

MISSION & MINISTRY CONNECTION

Rejoicing *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!”*

Philippians 4:4

A Word from Lay Ministry

When God Says No

Several years ago, prior to our family coming to Lord of Life, we came to a bit of a crossroads. My father’s health was failing, and his wife was entering the early stages of Alzheimer’s and dementia. After a considerable amount of prayer, we agreed to move back home to be near my parents and care for them. We had three basic criteria. 1) We must be less than an hour away from my dad. 2) We desired a diverse school district. 3) We wanted a smaller town with a simpler life in a more rural area.

We began traveling back home every weekend to look at small towns within an hour of my father. We identified this idyllic little country town with a historic town square within thirty miles of my father. All four corners of the town square were adorned with beautiful century old churches. We toured the elementary school. We attended worship at one of the churches in town. This place checked the boxes of our top three criteria.

We found a lovely home and decided to make an offer. We returned to St Louis and placed our house in Wildwood on the market. It sold in one day. Everything was falling into place. This was so easy. The Lord was blessing our well manufactured plan. Then our plan began to fall apart. The home in Kentucky had title and boundary issues that would be complicated to resolve due to family members having multiple adjoining plots. So, we began to look for other homes in the area. Then the buyers of our home had trouble securing their financing and had to back out of the purchase of our home. God was saying no.

We were perplexed. Our plan was so logical. We could take care of my ailing father. Joseph would be closer to his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. He could grow up in a small tight knit diverse community. Why would God say no? Within a couple of years of this attempted move, my father’s marriage of 42 years ended in divorce and he eventually came to live near us in Chesterfield. Furthermore, that idyllic little town was none other than Mayfield, Kentucky. Now we know at least two reasons why God said no, and we are abundantly grateful for the outcome even if our gratitude comes in hindsight.

There is nothing special about this little story of ours and it is certainly not the first time the Lord said no to us. Every Christian has experienced times when the Lord said no and at the time had no idea why. It seems we as a church family are entering 2022 with lots of nos. We have no pastor. We have no church organist. The pastor to which we presented a call has said no. If nos were strikes, we would be out. Right? There are three things I would encourage our church family to consider when it seems God is saying no.

First, God is not mad. He stills wants what is best for Lord of Life and the community we serve. We must lean upon God's promises. "God will meet all our needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19 "God knows the plans he has for us" "plans to prosper and not to harm, plans for a hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11. We must remember "God makes known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. His purposes will stand, and He will do all that He pleases." Isaiah 46:10. We must "count it all joy when we meet trials of various kinds. For we know that the testing of our faith will produce steadfastness leading to perfection lacking in nothing." James 1:2-4.

Second, we cannot focus on the past. Lord of Life has a rich history each of us should cherish. I love hearing the stories of the white octagon building. I think it is neat we still have folding chairs with the original "mission" church name spray painted on them. I am excited that we will be celebrating 50 years of worship as a faith community in just a couple of years. I enjoy looking at the photos of days with larger youth departments and more grandiose musical productions not to mention the magical memories of Return to Bethlehem. These I love remembering and hope to revisit in the future. However, they cannot be our focus. Our focus must be on the Lord. How can we reach our community for Jesus? We are mere sojourners of the faith hoping to leave a legacy for our children and grandchildren. Our desire should be that there is a place of worship, witness, and testimony to the saving knowledge of Jesus at the corner of Baxter and Clarkson roads a hundred years from now when we will be with the Lord. We must "forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead. We must press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called us heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:13-14.

Third, we must stand. When we have no answer, when the answer is no, when we don't like the answer, we must stand. We must continue to be faithful to our call. We will continue to show up for worship. We will continue to pray. We must continue to give. We must continue to be faithful to one another for we are a family bound together by the strongest of bonds, the blood of Jesus and the power of His Holy Spirit. We must "Be still and know that He is God." Psalm 46:10. During this time of seeking we must "put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, we may be able to stand our ground, and after we have done everything, to stand." Ephesians 6:13.

I encourage us to welcome "no." No means the Lord is still working out our faith. No means the Lord is protecting us. No means the Lord still has the best in store for us.

For His Glory,
Craig Young, Chair of Lay Ministry

A Word from Deaconess Sarah Longmire

Advent greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

December was another very busy, happy month in Preschool! Our classrooms are full and bustling. We are learning our classroom routines, enjoying the changing weather, and of course, getting ready for Christmas!

This month, we sang in church on 12/12 and shared a fellowship, potluck-style lunch afterwards! It is such a joy to be able to facilitate community-building activities for the preschool and the church. I love seeing relationships grow and build!

We had our last day of school on 12/17. We performed Christmas programs for parents, families, and loved ones! These programs were also live streamed and will be on the church's Facebook page. I am very proud of the hard work that the children showed; they learned a lot of songs and many actions!

Looking to January, we will be very excited to celebrate Lutheran Schools' Week! We are so grateful to be a preschool in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. In some ways, we celebrate every day when we freely and excitedly learn about Jesus. However, during January in particular, we will have a special week of dressing up, sponsoring a specific mission outreach, singing again in church, and having another fellowship activity!

As always, thank you for your continued prayers and support of the preschool! We are very blessed to be so loved and encouraged.

In Jesus' Love,
Deaconess Sarah

A Message from Pre-Kindergarten

Hello and Happy Holidays from Pre-Kindergarten!

This semester we have been working on our social emotional growth which helps children learn to be confident in a complex world. We practice sharing and taking turns; recognizing and labeling our own emotions and showing empathy.

Second semester we will continue with these concepts in addition to working on our math skills and scientific thinking. Cognitive and language skills will be enhanced by "Questions of the Day" and "Letters of the Week."

Of course, Bible will always be a focus in our class!

Pre-Kindergarten Teachers Miss Janay and Miss Laura

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

'Tis More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” (Acts 20:35)

And indeed, it is. Does this not strike a chord that resonates in us all? Which of us can't recall the look of surprise and thanks for the Christmas gifts that we labored to give to those whom we love? And the joy written on their face when that gift is received with thanksgiving means more than all the gifts we have received. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our Lord knew this because He practiced it. He gave of Himself – sparing not even His life in death – in order to give us back to our Father in heaven. He knew that in giving you get more because joy is multiplied in giving. The one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. And, what is more, the one who receives only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously in thanksgiving.

So it is with our tithes and offerings in church. We want to give because we have received from God all that we are and all that we have. Our giving does not originate in what we must do to earn God's favor. We have God's favor because of His gift of His Son, given through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving so that our tithes and offering are freely given in thanksgiving for what God has so generously given to us.

Why then does the church struggle to make budgets? Why does the church always seem stretched so thin when it is the place where God continually gives us His forgiveness of sins? Why does the church struggle when God, out of love for us, generously pours out His grace and mercy?

It is because we are sinners. Our fallen nature makes us selfish and miserly. It leads us to believe that we can have our cake and eat it, too. Because of sin, we want God's grace and mercy; we want His blessings of body and soul. But we don't want to share it with those around us. We want to remain comfortable in our own self-contained, neat, and tidy lives – without the headaches of loving those around us by helping them in their time of need.

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” Remember that God has placed you in a church, not only to receive His grace and mercy, but to press His eternal and temporal blessings into service to your neighbor.

Your tithes and offerings ensure that those around you have a pastor to preach the life-saving and life-giving Word of God. They ensure that the lights, heat, and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism as well as bread and wine for Holy Communion. They even ensure that your pastor has food and clothing and presents for his own family. The gifts of God are

immeasurable. They multiply and redound to everyone’s good as the fish and loaves in the feeding of the five thousand.

So, remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And remember the joy that attended the gifts you gave at Christmas. This same joy attends your gifts to the church.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

January Circle of Concern Needs

Cereal	Women’s Razors 4+ Blade
Canned Chicken	Women’s Shaving Cream
Snacks	Moisturizing Shampoo
Cake Mix	Size 5 Feminine Hygiene Pads
Muffin Mix	Body Wash - CRITICAL

Please bring your items and place them in the barrel. Thank you for your support!

January Birthdays

Katherine Peck	January 7
JoAnn Erselius	January 8
Lola Peck	January 8
Elisabeth Smith	January 11
Tyler Schmiderer	January 12
Lynne O’Connell	January 15
Shirley Rathert	January 15
Ruth Haussel	January 16
Darrell Schelp	January 21
John Dye	January 27

January Wedding Anniversaries

Mark & Janet Kammeyer	January 11
Marty & Jackie Schamber	January 11
Justin & Blake Langrehr	January 13
Ernie & Lola Peck	January 16

January Baptism Birthdays

Mary Churchill	January 1
Vicki Cralle	January 1
Sharon Delmore	January 1
Ed Goza	January 1
Krista Reed	January 1
Brian Tampow	January 1
Patty Tampow	January 1
Jim Urban	January 1
Cindy Young	January 1
Craig Young	January 1
Joseph Young	January 1
Sheila Zeigler	January 1
Austin May	January 6
Donna Bremer	January 9
Julie Mowczko	January 13
Steve Mueller	January 17
Marty Schamber	January 23
Katherine Peck	January 25
Lola Peck	January 28
Ruth Haussel	January 29

Altar Guild

January – Team #2

Beth Bossi
 JoAnn Erselius
 Linda Rosemann
 Jackie Schamber

Serving Teams

Jan. 2	8:00	Team 5
	10:30	Team 9
Jan. 9	10:00	Team 6
Jan. 16	8:00	Team 7
	10:30	Team 8
Jan. 23	4:00	Team 1
	7:00	Team 4
Jan. 30	8:00	Team 3
	10:30	Team 9

Counting Teams

Jan. 2	Yvette Hagstrom Jackie Schamber
Jan. 9	Sharon Delmore Ken Rosemann
Jan. 16	Dennis Oneal Linda Rosemann
Jan. 23	Sue Andrew Jean Urban
Jan. 30	Richard Barigela Joe Delmore

Lay Readers

Jan. 2	8:00	Diane Wolf
	10:30	Sharon Delmore
Jan. 9	10:00	Cindy Young
Jan. 16	8:00	Megan Clasen
	10:30	Marty Schamber
Jan. 23	4:00	Janet Kammeyer
	7:00	Mark Androff
Jan. 30	8:00	Mark Bossi
	10:00	Christel Handel

Lay Ministers

Jan. 2	8:00	Mark Kammeyer
	10:30	Donnie May
Jan. 9	10:00	Craig Young
Jan. 16	8:00	Justin Langrehr
	10:30	Donnie May
Jan. 23	8:00	Mark Kammeyer
	10:30	Joe Delmore
Jan. 30	8:00	Justin Langrehr
	10:30	Craig Young