or how to get involved, please let us know! Blessings to all of you as we begin the year together! Prayers for health and a great year ahead!

Tim Slinger  
Youth Director

*"Learn to light a candle in the darkest moments of someone's life.  
Be the light that helps others see."*

Roy T. Bennett

## OH NO! MORE SNOW!

To help keep Lord of Life's snow removal costs down, we ask for volunteers to help with shoveling our sidewalks. Pick a week that will work for you, and all you need to do is shovel once in the morning and once in the evening if it has snowed that day. There are shovels available, but if you prefer to use a snow blower, there is an electric start, gas-powered blower in the garage. There are an extension cord and outlet by the electric panel. You will receive the code to unlock the small garage door when you sign up. Please also remember to shovel the emergency exit doors in Fellowship Hall, Commons, Sanctuary, and the SonShine Room.

To volunteer for shoveling, please contact Lolly Kalinoski, 218-829-8207, lollykadlec@hotmail.com. Thank you!!!

Just to get you in the mood to say yes to shoveling, here are a few smiles for you:

What did the snowman have for breakfast? (Frosted Snowflakes)

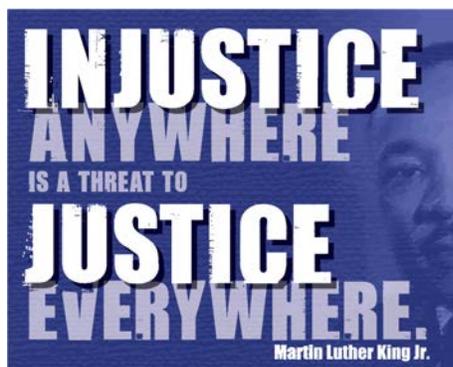
What do you call a snowman temper tantrum? (a meltdown)

If the sun shines while it's snowing, what should you look for? (snow-bows)

Where do snowmen love to dance? (at a snow ball)

What kind of math do Snowy Owls like? (Owlgebra)

What do you call 10 rabbits hopping backwards? (a receding hare line)



## The members of the Mission Support Team

want to thank the congregation for their continued generosity to Lord of Life. Also, we greatly appreciate the efforts of the members of the church council, Lori Rehnblom, Darcy Dwyer, and Brian Orłowski, and Darren Larson from the Finance Team, for presenting "basin talks" on generosity during our stewardship campaign.

Recently 337 pledge cards were sent to homes of our donors. Several have been returned, and we thank those who have sent them back to the church. However, if your pledge card is still sitting on your kitchen counter, or on your "to do" list, please take a few minutes to complete the card, and send it to the church in the addressed stamped envelope that was provided with your pledge letter. It helps the Council and Finance Team to plan our budget for the coming year. It also helps you to keep track of your giving, as your pledge amount will be included in your quarterly giving statement from the church.

We thank you for continuing your faithful gifts to Lord of Life. Every gift, no matter what the amount, is greatly appreciated. If you can imagine the possibilities by increasing your gift, even a little this year, your increase could go a long way toward continuing our mission of inspiring a deeper and richer connection to our community. I think everyone would like to see the mortgage paid off as soon as possible, as well, so a few extra dollars given to the capital fund would help us to realize that dream much faster.

Being generous is what God wants for each of us. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly, or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Proverbs 11:25 says "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others, will also be refreshed."

Thank you for your generous gifts to Lord of Life. May you be refreshed by refreshing others, and may God bless you, and keep you and yours safe and healthy during this Advent Season. I hope each you will have a blessed and merry Christmas! Thank you.

Valerie Jones  
Mission Support Team

# are you Experiencing Pandemic Fatigue?



Are you feeling exhausted from all the disruptions to life brought on by the pandemic? Are you or someone you know struggling with challenges like . . .

- Isolation and loneliness
- Anxiety over health
- Grief due to many different kinds of losses
- Tension from juggling work, childcare, and schooling
- Financial strain or job loss
- Uncertainty about the future
- Other unexpected life challenges?

If so, you don't have to face it alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support.

A Stephen Minister will meet with you privately—by phone, by video chat, or, if safely possible, in person—to offer care and support. It's free and completely confidential. For more information, call our church office.

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”* Matthew 11:28



*Christ caring for people through people*

**STEPHEN  
MINISTRY**

## 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.

Our next 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](mailto:deb.bergstrom@lolbaxter.org)

Lolly Kalinoski 218-829-8207 [lollykadlec@hotmail.com](mailto:lollykadlec@hotmail.com)

Pr. Erika Nilsen 218-828-9374 [erika.nilsen@lolbaxter.org](mailto:erika.nilsen@lolbaxter.org)

Pr. Steve Rye 218-828-9374 [steve.rye@lolbaxter.org](mailto:steve.rye@lolbaxter.org)

### *Lord of Life Lutheran Ministry*

#### Connecting to Christ

**Prayer Chain** - Faithfully lift up in prayer the needs and concerns of our church family and their loved ones. Contact Lolly Kalinoski at 828-3699.

#### Connecting to our Community

**Habitat for Humanity** - *Scott Hall*,  
(w) 828-8517- [scott.hall@lakesareahabitat.org](mailto:scott.hall@lakesareahabitat.org)

#### Connecting to Each Other

**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](mailto:erika@lolbaxter.org)

For updated information on the above events,  
check out our website:  
[www.lolbaxter.org](http://www.lolbaxter.org)

#### **Thank you -**

Worship Environment Team for decorating and getting us ready for the Advent/Christmas season.

Rick & Jeannine zumBrunnen and Darrell & Jennifer Pedersen for installing the lighted prayer labyrinth.

To the musicians, technicians, and ALL who helped make our Advent Season and Christmas Eve a beautiful 2020 experience.

#### **Prayer Shawl Ministry –**

Just a reminder that our Lord of Life Prayer Shawl Ministry is alive and well. We have continued to bless people with our shawls during COVID. We are in need of additional shawls and Baptism blankets. If you have already made some and would like to have them picked up, or if you would like someone to receive a shawl, please call Brenda Johnson (218-831-9725) or Jeannine zumBrunnen (218-343-0964). Thanks for your thoughtfulness!

# STAY ACTIVE AND INDEPENDENT FOR LIFE (SAIL)

January 11 - March 5

9 - 10 am | Free



Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) is a strength, balance and fitness program for adults 65 and older. Performing exercises that improve strength, balance and fitness is the single most important activity adults can do to stay active and reduce their chances of falling. The entire curriculum of activities in the Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) program can help improve strength and balance, if done regularly.

Schedule: This class will meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday (3 times per week) for 8 weeks. Last class will be March 5th, 2021.

Registration is required. Register at <http://crowwingenergized.org/event/stay-active-and-independent-for-lifesail-2/>

This is a virtual class that will use Zoom for each session. All participants must have audio and visual technology capabilities. This could be a laptop or tablet with a camera & microphone, or a smart phone. To support participants in using Zoom, we will offer a practice session on Thursday January 7th from 9:00 - 10:00am. We will email registrants the practice session link.

If you have participated in a SAIL class in the past, please use the email and login that you created. If you need assistance logging in or remembering your password please call 1-855-215-2174 for assistance.

Organizers:  
Deb Bergstrom  
Valerie Jones



[www.CrowWingEnergized.org](http://www.CrowWingEnergized.org)

## 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

## 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](mailto:steve@lolbaxter.org) Pastor Erika:  
[erika@lolbaxter.org](mailto:erika@lolbaxter.org)

## Lord of Life Office & Program Staff

**Ministry Operations Manager** Anne Laechel  
[anne@lolbaxter.org](mailto:anne@lolbaxter.org)

**Communications Coordinator** Tyler Jensen  
[tyler.jensen@lolbaxter.org](mailto:tyler.jensen@lolbaxter.org)

**Youth Director** Tim Slinger  
[tim@lolbaxter.org](mailto:tim@lolbaxter.org)

**Senior Choir Director** Sarah Aamot  
[sarah-lundin@hotmail.com](mailto:sarah-lundin@hotmail.com)

**Parish Nurse** Deb Bergstrom  
[deb@lolbaxter.org](mailto:deb@lolbaxter.org)

**Custodians** Karen & Paul Erickson  
[kde12112@gmail.com](mailto:kde12112@gmail.com)  
[bags1819@yahoo.com](mailto:bags1819@yahoo.com)

**Worship Director** Jennifer Person  
[jennifer.person@lolbaxter.org](mailto:jennifer.person@lolbaxter.org)

**Children's Ministry Coordinator**

## Newsletter Team

The **Good News** is published monthly. Articles for the February Newsletter are due January 18.



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

TRUST  
yourself  
TO THE  
God  
WHO MADE YOU



6190 Fairview Rd  
Baxter, MN 56425-8285

## A Word for the Year

Every January, some people pray and ask God to provide a word for their year ahead. Friends have shared theirs with me, but I was hesitant to embrace the practice myself. I'd love to receive a word like *flourish*; then again, I might be like the friend who heard *health* and then faced many physical challenges that year.



But I tried it for 2020 and heard *prepare*. My first reaction was that the word wasn't very exciting, which possibly confirmed I hadn't orchestrated it. Indeed, 2020 ended up full of significant, unexpected change for our family, with careers, school, church and friends. *Prepare* reminded me that amid chaos, God had prepared me for each moment and continues to prepare me for what's next.

Give it a try! Regardless of the word you receive or what lies ahead, you can trust that God loves you and is ultimately in control for 2021 and beyond.

—Janna Firestone

*Behind the Scenes*