

MISSION & MINISTRY CONNECTION

2019 “I Am A Church Member”

How VERY GOOD and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in UNITY!” Psalm 133:1

Sounds overly obvious doesn’t it: I AM A CHURCH MEMBER! If you are reading this article you would most likely say, “well of course I am church member.” You may be surprised to know that some churches have removed any sort of distinction or indication if someone is a member. For them if you come, worship and give support you are a “member.” It is tempting in today’s culture to erase any sort of commitment and identification of any kind. I will refrain from discussing the confusion and problems with this practice.

The Lutheran church believes through Holy Baptism we become part of the family of God. It is His means by which He calls and gathers His members. Make no mistake and let’s be clear, Holy Baptism is a free gift and God’s means of adoption into His family making you a member.

The book **I AM A CHURCH MEMBER** is a simple, insightful and meaningful book that takes deep biblical truths about the body of Christ in the church setting and formulates six simple chapters. These chapters bring to light some helpful and understandable concepts for how we function and live together as a body, brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Board of Lay Ministers read this book and believe this material is current and meaningful and recommended further study by the whole Lord of Life congregation. Consequently, we have developed a six-six-part worship series on this important topic—Church membership and life together.

Each family unit will be given a free copy of the book, asked and encourage to read each chapter. Each chapter should not take more than 30 minutes to read. As you read through the book, please prayerfully reflect on the content and commitment pledge found in each chapter.

This content of what it means to be a healthy and functioning member of the body of Christ, the church, is not new information. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote his masterpiece book, *Life Together*, before he was hung April 9, 1945 in the concentration camp at Flossenbug, Germany. Bonhoeffer’s book is deep with text about living in love and harmony together in community. Bonhoeffer opens his book with the same quote found at the top of this article (Psalm 133:1).

Both authors embrace the need for real, honest and deep fellowship within the body of Christ called the church. Both authors identify that sin so deeply impacts the health and vitality of the body that the church must be founded on grace, mercy and most importantly forgiveness. Otherwise, a gathering of fellow believers becomes nothing more than group of people to witness a civil event of some sort.

In our current day culture, I will not be surprised if people will challenge the need for church, a church body, or a denomination all in the attempt to remove the first three commandments (which are focused on our relationship with God). I pray that this study and worship series will give us much to pray about, enhance our LIFE TOGETHER, and expand our ability to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others.

May our prayer and passion be “How very good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in UNITY!” Psalm 133:1

Your brother in Christ,
Pastor Below

A Note from our Director of Music and Worship

This year has been quite exciting for Music Time in the Preschool. In December, we had Preschool musicians participate in two of our worship services. They were true leaders for us in worship! Having them come sing in worship was also an excellent experience for them to practice singing in front of lots of people, as they had their Christmas Program the following Tuesday. Once again, we were blessed to have borrowed ‘grown-up’ choir risers from the Gentlemen of Sound, which was a huge asset for our program. It’s much nicer when everyone can see and be seen!

This was my sixth Christmas Program at Lord of Life, and it is a wonderful feeling to see these little ones develop and mature. I’ve been here long enough now to be able to see many of the students’ entire tenure at our school, and it is amazing and bittersweet to watch them flourish and grow up.

This is also my fourth year of teaching Spanish Time on Tuesday afternoons. Our group had grown a lot—most weeks I have 17-18 students from across all classes. While this has been a challenge, it’s also been such a joy to see the older students set good examples for their younger counterparts. We have done a lot of good work making crafts, learning vocabulary, and discovering the differences between English and Spanish. Back in October, we had a *Día de los muertos* celebration. We talked about how it’s okay to be sad when people and pets die, but that it’s also a time to be happy and celebrate the time we had with them. Then we brought (battery-operated!) candles down to our *ofrenda* (special display of memories) and had a snack of homemade *calavera* (skull) cookies. What a fun time!

Every spring, we have a big *fiesta*, complete with a *piñata*, and I am looking forward to doing that again this year. When the weather is good, we are able to celebrate outside, which is particularly exciting when candy is flying everywhere. Some of our friends are shyer than others, and are hesitant to pursue their share of the goodies. But those with large caches of treats are more than willing to share the spoils, which is a huge blessing. I am continually reminded by these young people that life is much more enjoyable when everyone is working together than when we are looking out for our own selfish wishes, and I am grateful every day to be able to spend time with them!

Miss Elin

Lay Ministry

In December we celebrated Advent. During Advent we prepare for the One who saved us from sin, death and the power of the devil – our Lord Jesus Christ! Each year we prepare for this coming with services, celebrations and also have an opportunity to “Return to Bethlehem” to get an idea what it must have been like during those times.

In January we celebrate Epiphany which can be defined as the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles. Luther’s Small Catechism has a list of feasts and festivals for January and one of the listings is the Conversion of Paul.

You may remember that Paul, or Saul of Tarsus before his conversion, was a mentor of Gamaliel who was the most prestigious and influential rabbi in early first century Jerusalem. Gamaliel was a grandson of the legendary Hillel the Elder who was one of the most learned and quotable rabbis ever. Acts 5:34 tells us that Gamaliel was held in respect by all the people. He had tremendous influence among the Sanhedrin which was Judaism’s highest ruling court of religious affairs. As a group, the Sanhedrin of Paul and Jesus’ time was notoriously corrupt and often motivated by political expediency. But Gamaliel was a learned, peaceful, cautious and basically honorable man. Saul of Tarsus was trained at his feet so his academic credentials were impressive.

Before his famous encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus Road, Saul of Tarsus despised any challenge to the Pharisee’s traditions. When first mentioned in Scripture he is a young man (Acts 7:58) so thoroughly averse to Christ and so hostile to the faith of Jesus’ followers that he presides over the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. In his later years Paul confessed that “many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities” (Acts 26:10-11). Paul was clearly a scholar who stood out in his generation as a zealous activist, a ready worker, a gifted administrator, tough enforcer and skilled politician.

Yet after his conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul was a completely different kind of man. Paul was unique among the apostles. He never spent time with Christ during the Lord’s early ministry. In fact he probably would have not been a good fit in the circle of the twelve disciples. They were most common; fishermen, tax collector, former Zealot. A mix of working men and outcasts.

Paul had an extraordinary gift of bringing the gospel message to light in just a few clear and well chosen words. One major factor that set Paul apart from the others was the abundance of divine grace that had transformed him from what he once was, a fierce persecutor of the church, to the man we know from Scripture as an apostle of Christ to the Gentiles. The vast scope of the mercy shown to Paul never ceased to amaze him. His response was to labor all the more diligently for the spread of the gospel and the honor of Christ in order to make the most of his calling. He stressed the truth that authentic Christianity has only “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5).

So as we celebrate Epiphany, we should not forget Paul's conversion and the light that he brought to the Gentiles through the grace of Christ. If Christ can perform such a conversion taking Saul to Paul just think what His grace can mean for us today. May your journey through Epiphany this year be blessed.

Preschool & Kids' Day Out

As always the holiday season is a whirlwind of activity and this December is no exception! The children have made gingerbread men and had to hunt them down after they escaped from the oven. Mr. Denis DuMontier was a suspect in their disappearance one day, but his name was cleared after the gingerbread men were discovered in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom. Christmas trees, reindeer, elves, candy canes and angels have been studied, drawn, colored, and created into masterpieces in our classrooms and on our hallway bulletin boards. We hope that everyone had the opportunity to view our preschoolers' artwork!

Of course, our focus has been on the real meaning for the season – Jesus! We have practiced songs and finger plays. We have mastered ringing bells. There were seven children who dressed up and enjoyed sharing songs at Lord of Life church services on Wednesday, December 12, and nine children sang on Sunday, December 16.

Our Annual Preschool Christmas Program was Tuesday, December 18, at 11 am. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, sisters and brothers and members of the Lord of Life congregation came to witness this special event. Sixty children proclaimed the arrival of Jesus from the risers! The Junior Kindergarten class re-enacted the angels' proclamation to the shepherds on the night that Jesus was born. "Peace on Earth! Good will toward men!" The Pre-Kindergarten and Preschool classes joined the Junior Kindergarten to sing and ring bells. The Tuesday class of Kids' Day Out rang jingle bells with all of the preschoolers at the conclusion of the program. We ended our celebration with a Happy Birthday Party for Jesus in the fellowship hall with delicious cupcakes and punch.

During Sonshine Time on Fridays this fall the children have enjoyed talking about the importance of the Bible, God's word, in our lives and how God always has a plan for all people, including us. We have studied creation, Noah, Jacob, and Joseph. We studied Moses in depth: his placement in the basket, his conversation with God in the burning bush, his interactions with Pharaoh and the resulting plagues, the exodus, the parting of the sea, the ten commandments. Each week we have a craft that correlates to our story. We always expound on the chapel lesson from earlier in the week. This month we have explored the wonder that is found during the advent season. We visited the advent wreath in the sanctuary and talked about what each candle represents. Our last lesson was focused on the angels and the shepherds and how each worshipped God through the coming of the Savior. Sonshine Time is always a precious way to end our school week!

We wish everyone at Lord of Life Church a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Miss Ann

Four-year Old Preschool Class

One afternoon each week, an inquisitive group of preschoolers gather together to play, wonder, question, experiment, observe, and learn about the wonderful world around them. Our inquiries will vary widely, from physics using ramps or air power, building towers or bridges using cups, blocks, craft sticks and paper and finding out what sinks or floats in water, to kitchen chemistry making slime, gak, playdoh, glue, or using our favorite vinegar and baking soda combinations. We know what happens when dry ice is put in water and soap is added. It looks really cool inside a pumpkin! (You should try it.) We will learn about solutions, dissolving, and evaporation.

We often used principals of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) in our weekly class. Literature is often woven into our lessons. Sometimes the children are given a specific set of materials, minimal instruction, and allowed to discover, imagine, learn and create at their own pace, often in collaboration with others

During the first part of our school year we have explored our 5 senses and how they work. We have taken nature walks looking for signs of fall and used our senses to explore what we found. We have explored color and mixing colors and rainbows, as well as light, dark and shadows. Identifying scents was great fun, as well as tasting a variety of foods. The children enjoyed seeing rice vibrate when a metal pot lid was tapped and the grains danced around, and explored how instruments produce sound, and played a game identifying animal sounds.

During our weekly inquiries the children use scientific vocabulary such as predict, observe, outcome, investigate, chemical reaction, absorb, dissolve. We learn patience, the importance of asking questions, persistence, how to handle disappointment when something does not work the way we expect. We learn to try things a different way.

Learning about the wonderful world God has created for us is great fun. Children have such a marvelous, natural curiosity and I am grateful for the opportunity to help nurture a love of learning in the children that we serve.

Miss Mary Ann Rose

Mission & Ministry Council Leadership Changes - 2019

The November Congregational Meeting Elections bring new leadership to the MMC. The following members will represent organizational leadership for 2019.

President: Ken Rosemann (newly elected)

Vice President: Mark Bossi

Treasurer: Daryl Hagstrom

Secretary: Ann Pancoast (elected; 2nd two year term)

MMC Members at large: Janet Kammeyer

Krista Reed

Marty Schamber (newly elected)

Mark Stallmann

Together these individuals will represent the congregation with support and service to all activities in both the "Mission" work and "Ministry" of Lord of Life. As they begin their terms or as they continue in their present roles we give thanks to them for their service to each of us and our church. We give thanks for their willingness & dedication to serve.

"The 26th" - Return to Bethlehem

The streets of Bethlehem are no longer crowded with visitors. Cecil is back on the farm. The chickens are in the coop and the set and decorations have been packed away for another year. There were almost 800 visitors who made the journey to Return to Bethlehem this year. Based on the comments following their visit, the 60% of return travelers and the 40% of new visitors found your presentation to be "so personal, I felt I was in Bethlehem", "a wonderful telling of the story" and an "emotional" reminder of the real reason we celebrate Christmas.

It goes without saying, Lord of Life could not do this without the help of so many people. Whether you set up walls, handed our costumes, were in the cast, provided or served food, cleaned up afterwards or "carried bundles and fed donkeys until my feet screamed with pain" as the innkeepers helper said, your help was greatly appreciated. So much so that several travelers told us; "We hope Lord of Life never stops doing this for our community".

Won't you join in the fun andthe work next year, when we all get ready for the 27th time to "Return to Bethlehem?"

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

It is no secret that God calls us to be generous with the gifts He has given us. Throughout the Bible, we read that just as God has generously given to us, so are we to give generously one to another. As Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35) and "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

But God also calls us to give to Him. And He, who does all things well, presses it into service for the benefit of all the people of God. See for example what God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, after he and the people were safely brought out of Egypt across the Red Sea on dry land:

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me. And this is the contribution that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze, blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, goats' hair, tanned rams' skins, goatskins,[a] acacia wood, oil for the lamps, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, onyx stones, and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it. (Ex. 25: 1-9)

Notice in verse two that the Lord instructs Moses to tell the Israelites to “take for me a contribution” and that from everyone motivated from gratitude for what God has just accomplished and given to them, Moses is to gather up “the contribution for me.”

Pay attention, though, why the Lord wants the people of Israel to gather up these contributions for Him. God tells Moses precisely why: “let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.” The purpose for the contribution of the Israelites was so that He may dwell with them, that He would live among them. Through the tabernacle and the priesthood, through their rites and ceremonies, through their feasts and festivals, as through means, the Lord God, who brought them out of the bondage of Egypt would live and dwell among them and be their God, and lead them into the promised land, which flowed with milk and honey.

God dwells among us still. In the fullness of time, God’s son was born of woman, born under the law to redeem those under the law. He brought us out of bondage to sin, death, the devil, and Hell, and He did this by His obedient suffering and death, his resurrection and ascension. But He is not gone. He dwells with us through the means of His Word and His sacraments, through the preaching and the teaching of our pastors, through the rites and ceremonies of our liturgy. He dwells with us in the Church through those means. And He is leading us to the true promised land, to the new heavens and the new earth in the new creation.

In the meantime, as God, even now, continues to call us to give to Him, let us, who have been saved from slavery to sin and death, the devil and hell, be so moved in our hearts as to give generously to Him so that the means of grace, the means of His gracious dwelling among us, would continue now and into the future. For just as He did then so does He do now. He presses the gifts given to Him into service for the benefit of all His people. He puts it to use so that we may have him with us always, even unto the end of the age.



January Circle of Concern Needs:

- Dinner Helpers – Critical
- Canned Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Canned Carrots, Peas & Mixed Vegetables
- Cereal – Critical
- Deodorant - Critical

The Yellow Meal-A-Month Bags are on the Circle of Concern barrel in the entryway. Please take one, bring your items in those bags or a paper bag, and place them in the barrel. Circle has informed us that they can no longer reuse plastic grocery bags. They can only accept brown paper bags.

Our goal is 500+ cans each month. Thanks for your support!

January Baptism Birthdays:

Mary Churchill	1/1
Sharon Delmore	1/1
Ed Goza	1/1
Margie Jacob	1/1
Gladys Mueller	1/1
Krista Reed	1/1
Brian Tampow	1/1
Patty Tampow	1/1
Jim Urban	1/1
Cindy Young	1/1
Craig Young	1/1
Joseph Young	1/1
Sheila Zeigler	1/1
Karin Dye	1/2
Alice Pragman	1/6
Stephen Schelp	1/7
Donna Bremer	1/9
Steve Mueller	1/17
Marty Schamber	1/23
Katherine Peck	1/25
Lola Peck	1/28
Ruth Haussels	1/29

Note: If someone doesn't know their exact Baptism date, their name is listed at the beginning of the year.

Happy Birthday To:

Katherine Peck	1/7
JoAnn Erselius	1/8
Lola Peck	1/8
Danielle Beirne	1/9
Elisabeth Smith	1/11
Tyler Schmiderer	1/12
Lynne O'Connell	1/15
Shirley Rathert	1/15
Ruth Haussels	1/16
Darrell Schelp	1/21
John Dye	1/27
Cody Dickinson	1/28
Samantha Eatherton	1/30
Bob Krause	1/31

January Wedding Anniversaries:

Mark & Janet Kammeyer	1/11
Marty & Jackie Schamber	1/11
Ernie & Lola Peck	1/16
Roger & Carla May	1/18
Milton & Norma Fehrenbach	1/28

Serving Teams

Jan 6	8:00	Team 1
	10:30	Team 8
Jan 13	8:00	Team 5
	10:30	Team 10
Jan 20	8:00	Team 7-11
	10:30	Team CAAN
Jan 27	8:00	Team 2
	10:30	Team 6

Lay Readers

Jan 6	8:00	Tracy Heaton
	10:30	Robbie Doebert
Jan 13	8:00	Zach Zeigler
	10:30	Sharon Delmore
Jan 20	8:00	Janet Kammeyer
	10:30	Kristie Nolan
Jan 27	8:00	Diane Wolf
	10:30	John Dye

Nursery – 10:30

Jan 6	Kristin Dye
Jan 13	Carla May
Jan 20	Schamber Family
Jan 27	Robbie Doebert

Altar Guild

Team #1
 Carol DuMontier
 Margaret Drury
 Bobbie Pounds
 Melba Booker

Counting Teams

Jan 6	Peggy Krause Gene Valett
Jan 13	Steve Mueller Carol DuMontier
Jan 20	Yvette Hagstrom Cindy Young
Jan 27	Ken Rosemann Marilyn Evensen

Lay Ministers

Jan 6	8:00	Ted Greer
	10:30	Brian Andrew
Jan 13	8:00	Ted Greer
	10:30	Gene Valett
Jan 20	8:00	Mark Kammeyer
	10:30	Nehemiah Langness
Jan 27	8:00	Justin Langrehr
	10:30	Joe Delmore

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