

# 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

**CONTACT US**  
(218) 828-9374

office@lolbaxter.org

PO Box 685  
Brainerd, MN, 56401

# The Good News at Lord of Life

## February 2025

### Coming Soon: Visiting Friends Team

**WHAT:** You are invited to join a newly formed caring ministry!

**WHO:** LOL's Visiting Friends are folks visiting folks who could use a friend. Each volunteer "Visitor" will be paired up with a "Visitee," who is a person in need of a caring visit. Visitees may be homebound, or primarily living at home but with needs, or living in a senior-living apartment, or care facility, or nursing home, or memory-care facility, or group home, or another unusual situation. The Visitees are folks referred to us by Pr. Erika, or our Parish Nurse Deb Bergstrom, or by any LOL member who wishes the gift of friendship for self or other.

**WHY:** The primary reason for creating this new ministry is to make sure every member of our faith family is receiving support during trying times, whether current or ongoing. Our hope is that the Visitees will feel more connected to their faith family, will know that the LOL congregation cares about them, and that the visits will help to alleviate loneliness. Also, if both the Visitee and Visitor desire,

the Visitor could bring Communion as part of each visit or just occasionally. Deb Bergstrom will train those who would like to include Communion in their visits, but it is not a required part of this volunteer position. Also praying with or for the Visitee could be an optional part of some or all visits, if comfortable for both the Visitee and Visitor.

A very important function of the Visiting Friends team is to help Pr. Erika, especially during this transitional time for LOL. Pr. Erika recently told the organizers of this group that the only thing that keeps her awake at night is worry that someone in need might "fall through the cracks."

Several generous and caring LOL members have already been quietly ministering to folks in need for quite a while. Visiting Friends will be continuing in their footprints and inviting more volunteers to serve on the same path!

**WHEN:** Visitors will be asked to connect with their Visitee about once a week or every other week for an hour or two. The dates and times will be very flexible and chosen by the two of them together.

**HOW:** This volunteer position will involve no formal training, but there will be informational meetings about the ministry on Sunday, February 2nd, and Wednesday, February 5th.

The informational meetings will be held following Sunday's 9:30 am worship, in Room 1, and Wednesday's 6:30 pm worship, in the Pastor's Study. The meetings are expected to last about half an hour.

Training will be offered for volunteers who wish to bring Communion to the person they are visiting.

We also hope to hold occasional future meetings to support and encourage volunteers.

**ROMANS 8:28** "And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."

Thank you for considering this invitation to work together as a faith family!

Visiting Friends Organizers:  
Deb Bergstrom,  
Lolly Kalinoski, and  
Bonnie Henningson

# February Calendar

## Sunday

### January 26th

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am  
Middle School YG, 5:30 pm

### February 2nd

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am  
Teen Challenge Choir, 9:30 am  
Visiting Friends, 10:30 am  
Soup Kitchen Serving, 11 am

### February 9th

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am  
*Noisy Offering*

### February 16th

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am  
HS Mission Trip Meeting, 5 pm

### February 23rd

Sunday Worship, 9:30 am  
Heartland Conference, 2 pm  
Middle School YG, 5:30 pm

## Monday

### January 27th

Stephen Ministry, 4 pm  
MG Book Discussion, 7 pm

### February 3rd

MG Book Discussion, 11 am

### February 10th

Pinetree Patchworkers, 1 pm  
Stephen Ministry, 4 pm

### February 17th

### February 24th

Stephen Ministry, 4 pm  
MG Book Discussion, 7 pm

## Tuesday

### January 28th

### February 4th

Capital Campaign Comm., 6 pm

### February 11th

Sarah Circle, 1 pm

### February 18th

### February 25th

## Wednesday

### January 29th

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

### February 5th

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

### February 12th

Women's Bible Study, 10:30 am  
Worship w/ Conf., 6:30 pm  
*Noisy Offering*  
Choir Rehearsal, 7:30 pm  
High School YG, 7:30 pm

### February 19th

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

### February 26th

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

**Thursday****January 30th**

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

**February 6th**

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

**February 13th**

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

**February 20th**

Quilters, 9 am  
Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am  
Tech Help Ministry, 11:15 am  
Driver Improvement Class, 12 pm

**February 27th**

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

**Friday****January 31st**

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

**February 7th**

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

**February 14th**

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

**February 21st**

Men's Breakfast, 7 am  
Middle School LNO, 5 pm

**February 28th**

Men's Breakfast, 7 am

**Saturday****February 1st**

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

**February 8th**

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

**February 15th**

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

**February 22nd**

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

**March 1st**

Lots of Love AA, 7 pm

**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

# ***Lent and Easter***

***Ash Wednesday: March 5th***

***Noon and 6:30 pm***

***Palm Sunday: April 13th***

***9:30 am***

***Maundy Thursday: April 17th***

***Noon and 6:30 pm***

***Good Friday: April 18th***

***Noon and 6:30 pm***

***Easter: April 20th***

# Ministry News

## Micah Group

According to the book, *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class can Reconstruct American Democracy* by Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II, 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?

Asserting in Biblically inspired language that there should never be shame in being poor, *White Poverty* lifts the hope for a new “moral fusion movement” that seeks to unite people “who have been pitted against one another by politicians (and billionaires) who depend on the poorest of us not being here.” Micah Group has scheduled four sessions to discuss this book.

Tony Maurer is discussion leader. Two final sessions will be February 3 and

24. Even if you have not attended the first two sessions, you are welcome to come to the 3rd and 4th at 7:00pm in Room 7. For February 3, read through Chapter 8; for February 24, read the remainder of the book. If you need a book, ThriftBooks.com often has gently used books for a much lower price.

March 24 at 7:00pm in the sanctuary, Vicky Kinney from My Neighbor to Love Coalition will be with us to update on what is happening at Creekside, the development designed to house our homeless brothers and sisters. There will be information about the project and an opportunity to ask questions and find out how to assist.

Watch the weekly Good News and the Micah Group bulletin board for more information as details become available.

All members of the congregation and wider community are invited to attend Micah Group events!

## DECEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

	ACTUAL	BUDGET
<b>INCOME</b>	\$94,861	\$63,618
<b>EXPENSE</b>	\$87,721	\$107,117
<b>YTD INCOME</b>	\$345,778	\$320,460
<b>YTD EXPENSE</b>	\$343,030	\$374,130

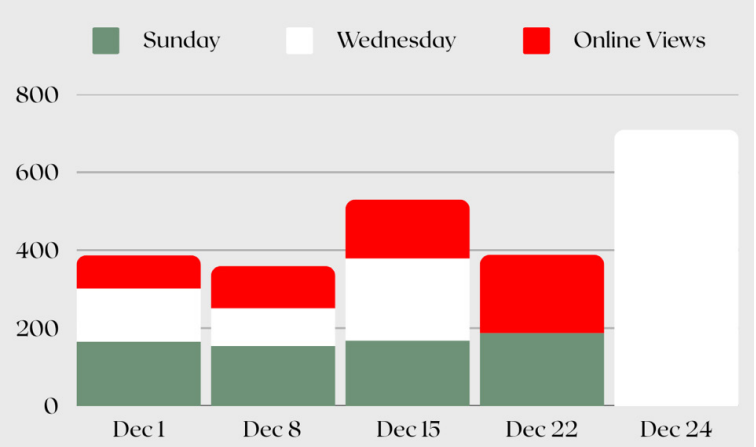
### MORTGAGE STATUS

December Interest Paid	\$2,276.71
December Principal Paid	\$3,406.29
Balance 12/31/2024	\$564,797.26

### CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE

Dedicated Funds	\$103,080
Unrestricted Funds	\$3,165

# December Attendance



**Lord of Life Council  
Meeting  
01/14/2024 @ 5 pm**

**Present:**

Pr. Erika Nilsen  
Eric Davidge  
Matt Delaney  
Landen Stoen  
Guy Kelm  
Andy Isackson  
Greg Bennett  
Erica Dolven-Kolle

**Guest:**

Anne Laechel

**Absent:**

Jane Peterson

Paul Marsh, a consultant from GSB Fundraising, presented an overview on the pre-campaign study. They suggest the results are favorable and we move forward with the capital campaign.

Pr. Erika offered an opening prayer.

Motion to accept financials by Greg Bennett, second by Eric Davidge, All Ayes (CC.01.12.2025.01)

Motion to affirm the increase of Pr. Erika Nilsen's housing allowance to \$40,000.00, as decided by the Executive Committee in November 2024, made by Eric Davidge, second by Guy Kelm, All Ayes. (CC.01.12.2025.02.02)

Motion to extend the

agreement with Close-Converse on the Barrett property through 2025 made by Greg Bennett, second by Matt Delaney, All Ayes. (CC.01.12.2025.03)

**Capital Campaign**

Steering committee for the capital campaign is chaired by Greg Bennett, they have come up with a slogan "Forward Together". This is for all of us, paying off debt means a lot to many people.

They are reading a book A Spirituality of Fundraising by Henri J. M. Nouwen. Steering Committee members include Andy Isackson, Katy Kelm, Sara Speer, Greg Parks, and Andy Rangen. Kurt & Kate Porter are serving as honorary chairs.

Campaign kick-off will be the first week of March with temple talks, with pledges/donations beginning in April.

Greg Bennett says that people are in general more positive and are feeling better about where we are as a congregation.

**Pastoral Transition**

During the pastoral transition, we will gather thoughts and information from the congregation. We don't want to rush through the process

and we need time to understand what the congregation needs. We need to listen deeply to what we envision, what does that look like, who needs to be there. We will invite people into a process of discovering and to dream about who we want to be. What does the timeline look like? Maybe 6 months to a year, 6 months would be a bit on the short end.

Gathering information from the members about what "Forward Together" means.

**Other Business**

Christmas donations totaled approximately \$4,800 and we will decide a percentage that we will donate to The Bridge on 7th.

Motion to give 33% of Christmas Eve Giving to The Bridge on 7th made by Andy Isackson, second by Greg Bennett, All Ayes. (CC.01.12.2025.04)

Flyers are out on the usher's stand in the narthex for giving to Lutheran Disaster Response either for the Los Angeles Fires, or just in general to give to them.

This Wednesday people are coming from Impact Global Change, to talk after worship about their story and will be selling a book and will collect donations.

February 2nd Adult and Teen Challenge will be coming to conduct our service, share their stories, and will collect a donation. The choir will sing and then they will present their stories. Council discussed what amount will donate to their organization.

Motion to give \$500 to the Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge's Choir for their February 2nd Service from the Beyond Our Doors account made by Greg Bennett, second by Eric Davidge, All Ayes. (CC.01.12.2025.05)

Pr. Erika spoke about feeling really prayed for and spiritually supported by the congregation during this transitional period. She spoke of feeling really grateful for that.

Lutheran Social Services Kid's Resilience Program has put on hold their request to rent space from Lord of Life and was willing to have a clause to end their contract. They also would pay to have the oven installed in the kitchen if they did move in. However this is on hold for now as the house they are running out of had the sale fall through.

Guy Kelm - Met with 3rd and 4th grade students and their families and spoke

*Continued On Back Page*

# Youth Update

## Middle School Late Night Out February 21st, 5 to 11 pm

Sign up today this event will fill up fast!

Inviting 5th-8th graders to join us for our next Middle School Late Night Out!

This month will be hosted at Trinity Lutheran Church and weather permitting we may enjoy some snow activities as a part of the night!

Join us for a night filled with interactive games,



Bible study and some great food! Scan the QR code to sign up today. Space is limited!

## Looking back at January

There was lots happening as we entered into the season of Epiphany together!

From special events around baptism and late-night outs. To hosting Im-

pact World Change and enjoying a Ukrainian meal together. Lots of energy life and excitement filled Lord of Life and beyond!

## Summer Mission Trip

Fundraising has begun for our upcoming high school mission trip to Knoxville, TN this summer!

Thank you to everyone who showed up for our first pancake breakfast fundraiser!

There will be a meeting for those going on the trip

on *Sunday, February 16th at 5 pm.*

This is our first meeting where we will gather together as a large group with Bethlehem, Trinity and Hope Lutheran in Walker. As we prepare for our upcoming summer trip.

## Middle and High School Youth Groups

5th-12th graders are invited to join us for our upcoming youth group nights! Join us as we explore nightly themes and Bible study!

Enjoy connecting with friends playing for favorite games and of course your

favorite snacks!

Middle Schoolers meet *Sunday, February 23rd at 5:30 pm.* High Schoolers meet *Wednesday, February 12th, and Wednesday, February 26th, at 7:30 pm.*



# February Readings

## First Readings

February 2nd  
Malachi 3:1-4

February 9th  
Isaiah 6:1-8

February 16th  
Jeremiah 17:5-10

February 23rd  
Genesis 45:3-11, 15

## Psalms

February 2nd  
Psalm 84

February 9th  
Psalm 138

February 16th  
Psalm 1

February 23rd  
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40

## Second Readings

February 2nd  
Hebrews 2:14-18

February 9th  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11

February 16th  
1 Corinthians 15:12-20

February 23rd  
1 Corinthians 15:35-38,  
42-50

## Gospel Readings

February 2nd  
Luke 2:22-40

February 9th  
Luke 5:1-11

February 16th  
Luke 6:17-26

February 23rd  
Luke 6:27-38

# Gospel Reflections

## Luke 2:22-40

This story is a study in contrasts: the infant Jesus with the aged prophets; the joy of birth with the ominous words of Simeon to Mary; the faithful fulfilling of the law with the presentation of the one who will release its hold over us. Through it all, we see the light of God's salvation revealed to the world.

## Luke 5:1-11

Jesus' teaching of God's word has begun to draw great crowds. For Simon, James, and John, Jesus' teaching inspires hospitality, then obedience, and then risk. After Jesus' creative power is revealed, fear and amazement leads these three fishermen to leave everything behind to become apostles.

## Luke 6:17-26

After choosing his twelve apostles, Jesus teaches a crowd of followers about the nature and demands of discipleship. He begins his great sermon with surprising statements about who is truly blessed in the eyes of God.

## Luke 6:27-38

Jesus continues to address a crowd of his disciples. He invites his followers to shower radical love, blessing, forgiveness, generosity, and trust even on enemies and outsiders. Living in harmony with God's intent brings the reward of overflowing blessing.

**Join us on February 2nd  
MN Adult & Teen Challenge Choir  
in the 9:30 worship service  
Pastor Erika's Brother,  
Per Nilsen, is the guest preacher**



# **FORWARD TOGETHER**

***Lord of Life's  
Capital Campaign begins  
Sunday March 2nd***

***Let's move toward a future  
of even greater ministry  
here in this place!***

# Lord of Life Group Guide

## Finance Team

Using their knowledge and gifts of discernment, this group helps the congregation plan how our financial resources are best used to accomplish the missions we strive to do. *For more information, contact Anne Laechel at [anne@lodbaxter.org](mailto:anne@lodbaxter.org).*

## Friends of Bridges of Hope

Partnering with this local organization, our volunteers provide occasional support at the Bridge on 7th Warming Shelter, helping those who are in need here in our community. *For more information, contact Ruth Nelson at [ruthnelson1570@gmail.com](mailto:ruthnelson1570@gmail.com).*

## Friends of Habitat for Humanity

Helping build homes for families in need is the calling of this group of volunteers. When Lord of Life receives notice of a Habitat Home being built, this group comes forward to share their time and talents. *For more information, contact Bonnie Henningson at [bonniebhenningson@gmail.com](mailto:bonniebhenningson@gmail.com).*

## Friends of the Red Cross

Thanks to organizations like the Red Cross, we can give the gift of life-saving blood to people all over our country and world. The volunteers of the Friends of the Red Cross help facilitate blood drives hosted at Lord of Life. *For more informa-*

*tion, contact Sally Jacobsen at [sally@jacobsenlaw.com](mailto:sally@jacobsenlaw.com).*

## Grief Support Group

Whether it is from the loss of a loved one, a change in life circumstances, or some other hard time in your life, it is important to have people to support you on the journey through grief. Each Grief Support Group meets for a few months, and equips you with resources to deal with your grief. *For more information, contact Deb Bergstrom at [deb.bergstrom@lodbaxter.org](mailto:deb.bergstrom@lodbaxter.org).*

## Kids Time Leaders

Do you want to help make a difference in the next generation of the Lord of Life Faith Family? Our Kids Time Leaders do that every Sunday, just by taking some time during worship to lead and supervise Kids Time. Lessons are prepared ahead of time for leaders. *For more information, contact Pastor Erika at [erika@lodbaxter.org](mailto:erika@lodbaxter.org).*

## Martha and Sarah Circle

Martha Circle and Sarah Circle are our two monthly women's groups here at Lord of Life. They give ladies an opportunity for fellowship and Bible Study. Martha Circle meets the second Thursday of each month at 1 pm, while Sarah Circle meets at the same time, but on the second Tuesday of the month. *For more infor-*

*mation about Martha Circle, contact Sally Jacobsen at [sally@jacobsenlaw.com](mailto:sally@jacobsenlaw.com). For information about Sarah Circle, contact Ginny Orlovski at [virginialake99@gmail.com](mailto:virginialake99@gmail.com).*

## Men's Breakfast and Fellowship

Every week, we have two opportunities for men to come together for fellowship and contemplating God. Men's Fellowship meets Thursdays at 9:30 am, while Men's Breakfast meets Fridays at 7 am. *For more information about these ministries, contact Ted Anderson at [maryteda@charter.net](mailto:maryteda@charter.net).*

## Micah Group

The Micah Group's mission is "To increase our understanding of human diversity and to transform whatever unknowing, fear, and hostility we may have into hospitality toward each other and all peoples of the earth." *For more information about this group and its various programs, contact Patricia Dickson at [otherpeoplecount.period@gmail.com](mailto:otherpeoplecount.period@gmail.com).*

## Music Ministry

Do you have a musical gift that is begging to be shared? Join our music ministries here at Lord of Life, and use it for the glory of God!. *For more information, contact Koreann Martin at [koreann@lodbaxter.org](mailto:koreann@lodbaxter.org).*

## Prayer Chain

Sometimes the greatest gift you can give someone is to pray for them. Our Prayer Chain receives requests via email and takes time to pray for the person in need. *For more information, contact tyler@lodbaxter.org.*

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

These Lord of Life knitters take projects to work on, creating prayer shawls to wrap people in God's Love. *For more information, contact Jeannine zumBrunnen at [zummyb@brainerd.net](mailto:zummyb@brainerd.net).*

## Property Team

Using their skills and knowledge, this group works to improve and maintain the Lord of Life property. In addition to meeting once a month, they organize property work days twice a year, once in spring and once in the fall. *For more information, contact Anne Laechel at [anne@lodbaxter.org](mailto:anne@lodbaxter.org).*

## Quilters

Every Thursday at 9 am, the Lord of Life Quilters meet and use their gifts to make quilts destined for our High School Seniors, fundraisers for local organizations, and anyone who needs to be wrapped in the love of God. *For more information, please contact Irene Christofferson at [dadsglh@gmail.com](mailto:dadsglh@gmail.com).*

# Lord of Life Group Guide

## **Stephen Ministry**

Our Stephen Ministers are trained to walk alongside people when they need someone to listen. *If this ministry calls to you and are interested in going into Stephen Minister training, please contact Pastor Erika at [erika@lolbaxter.org](mailto:erika@lolbaxter.org).*

## **Women's Bible Study**

Each Wednesday at 10:30 am on Zoom, women from Lord of Life meet to study and discuss Scripture with one another. The group also meets every other month in person for a fellowship event. *For more information, contact Anne Holz at [ispolish47@gmail.com](mailto:ispolish47@gmail.com).*

## **Worship Environment Team**

Have you ever looked at our Sanctuary and wonder, "Who makes it look like this?" The answer is the Worship Environment Team! From Christmas trees and poinsettias to the banners that hang from the walls. *For more information, contact Judy Bialka at [mjtbialka@charter.net](mailto:mjtbialka@charter.net).*

## **Worship Volunteers**

Worship services are a great time to use your gifts for God, and make connections with other Lord of Life members also volunteering! From scripture reading to Communion serving to just offering a warm greeting, there are many opportunities. *For more information, email [tyler@lolbaxter.org](mailto:tyler@lolbaxter.org).*

***Did we miss a ministry?***

***Do you see an opportunity  
for a new group?***

***Contact Tyler Jensen at  
[tyler@lolbaxter.org](mailto:tyler@lolbaxter.org), or  
speak with a member  
of the Church Council.***

# Council Minutes Cont.

about setting up something where they would be meeting regularly. We need parents to be involved to help this work. Talk about putting together materials where everything was laid out for them to lead. It would be

1.5 hours of activity, study, food, games, and a mission project.

Jane Peterson - The Balsey's moved the books out of the library and donated them to Friend's of the Library. Jane is working on

developing a job description for music staff and getting the choir back.

Erica Dolven-Kolle - The Micah group has been busy.

Matt Delaney - Has not been in touch with the prop-

erty team - lights are being installed in the sunshine room.

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

The meeting adjourned at 6:55pm

## Chili Cookoff

Wednesday, February 19th

5:30 to 6:30 pm

Bring your best chili!



Sign up in the Commons or call the Church Office  
at (218) 828-9374