

Good News

December
2021

Lord of Life
Lutheran
Church
(ELCA)

Worship
Sunday - 9am
Wednesday -
6:30 pm

Ministers
The Lord of Life
Faith Family

Pastors
Steven J. Rye
Erika Nilsen

Office Hours
Mon.-Fri.
8:30am - 5pm

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org

Less is More Pastor Erika Nilsen

Dear Friends!
The month of December holds within its days and nights some of my favorite times and experiences:

- the season of Advent with its waiting and wondering and invitation to us to look for and live out hope, peace, joy and love.
- the winter solstice with its darkness and depth and its invitation to grieve and to watch for the dawn of a new day, and of course
- Christmas Eve with its brilliance and beauty, awe and mystery of a God who takes us flesh and blood and comes down to Earth to be with us.

And not one of those experiences involves Target or Amazon or “stuff.” Which is why I was captivated by the theme of Less is More for our Advent focus this year. Especially noting supply chain issues and delays in shipping and the growing inaccessibility of stuff. Maybe this season is the invitation we need to find more – more meaning, more mystery, more serenity amidst less of everything else.

I like the way the introduction to our Advent Devotional invites us to experience Less is More, it reads:

“Christmas has become the biggest holiday in North America, arguably the biggest in the world – and in many ways, it has become a holiday of “more”: more presents, more stuff, more events, more expectations, more stress.

But as it turns out, if we dial back the “more,” we get closer to the heart of Advent and Christmas. For the stories of the season all point in a “less is more” direc-



tion. Jesus is born not in a palace, but in a barn. The angel Gabriel appears to a young, vulnerable, pregnant teenager. The heavenly host appears not to royalty, but to shepherds, with nothing to give but their presence. And even the Wise Ones from the East, the only figures in all the stories who bring gifts, offer only three.

Less is more.

So this year, let's get back to basics. Let's recapture the beauty of simplicity. Let's have music and presents and celebration, yes, but let's focus on what's most important, and put first things first. This year, let's have less stuff and less stress – and more hope, more peace, more joy, and more love.”

Be sure to pick up a devotional and daily guide to a Less is More Advent! May this season truly be a gift to you and your family!

Peace,

Pastor Erika

Youth News

It is hard to believe that we are entering the month of December already, soon 2021 will be coming to a close. As we prepare for the month ahead, I am sending peace to all of you! This year in many ways will be different from the last but, may also be similar as well.

I recently spent some time preparing for a high school youth group lesson around Thanksgiving. Where I took a look back to see what we talked about leading up to Thanksgiving in November, 2020. Much of the conversation was around ways in which this year (2020) might be different for our holiday season and gatherings we might have had in the past. There was time to name the changes or losses and how it was going to be different. In the midst of that there was a prayer to be present in the moment where ever you found yourself and the hope to see the blessings that may still come. This year may look different than the last for you or it may not. This can be a difficult time for many as we journey into this season. I pray that as we enter the season of Advent you are surrounded by a sense of God's peace and love. Where ever you find yourself, this month take a moment to pause, be present with those around you and may that time be filled with many blessings!

Confirmation:

November was an exciting time as we confirmed our 10th grade confirmation class! What a blessing it was gathering together with families and friends. As we celebrated this faith milestone and blessed them on their continued faith journey! Thank you to everyone who has supported this class along the way! I want to take a moment to thank all of the small group leaders, parents and mentors who have said yes to journeying alongside our confirmation class this year as well! It is truly a blessing to surround these students with faithful adults!

Club 56: Session #2: December 1st & 8th

We are halfway through our second session for Club 56! This session our 5th and 6th graders are exploring the topic of peer ministry. We have great group of high school leaders who are helping out with this session! It is wonderful to see the Club 56 participants getting to know our high school youth this year!

Teen's Upstream:

All 9th-12th graders are welcome to join us on Wednesday nights from 8pm-9pm in the Sunshine room for Teen's Upstream. Our last youth group for this month will be December 15th. We will enjoy games and a Christmas party before school break begins!

Christmas Décor & Bake Sale: THANK YOU!!!

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2nd annual Christmas Décor & Bake sale at Lord of Life on November 20th and 27th. Funds that were raised will be used to support our high school youth and adults as we travel to the ELCA National Youth Gathering this summer! Thank you to everyone who donated items, volunteered to help or stopped in to say hi or purchase items!

Important Calendar Updates:

December 8th: Club 56 Session #2 Concludes

December 15th: Last night of Wednesday Night Programming in December

December 22nd & 29th: No Wednesday Night Programming (Christmas Break)

January 5th: Wednesday Night Programming Resumes!

Life Groups 2022

LIFE GROUPS starting in January 2022

“I came that you may have life and have it abundantly.” John 10:10

2020 and 2021 will go down in our history as two terribly difficult years! We have seen great division in community, in county, and even in church family. There maybe is not a more important time than now to work on and practice some basic building blocks of life together – so that we might all be able to fully claim the abundant life that Jesus offers. To that end, our Life Group theme this year is One Anothering. The scriptures invite us into meaningful, life giving relationships with one another and offer us tools for those relationships. This year we'll focus on a number of different biblical ways to be in relationship to One Another:

- Fellowship with One Another;
- Love One Another;
- Prayer for One Another;
- Care for One Another;
- Bear One Another's Burdens;
- Submit to One Another;
- Admonish One Another; and
- Spur One Another on Toward Love and Good deeds.

I invite you to prayerfully consider joining a 10:10 LifeGroup in the coming year. These life groups will commit to meeting 10 times and consisting of no more than 10 individuals. How often and where your 10:10 LifeGroup meets will be up to your group to decide.

These themes will also be our preaching themes for January and February so that as a faith family we might all practice One Anothering in a more intentional way this coming year – and build an ever stronger foundation for our life together in Christ.

Interested? Visit lolbaxter.org and click the button to register. Or, you can sign up in the building with Tyler Jensen.

LoL Staff

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Paul and Karen
Erickson

2021 Confirmands

We would like to once again congratulate the young people who affirmed their baptism and became confirmed members of Lord of Life on Sunday, October 31. Congratulations to Will Aadland, Alice Balsley, Bella Barber, Tia Bruggeman, George Campbell, Maren Ceynowa, Jocie Daniels, Kayli Dorn, Josh Freelove, Kale Koop, Tray Lofstrom, Tyler Pederson, Spencer Porter, Sawyer Pribula, Brady Rushin, Bryan Schaitberger, Evan Shogren, Calvin Stengrim, Lexi Strus, Branden Tulenchik, Julia Wheeler and Drew Whitlock.



Micah Group

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8 NRSV

Our congregation's social justice group has continued to move forward. We are now the Micah Group. The name seemed to fit. We are trying to follow the path toward justice that has been laid out in this Old Testament verse and by the ELCA.

So what have we been up to? We are planning a new book discussion to start in January. It will be on the second and fourth Sundays at 10:15 a.m. after the 9:00 service is over. The book is titled *Waking Up White: Finding Myself in the Story of Race* by Debby Irving. The discussion will be led by Lolly Kalinoski and Darrell Pedersen. Our hope is to meet in-person, but also make it available on Zoom for those at home. Books are available free from Sue Beck. Reserve one by emailing sbeck312@gmail.com.

We also plan to provide a monthly series that will explore the experiences of all of God's people throughout American history. This will begin after the first of the year so stay tuned. We hope to do a mailing with more details after Christmas.

Would you like more information about the group? We have a brochure available. There will be some in the narthex or you can find it at lodbaxter.org/micah-group/.

Interested? Have a question? Feel free to talk to any member of the Micah planning group. Judy Bialka, Lolly Kalinoski, Michael Erickson, Darrell Pedersen, Pat Dickson or Sue Beck.

December Calendar

Lessons

December 5

Malachi 3: 1-4
Luke 1: 68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3: 1-6

December 12

Zephaniah 3: 14-20
Isaiah 12: 2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

December 19

Micah 5: 2-5a
Luke 1: 46b-55
Hebrews 10: 5-10
Luke 1: 39-45 [46-55]

Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9: 2-7
Luke 2: 1-7
Luke 2: 8-20

December 26

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

Wednesday, December 1

Advent Devotional Group, 4:30 pm
Club 56, 5:30 pm
Supper, 5:30 pm
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm
Master Class Bible Study, 7:30 pm
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

Thursday, December 2

Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
Martha Circle, 1 pm
Parkinson's Support Group, 1 pm

Friday, December 3

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Sunday, December 5

Worship, 9 am

Tuesday, December 7

Grief Support Group, 4:30 pm

Wednesday, December 8

Advent Devotional Group, 4:30 pm
Club 56, 5:30 pm
Supper, 5:30 pm
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm
Master Class Bible Study, 7:30 pm
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

Thursday, December 9

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am

Friday, December 10

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Sunday, December 12

Worship, 9 am

Tuesday, December 14

Sarah Circle, 1 pm

Wednesday, December 15

Advent Devotional Group, 4:30 pm
Club 56, 5:30 pm
Supper, 5:30 pm
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

January Newsletter Article Deadline
(Send Submissions to tyler.
jensen@lolbaxter.org)

Thursday, December 16

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am

Friday, December 17

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Sunday, December 19

Worship, 9 am

Wednesday, December 22

Advent Devotional Group
Service of Grief and Hope, 6:30 pm
Master Class Bible Study, 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 23

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am

Friday, December 24

Christmas Eve Services, 3, 5 and 9
pm

Saturday, December 25

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 26

Worship, 9 am

Monday, December 27

Church Office is Closed

Wednesday, December 29

No Wednesday Night Service

Thursday, December 30

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am

Friday, December 31

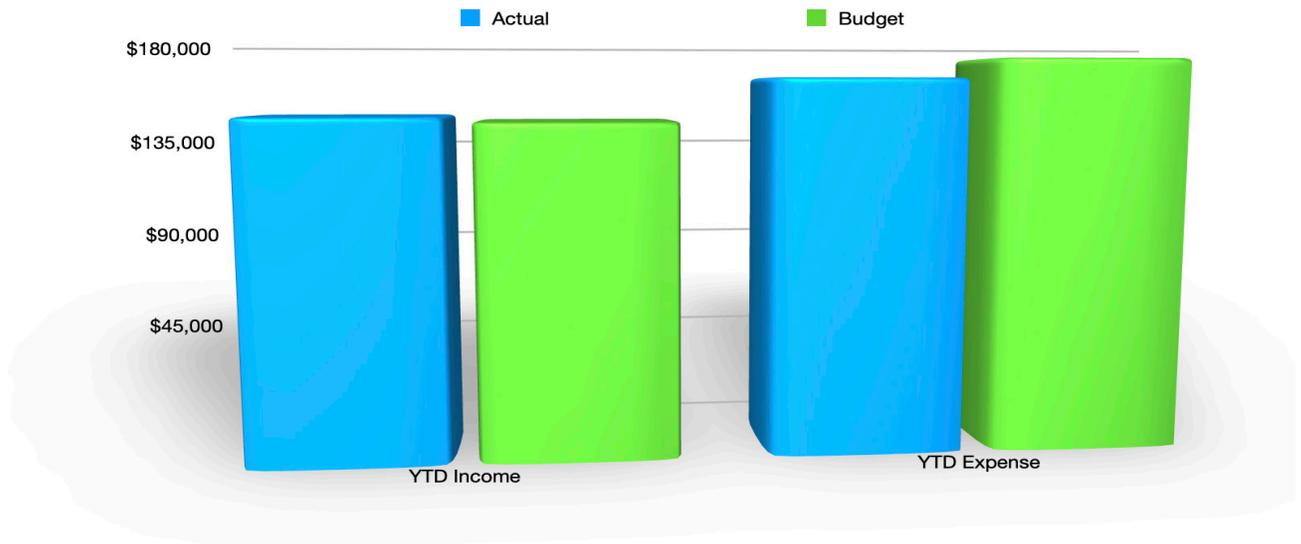
Church Office is Closed

Financials

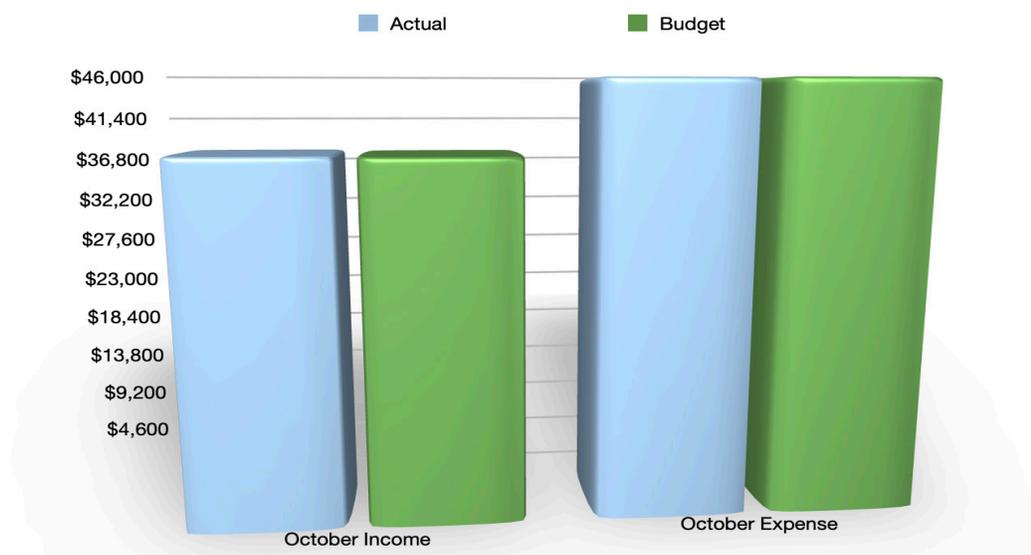
Year End Tax-Deductible Contributions Deadlines

- In Person: 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 30, 2021.
- Via USPS: Post-marked no later than December 31, 2021.
- Online: Must have an “approved” status by December 31, 2021.
- 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 Friday, December 31, 2021 to be considered a 2021 gift. As the process can take 1-2 weeks, requests should be initiated by Friday, December 17th.
- Any gift received or post-marked on or after January 1, 2022 will be credited to 2022.

July 2021-June 2022 YTD - General Fund



October 2021 General Fund



Groups

- Men's Fellowship - An opportunity for men to meet to discuss the Bible and other religious topics, while enjoying coffee, donuts and fellowship. This group meets every Thursday at 9:30 a.m. in the Commons.
- Men's Breakfast - This group meets Friday mornings at 7 a.m. for breakfast, Bible studies, and fellowship
- 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.
- Sarah Circle - The Sarah Circle will have their annual Christmas Brunch at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 14 at the home of Brenda Johnson, 13631 Olivewood Drive, Baxter. For more information and to RSVP please call 218-831-9725.
- Wednesday Women's Bible - A Bible Study opportunity for women each Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.
- The Micah Group - A team of Lord of Life members and others, who are working to address racial issues in our community and world.