

Good News

April
2021

Lord of Life
Lutheran
Church
(ELCA)

Worship
Sunday - 9am
Wednesday -
6pm

Ministers
The Lord of Life
Faith Family

Pastors
Steven J. Rye
Erika Nilsen

Office Hours
Mon-Thurs: 9-4
Fri: 9-2

Contact Info
(218) 828-9374
office@lolbaxter.
org

Dear Friends,

Almost every Sunday in worship – as hear once again the table of the banquet feast being visually set through word and image – we proclaim the mystery of faith with these words:

Christ has died.
Christ has risen.
Christ will come again.

What I am often struck by is both the radical truth of that bold, life altering, death defying proclamation, and the words that lead up to it when we talk about it as the “mystery of faith.”

Each week we are reminded that there is simply more going on than we can fully understand and most certainly more than we can articulate. Each week we humbly acknowledge that God is God and we are not [thank God]! Each week we bravely commit to a mystery – one that challenges us to think beyond our own existence, one that places us within God’s providence, one that confronts us with the truth of death and one that invites both awe and surrender to the possibility of new life.

Mystery indeed.
Gift indeed.

Because as a whole, we seem to be a people hardwired against mystery. We like to know things. We like to discover things. We like to control things. As a whole we seem to be a people that wants to be able to explain why things happen and make sense of the universe around us. And that’s not a bad thing –



our desire for knowledge has led us to complex new worlds. Our insistent seeking after answers has brought brilliant insights to us about our own nature, about the nature of people and relationships and the creation. Our relentless pursuit for understanding has inspired people to work for justice, to change systems of oppression, to open up avenues for new possibilities. Our wild imaginations have led to technologies and medicines that quite simply bless in the world in ways once impossible to imagine. What we know is something quite wonderful but can also be a bit of a golden calf – something we worship first and foremost.

So maybe that’s why I love that each week we proclaim the mystery – and we own up to our not-knowing and in our not-knowing we step into faith, and find ourselves in the presence of God - a God who in Christ has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows – who has suffered our death - but did not allow it to be the end of the story. The mystery holds the rest of our story. And that is gift indeed.

Christ has died. Christ is Risen. Christ will come again.

Happy Easter!

Pastor Erika Nilsen

Youth News

Confirmation Concludes April 28th!

It's hard to believe but we are into our final month for our confirmation class this year! We look forward to connecting with all of you both in building and online to close out the year! We will conclude our yearlong focus for confirmation which was being, "Deeply Rooted in A Boundless God!"

5th Grade First Communion!

In March, 5th graders at Lord of Life along with their parents completed the First Communion faith stepping stone class. We met on Thursday evenings in March both online via Zoom and in building. Make sure to check back next month for pictures, highlighting the class and some cool keepsakes they were able to create along the way!



Join Us for Teen's Upstream!:

Happening Wednesday nights from 8pm-9pm at Lord of Life! All 9th-12th graders are welcome to come and connect with friends, enjoy games, activities, faith filled conversations and Bible study. As the weather warms up and the grass begins to green up, we may transition outdoors. Join us either in the Sonshine room or out back for some sand volleyball and a campfire! If you would like more information about this program, please contact the church!

Summer Program Updates!

Planning for summer youth ministry opportunities is in full swing! We are excited about the opportunities that will be available for you and your family this summer. For our high school youth, we have two summer trips planned! Registrations for these trips opened in the middle of March. Contact the church for space availability at this time. For our middle school youth, we continue to plan and create what summer stretch and serveCAMP will look like for all of you! Make sure to continue to check our website, social media and email announcements for any updates!

Club 56: Thank You 5th & 6th Grade Families!

To all you who participated in the brand-new format for Club 56 this year... Thank you! It was truly a blessing connecting with all of you this past year. I will miss the pizza deliveries and check ins that took us throughout the Brainerd Lakes Area to meet with all of you. We had many laughs and great faith filled conversations along the way! I hope this time was a blessing for you and your family. Thank you for making this program a special one this year! A special thank you to Papa Murphy's of Baxter who partnered with us throughout this past year.

I hope everyone has a great month of April! If you have any questions about youth ministry programs happening at Lord of Life, please don't hesitate to contact me!

Blessings,
Tim Slinger
Youth Director

Council News

Council Members

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



Lord of Life Church Council Regular Meeting Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 6:00 pm

Steve Schaitberger Darcy Dwyer Laura Campbell
Lori Rehnblom Dan Tupy Pastor Erika Nilsen
Pastor Steven Rye Emmy Holcomb Smith
Guests Present (1): Absent (3):
Anne Laechel, Chris Adamson, Brian Orlowski, Pam Caughey

Devotions by Pr. Erika Nilsen

Consent Agenda:

- To Adopt the 2/18/21 Agenda. (CC.2021.02.01)
- To APPROVE the January 2021 Council Meeting Minutes (CC.2021.02.02)
- To Receive for audit the January 2021 Financial Report. (CC.2021.02.03) Consent Agenda approved by unanimous consent.

New Business:

- MOTION to authorize the purchase the televisions and video switcher. Motion by Steve Schaitberger; Seconded by Darcy Dwyer. (CC.2021.02.04)
- MOTION by Pastor Steve to authorize up to \$6000 from the Video Ministry Fund (if the Video Ministry Fund is expended, any remaining funds would come from the Pastor's Discretionary Fund) for the purchase of 4 Samsung televisions with mounts, plus video switcher, and commercial warranties (as applicable) for the equipment purchased.
 - o Motion by Pastor Steve to substitute the above, more-detailed motion for the previous motion by Steve Schaitberger. Seconded by Pastor Erika. All approved. (CC.2021.02.05)
 - Substituted Motion seconded by Emmy Holcomb Smith. All approved. (CC.2021.02.06)

Meeting Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer

- Thursday, April 18, 2021 at 6:00 pm – Council Meeting
- Sunday, June 6, 2021 - Annual Congregational Meeting

Of Note:

- Anne will setup and send a Doodle Poll for Council with date options for Council Retreat. Initial plan is that it will be an online retreat on two separate days, meeting 2 – 2.5 h each day.

April Calendar

Lessons

April 1

(Maundy Thursday)

Exodus 12: 1-14
Psalm 116: 1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11: 23-26
John 13:1-17, 31-35

April 2

(Good Friday)

Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1-19:42

April 4 (Easter)

Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Mark 16:1-8

April 11

Acts 4:32-35
Psalm 133
1 John 1:1--2:2
John 20:19-31

April 18

Acts 3:12-19
Psalm 4
1 John 3:1-7
Luke 24:36b-48

April 25

Acts 4:5-12
Psalm 23
1 John 3:16-24
John 10:11-18

Thursday, April 1

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.
Maundy Thursday Services, 12 and 7 p.m.

Friday, April 2

Tuesday Bible Study, 9 a.m.
Good Friday Services, 12 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Sunday, April 4

Easter Sunday Services: 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Monday, April 5

Stephen Leaders Meeting, 3 p.m.

Tuesday, April 6

Grief Support Group, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 7

Wednesday Worship, 6 p.m.
7th-9th Grade Confirmation, 7 p.m.
Master Class, 7 p.m.
Teen's Upstream, 8 p.

Thursday, April 8

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, April 11

Worship, 9 a.m.
Race in American History Series, 10:45 a.m.

Monday, April 12

Stephen Ministers Education and Supervision, 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 13

Grief Support Group, 5 p.m.
Tuesday Morning Bible Study, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, April 14

Wednesday Worship, 6 p.m.
7th-9th Grade Confirmation, 7 p.m.
Master Class, 7 p.m.
Teen's Upstream, 8 p.

Thursday, April 15

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.

Deadline for May Newsletter. Please submit news to tyler.jensen@lolbaxter.org.

Sunday, April 18

Worship, 9 a.m.
Race in American History Series, 10:45 a.m.

Monday, April 19

Stephen Leaders Meeting, 3 p.m.
Joining our Faith Family Conversation, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, April 20

Grief Support Group, 5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 21

Wednesday Worship, 6 p.m.
7th-9th Grade Confirmation, 7 p.m.
Master Class, 7 p.m.
Teen's Upstream, 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 22

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, April 25

Worship, 9 a.m.
Race in American History Series, 10:45 a.m.

Monday, April 26

Stephen Ministers Education and Supervision, 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 27

Grief Support Group, 5 p.m.
Tuesday Morning Bible Study, 9 a.m.

Wednesday, April 28

Wednesday Worship, 6 p.m.
7th-9th Grade Confirmation, 7 p.m.
Master Class, 7 p.m.
Teen's Upstream, 8 p.m.

Thursday, April 29

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 a.m.

Ministry

Groups

- Men's Fellowship - An opportunity for men to meet via Zoom and study the Bible. Takes place at 10 a.m. on Thursdays.
- Sunday Morning Book Group - A group for people looking to read a variety of books and discuss it with others. Held at 10:45 a.m. on Sundays via Zoom. The group is currently joining with the "Race in America" history series.
- Tuesday Morning Bible Study - A Bible Study session for those looking to spend time with other members of the Church while reading Scripture. The group meets Tuesdays at 9 a.m. on Zoom.
- Master Class - A Wednesday evening Bible Study class aimed at helping people understand the mission of the Church and Scripture. Held Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. via Zoom.
- Stephen Ministry - A ministry that trains members to walk with those experiencing trauma, grief and more, to help them get through it. Contact Pastor Erika for more information. The newest class of Stephen Ministry training begins very soon, and all training will be conducted via Zoom.
- The Prayer Chain - Members of the Church who issue prayers to God for all those in need as soon as the prayer requests come in.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Lord of Life is always looking for more people to participate in services as readers, slide flippers and video and sound board operators. Please contact Tyler at the Church office if interested.
- We are looking for people with a passion for Children's Ministry to join the planning team. Contact Pastor Erika for more information.
- We're looking for people who feel a calling to provide support to canoeists and kayakers who are travelling down the Mississippi River. Please prayerfully consider whether you would be willing to help as you are available.

Prayer Concerns

- Les, Kathy and the rest of the Hall family as Les continues to undergo treatment for cancer.
- Phyllis Campbell who is recovering at Good Samaritan-Bethany.
- The people of Boulder, Colorado, following the mass shooting, March 22.
- Those who have been distributing the Covid-19 vaccine.
- All others in our community who continue to be affected by COVID-19.

LoL Staff

Senior Pastor

Steven Rye
steven.rye@lolbaxter.org

Associate Pastor

Erika Nilsen
erika.nilsen@lolbaxter.org

Operations Manager

Anne Laechel
anne@lolbaxter.org

Youth Director

Tim Slinger
tim@lolbaxter.org

Worship Director

Jennifer Person
jennifer.person@lolbaxter.org

Choir Director

Sarah Aamot
sarah-lundin@hotmail.com

Communications

Coordinator

Tyler Jensen
tyler.jensen@lolbaxter.org

Custodians

Paul and Karen
Erickson

Birthdays and Anniversaries



April 1 - Graycen Blum, Dawn Genz, Alex Getty, Melanie Helmrichs, Eric Jendro, Beckett Miller, Steve Schaitberger

April 2 - Gary Engelmann, Annie Foss, Luke Swanson, Zach Olds

April 3 - Elle Bruggeman, Nate Felix, Mike Fraki, Dorothy Nelson, Pat Saxum

April 4 - Arabella Dumpprope, Kathy Hauble, Lisa Strelow- Kohls

April 5 - Deb Cervantez, Bruce Jensen, Anadell Johnson, Mark Lange, Rick Smith, Hammy Staehling

April 6 - Jim Larson, Lindley Mithun

April 7 - Kim Erickson, Dorothy Karlson, Kay Rineck, Addison Selisker, Kaylin Vesely

April 8 - Carol Blowers, Ernie Bruckner, Karli Knopf, Mary Jo Kobes, Alison Kohout, Sawyer Peterson

April 9 - Ron Meyer

April 10 - Hayden Carlson, Jocie Daniels, Simon Foss, Keaton Walkowiak

April 11 - Katie Erickson, Abby Larson, Lynn Miller

April 12 - Avery Davidge, Ethan Koering, Maura Halverson, Lauren Rud, Evan Shogren

April 13 - Jerry Bruggeman, Arlo Hill, Lucas Hoglin

April 14 - Pat Einarson, Daniel Nowacki, Kelcie Parrish, Jolene Parks

April 15 - Mari Devine, Mike Marlatt, Liam Milloch, Nick Peterson

April 16 - Jon Belanger, Luke Jacobsen, Mike Patrick

April 17 - Everett Grams, Bunny Window, Drew Whitlock, Ethan Wolfe

April 18 - Gladi Eschenbacher, Courtney Osbakken, Caspian Wagner

April 19 - Ellie Hughes, Sandy Jensen

April 20 - Debra Kron, Mel Nefstead

April 21 - Jim Benson, Phyllis Campbell, Don

Narveson, James Nelson, Rick Redshaw, Kathryn Tibbetts

April 22 - Roland Anderson, Deb Bergstrom, Kelsey Binggeli, Carter Workman

April 23 - Megan Christenson, Todd DeBoer, Amanda Myran, Caleb Patrick, Tara Smith

April 24 - Tim Caughey, Eric Nelson, Amber Taylor

April 25 - Hannah Drietz, Dalen Hodge, Sophia Hohman, Jana Shogren

April 26 - Emily Bastian, Troy Fink, Ryan Goos, Ila Sanow, Sharon Syvertson, Nancy Swenson

April 27 - Dustin Christenson, Lucas Janey, Blake Smith

April 28 - Irene Christofferson, AJ Gratke, Ron Hensel, Carlene Lange

April 29 - Simon Erickson, ReNee Leonard, Charlie Rude, Eric Rude, Iris Weihemuller

April 30 - Levi Aadland, Kari Champion, Josh Freelove, Marcie Krall, Walker Peterson, Austin Rubin



April 3 - Dalen & Lori Hodge

April 5 - Dustin & Megan Christenson
Tim & Kaarin Hanske

April 7 - Bob & Maxine Fromm

April 11 - David & Renae Goos
Bruce & Sandy Jensen

April 12 - Tom & Lisa Patrick

April 16 - Pat & Raquel Kiffmeyer

April 17 - Rod & Deanna Kohout
Roger & Leisha Tietz

April 19 - Mark & Carlene Lange

April 20 - Troy & Lori Fink

April 23 - Allen & Becky Braak

April 26 - Chris & Kim Erickson

April 28 - Wayne & Aleatha Knopf

April 29 - Paul & Glenda Hoheisel

Married 25 years or more

Married 50 years or more

Additional FYI



Thank You's

We would like to take this time to thank members of the congregation for some of the work done at the Church!

- All the volunteers who have helped make our services happen. These include, but are not limited to, the musicians who provide music, our sound and video teams, those who offer to read scripture and our volunteers who greet the Congregation and help set up for Holy Communion.
- Deb Bergstrom for hosting the grief support group.
- The numerous volunteers who braved the snow and cold this winter to clear off our sidewalks.
- All the members of our Congregation who donate their time, talents and treasure to help our make our ministries possible and do the good works God calls us to perform.

2021 Pre-Marriage Retreat

Every year, Lord of Life encourages couples who are planning to get married in the coming year to participate in a marriage retreat. This is a cooperative venture between: Cross Lake Lutheran Church, First Lutheran Church in Brainerd, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Brainerd, Lutheran Church of the Cross in Nisswa, and Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Baxter.



This retreat is a 3-day long event for couples who are invited to consider their commitment to each other — and what it takes to create a happy and healthy relationship for the long-term, led by local counselor Jen Ellie. Time is also set aside for individual couple conversation and reflection.

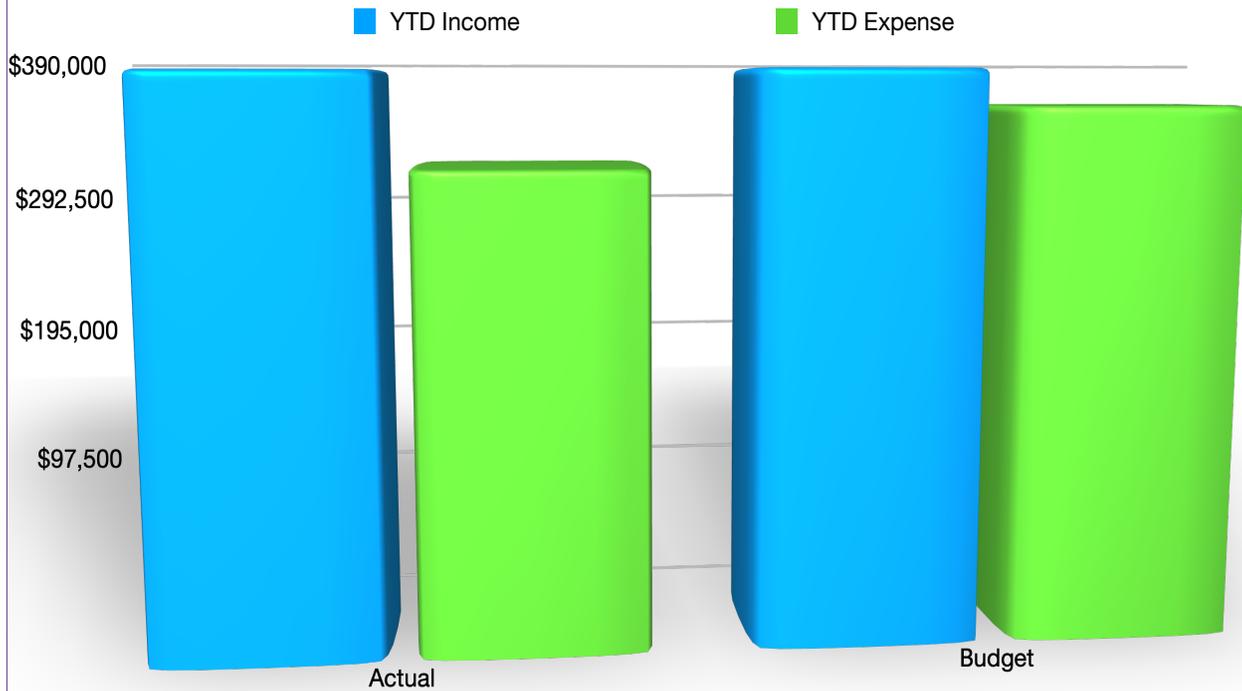
A key reason for providing this retreat is that when combined with the individual counselling that pastor's provide, it fulfills the states requirements for the number of hours required to get a discount on marriage licenses.

This year, because of COVID concerns the retreat will take place on Zoom, and is tentatively scheduled for the weekend of April 16th-18th. Potential attendees should schedule time on Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday. We anticipate spreading out the sessions in two hour blocks over those three days.

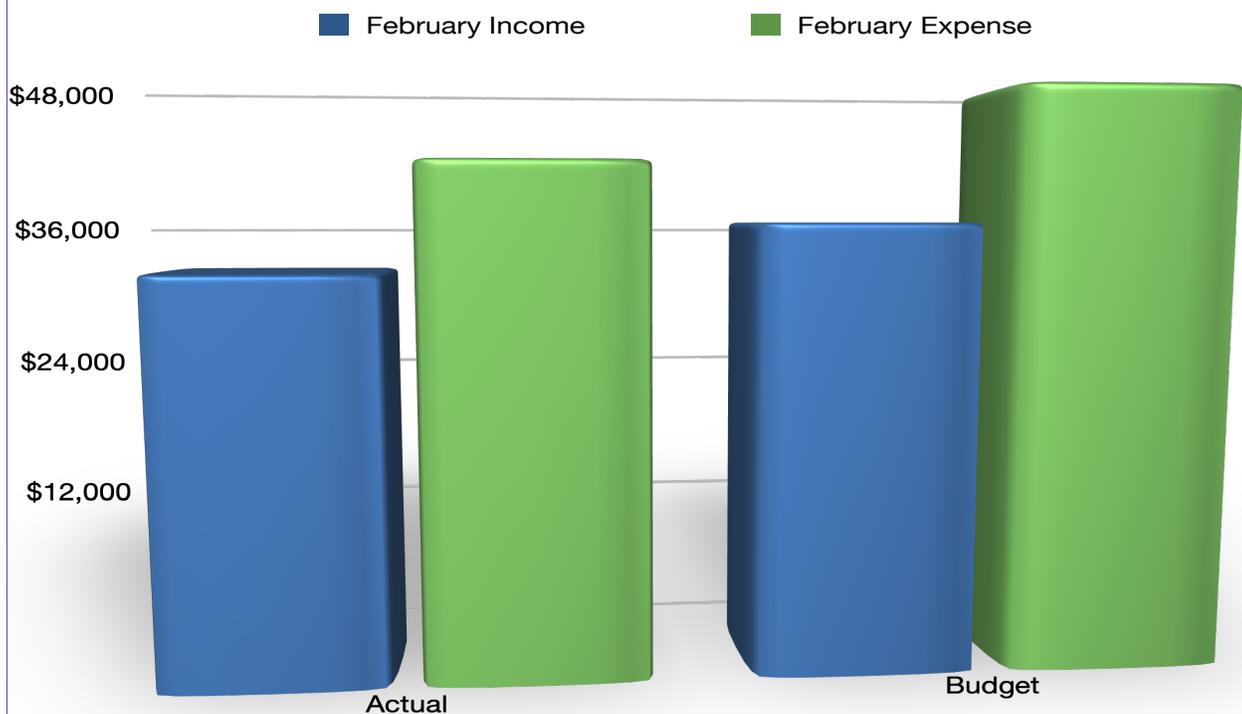
Couples who are interested in signing up should visit the Lord of Life website lolbaxter.org during the month of April and April to sign up. Costs for the retreat is \$125 per couple.

Church Finances

July 2020-February 2021 YTD - General Fund



February 2021 General Fund



Upcoming Groups

Expanding Understanding of Ourselves and Others - Race in American History Series

John 13:34-35

34 Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

How do we live out our ELCA values? What does our church mission: to inspire a deeper and richer connection to Christ, our community, and each other, mean to you?

Forgiveness and reconciliation

Dignity, compassion and justice

Inclusion and diversity

Courage and openness to change

Faithful stewardship of God's creation and gifts

In response to George Floyd's murder, a small group at LOL has been engaged in discussion of Lenny Duncan's book *Dear Church: a Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the U.S.* and the ELCA's Racial Justice Ministries. We have been both challenged and inspired by our call to fairness and justice. As Duncan says, because of grace, we, ELCA Christians, are uniquely positioned to "stretch God's tent."

We invite you to join us on the next steps of our journey: Sunday mornings from 10:45-12:00, beginning on April 11, for a 7-week series of expanding our understanding of ourselves and others. We will learn more about our history and some of the events that have brought us to where we are today. Please call the church office to register for the sessions and receive the Zoom link.

Pastor Darrell Pedersen, Lolly Kalinoski, Cindy and Greg Swenson, Bob Brekken, Tony Maurer, Keith Peterson, Beth Bastian

Grief Support Group

A new grief support group has started up at Lord of Life.

The group is meeting Tuesday nights from 5 - 6 p.m. at the patio on the west side of the building. Masks will be required.

For the first eight weeks of the program, the group will meet once a week. After that, they will meet every other week for a month and then once a month after that.

Pastor Erika Nilsen and Deb Bergstrom, RN, our Parish Nurse, will be facilitating these meetings.

Our facilitators have a number of ways to help people with their grief, including:

- Having a deep knowledge of the grief process;
- Being accepting and non-judgemental, while showing compassion and empathy;
- Being good listeners, both Pastor Erika and Deb Bergstrom are trained as Stephen Ministers, volunteers who walk with people during difficult times; and
- Providing education through a variety of methods on grief and coping skills.

We appreciate the different ways grief affects people.

While this program does not take the place of a counselor, we have found that attending it can help support therapy.

If you are interested in joining, please contact the Church at (218) 828-9374.

Habitat for Humanity

New Habitat for Humanity project to kick off soon!

Dear Lord of Life Family,

The Friends of Habitat for Humanity group at LOL is getting ready to raise the roof, walls, funds and prayers for the Svoboda Family!!

Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity has been awarded a \$62,500 Thrivent 'Faith Build' grant to get a home started in SE Brainerd for the Svoboda family. LoL and 12 other local churches will provide volunteers, lunches and additional financial support to help make this dream come true.

The build is scheduled to begin May 2021. By the end of the summer, the Svoboda family will have worked 300 hours alongside volunteers to create a place they can call home with a mortgage they can afford.

JOIN US!! How would you like to serve?

- Pray for the Svoboda Family and our Thrivent Faith Build Volunteers and Mission.;
- Make a financial contribution on Lord of Life's 'Giving' site. (ADD LINK HERE).;
- Volunteer on a build day.;
- Provide lunch for on-site workers.;
- Create a welcome basket or other special items for the family when they move into their new home.

For additional information or to get on our volunteer list, please call:

Bonnie Henningson
LOL Friends of Habitat for Humanity
bonniebhenningson@gmail.com
218-851-9163



The Svoboda's Story

We build up our Christian community when we humbly serve our neighbor, putting their needs before our own. Travis and Mary Svoboda exemplify the meaning of service to others before one's self.

The couple serves six children, five of whom they adopted, by sleeping on couches so the children can use the two bedrooms in their apartment.

Four of the children they care for are their grandchildren, while another is a grandnephew.

They work hard to afford their \$980 rent payment, while dealing with an unsafe basement that has had sewer backups and mold, which they clean so their children have a safe place to live

They are working with Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity to work toward owning a 5-bedroom, 2 bathroom home they can raise their family in. They have already put in many hours of sweat equity toward the home by working in the ReStore and plan to put more hours in.

Once they have a safe home, with an affordable mortgage, the Svoboda's will not have to be worrying about moving around all the time. They will

*Continued on the
Back page*

Stephen Ministry

NEW STEPHEN MINISTER TRAINING CLASS SET TO BEGIN!

As I write this article and as you read this newsletter, God willing, we will have begun Lord of Life's second Stephen Ministry training course.

With the many challenges brought on by the COVID-19 crisis, we are seeing a pressing need to expand our Stephen Ministry team. Because of the uncertainty of the paths the pandemic could take, we will be conducting the 50 hours of training via Zoom, at least for now. At the completion of the course in the summer, the trainees will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers and will join Lord of Life's currently active Stephen Ministers in providing one-to-one care to individuals experiencing difficulties in life.

Stephen Ministry training combines sound theological principles with contemporary psychology. The training is top-notch. The skills our Stephen Ministers learn and practice during training prepare them to provide a very high level of Christian caregiving. The training is intense because it explores some serious life issues, but it is also a growth-producing, faith-increasing, and enjoyable experience for the trainees.

Looking at feedback from many Stephen Ministers and Stephen Ministry Leaders from across the country and around the world, many folks state that what they enjoyed the most in their training was the close Christian community, team spirit, and group trust that form within each group of trainees.

Needless to say, our current Stephen Ministers and we, the Stephen Ministry Leaders, are very much looking forward to welcoming and supporting our new trainees. We all share the sure knowledge and trust that we as a team are being led by the Holy Spirit in this amazing

adventure. That faith alone is enough to bond us into a very effective and connected ministry.

Please lift up the training class in your prayers over the coming months! And please join us now as we pray:

Our loving God, as your chosen people, holy and dearly beloved by you, we ask your guidance and blessing on our Stephen Ministry. We pray for our Stephen Leaders that they may be clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Please guide our new trainees in their learning and be with them through the joys and challenges of their training and ministry. We pray for all the Lord of Life folks involved in Stephen Ministry, that they may remain humble servants to you, focusing on bringing your love and support to those experiencing life challenges. We pray for those in our congregation whom you have blessed with the gifts and abilities to serve as Stephen Ministers, that they may be moved by your Spirit to come forth and serve in this ministry. We pray that each of us, during difficult times in our lives, will recognize our need to be cared for by others and be open to receive care.



HFH continued

be able to save money, while making sure everyone in their family will have a place to sleep and be warm and safe.

The Svoboda's are ready to care for their home and keep it in great condition.

Mary cried tears of joy when she learned that Lakes Area Habitat for Humanity selected her family to become homeowners through their program.



Travis and Mary have opened their hearts to serve their children. Now we ask you, members of our faith community, to open your hearts to serve the Svoboda family.

Please prayerfully consider how you can volunteer and raise funds to build Travis and Mary's home, to work to build up our Christian community right here in the Lakes Area.

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
6190 Fairview Road
Baxter, MN 56425