

May 2026

Lord of Life Lutheran Church Newsletter

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
6190 Fairview Rd
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(218) 828-9374

Fullness of Joy - 1
Suppers - 7
Calendar - 9&10

...In Your Presence There Is Fullness of Joy

You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy... Psalm 16:11

Dear Lord of Life Congregation,

I am humbled and honored and privileged to serve as the senior pastor in this church - to serve with and alongside each of you remarkable people of faith, to serve with and alongside each of you as together we explore what it means to be the body of Christ at this time and in this place – as we discover what it looks like to do life together as brothers and sisters in Christ – as we embody and bear witness to the love of God come down and the kingdom of God come near. How blessed am I?

Prior to meeting with the executive committee for my interview for the senior pastor position I spent time in prayer - prayer for clarity, for discernment, for truth telling, and wisdom.

And in that time 3 things kept coming to mind as I thought about life at Lord of Life:
Joy! Generosity! Genuine love!

Joy that comes from a relationship with Christ – that is deeper than fun – that is richer than happiness – that is more consistent than delight. I want to grow in that joy of the Lord with you!

Generosity that comes from a relationship with Christ – that broadens the possibilities of our life together as we expand our ability to bless others. I want to grow in that generosity with you and to live into and walk towards the vibrant future God has in store.

Genuine love that comes from a relationship with Christ – that sinks us deep into God's heart for the world. I want to live that out with you as the way we love God – to have love for one another, the neighbor, the stranger, the church, the creation.

Joy! Generosity! Genuine Love!

Lord of Life – over the past 25 years – we've been through a lot. You have patiently watched me grow, you have nurtured my kids as they grew up in this place, you have washed out a ridiculous number of coffee cups for me, and waited for me when I was running late. You have accompanied me and my family through countless celebrations and terrible devastations all along the way. For all of that I am eternally grateful.

Now we keep moving – forward together!

May this be our prayer,

"O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Together in Faith,
Pastor Erika



Pastor Erika Nilsen and Council President Greg Bennett after the Congregation voted to call Pastor Erika to serve as Senior Pastor on Sunday, April 12.

Ministry News

Summer Book Study on Life Together by Bonhoeffer

We want to invite you into something simple... and deeply meaningful this summer.

We'll be gathering around a short but incredibly rich book: Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Order your book now from wherever you like to order books from or borrow it from our public library.

Bonhoeffer was a German pastor and theologian who lived during the time of World War II. He was part of the resistance against Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime, and ultimately was imprisoned and executed for his faith and convictions. In the midst of all of that, he wrote about Christian community, what it means to live, worship, and follow Jesus together in real and honest ways.

And what he writes... it's simple, it's honest, and it's so rich for us as we think about our own life together. Dietrich Bonhoeffer continues to inform and inspire what it means to be a disciple of Christ in our world today.

This is an easy read, not long, not overwhelming, but full of insight that can shape how we show up for one another and for the world.

We'll gather a few times throughout the summer, after worship, to talk about different sections of the book.

If summer schedules are full or unpredictable, we'll also have an online option. We'll share a brief video on Facebook and YouTube for each section, along with an invitation to join the conversation there.

And if you can't make every date, or even one of each set, don't worry about it. Come when you can. Engage how you're able. Because the truth is, however you show up... we'll be blessed. And our life together will be blessed too.

Life Together Book Study Sessions

June 14th and 17th - Community

July 12th and 15th - Day Together & Day Alone

August 2nd and 5th - Service of Confession & the Lord's Supper

Lord of Life Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, June 7th After Worship

**Review Ministry Reports
Elect New Council Members
Vote On 2026-2027 Budget**

Parish Nurse Update

Happy May! I hope you have noticed that in the bathrooms there are health hints on the backdoor or side of the stall. This is called Backdoor Reading and it was started by Parish Nurses to offer health insights when there is a "captive" audience!

Each month I will change the topic and this month I highlighted what nutrition fruits and vegetables give us. LOLLY will be meeting May 13 at Noon and Pastors Erika and Sarah will join us. Please note that LOLLY will be taking June, July and August off. God's blessing!

Youth Update

Wednesday Night Program Wrap Up

It is hard to believe but our Wednesday night programming, confirmation and club 56 have wrapped up for the year! On our last night, we gathered our confirmation and club 56 families together to celebrate the year and look forward to summer programming!

There is so much to be thankful for as I look back at this year. The energy that filled Lord of Life every Wednesday night was truly a blessing. Thank you to everyone who participated in so many ways from our delicious Wednesday night meals, worship, various programs and all who volunteered throughout the year! Thank you for making this year one to remember!

Sign up for Summer Programming
Register at lollbaxter.org

Summer Stretch (Thursdays in June and July)
Open to students entering 7th - 9th Grade in 2026

ServeCAMP (August 2nd - 6th)
Open to students entering 5th - 8th Grade in 2026

Vacation Bible School (July 26th - 29th)
Open to 3-year-olds to 4th Graders

Senior Recognition Service

Join us in celebrating this year's high school graduating seniors on Sunday, May 17th!

Our high school seniors from Lord of Life will be recognized during our 9:30 am worship service, there will be a slide show including pictures and future plans. We will be presenting each senior with a handmade quilt from the Lord of Life Quilters.

These special one-of-a-kind quilts will be a blessing as these seniors begin their next journey in life, following high school graduation! We hope you can join us in celebrating the class of 2026!



Annual Rummage Sale

Our annual Lord of Life spring rummage sale is quickly approaching. There are many ways in which you can help support us this year! Here is some important information to remember

Donation Drop Off Begins Sunday May 3rd

Sunday: After church - 3 pm

Monday-Wednesday: 8:30 am - 8:00pm

Thursday: 8:30 am - noon

Volunteers Needed May 3rd-9th

Volunteers are needed throughout the week with presale set up and helping with the days of the sale. If you have some time during the week of May 3rd stop on by to help volunteer. You can sign up to volunteer by scanning the QR Code, visit the volunteer sign up table or contact the church!



Wednesday Night Suppers

Family, Gathered Around a Good Meal

Great food, hard-working servers, and well-filled eaters – that’s what happened at Lord of Life Lutheran on Wednesday nights during the past school year. Eight food-serving teams took turns providing nourishing and tasty meals to an average of 70+ diners each week. Supper, worship, confirmation, choir, 5th-6th grade youth group – and lots of good conversation and fellowship lifted our faith family, the Body of Christ each week. The free-will offerings more than covered the cost of the food. Thanks be to God, and thanks to all the roughly 80 workers, ranging from Middle School to well into retirement age.

Here are some quotes from diners and servers:

- It’s awesome to see the community come together for a shared meal on these Wednesday nights. It is such a blessing to be able to serve and see everyone come together. (Mike Bush)

- I love the food at Wednesday suppers, especially the hotdogs. I like the good stuff and God! (Quinn, student)

- I enjoy the evening meals as I live alone and look forward to meeting friends and strangers. I will miss it over the summer. (Shirley Hansen)

- I love the Wednesday meals so much. I get to hang out with my friends and eat delicious meals. (Emma Campbell, student)

- I enjoy the Wednesday night suppers so much. It’s an opportunity to visit, share, just be in touch. The Wednesday services are great. Love how Pastor Erika – teaches/preaches. And love seeing all our youth at church. (Connie Fordyce)

- I love going to Wednesday dinners because I get to see friends, and family while eating amazing dinner. (Arah Halbersma, student)

- It’s great to see so many people come and share a meal and conversation. There are a lot of young people and that’s very encouraging. (Anonymous)

- Wednesday night suppers have been wonderful fellowship. We appreciate the volunteers for this gift! (Valerie Rangen, student)

- The food has always been so consistent, and every time I love coming here. I always look forward to Wednesday nights. (Reegan Anderson, student)

- “Better than big mac” (Beckett and Ben, students)

Next fall, we will set up serving teams again. Each team serves about 3 times a year. Many of the existing teams have already indicated an interest in continuing. New members are welcome to join or to form an entirely new team. This is fun! Please let me know if you’d like to help with food service next fall.

Darrell J. Pedersen
(218) 330-5100
darrellpedersen@gmail.com

Thank you to our
Wednesday Night Supper Teams!

The Augustinack Team;

The Behr Team;

The Borgstrom / Caughey Team;

The Bush Team;

The Micah Group;

The Thursday Men’s Group;

The Friday Men’s Group;

The zumBrunnen Team; and

Ted Anderson, who helped almost every Wednesday.

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| <p>Sunday, May 3rd</p> <p>Affirmation of Baptism Service, 9:30 am Soup Kitchen, 11 am Rummage Sale Donations, 10:30 am to 3 pm Piano Recital, 2 pm</p> | <p>Monday, May 4th</p> <p>Rummage Sale Donations, 8:30 am to 8 pm</p> | <p>Tuesday, May 5th</p> <p>Rummage Sale Donations, 8:30 am to 8 pm</p> | <p>Wed., May 6th</p> <p>Rummage Sale Donations, 8:30 am to 8 pm WBS, 10:30 am WBS Event, 1 pm Worship, 6:15 pm Life Together, 7:30 pm</p> |
| <p>Sunday, May 10th</p> <p>Worship w/ Noisy Offering, 9:30 am</p> | <p>Monday, May 11th</p> <p>Pinetree Patch., 1 pm Stephen Ministry, 4 pm</p> | <p>Tuesday, May 12th</p> <p>Sarah Circle, 1 pm Property Team, 4 pm</p> | <p>Wed., May 13th</p> <p>WBS, 10:30 am LOLLY, 12 pm Finance Team, 4 pm Worship, 6:15 pm</p> |
| <p>Sunday, May 17th</p> <p>Senior Recognition Service, 9:30 am Quilt Blessing, 9:30 am Life Together, 10:45 am Club 34, 5:30 pm</p> | <p>Monday, May 18th</p> <p>LAJT Environmental, 11 am Life Together, 1 pm Life Together, 6 pm</p> | <p>Tuesday, May 19th</p> <p>LAJT Public Education Team, 5:30 pm</p> | <p>Wed., May 20th</p> <p>WBS, 10:30 am Driver Course, 12 pm Worship, 6:15 pm Life Together Event, 7:30 pm</p> |
| <p>Sunday, May 24th</p> <p>Worship, 9:30 am</p> | <p>Monday, May 25th</p> <p>Stephen Ministry, 4 pm</p> | <p>Tuesday, May 26th</p> | <p>Wed., May 27th</p> <p>WBS, 10:30 am Worship, 6:15 pm</p> |
| <p>Sunday, May 31st</p> <p>Worship, 9:30 am Mission Trip Parent Meeting, 6 pm</p> | | | |

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| <p>Thursday, May 7th</p> <p>Rummage Sale Donations, 8:30 am to 12 pm Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am</p> | <p>Friday, May 8th</p> <p>Men's Breakfast, 7 am Rummage Sale, 8 am to 5 pm SMART Recovery, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Saturday, May 9th</p> <p>Rummage Sale, 8 am to 2 pm Lots of Love AA, 7 pm</p> |
| <p>Thursday, May 14th</p> <p>Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am Parkinson's Support Group, 1 pm Al-Anon Family Group, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Friday, May 15th</p> <p>Men's Breakfast, 7 am SMART Recovery, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Saturday, May 16th</p> <p>Ted Toensing Visitation, 11:30 am Ted Toensing Funeral, 1 pm Lots of Love AA, 7 pm</p> |
| <p>Thursday, May 21st</p> <p>Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am Martha Circle, 1 pm Al-Anon Family Group, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Friday, May 22nd</p> <p>Men's Breakfast, 7 am SMART Recovery, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Saturday, May 23rd</p> <p>Lots of Love AA, 7 pm</p> |
| <p>Thursday, May 28th</p> <p>Men's Fellowship, 9:30 am Church Council, 6 pm Al-Anon Family Group, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Friday, May 29th</p> <p>Men's Breakfast, 7 am SMART Recovery, 6:30 pm</p> | <p>Saturday, May 30th</p> <p>Bruce Femling Visitation, 10 am Bruce Femling Funeral, 11 am Lots of Love AA, 7 pm</p> |
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What we've made possible together

One year ago, we stepped forward in faith. Together, we committed to becoming debt-free and mission-focused while creating a space that welcomes all.

Today, we celebrate.

Where we are now

This past year has shown something powerful. We are a church that shows up, gives generously, and believes in the future. Forward Together isn't just a campaign. It's a reflection of who we are and who we are becoming.



What we've done so far

Already, your generosity is at work:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New HVAC system in the sanctuary • Updated furnaces and added air conditioning • Paid down the mortgage (\$277,000 left to go.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen and building improvements • Columbarium paving stones • Paid campaign expenses |
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These aren't just upgrades. They create space for kids to learn and grow, families to gather, and ministry to thrive.

What's ahead in year two

We're not done. Upcoming priorities include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to pay down the mortgage • Continuing to improve our building • Continuing to expand ministry opportunities • Continuing accessibility upgrades | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanctuary sound improvements • Window updates • Pay forward to youth ministry budget |
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Who we are becoming

This is our season. A season to celebrate and step forward together. Thank you for being part of this story.

An invitation

If you've already made a commitment, thank you. You are making a difference.

If you haven't yet participated, it's not too late. This campaign isn't just about a goal. It's about being part of what God is doing here.

Fill out a pledge card and return it, or email Anne for more info: anne.laechel@lolbaxter.org. Every step moves us forward.

Micah Group

Northern Neighbors is a community-rooted effort in North Central Minnesota that supports immigrant families and individuals impacted by detention. Northern Neighbors' work includes provision of legal pathways and costs, connects immigrants with people they can trust, offers translation and communication support, and helps with food, rent, and utilities. Northern Neighbors serves both locally and across our region.

During Lent, Lord of Life's "All in for Our Neighbors" collected non-perishable food, and other daily needs for these families and individuals. Micah Group drivers delivered about five carloads of donations to the drop-off location.

The needs of these neighbors did not end when Lent transitioned into Easter. Thus, there will be boxes marked "Northern Neighbors" in the Narthex Area for the congregation to continue to help our northern neighbors impacted by detention for the foreseeable future.

A copy of the included list is posted on the Micah Group bulletin board and by the donation boxes. It will be updated as needed.

If you wish, you may make a tax-deductible monetary donation at www.sowingroom.org/connectwithus

Thank you for your donations during Lent and for continuing to donate.
Micah Group

REQUESTED ITEMS

diapers (Sizes: 1-5, pull-ups);

Wipes;

NIDO infant formula (both red and yellow cans);

toilet paper and paper towels;

soap: (laundry, bath, dish);

gallon water containers;

rice;

pinto beans;

chicken bouillon;

canned corn, peppers, tomatoes;

chicken noodle soup;

pasta/spaghetti sauce;

tortillas;

powdered parmesan;

canola oil;

juice;

canned chicken; and

cookies/snacks.



April Baptisms



On Sunday, April 12th, we welcomed Celise Jeane Shelby, daughter of Brent and Amanda Shelby, into the Body of Christ and Family of Faith through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism



On Sunday, April 19th, we welcomed Miley Pamela Tautges, daughter of Caleb and Jackie Tautges, into the Body of Christ and Family of Faith through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism