

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

January 2025

Epiphany: A Moment of Sudden Revelation or Insight - A Showing Up!

January 6th marks the day of Epiphany – on that day and in the days to come in the church we celebrate the in-breaking of God’s light. The scriptures we’ll hear throughout the season will help us understand that the manifestation of God is for all people everywhere.

This is a message of radical inclusivity. The magi are drawn from the east to come to pay homage to the Christ child. They who were once far off are now embraced by the one true God, who has sent a Savior into the world.

Likewise, Paul reports in Ephesians that he has been given grace to “bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ”

(*Eph. 3:8*). Just as Isaiah had foretold, nations shall come to God’s light (*Isa. 60:3*).

In this inclusive reality, everyone is welcome, and so are their gifts. Just as the magi showed their respect for Christ with gold, frankincense, and myrrh, we can offer our gifts and talents to further the brightness of God’s dawn. Whatever we bring—no matter how simple—is accepted and used for a mighty purpose.

There is also a sense of joy at this Epiphany. When the magi saw that the star they were following had stopped over the place where the Christ child lay, they were overwhelmed with joy (*Matt. 2:10*).

The angel had declared to the shepherds that the newborn child would bring good news of great joy for

all the people (*Luke 2:10*). Now again, Christ brings joy to all. Christianity is a truly joyful religion.

Through word and sacrament we too are invited to rise and shine, for our light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us. Fed and nourished in worship, we are sent forth to bear witness, to let our little lights shine. [*from Sundays & Seasons*]

I share these beautiful words with you as an invitation into a season of light and insight and showing up and shining bright!

Let’s see together what God is revealing to us – and walk together in the light of life!

With you in the Light,
Pastor Erika

EPIPHANY!

January Readings

First Readings

January 5th
Isaiah 60:1-6

January 12th
Isaiah 43:1-7

January 19th
Isaiah 62:1-5

January 26th
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6,
8-10

Psalms

January 5th
Psalm 72:1-7,10-14

January 12th
Psalm 29

January 19th
Psalm 36:5-10

January 26th
Psalm 19

Second Readings

January 5th
Ephesians 3:1-12

January 12th
Acts 8:14-17

January 19th
1 Corinthians 12:1-11

January 26th
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Gospel Readings

January 5th
Matthew 2:1-12

January 12th
Luke 3:15-17,21-22

January 19th
John 2:1-11

January 26th
Luke 4:14-21

Gospel Reflections

Matthew

2:1-12

God's promise shines bright in the night as magi follow a star to honor a new king. Strangers from a far-away land, they welcome the long-awaited messiah of Israel.

Luke

3:15-17, 21-22

The reading opens with questions about the identity of the Messiah. John the Baptist insists that he is not the Messiah; instead he points ahead to one who is coming. And whether the voice of God was heard by all or only by Jesus, God settles the matter: Jesus is God's beloved Son.

John

2:1-11

Turning water to wine at the wedding at Cana is described as the first of Jesus' signs. Through many such epiphanies, Jesus reveals that he bears God's creative power and joyful presence into the world.

Luke

4:14-21

Near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, he visits his hometown of Nazareth. In the words of Isaiah, he states and claims his identity, purpose, and mission.

SAVE THE DATE

MN Adult & Teen Challenge Choir

Sunday February 2nd in worship

Pastor Erika's Brother,

Per Nilsen, is the guest preacher

January Calendar

Wednesday, January 1

New Year's Day, Office Closed

Thursday, January 2

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

Friday, January 3

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Saturday, January 4

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, January 5

Worship, 9:30 am
Soup Kitchen Serving, 11 am

Monday, January 6

MG Book Discussion, 7 pm

Tuesday, January 7

Capital Campaign
Steering Committee, 5 pm

Wednesday, January 8

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Finance Team, 4 pm
Worship w/ Conf., 6:30 pm
Noisy Offering
Club 56, 7:15 pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 9

Quilters, 9 am
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am
Martha Circle, 1 pm
Justice Table, 2:30 pm
Myth Busters, 6 pm

Friday, January 10

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

Saturday, January 11

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, January 12

Worship, 9:30 am
Noisy Offering
3rd / 4th Grade Ministry, 11 am
Church Council, 5 pm

Tuesday, January 14

Sarah Circle, 1 pm

Wednesday, January 15

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Fellowship Meal, 5:30 pm
Worship w/ Conf., 6:30 pm
Impact World Change, 7:15 pm
HS Youth Group, 7:30 pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 16

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

Friday, January 17

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Saturday, January 18

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, January 19

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am

Monday, January 20

LifeLine Screening, 8 am

Tuesday, January 21

Driver Improvement, 12 pm

Wednesday, January 22

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Worship w/ Conf., 6:30 pm
Club 56, 7:15 pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 23

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

Friday, January 24

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

Saturday, January 25

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

Sunday, January 26

Worship, 9:30 am

Wednesday, January 29

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am
Worship w/ Conf., 6:30 pm
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 30

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

Friday, January 31

Men's Breakfast, 7 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

3rd and 4th Grade Ministry Event



**Join us on Sunday, January 12th at 11 am for
planning, pizza and games!**



IMPACT WORLD CHANGE

ROOTED IN GRACE. UNITED IN SERVICE. INSPIRED TO ACT.



Come and be inspired by stories of **faith** in action. Together, we'll celebrate the power of God's **grace** to transform lives both near and far.

Join us as we explore how our faith calls us to serve others and **make an impact in the world.**

Save the Date. Bring a Friend. Let's Make a Difference Together.

www.impactworldchange.com/lord-of-life

JAN

15

5:30PM

Ukrainian Meal - 5:30 pm

Worship w/ Guest Speaker - 6:30 pm

Presentation by Mariia Kharytonova, who fled Ukraine due to war - 7:15 pm

Ministry News

Quilters

Instead of a so-so winter, make it a sew-sew winter!

The Lord of Life Quilters are working hard to complete quilts for our High School Seniors, as well as a number for Lutheran World Relief, and they could use some additional hands.

You can either join them for their meetings on Thursdays

at 9 am, or take a kit home with you to work on. Each kit includes enough 10 1/2 in squares to make a 60 by 90 in quilt! Once you've sewn the quilt top together simply return it to the Quilters and they'll finish this amazing gift of love.

If interested, please contact Irene Christofferson at dads-glh@gmail.com.

A Message From Pastor Erika

Dear LOL members and friends,

As we step into a new year I want to begin with a word of thanks for each and every one of you.

Through your prayers, presence and generosity, Lord of Life continues to thrive and grow and fulfill its mission to deepen and enrich our connections to Christ, community and each other.

In particular, our staff have been ROCK STARS amidst lots of change. They step up, step in, do what's asked, needed, and far more!! I could not be more grateful for each of them.

I also want to thank our Church Council. They have steadily led through ups and downs and have their eyes focused on Jesus. And to the volunteers who show up week after week or day after day, occasionally when asked or wonderfully and mysteriously embody the love of God in a particular way – THANK YOU!

The coming year will be exciting and full of opportunities to grow in Christ, to expand in love, to share in abundance, and to walk in grace.

Grateful,
Pastor Erika

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

The New Year is upon us and it is a good time to think taking new opportunities to learn. This is a reminder that Micah Group will be starting a book discussion series this January. 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 and you don't need to be present for every session. Come when you can and join us in learning. The first session we will cover the preface through Chapter 2.

November Council Minutes

Lord of Life Council Meeting
11/21/2024 @ 6 pm

Present:

Pr. Erika Nilsen
 Eric Davidge
 Matt Delaney
 Landen Stoen
 Guy Kelm
 Jane Peterson
 Andy Isackson
 Greg Bennett

Guest:

Anne Laechel

Absent:

Jessamyn Foley
 Erica Dolven-Kolle

Pastor Erika led devotions.

Discussion of October Financial Report. Report received for audit.

Discussion of October Council Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes of the October 2024 meeting. All ayes. Motion carried.

Motion by Andy Isackson that a portion of the Christmas Eve offering will be designated to the Bridge on 7th Warming Shelter, with the exact percentage to be decided at the January 2025 Council meeting. Second by Guy Kelm, All Ayes, Motion carried.

Discussion of Lutheran Social Services Kid’s Resiliency Program. Primary rooms to be used are Rooms 7, 8, 9 and the SonShine Room. The church library in Room 9 will be eliminated and the books donated. Motion to approve the request by LSS to host the Kid’s

Resiliency program with the amendments to the contract – Tabled for electronic vote after contract edits.

Water line was damaged during parking lot construction. Andy Isackson contacted Knife River and they have agreed to pay for the repairs completed by Tim Thompson Plumbing.

Discussion of upcoming capital campaign – Interviews are being scheduled with a representative sample of church members to determine if there is energy to continue with a capital campaign and to narrow down what additional areas will be funded besides paying down the mortgage.

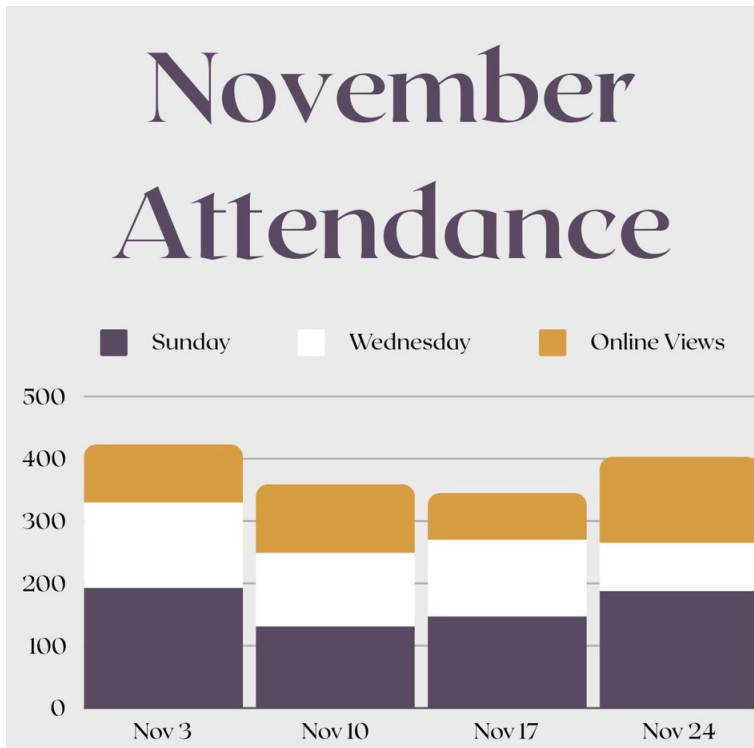
Discussion in regards to agenda for Community Con-

versation meeting on November 24th.

Discussion regarding the formation of the Personnel Committee. They are evaluating job descriptions, comparing salaries to local averages and assisting staff in understanding their role. Volunteers are needed to keep programs alive.

Motion by Pr. Erika to invite Impact World Change to come and share their story, second by Guy Kelm. All Ayes. Motion carried

Next Council meeting is Sunday, January 12, 2025 at 5:00 pm.



NOVEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

	ACTUAL	BUDGET
INCOME	\$53,783	\$53,368
EXPENSE	\$46,437	\$53,661
YTD INCOME	\$250,917	\$256,842
YTD EXPENSE	\$255,306	\$270,657

MORTGAGE STATUS

November Interest Paid	\$2,366.32
November Principal Paid	\$3,316.68
Balance 11/30/2024	\$568,203.55

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE

Dedicated Funds	\$101,378
Unrestricted Funds	\$5,100

Youth Update

Middle School Late Night Out

Inviting all 5th-8th graders at Lord of Life to join us for our next middle school late night out happening Friday, January 10th at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Registration is required to attend and a cost of \$10 per person for the event. Some of the photos in that picture collage were from our December event!



Wednesday Night Programming

Club 56 and Confirmation will resume after Christmas break on Wednesday, January 8th.

A special note for 9th grade confirmation: January 22nd & 29th will be a mentor night!

High School Youth Group

Open to 9th-12th graders, our High School Youth Group will meet following our January 15th Wednesday night worship service, roughly at 7:30pm, in the SonShine Room.

No registration is required to attend. Enjoy connecting with friends, games, snacks and Bible study! 9th graders can join us after confirmation that night.



Looking Back at Christmas and Advent

December was filled with fun, meaningful youth ministry events.

We Enjoyed a middle school late night out event in collaboration with the Brainerd ELCA congregations.

Together we explored the themes of Advent through Advent prayer stations.

And of course, who can forget the gingerbread house making competition!

Want to Learn More?

For current happenings in youth ministry, to get more information, or for help answering any questions you might have, contact Youth

Director Tim Slinger at tim@lolbaxter.org, or call the Church Office at (218) 828-9374.

BETHLEHEM - FIRST LORD OF LIFE - TRINITY ELCA

MIDDLE SCHOOL LATE NIGHT

DATE - LOCATION
 JANUARY 10 - BETHLEHEM
 FEBRUARY 21 - TRINITY
 MARCH 28 - LORD OF LIFE

5:00 PM - 11:00 PM

ARRIVE BETWEEN 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM
 COST: \$10 PER LATE NIGHT EVENT

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR JANUARY:
[HTTPS://SHORTURL.AT/9UWNB](https://shorturl.at/9uwnb)
 SIGN UP TODAY

Snow and Ice Removal



**We need your help with
removing snow and ice
from our sidewalks!**

**Any help is appreciated,
please email
tyler@lolbaxter.org if
interested.**