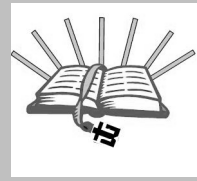


# LIVING WORDS

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



January 27, 2010  
Volume 5, Issue 2

Living Word Lutheran Church  
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*“Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.” Joel 2:13*

This verse from Joel is an instant reminder that Lent will soon be upon us. This verse from Joel is used in our weekly worship to replace the alleluia verse leading up to the reading of the Gospel. The reason this happens is because soon our Alleluia's will be silenced and we will be called once again to repentance, prayer and ultimately, a return to the Lord our God.

However, when thinking about this verse with the worship tune running through my head, I could not help but think about the situation that is happening in Haiti. Many so called Christians are proclaiming the first part of this verse because they believe the Haitian people caused the great devastation because of their sinful ways and therefore all of Haiti needs to return to the Lord their God. However, I believe these so called Christians hurt the name of Christian. They hurt the name of Christian because they forget the remaining portion of this verse. We have a God that is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounds in steadfast love. The portion we don't sing on Sunday is, “we have a God who relents from punishing.”

This is the message the Haitian people need to hear. Love not hate. Grace not law. And the reason I know and believe this so deeply is because it is the same message we need to hear. We do not have a God who punishes us for every bad thing we have ever done. We have a God that loves us so much that he sent his only son to die for us. That is the message that the Lenten season brings. Lent is a 40-day journey for us to the cross with Christ Jesus our Lord, where God's love for us was shown in a most unusual way.

May this Lent be a time where all of us hear once again the call to, *“Return to the Lord, your God.”* And may we continue to support the people of Haiti with our gifts given out of love and most importantly and may we continue to keep the people of Haiti in our prayers.

Let us pray,  
Loving God, in the communion of Christ,  
we are joined with the trials and sufferings of all.  
Be with those who endure the effects of the earthquake in Haiti.  
Protect those in the path of danger.  
Open the pathway of evacuations.  
Help loved ones find one another in the chaos.  
Provide assistance to those who need help.  
Ease the fears of all and make your presence known in the stillness of your peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Jason and Pastor Andrea

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“Celebrate the Joyful WORSHIP of Christ regularly” ...and bring others with you to share ‘the joy’  
-expanded from the “Principals We Live by Mission Purpose of LWLC.

Thanks to the Living Word Christmas Singers and the Living Word Choir - for their music on Christmas Eve at Living Word was uplifting. The Living Word Choir worked hard at all those 8 AM Sunday morning rehearsals and even stayed for a full rehearsal following a mid-week Advent Service. Those in the Congregation who attended both Christmas Eve Services heard much music of different styles presented. The only repeated special music heard at both services was the wonderful Viola solo played by Sam Moody. The Living Word Choir extended themselves even more by singing at both Services helping to provide fifteen minutes of Christmas music before each service. A nice time of food and fellowship was enjoyed between the services with some members of the Congregation joining the Choir. Entertainment during this time was provided by the Organist who showed everyone how to spill a plate of food on himself!

The Living Word Christmas Singers helped to provide some lighter special Christmas music before the 7 PM service. The Living Word Seasonal Singers will sing for Easter Day services as well as Christmas Eve. For those who would like to give of their talent but are restricted by rehearsal time, the Seasonal Singers can be their answer. Stay tuned to this newsletter for more information.

Wasn't it wonderful to see and hear Living Word's Children sing and ring? Many thanks, to those who took leadership for the two Children's groups.

The second half of this February brings us into the season of Lent. Sometimes we get things all switched around. What is unimportant we regard as supremely important. What really matters we are quick to discard. The high call of Lent is to get our priorities in order, so that God might be glorified and served in all of our life. In the Luke 4 text for the First Sunday in Lent Jesus had to do that. Jesus was in the wilderness being tempted by Satan. Jesus was preparing for a great task---the divine work of man's salvation. He would have to die for the people. To keep His eye on that kind of priority would mean having all the lesser priorities in order too. Satan tempted Him precisely at these crucial points, but He remained faithful to the larger priority---the Word of God and the Father's will. That is our high calling in Lent---to see the Word as all important! Can it be: More important than my career? More important than purchasing power for the sake of my family's comfort? More important than flashy church programs that pack the worship space? Lent calls us to focus on and trust God's Word. Temptation and the power of evil are no small force, Jesus wants us to know. Martin Luther, as hymn writer, wrote:

The old satanic foe  
Has sworn to work us woe!  
With craft and dreadful might  
He arms himself to fight.  
On earth he has no equal.

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

The devil has been imagined in many ways throughout history. Even in music there is a tradition of avoiding the interval between notes called, “an augmented fourth” because it is the “devil's interval.” The composer Tartini wrote a piece for violin that contains the “devil's trill.” Musicians find passages in music that they find “devilishly” hard, and occasionally we skip a choir rehearsal or worship service because “the devil made us do it.” So we see how easy it becomes to domesticate and trivialize a power so strong that even Jesus had to ferociously fight it. So let us remember to focus on His promises that will bring us all we are really looking for. Christ was crucified, and died---and the third day there was victory. During this Lenten season we will sing beautiful, solemn music at worship. Let us keep God's Word and way the center of our lives and our work!

Wendell Baechler  
Organist

LENTEN SERIES

Ash Wednesday is February 17 which begins the season of Lent. This year the Lenten midweek series will be: "Overheard: Conversations by the Cross." This six-part Lenten worship series asks, "Did various people who were involved in our Lord's Passion ever have an opportunity to talk with one another about it?" People such as Malchus and Mark, Barabbas and Caiaphas, Pilate and his wife, Simon of Cyrene and the centurion, Mary and John, and the two thieves. If you could have listened to their conversations, what might you have Overheard?



February 16 6PM Shrove Tuesday Dinner  
 February 17 7PM Ash Wednesday  
 February 24 6PM Lenten Dinner  
 7PM Lenten Worship  
 March 3 6PM Lenten Dinner  
 7PM Lenten Worship  
 March 10 6PM Lenten Dinner  
 7PM Lenten Worship  
 March 17 6PM Lenten Dinner  
 7PM Lenten Worship

March 24 6PM Lenten Dinner  
 7PM Lenten Worship  
 March 28 9:30AM Palm Sunday  
 April 1 7PM Maundy Thursday Service  
 (Sedar Meal)  
 April 2 7PM Good Friday Service  
 April 4 Time for the Easter Service(s)  
 will be announced at a later  
 date.

LIVING WORD CHOIR FEBRUARY SCHEDULE

|                        |                 |   |
|------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Sunday, February 7     | Epiphany 5      | 8 AM Prayer and Rehearsal                   |
| Sunday, February 14    | Transfiguration | 8 AM Prayer and Rehearsal<br>9:30 AM Anthem |
| Wednesday, February 17 | Ash Wednesday   | Warm up and Anthem                          |
| Sunday, February 21    | Lent 1          | 8 AM Prayer and Rehearsal                   |
| Sunday, February 28    | Lent 2          | 8 AM Prayer and Rehearsal                   |

REPORT OF SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
JANUARY 24, 2010  
Submitted by Marian Gray, Council President

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The congregational meeting opened with prayer at 11:10 a.m. with 26 members present. Given that this is one of the two important meetings in the year, with significant agenda items, it was disappointing to see so few members participating.

2009 Financial Report:

The 2009 Financial Report for Living Word, prepared by the Treasurer, G. Proseus, showed total income of \$160,507 and operating expenses of \$150,035 (including non-budgeted expense items), providing a positive net figure of \$10,472. The income figure included approximately \$22,000 of BOW contributions reallocated to General Giving by members during the year, and \$5,626 given by members towards the cost of non-budgeted expense items. Consequently no withdrawals were required from any other account. The contribution to Synod Benevolence, however, was \$5,550 less than budgeted. (Copies of the Financial Report are available at the church).

2010 Budget and Pledge Status:

A proposed budget of \$153,326 was presented for approval and represented an increase of approx \$9,000 over 2009, primarily due to higher rent and utilities, and a nominal increase of 3% for salaries. Benevolence was reduced to \$5,000 with the intent of fulfilling that commitment in 2010. Notation was made during the meeting that the Pastors' salary was \$12,000 below the minimum amount set out in the 2010 ELCA Guidelines, and that this situation needed to be taken into account in future financial planning with the goal of reducing the difference.

Current pledges (27) amount to \$112,240 leaving a shortfall in income of \$41,086 for the year. Even allowing for unpledged income similar to that received in 2009, a shortage of approximately \$20,000 still remains. Requesting members to revisit their pledges, or complete a pledge card, as well as contributing all or part of any tax refund to Living Word, were suggestions to help meet the shortfall.

The non-balanced budget was approved by a majority with 3 nays.

Nomination Committee:

The following members were elected to the Nomination Committee for 2010: Susan Hugel, Beverly Wagner, Lee Buchschacher and Jim Bampffield. Travis Fowler was appointed as Council's non-voting consultant to the Committee. An expression of thanks was extended to the 2009 Committee members.

REPORT OF SEMI-ANNUAL  
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING  
(article continued from Page 4)

Proposed Amendments to Constitution and By Laws of Living Word:

The proposed amendments to the Constitution and By Laws, as approved by Council on December 10, 2009, were presented to the Congregation. By unanimous vote both documents with amendments were approved and adopted for onward transmission to the Southeastern Synod for final approval.

BOW/Capital Campaign Update:

Total contributions to the Capital Campaign amounted to \$142,728 as of January 17, 2010. This represents more than 50% of the total pledges given, leaving a balance of \$140,272 to be met over the next 16-24 months. Although approximately \$22,000 was reallocated to General Giving in 2009 from BOW contributions, \$41,778 was still contributed to the BOW Fund during the year. After completing payment of the land loan and associated costs (e.g. property tax, site development survey) the balance of the BOW Funds has been increasing with a current balance of \$34,003.

Living Word - Financial Planning:

In order to be able to establish a reliable time-line for constructing a building, Council and the Finance Committee require financial data to first determine a realistic loan amount that can be supported by Living Word, and which will be approved by Mission Investment Fund. Consequently all members are being asked to complete an anonymous survey (one per household or giving unit) to be returned by February 7<sup>th</sup>, indicating the amount of an estimated pledge to General Giving once the Capital Campaign is finished. If you were not at the Congregational Meeting, we ask that you please pick up a survey to be completed. We are hoping that since we had 27 pledges for 2010, we should be close to that number when it comes to the survey.

Easter Services:

Following an inquiry by Pastor Jason, members present indicated that they probably would not attend an Easter Sunrise Service. Because of an expected increase in attendees at Easter Worship, discussion followed on having two services and at what times. Most people did not favor an early service, and non-availability of the organist prevented a service being held later than 9:30. The Worship Committee will review the matter at their next meeting.

Dorcas Circle (Millington)

The Dorcas Circle will meet on Tuesday, February 9, at 7 pm. The gathering will take place at the home of Michelle Spitler. All are welcome!

February Birthdays

- |   |                 |    |                  |
|---|-----------------|----|------------------|
| 1 | Karen Hudspeth  | 11 | Richard Majkrzak |
| 4 | Cheryl Schwartz | 12 | Carolyn Moody    |
|   |                 | 26 | Carter Majkrzak  |

February Anniversaries

Ford & Joyce Cornett (16)

February Baptisms

- |    |                   |    |                |
|----|-------------------|----|----------------|
| 2  | Alex Buchschacher | 25 | Lisa Chapman   |
| 18 | Elna Larson       | 25 | Alex Fowler    |
| 20 | Betty Barnes      | 25 | Cody Sutton    |
|    |                   | 26 | Beverly Wagner |

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THRIVENT FINANCIAL FOR LUTHERANS - HELPING HAITI

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will add \$1 to every \$2 donated by Thrivent members, with a maximum amount of \$250 added by Thrivent per member donation, up to an aggregate added amount of \$1 million. Donations will be accepted through March 31, 2010.

Donations can be made by check, online or by phone, to any one of the following funds: (1) ELCA Disaster Response; (2) Lutheran World Relief; (3) LCMS World Relief/Human Care; (4) WELS Committee on Relief.

To make a donation by check, the check should be made payable to the designated fund (not payable to Thrivent), noting "Helping Haiti" on the Memo Line, signed by a Thrivent member, and mailed to:

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, 4321 N. Ballard Road, Appleton, WI 54919.

Thrivent will then forward the check to the appropriate Fund after calculating the additional contribution from Thrivent.

For questions or to make a donation over the phone, call 1-800-236-3736 between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. Central time, Monday through Friday. When prompted say "directory" and enter ext. 83003, OR visit [Thrivent.com/helpinghaiti](http://Thrivent.com/helpinghaiti) to learn more and make a donation.

Unfortunately, donations to this Thrivent program cannot be made through Living Word.

M. Gray  
Thrivent Church Coordinator

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*Visit us at:*

Web site address

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[www.livingwordlc.org](http://www.livingwordlc.org)

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**LIVING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH'S  
Mission and Purpose**

Living the Word...Spreading the Word.

**Worshiping**  
Celebrate the joyful worship of Christ Regularly

**Praying**  
Pray daily for one another and for the community

**Sharing**  
Be a light in the community by sharing our bounty

**Proclaiming**  
Proclaim Living Word of Jesus Christ in Word and Deed

**Studying**  
Grow in Faith and Knowledge in Study of the Bible

**Welcoming**  
Welcome with love and acceptance ALL people