

Welcome to Lord of Life!

We are a member
of the Evangelical
Lutheran Church in
America (ELCA)

MINISTERS
The Lord of Life
Faith Family

WORSHIP TIMES
Sunday
Traditional
8:30 am

Sunday
Contemporary
10:30 am

Wednesday
Evening
6:30 pm

OFFICE HOURS
Mondays, Tuesdays,
and Thursdays:
8:30 am - 5 pm

Wednesdays:
11 am - 5 pm

Our Office is closed
on Fridays

CONTACT US
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office@lolbaxter.org

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Brainerd, MN, 56401

The Good News at Lord of Life December 2023

Worship

Dear friends,

As December begins we arrive at a new season in the church year, and indeed a new year. It is, most certainly, a time for new beginnings. The word Advent means “coming or the arrival of a notable person, thing or event” – which is a very different focus from that of the world around us which is steeped in massive consumption and clamoring to create a feeling of warmth and belonging and as the Scandinavians call it, “kose-lig” - a coziness to it all.

And I love the cultural sense of this season for all of those things. It's fun to consider others and give gifts and gather in delight with family and friends or around a tree wrapped in lights on a dark night. It's wonderful to attend concerts and hear and sing tidings of comfort and joy. But this season can also come with an enormous amount of stress and grief – when our actual life doesn't look like the hallmark movie, or the Norman Rockwell scene, or nearly anything we'd like to be living.

So, in the midst of all we might want this time to be, and in the midst of all that it actually is, how does one

Reflections

truly “Advent” this time? What would it mean to shift our focus and seek opportunities to wait and watch – to use our time to anticipate the coming again of Jesus – the radical new beginning when, as the prophet of old foretells,

4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Or as Mary proclaims in her song, a time when:

...He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Are we ready for those kinds of new beginnings? Are we ready for those kinds of radical reversals? Are we ready to be undone and remade? Are we ready for the one who comes declaring, ‘See, I am making all things new’?

I pray this Advent season might be filled with marvelous moments where you give yourself permission to step out of the usually rush of the season and wonder about the new thing God will do in this world and in you through Jesus.

Blessings in it all,
Pastor Erika

All Are Welcome In This Place



December Readings

First Readings	Psalms	Second Readings	Gospel Readings
December 3rd Isaiah 64:1-9	December 3rd Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	December 3rd 1 Corinthians 1:3-9	December 3rd Mark 13:24-37
December 10th Isaiah 40:1-11	December 10th Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	December 10th 2 Peter 3:8-15a	December 10th Mark 1:1-8
December 17th Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	December 17th Psalm 126	December 17th 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	December 17th John 1:6-8, 19-28
December 24th 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	December 24th Luke 1:46b-55	December 24th Romans 16:25-27	December 24th Luke 1:26-38
December 31st Isaiah 61:10—62:3	December 31st Psalm 148	December 31st Galatians 4:4-7	December 31st Luke 2:22-40

Gospel Reflections

<p>Mark 13:24-37</p> <p>Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.</p>	<p>Mark 1:1-8</p> <p>The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus’ birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.</p>	<p>John 1:6-8, 19-28</p> <p>John’s gospel describes Jesus as the “light of the world.” John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.</p>	<p>Luke 1:26-38</p> <p>In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.</p>
<p>Luke 2:22-40</p> <p>Luke’s narrative continues with stories that emphasize Jesus’ connection to Judaism. His family is devout in its observance of the law, and Jesus himself is recognized as one who will bring glory to Israel.</p>			

Youth Ministry Update

Highlights from the NEMN All-Youth Gathering

Lord of Life 6th - 12th graders joined a couple hundred youth from across the NEMN Synod at Cragun's resort for the annual NEMN Synod All Youth Gathering November 18th - 19th.

This action-packed experience included keynote speaker and music by Agape. This year the retreat focused on the 10-commandments and learning about them through large group ses-

sions and Bible studies. Saturday night was highlighted by numerous activities.

Memories were made as our group challenged each other to the races through the inflatable obstacle course, enjoying time in the pool relaxing, late night pizza and so much more. Thank you for those who participated in this experience! Can't wait until next year!

Youth Christmas Sale Was a Success!

The Fellowship Hall at Lord of Life was transformed into a Christmas wonderland to support the 2024 summer trip to the National Youth Gathering. Thank you to those who donated items for our sale and provided baked goods!

This one-day sale was a success with money raised going to support the high school youth traveling to the National Youth Gathering

next summer! As we transition into a new year there will be more opportunities for you to learn about this wonderful trip, those who are participating and ways in which you can support our group!

I hope the treasures you may have found during the sale will be a blessing to you this Christmas! Thank you for your support!



**Tim Slinger,
Youth Director**

Confirmation Update

Our 5th & 6th graders on Wednesday, November 15th spent their class time putting together gift bags that were given to the Bridge on 7th!

Items included handwarmers, neck warmers, treats gift cards and messages from our youth to those who would receive them around Thanksgiving!

Lunch at Schools

This fall I have had the opportunity to join so of our Lord of Life youth for lunch at either the Brainerd High School or Forestview Middle School! It has been great connecting with all of you meeting you friends and enjoying a lunch! I am usually joined by Pastor Sarah & Pastor Jordan as well. If you see us enjoying lunch on a Monday and if we are not sitting at your table that day stop over and say hi!

Confirmation Update

Thank you to the 9th graders and mentors who were able to join our retreat in November!

We were lucky to enjoy some warm weather and take advantage of it playing some 4-square in-between exploring NOOMA videos from Rob Bell with guided discussions. This month we will continue exploring the New Testament as a class!

**Middle School
Youth Group
12/17 at 5:30 pm**

**No Wednesday Night
Programming on
12/27**

Ministry Information

Micah Group Book Discussion

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

Micah Group will host a discussion of John Pavlovitz's book, *If God is Love Don't Be A Jerk*, over four Sundays in January and February. The dates are 1/14, 1/28, 2/11 and 2/25, after the second service at 11:30 a.m. We will begin with a meal and discussion will follow. Child care is available upon request (contact Judy Bialka).

From the book, "Pavlovitz examines the bedrock ideas

of our religion to help all of us take a good, honest look at how the beliefs we hold shape our relationships with God and our fellow humans--and to make sure that love has the last, loudest voice." This book provides a framework for conversations that are sometimes difficult, yet extremely important in our polarized society.

The audiobook is available on Hoopla from the library, and there are many used copies available on Thriftbooks.com if you'd like a hard copy. Please join us as we attempt to find a faith that makes us better humans.

Pray and Ponder



Advent Pray and Ponder Event
Saturday, December 9th
9 - 11 am

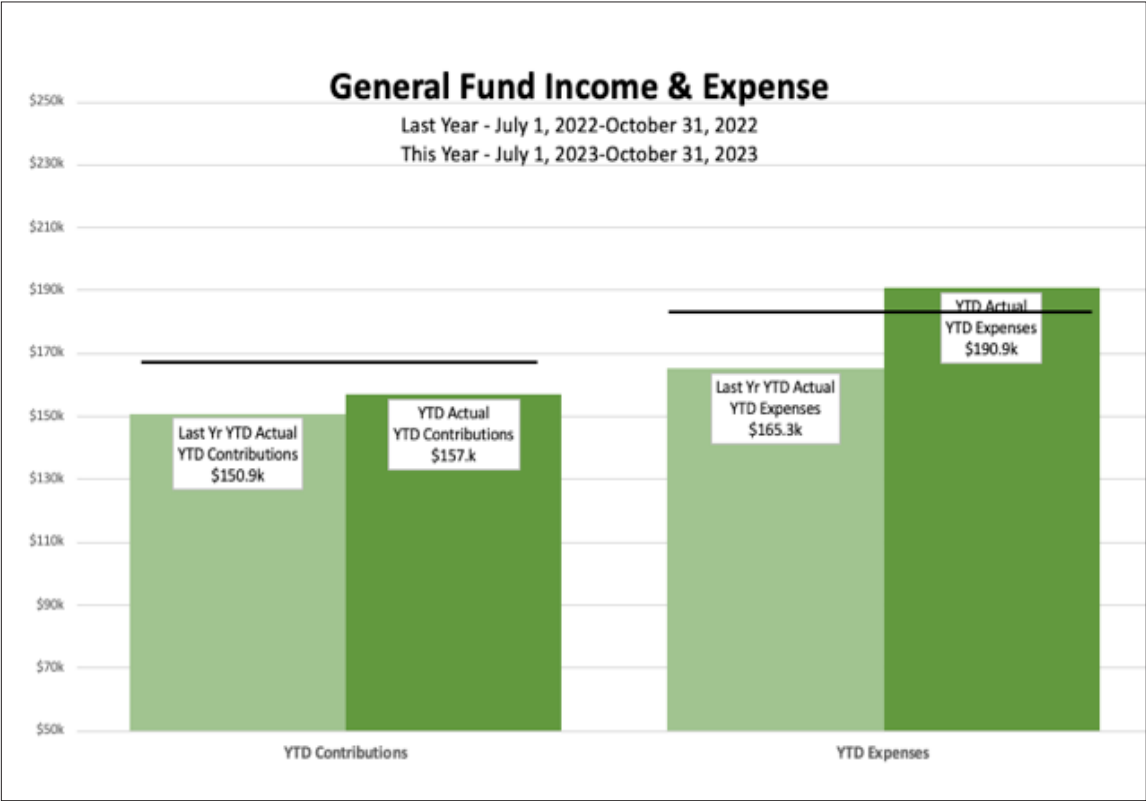
Contact the Church Office at
(218) 828-9374 for more info

Worship Volunteers

**Thank you to
 all who
 volunteer
 in worship!**

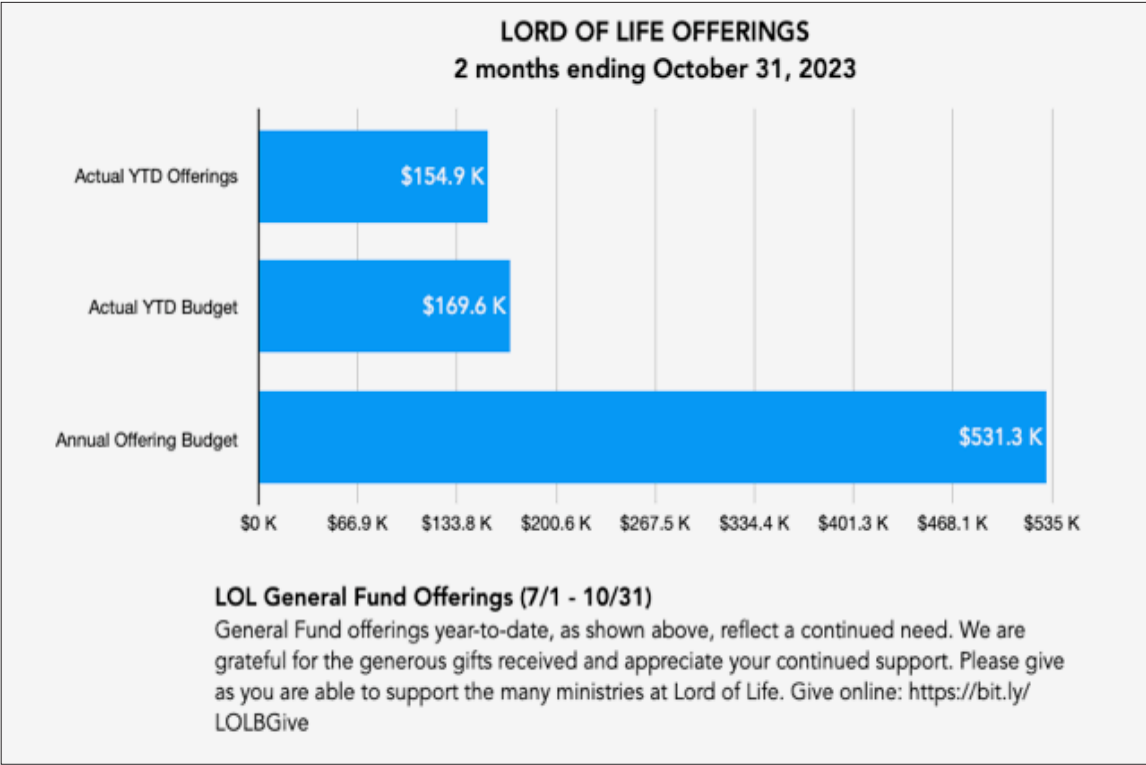
**If you would like
 to help make our
 services run
 well, meet new
 people and learn
 new skills, talk
 to Tyler Jensen.**

Financial Report



Year-End Tax Deductible Contribution Deadlines

- **In Person:** 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 31, 2023;
- **Via USPS:** Postmarked to PO Box 685, Brainerd, MN 56401 no later than December 31, 2023;
- **Online:** Must have an “approved” status by December 31, 2023; and
- **Stock:** If you wish to gift Stock to Lord of Life, please contact Anne Lae-chel for more information. Transfer of ownership must be completed by Friday, December 29, 2023 to be considered a 2023 gift. As the process can take 1-2 weeks, requestsshouldbeinitiatedby Friday, December 15th.



Any gift received or post-marked on or after January 1, 2024 will be credited to 2024.

December Calendar

Friday, December 1

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Staehling-Geraets Wedding 3 pm
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Saturday, December 2

Helen Herbon Visitation, 10 am
Helen Herbon Funeral, 11 am
Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 3

Traditional Worship, 8:30 am
Community Hour, 9:30 am
Contemporary Worship, 10:30 am
Soup Kitchen, 11 am
Cantata Rehearsal, 7 pm

Monday, December 4

Grief Support Group, 1:30 pm

Wednesday, December 6

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Swedish Meatball Meal, 5:30 pm
Worship w/ Cantata, 6:30 pm
Club 56, 7:15 pm
Teen's Upstream, 8 pm

Thursday, December 7

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

Friday, December 8

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Saturday, December 9

Pray and Ponder, 9 am
Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 10

Worship w/ Cantata, 8:30 am
Community Hour, 9:30 am

Worship w/ Cantata, 10:30 am

Monday, December 11

Grief Support Group, 1:30 pm

Tuesday, December 12

Bible Study, 9 am
Sarah Circle, 1 pm
Columbarium Meeting, 4 pm
Property Meeting, 5:30 pm

Wednesday, December 13

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Worship w/Confirmation, 6:30 pm
Club 56, 7:15 pm
Teens Upstream, 8 pm

Thursday, December 14

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
Martha Circle, 1 pm
Worship Planning Meeting, 4 pm

Friday, December 15

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Saturday, December 16

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 17

Traditional Worship, 8:30 am
Community Hour, 9:30 am
Contemporary Worship, 10:30 am
Middle School Youth Group, 5:30 pm

Monday, December 18

Grief Support Group, 1:30 pm

Wednesday, December 20

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Worship w/Confirmation, 6:30 pm
Teens Upstream, 8 pm

Thursday, December 21

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

Friday, December 22

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Saturday, December 23

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 24

Worship, 9:30 am
Christmas Eve Worship, 3 pm
Christmas Eve Worship, 5 pm
Christmas Eve Worship, 9 pm

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas!

Wednesday, December 27

No worship this Wednesday

Thursday, December 28

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

Friday, December 29

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Saturday, December 30

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 31

Worship, 9:30 am

Our Team

Pr. Steven Rye,
Senior Pastor

steven@lolbaxter.org

Pr. Erika Nilsen,
Associate Pastor
erika.nilsen@lolbaxter.org

Anne Laechel,
Business Administrator
anne.laechel@lolbaxter.org

Tim Slinger,
Youth Director
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Tyler Jensen,
Communications
Coordinator
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Paul and Karen
Erickson,
Custodians

Kennedy Niska,
Music Coordinator
kennedy@lolbaxter.org

Koreann Martin,
Contemporary
Worship Leader



Third Grade Bibles



Youth Christmas Sale



Lord of Life Christmas Eve Services

Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Program - 9:30 am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services - 3, 5, and 9 pm