

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
Morning
9:30 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

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Brainerd, MN, 56401

The Good News at Lord of Life December 2024

The Weary World Rejoices

Have you been looking at the jaw-dropping new images that are coming in from the James Webb Space Telescope? These photos of deep space are wild and surreal. Pillars of gas and dust. Clouds of yellows, oranges and blues that capture the mystery and dazzling beauty of the universe. You are immediately struck by the sense that there is so much out there, but it's not here. Not yet anyway.

The days leading up to Christmas (we call this season Advent) is kind of like that. It's a promise that is coming, as surely and steadily as light traveling from a distant star. It is the promise of a return—a restoration of all things to their true being, a goodness which was con-

ceived from the beginning of time, a realized hope we've been longing for. For the "days are coming," say the prophets of old. "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will fulfill the good promise."

The promise of truth, compassion, restoration, and justice.

These four promises will orient our season and serve as our guiding themes—pulling us toward a future that we can only glimpse. But it is a future that will turn everything upside-down (or maybe right-side up). Everything wrong will be made right; everything bad will be made good; everything empty and devoid of love will be filled. (These words are from Kate Bowler, author of the daily devotional we'll be using for this Advent!)

Accompanied by such wisdom and the gift of God's Word, I invite you into the blessing and the tension, the calm and the contention, the wonder and the weary waiting nature of Advent!

The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian calendar, and this year it begins on December 1st.

As a congregation, we'll journey together in worship, in daily practices, in congregational gatherings, and in service to our neighbors as we wait for the tender mercy that dawns from on high – as the light of the world comes to life at Christmas and the weary world rejoices.

With you in the waiting,

Pastor Erika

Christmas Eve Services

Tuesday, Dec. 24th
3, 5, and 9 pm



December Readings

First Readings

December 1st
Jeremiah 33:14-16

December 8th
Malachi 3:1-4

December 15th
Zephaniah 3:14-20

December 22nd
Micah 5:2-5a

December 29th
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalms

December 1st
Psalm 25:1-10

December 8th
Luke 1:68-79

December 15th
Isaiah 12:2-6

December 22nd
Luke 1:46b-55

December 29th
Psalm 148

Second Readings

December 1st
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

December 8th
Philippians 1:3-11

December 15th
Philippians 4:4-7

December 22nd
Hebrews 10:5-10

December 29th
Colossians 3:12-17

Gospel Readings

December 1st
Luke 21:25-36

December 8th
Luke 3:1-6

December 15th
Luke 3:7-18

December 22nd
Luke 1:39-45

December 29th
Luke 2:41-52

Gospel Reflections

Luke

21:25-36

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

Luke

21:25-36

Jesus grew up in a family that went to the Passover festival each year. It was in this environment of faithful adherence to the law that Jesus grew into spiritual maturity and an understanding of his identity and mission.

Luke

3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

Luke

3:7-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

Luke

1:39-45

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

December Calendar

Sunday, December 1

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am
Advent Family Craft, 10:30 am
Kid's Program Rehearsal, 10:30 am
Soup Kitchen Serving, 11 am
Hops and Carols, 4 pm
Advent Service, 7 pm

Monday, December 2

Grief Support Group, 11 am
Advent Devotional Group, 12:30 pm

Tuesday, December 3

Driver Improvement, 12 pm

Wednesday, December 4

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
WBS Fellowship, 1 pm
Worship w/ Confirmation, 6:30 pm
Club 56, 7:15 pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 5

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
LSS Support Group, 11 am
Parkinson's Support Group, 1 pm

Friday, December 6

Men's Breakfast, 7 am
MS Late Night Out, 5 pm
Al-Anon, 7 pm

Saturday, December 7

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 8

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am
Noisy Offering
Kid's Program Rehearsal, 10:30 am
Advent Service, 7 pm

Monday, December 9

Advent Devotional Group, 12:30 pm
Pinetree Patchworkers, 1 pm
Stephen Ministry, 4 pm

Tuesday, December 10

Sarah Circle, 11 am
Property Team, 4 pm

Wednesday, December 11

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Finance Team, 4 pm
Worship w/ Confirmation, 6:30 pm
Noisy Offering
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 12

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
Martha Circle, 1 pm
Justice Table, 2:30 pm

Friday, December 13

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

Saturday, December 14

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 15

Cantata Service, 9:30 am
Advent Service, 7 pm

Monday, December 16

Grief Support Group, 11 am
Advent Devotional Group, 12:30 pm

Wednesday, December 18

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Fellowship Dinner, 5:30 pm
Worship w/ Confirmation, 6:30 pm
Club 56, 7:15 pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 19

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
Tech Help Ministry, 11:15 am

Friday, December 20

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

Saturday, December 21

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 22

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am
Advent Service, 7 pm

Monday, December 23

Advent Devotional Group, 12:30 pm

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service, 3 pm
Christmas Eve Service, 5 pm
Christmas Eve Service, 9 pm

Wednesday, December 25

Christmas Day, Office Closed

Thursday, December 26

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

Friday, December 27

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

Saturday, December 28

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, December 29

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am

Our Team

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

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

Tim Slinger,
Youth Director
tim@lolbaxter.org

Tyler Jensen,
Communications
Coordinator
tyler@lolbaxter.org

Paul and Karen
Erickson,
Custodians

Koreann Martin,
Worship Leader

Hops and Carols

**Sunday,
December 1
4 - 6 pm
Roundhouse
Brewery**



Advent 2024 at Lord of Life

Join us as we await the coming of the Light of the World!

Advent by Candlelight
 December 1, 8, 15, 22
 Lord of Life Sanctuary at 7 pm



Join us for a time of prayer, hymns and reflection based on Kate Bowler's Advent series, "The Weary World Rejoices."

Christmas Carols
 December 15th at 9:30 am
 December 18th at 6:30 pm



Join us as we celebrate the coming of Christ through the gift of music! Swedish Meatball Dinner at 5:30 pm on the 18th!

Christmas Caroling
 December 16th, 5:30 to 7 pm

Singers travel to homes of Lord of Life members and sing Christmas Carols!



Outdoor Prayer Labyrinth

Use a walk around the lighted prayer labyrinth next to the FaithWorks building as a time for prayer!



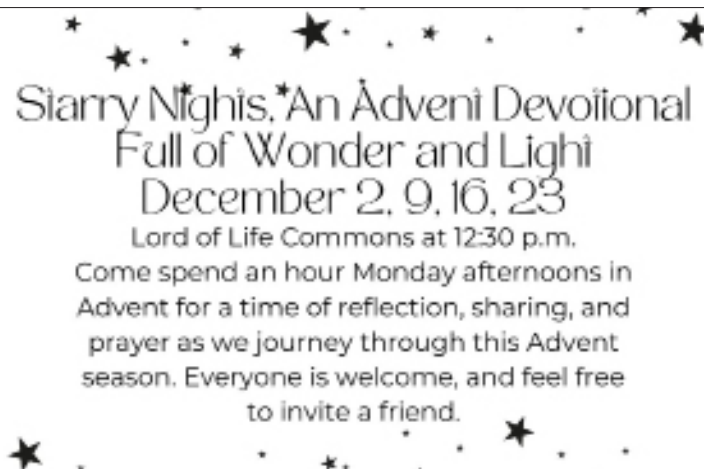
Family Advent Celebration
 Sunday, December 1st, 10:30 a.m.
 in Fellowship Hall

Families are invited to stay after worship and begin Advent with crafts, stories, and treats. Children will create an Advent Spiral to use during the Advent Season.



Starry Nights, An Advent Devotional
 Full of Wonder and Light
 December 2, 9, 16, 23

Lord of Life Commons at 12:30 p.m.
 Come spend an hour Monday afternoons in Advent for a time of reflection, sharing, and prayer as we journey through this Advent season. Everyone is welcome, and feel free to invite a friend.



Ministry News

OCTOBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

	ACTUAL	BUDGET
INCOME	\$43,683	\$53,368
EXPENSE	\$71,296	\$64,684
YTD INCOME	\$197,134	\$203,474
YTD EXPENSE	\$208,869	\$216,995

MORTGAGE STATUS

October Interest Paid	\$2,366.32
October Principal Paid	\$3,316.68
Balance 10/31/2024	\$571,520.23

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE

Dedicated Funds	\$102,359
Unrestricted Funds	\$-1,877

Micah Group

Micah Group will be starting another book discussion series in January of next year. Tony Maurer will be leading the discussion. The book is “WHITE POVERTY: HOW EXPOSING MYTHS ABOUT RACE AND CLASS CAN RECONSTRUCT AMERICAN DEMOCRACY” by the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II.

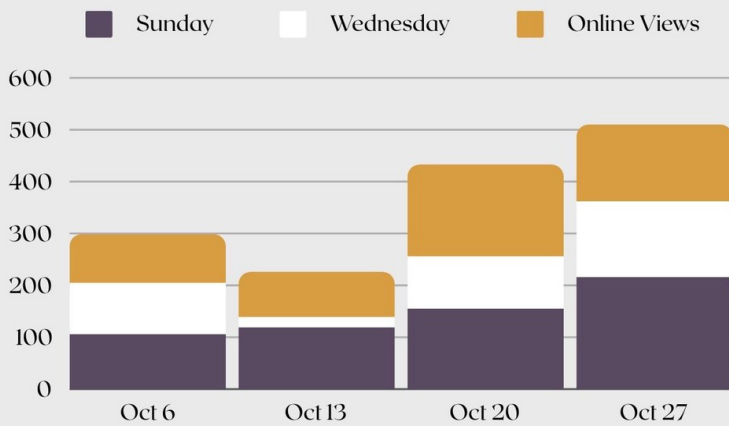
A description from Amazon:

One of the most pernicious and persistent myths in the United States is the association of Black skin with poverty. Though there are forty million more poor white people than Black people, most Americans, both Republicans and Democrats, continue to think of poverty—along with issues like welfare, unemployment, and food stamps—as solely a Black problem. Why is this so? What are the historical causes? And what are the political consequences that result?

These are among the questions that the Rev. Dr. William Barber II, a leading advocate for the rights of the poor and the “closest person we have to Dr. King” (Cornel West) addresses in White Poverty, a groundbreaking work that exposes a legacy of historical myths that continue to define both white and Black people, creating in the process what might seem like an insuperable divide. (He)...addresses white poverty as a hugely neglected subject that just might provide the key to mitigating racism and bring together tens of millions of working class and impoverished Americans.

This will be a series of four discussions on Monday January 6th and 27th and February 3rd and 24th from 7:00 to 8:30 at the church. Books are available through many vendors and online sellers such as thriftbooks.com. All are welcome to join.

October Attendance



October Council Minutes

Lord of Life Council Meeting 10/14/2024 @ 6 pm

Present:

Pr. Erika Nilsen
Eric Davidge
Matt Delaney
Landen Stoen
Guy Kelm
Jane Peterson
Pr. Steven Rye (left early)
Andy Isackson

Guest:

Anne Laechel

Absent:

Greg Bennett
Erica Dolven-Kolle

Pr. Steven gave a reading from Deuteronomy 3 and the blessing from the end. Pr. Steven wishes that we continue to seek to be faithful to the mission that God has called you too. Nominating committee needs more people, we only have 2 and there should be 6. A Blessing of closure when Leaving a Congregation was read from "For Everything A Season".

Pr. Steven left the meeting.

Motion to approve the consent agenda made by Guy Kelm, second by Eric Davidge, All Ayes (CC.10.24.2024.01)

Motion to approve transfer of membership for Paul

and Pam Braland to Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Apple Valley MN; Todd Holman to Celebration Lutheran Church, Sartell MN; Croix Butenhoff to Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater; and Steven and Suzanne Rye to First Lutheran, Brainerd MN made by Eric Davidge, second by Matt Delaney, All Ayes. (CC.10.24.2024.02)

As Pr. Steven prepares to leave, there will be many more duties to fulfill by staff and Pr. Erika. The Council encourages transparency with their communication on asking for help and the council plans to adjust wages and compensate people accordingly.

• Pr. Erika has suggested that as a church we pause and get our feet back under us. Interim Pastors are hard to find and may be more work than just having to do this on her own;

• The Synod has acknowledged that the council has handled this situation well;

• We will build a priority list of things that Pr. Erika needs help with and ask Darell Pedersen to assist as he is able;

• Conversations with staff have taken place and everyone is good;

• Music is a topic that we could discuss, maybe other people would want to get involved again;

• Monthly message from a church council telling us "This is where we are at" and "This is what we need;" and

• Jane Peterson will sit in at weekly staff meetings for a while to offer assistance where needed.

Motion to form a personal committee made by Jane Peterson, second by Guy Kelm, All Ayes. (CC.10.24.2024.03)

Community conversations following the church service to talk to the congregation about how things are going. Pr. Erika will be at a youth even on November 24th and the church council will hold conversations following the service.

Barrett Property buyer fell through, there is a trail that is

Year-End Giving Deadlines

In Person: 5 pm on Tuesday, December 31, 2024;

Via USPS: Postmarked to PO Box 685, Brainerd, MN 56401 no later than December 31, 2024;

Online: Must have an "approved" status by December 31, 2024; and

being built near the property that may increase the value.

Capital Campaign is on hold, payments are on pause. We are thinking about starting it up again, this could be a good time with Pr. Steven's leaving on October 31st. Andy Isackson will look into getting a timeline for kicking off the capital campaign.

Pr. Erika talked about Lutheran Social Services using some of the church space for their "Kid's Resiliency program". There are some more questions that she is working on to fully understand their needs and how we could do this as a church.

Next meeting will be November 21st at 6:00pm

Motion to adjourn at 7:55pm made by Andy Isackson, second by Landen Stoen, All Ayes.

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 Tuesday, December 31, 2024 to be considered a 2024 gift. As the process can take 1-2 weeks, requests should be initiated by Friday, December 13th.

Youth Update

Middle School Late Night Out

Our first Middle School Late Night Out is happening Friday, December 6th at First Lutheran Church in Brainerd! This event is open to 5th-8th grade students and runs from 5:00pm-11:00pm.



Registration is required for the event please scan the QR code to register!

Here is a great way to connect with friends enjoy

night games and an engaging Bible study experience! You won't want to miss out!

Middle School Late Night Out

Last month Lord of Life sent a group of 30 youth and adult leaders to the NEMN Synod All Youth Gathering hosted at Cragun's.

Hundreds of youth gathered from across our Synod for an action packed overnight of worship, fun interactive games, Bible studies and listened to keynote speaker Mike Carlson talk on the theme, "Let Us Run The Race" focused on the Apostles Creed.

Teens Upstream

Join us for our high school youth group happening every other week on Wednesday nights! This month we will only be meeting on the 11th due to Christmas.

Open to all 9th - 12th graders, High School Youth Group begins immediately following the Wednesday night worship service, roughly around 7:15 pm! No registration required, join us when you can!

Club 56

Club 56 meets on Wednesdays, December 4th and 18th, this month, from 7:15 pm to 8 pm.

Our Club 56 program is continuing working through a curriculum from Fuller Institute called, "The Big Questions" together we are exploring the following themes.

• Knowing Jesus Changes Everything;

• You Don't Have to Prove You Are Enough;

• You Belong Here; and

• You Matter More Than You Think.

We have a great group that meets on Wednesday nights thanks to the parents who have also stepped in to help throughout the year. We couldn't run this program without your help!

Confirmation Mentor Night

Wednesday December 4th is a mentor night for our 9th grade confirmation class! On this night mentors will gather with their 9th grade

confirmand for worship, the confirmation lesson and discussions. Thank you to everyone who has agreed to be a mentor this year!

Interested in helping us keep the sidewalks clear?

Sign up in the Commons for the Snow Removal Team!



**Middle School Youth Group Christmas Party
December 15th at 5:30 pm**

Poinsettias

**Would you like to
sponsor a poinsettia?**

**Fill out the order form
included in this
newsletter or in the
Commons by December
15th.**

