

# Good News

April  
2022

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

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

## “Here’s to Another Easter” Pastor Erika Nilsen

More than 10 years ago, after my mother’s youngest brother and sister died, my parents adopted a practice of gathering neighbors, friends, loved ones, whoever was around and if no one – then just the two of them. And they would raise a glass of bubbly on the Spring Equinox and toast to making it to another spring! “Here’s to another Spring!” Indeed - another season of life – another opportunity to behold growth – another moment to give thanks that the dark and cold of winter did not get the best of us – another chance to celebrate the gift of life. As they have aged – this simple practice has become a ritual of wonder and praise – especially making it through the last two Covid winters – to make it to Spring was gift indeed.

The natural world around us so wonderfully gifts us with these points of reference – these markers along the way that invite us to stop and consider the light and the dark – to consider whether it is a time of growth or a time of going fallow – to consider whether it is a time of activity or a time of rest.

Our seasons of the church year do the same – marking for us times and seasons to reflect in a certain way – to ponder God’s activity and ours.

This month – the month of April – we begin the month still in the season of Lent – a season of deep reflection and repentance. And while the word Lent means Spring. I don’t imagine people would often raise a glass and toast saying, “Here’s to another Lent.” Yet – that too is not such a bad idea. The season offers a time to move inward and to think deeply about who we are and how we are at work in the world. This season offer a time to have honest conversations with ourselves, asking questions like, what needs to be renewed? What needs to be burned away? What needs to be changed? What needs to



die?

In the middle of this month - the season of Lent will give way to Holy Week. From Palm Sunday to Holy Saturday we walk with Jesus to the cross and grave – facing our own part in the violence and trouble of the world – facing our own participation in things that are not life giving at all – facing our own desire to deny, run away and betray. I have often said before that I think we need Holy Saturday more than God needs Holy Saturday. We need a reminder that God is at work in the dark – and that when it seems as if all is lost – new life is already beginning.

Then out of the dark of night and tomb, Easter Sunday bursts forth in all of its color and joy and noise – ushering us from death to life – from dark to light – from captivity to freedom. Stones rolled away. Graves empty. Life is on the loose.

So dear friends, here’s to another Easter! Another season of life and growth and hope. Every year there’s a moment where it feels like Easter will never come – but it always does! Because in Jesus – life is always more powerful than death. Light will always scatter the darkness. And the tomb is always empty. Thanks be to God!

Happy Easter,  
Pastor Erika

# Youth News

It is a busy and exciting time with regards to Youth Ministry. We are in the midst of the Lenten season and preparing for Easter. Our school year youth programs have welcomed spring and will soon be winding down to get ready for summer! There is a little bit of everything in this month's article. Thanks for taking a moment to read through it!

## **Confirmation**

Our confirmation program has been busy exploring weekly themes around, "A Boundless God Beyond Measure". This theme has been our Lenten preaching series this year in collaboration with area ELCA churches. Confirmation students continue to meet with their mentors, parents and in a large group setting throughout Lent! Just a quick reminder that during Holy Week we will not have confirmation!

## **Club 56 Final Session**

Exploring discipleship practices has been the focus for our last Club 56 session! It is hard to believe that this final session concludes on April 6th! It has been a fun year thank you to families and high school leaders that have been involved!

## **April 3rd Youth Group Bowling @ Jacks House**

We will be gathering Sunday, April 3rd from 4pm-6pm for a night of bowling and pizza! Join us along with Lutheran youth groups from across the Brainerd Lakes Area! Registration for this event closes Friday, April 1st and is open to 5th-12th graders! Check our social media pages or next month's newsletter for a recap on this event!

## **Summer High School Trip Update: Synod Journey & Beyond!**

It has been a busy month with regards to our high school summer trip! We are continuing with the NEMN Synod Journey to Duluth, MN & Superior, WI. We are excited to announce that following the Synod Journey we will be traveling to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for the remainder of the week! We are partnering with Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Brainerd for this adventure! This summer trip will have it all! Connecting with churches and youth from across our NEMN Synod! Worshiping and serving alongside each other! Adventure and exploring the UP of Michigan while connecting with one of our great ELCA Lutheran Camps at Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp in Crystal Falls, Michigan!

## **Mark Your Calendars... Important April Dates:**

April 6th: Last Night of Class for Club 56  
April 13th No Wednesday Night Programming (Holy Week)  
April 27th Last Night of Class for Confirmation

## **Mark Your Calendars! Future Events in May**

### **Annual Youth Rummage Sale May 13th & 14th!**

The rummage sale is back at Lord of Life after taking a few years off during the pandemic. This is a large rummage sale with proceeds going towards our youth summer trips! There will be lots of information coming to you during this month! Ways in which you can be a part of this experience and help support it! Mark your calendars you won't want to miss this!

### **Lord of Life Senior Recognition Sunday, May 22nd**

Let us gather together to celebrate our 2022 high school graduating seniors on Sunday, May 22nd! If you have a current high school senior we will be contacting you for information regarding future plans and also pictures to include in a slide show!

# Ministry News

## **Micah Group**

God's Holy Spirit has been moving, during these past two years of terrible trouble and challenge, to bring about the best good possible. One example. Many of us, from all of this, have learned that our sisters and brothers of color:

- Often, still do not receive justice in terms of the law and its enforcement.
- Often, still do not receive justice in terms of health care, education, compensation for work, home ownership, and even in everyday living expectations and blessings.

Five years ago, our Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA Assembly voted to establish a "Together Here Ministry." The mission of THM is "To create space for transformational change through listening, learning, and relationship building among diverse peoples and communities."

The first piece of this new ministry was the "Bridge Building Team." This team is working to guide our Synod congregations in learning about the evils of colonialism, repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, working at repentance for past wrongs, and building new bridges of healing, hope and shared work with the various tribal nations found in Northern Minnesota.

Following the death of George Floyd, Bishop Tom Aitkin called for the additional establishment of the "Anti-Racism Team." This team is tasked with helping our congregations to become more aware of systemic and root causes of historical and contemporary racism and internalized racial oppression. To grow more familiar with our respective communities and the diversity of races, ethnicities, genders, ages, socio-economic classes and ability demographics that are represented there. To establish authentic, supportive relationships and shared work with these and others in pursuit of full justice for all. Finally, an "Advisory Board" serves as the organizing and supportive link between these two teams, the Synod and our congregations.

Deacon Colleen Bernu, life-long ELCA member, and member of the Fond du Lac Band in Cloquet, has been instrumental in founding and leading this ministry to this very day. Deacon Bernu is now serving as Assistant to our Bishop Amy Odgren, but will continue to relate to Together Here as well. Pat Dickson and I are both members of the Advisory Board. A host of study resources, videos, books, speakers, etc., is available by contacting [www.nemnsynod.org](http://www.nemnsynod.org). Micah Group is also developing quite a resource list.

Interested? Want to learn more? Feel called to make a difference in your world? So are we. Micah Group may be a chance for us to grow together.

Come and see.  
Darrell J. Pedersen  
Micah Group Leadership Team

## **Prayer Shawl Blessing:**

We will be having a Prayer Shawl gathering and blessing on Thursday, April 21, at 1 pm at Lord of Life. We are inviting anyone who is interested in knitting or crocheting to join with us in this wonderful ministry. Please come and learn more about our Prayer Shawl ministry! If you would like to learn more, please contact Jeannine zumBrunnen (218-343-0964) or Brenda Johnson (218-831-9725)

## **LoL Staff**

### **Senior Pastor**

Steven Rye  
[steve@lodbaxter.org](mailto:steve@lodbaxter.org)

### **Associate Pastor**

Erika Nilsen  
[erika.nilsen@lodbaxter.org](mailto:erika.nilsen@lodbaxter.org)

### **Operations Manager**

Anne Laechel  
[anne@lodbaxter.org](mailto:anne@lodbaxter.org)

### **Youth Director**

Tim Slinger  
[tim@lodbaxter.org](mailto:tim@lodbaxter.org)

### **Communications**

#### **Coordinator**

Tyler Jensen  
[tyler.jensen@lodbaxter.org](mailto:tyler.jensen@lodbaxter.org)

#### **Custodians**

Paul and Karen  
Erickson

# Pastor Steve's Sabbatical

The Lord of Life church council has granted my sabbatical request for May 1, 2022, through July 31, 2022. Before I arrived at Lord of Life, the sabbatical policy was approved eight years ago. I have been making plans for this time to be a great blessing both for Lord of Life Lutheran Church and for me.

The purpose of my sabbatical is four-fold. That this time away will create Spiritual, Physical, Mental, and Social renewal and will help deepen my sense of calling and direction to Lord of Life Lutheran Church. Once taken, the sabbatical policy calls for me to stay at Lord of Life for at least two years so that the congregation can benefit from this renewal.

Toward creating spiritual renewal, I intend to go on some pilgrimage. While in campus ministry during my last sabbatical, I found that a road trip on Highway 52 was transformational for me. It gave me time and space to profoundly reflect on the church and my calling.

I plan to do this again, though the road is yet to be determined. It may be on some highway--possibly Highway 30. Traveling the entire length of that highway is on my bucket list. It is the oldest highway and is famously known as the Lincoln Highway. President Eisenhower traveled this highway early in his military career, and it later became the inspiration for the Interstate Highway system that we enjoy today.

It is more likely that I will travel on a road that commemorates the path of the removal of an Indian tribe. For example, a series of roads known as the "Trail of Death" marks Native Americans' path as soldiers relocated them from Northern Indiana to Kansas. I hope to research similar history in Rock County, Minnesota - where my ancestors settled. Their sod house is currently reconstructed in the Minnesota History Center in the exhibit, "Then, Now, Wow." My pilgrimage would give me insight into the rest of the story regarding their migration.

I also plan to make this time a period of Physical Renewal. This sabbatical will provide ample time for regular exercise and help me establish good habits that will allow me to be healthier and more productive. I enjoy biking and hope to experiment with biking and kayak camping during this time. I intend to work on creating habits that will carry me forward. Self-care is an important part of the ministry, and this time will allow me to focus on that.

I plan to make this a time of mental renewal as well. It is intended to be a time to explore the use of technology to enhance the church's musical life. I want to focus on a suite of products built around producing high-quality Christian contemporary music. These include Loops and Ableton Live. Time will be spent honing my video editing skills to be a more effective collaborator when it comes to congregation communication in the 21st century. We no longer live in an age where a bulletin and newsletter will suffice.

And finally, I plan to make this a time of social renewal, a time to connect with old friends and especially my family. This sabbatical comes at a good time because my parents plan to relocate to an Assisted Living facility in June. My sabbatical will allow me to be more fully present for them, for my siblings and allow me to support them without severe time pressures that getting back to church work would normally require.

All of this - except the road trip and family relocation - will occur here in town and at my wife's family cabin near Two Harbors. I hope to be on a bike path quite a bit, and maybe in the boundary waters. Though I will be physically near the church for some of the time, the intent is to disconnect and "stay away" from Lord of Life during this period. While I would love to worship at Lord of Life, I've found that worshipping in other settings helps give me a vision for different ways that are also helpful to lead in worship. So that separation, too, will be an important aspect of the sabbatical.

As I ponder what lies ahead, I am profoundly grateful for Lord of Life's provision for this sabbatical. Having experienced sabbatical already once in my life, I am certain that it will bless our ministry together in ways that will be deep and profound.

Blessings!  
+ Pr. Steve

# Feb. Council Minutes

**Lord of Life Church Council Regular Meeting Minutes, Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 6 p.m.**

**Present (10)**

Tom Campion  
Pam Caughey  
Pr. Erika Nilsen  
Kevin Olson  
Brian Orłowski

Pr. Steve Rye  
Donna Salli  
Steve Schaitberger  
Karla Skwira  
Dan Tupy

**Absent (1)**

Emmy Holcomb-Smith

**Guest (2)**

Tyler Jensen  
Anne Laechel

Meeting (held online via Zoom) called to order by President Tupy.

Devotions by Pr. Rye. (Mark 8)

Consent Agenda:

- Adoption of 2/17/22 Agenda (CC.2022.02.01)
- Approval of January 2022 Council Meeting minutes (CC2022.02.02)
- January 2022 Financial Report.

Campion gave financial report. At the 7/12ths point of fiscal year (July-June), overall finances healthy, however contributions amount has been lagging behind and expenses up some at this point. Recommend focus on increased generosity planning to provide for needs and buffer. Discussion followed, including need to prioritize ranking of projects/needs.

Discussion of Barrett property. Assessments may be added to current property taxes as City of Baxter does improvements in the property area. Discussion of forming group comprised of various views (selling, keeping for future ministry use, etc.) MOTION to form a group interested in LOL stewardship decisions regarding Barrett property and formulating information and recommendations for presentation by 2022 Annual Meeting. Motion by Pr. Rye, second by Campion, all ayes (CC 2022.02.03)

## **New Business:**

Jensen gave report of Generosity Team meeting. Initial priority is meeting \$60K goal. Short-term capital gain campaign of \$100-125K may follow. List of priorities is in progress. Discussion followed that list should include right-sizing staff, etc., along with projects. Current mortgage is \$5800/mo. Larger campaign possible in future using experience of smaller short-term campaign. Special council meeting scheduled for February 22, 2022 at 6 pm via Zoom to form financial priorities list and prepare for Council's meeting discussion with Generosity Team.

Discussion of Youth Gathering (National 2022 Gathering has been cancelled). Pr. Nilsen reported LOL youth will be participating in NE MN Synod Journey portion and looking at options to add to that.

Setting of annual meeting date tabled.

# April Calendar

## Sunday Lessons

### April 3

Isaiah 43: 16-21  
Psalm 32  
Philippians 3: 4-14  
John 12: 1-8

### April 10

Luke 19:28-40  
Isaiah 50:4-9a  
Psalm 31:9-16  
Philippians 2:5-11  
Luke 22:14--23:56

### April 17

Acts 10:34-43  
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24  
1 Corinthians 15:19-26  
Luke 24:1-12

### April 24

Acts 5:27-32  
Psalm 118:14-29  
Revelation 1:4-8  
John 20:19-31

### Friday, April 1

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

### Saturday, April 2

Pray and Ponder, 9 am  
Roland Anderson Funeral, 2 pm

### Sunday, April 3

Worship, 9 am  
Micah Group Presentation, 10:30 am  
Youth Bowling Event, 4 pm

### Tuesday, April 5

Bible Study, 9 am  
Property Team Meeting, 6:30 pm

### Wednesday, April 6

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am  
Supper and Club 56, 5:30 pm  
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm  
Master Class Bible Study, 7:30 pm  
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

### Thursday, April 7

Quilters, 9 am  
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am  
Martha Circle, 1 pm  
First Communion Class, 6:30 pm

### Friday, April 8

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

### Sunday, April 10

Passion Sunday Worship, 9 am

### Monday, April 11

Worship Music Planning Meeting, 6:30 pm

### Tuesday, April 12

Sarah Circle, 1 pm

### Wednesday, April 13

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am

### Thursday, April 14

Quilters, 9 am  
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am  
Maundy Thursday Services, 12 and 7 pm

### Friday, April 15

Men's Breakfast, 7 am  
Good Friday Services, 12 and 7 pm  
**May Newsletter Deadline**

### Sunday, April 17

Easter Sunday Worship, 7, 9, and 10:30 am

### Tuesday, April 19

Tuesday Bible Study, 9 am

### Wednesday, April 20

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am  
Supper, 5:30 pm  
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm  
Master Class Bible Study, 7:30 pm  
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

### Thursday, April 21

Quilters, 9 am  
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am  
Church Council, 6 pm

### Friday, April 22

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

### Sunday, April 24

Worship, 9:30 am

### Wednesday, April 27

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am  
Supper, 5:30 pm  
Wednesday Worship, 6:30 pm  
Master Class Bible Study, 7:30 pm  
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

### Thursday, April 28

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

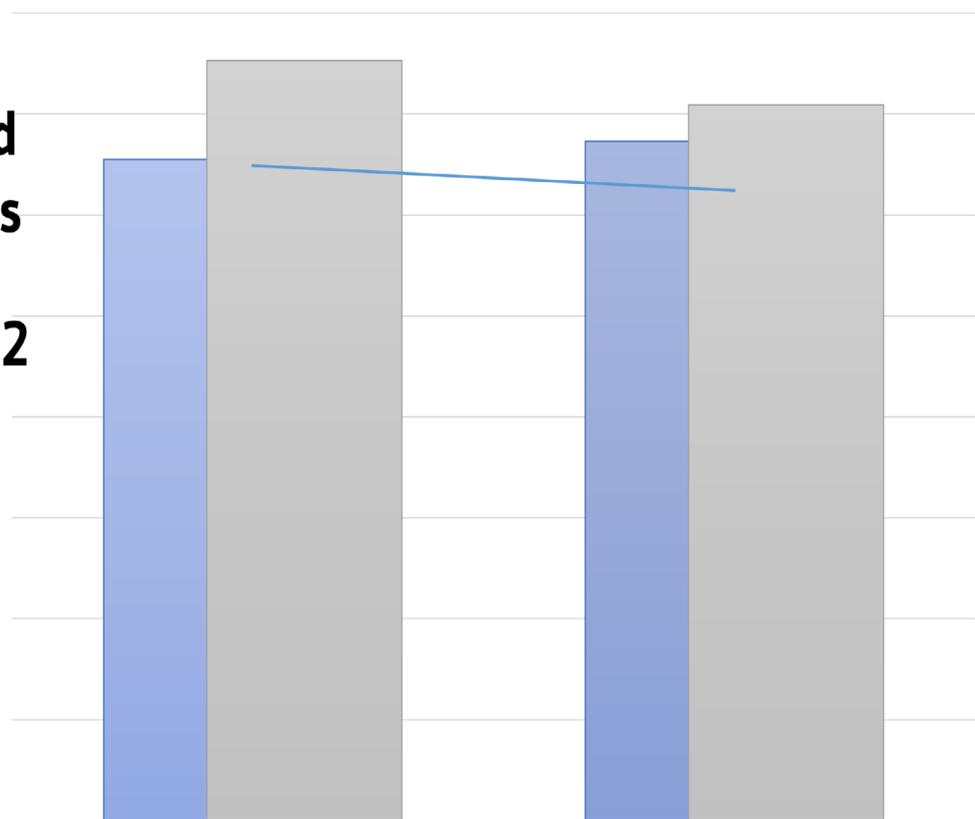
### Friday, April 29

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

# Financials

## General Fund Contributions

February 2022



|                    | YTD Contributions | YTD Expenses |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 21-22 Actual       | \$327,536.53      | \$336,568.79 |
| 21-22 Budget       | \$376,464.99      | \$354,596.31 |
| 2019-21 Actual Avg | \$324,439.17      | \$312,123.82 |

### Capital Campaign

|                      |              |                               |             |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>YTD Credits</b>   | \$55,838.92  | <b>YTD Credits Last Year</b>  | \$57,181.71 |
| <b>YTD Debits</b>    | \$46,432.00  | <b>YTD Debits Last Year</b>   | \$46,432.00 |
| <b>Balance Due</b>   | \$673,927.67 | <b>Current Rate</b>           | 3.875%      |
| <b>Loan Maturity</b> | June 2034    | 5 yr Adj Sec Loan (2018-2023) |             |

# 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 am in the Commons.
- Men's Breakfast - This group meets Friday mornings at 7 am 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 pm via Zoom.
- Sarah Circle - The Sarah Circle meets the second Tuesday of each month for Bible Study and fellowship for women at Lord of Life.
- Wednesday Women's Bible - A Bible Study opportunity for women each Wednesday at 10:30 am.
- Martha Circle - A women's group that meets the first Thursday of each month at 1 pm, for fellowship and Bible study.
- Pray and Ponder - This program for women at Lord of Life meets one Saturday a month for breakfast and discussion based on the NOOMA video series.