



Dear friends in Christ,

As we move from the festivals of Reformation and All Saints into the quiet anticipation of Advent, Lord of Life is alive with hope and activity. In the weeks ahead, our worship, fellowship, and service invite us to prepare room—for Christ, for one another, and for our neighbors.

Through sung midweek prayers, joyful decorating, creative expression, and celebrations of Christmas traditions from around the world, the Spirit is gently drawing us deeper into joy and belonging. This season reminds us that even in the busyness, Christ comes to us—again and again—with light, peace, and promise.

And this season also reminds us of a simple, aching truth: from the very beginning, Jesus came into a world that did not have room for him. Mary and Joseph, weary from travel and uncertainty, knocked on doors that never opened. They were turned away, yet God's love would not be shut out.

So Jesus was born anyway—in a stable, among the outcast and overlooked, held by parents who trusted God's promise more than their own fear. That story isn't just ancient history. It is still happening today.

There are people in our community longing for a door to open. People searching for a place to rest their soul. People hoping for just a glimmer of welcome to break into their darkness. And every single week, because of you, they are finding room here.

I hear it in their words:

- “I didn't think church was for someone like me.”

- “I wasn't sure when I walked in, but I left feeling at home.”
- “Everyone is so friendly; I'm so glad I came.”

You are making that possible. Through radical hospitality, compassionate service, and a warmth that can be felt the moment you step through our doors, Lord of Life is a place where Christ's love isn't only spoken—it's practiced.

This is how we prepare him room.

As we approach year's end, I invite you to continue supporting this ministry—through prayer, presence, and financial giving—so that we may continue the welcome Christ is growing here. You can give in worship, through your bank, or online. Every gift fuels a ministry that is changing lives in real, tangible ways.

Mary and Joseph found room at last. Our church is a little like that place. It may not be the biggest or fanciest, but it is a place where travelers find rest; a light in the night; a stable of grace; a home where Christ is born anew in every act of welcome.

Thank you for your generosity, your hope, and your commitment to

Grace and peace,

Lunch Bunch



We will meet at Longhorn, 708 Janes Avenue, Bolingbrook, on Tuesday, December 9th at 11:30 AM. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Marilynn Sells at 630-927-9996. Please plan to pay with cash, as cash is preferred by the restaurant.

Happy Birthday

Dec. 3rd Nancy U.
Dec. 5th Bruce D.
Dec. 8th Art K.
Dec. 10th Raymond S.
Dec. 15th Ethan M.
Dec. 17th Ray S.
Dec. 20th Dale P.
Dec. 25th Paul R.



International Christmas Celebration

Our annual International Christmas Celebration is tonight from 4:00 to 7:00. We are having a Christmas raffle and are looking for items to raffle off, with all proceeds going to the ministry fund.

Ticket Prices: \$15 for adults, \$7 (5-11 years), under 5 free, Family max \$45.

Senior Spirits

We will meet on Thursday December 11th at noon, this is a week earlier. We will continue with our Potluck Luncheon. If you would like to participate in the gift card exchange please bring a \$10.00 gift card to Senior Spirits.

Everyone is welcome!

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me!

Marilynn Sells
630-927-9996

Blues Christmas Longest Night Service

Feeling blue this holiday season? Know someone who is struggling with finding joy this Christmas? You and your loved ones are invited to the Blues Christmas Service at **Prince of Peace Lutheran Church on Sunday, December 21st at 6pm.** The service is a collaboration between Christ Lutheran of Clarendon Hills, Lord of Life Lutheran of Darien, and Prince of Peace Lutheran of Woodridge.

This special service is designed for those experiencing loss, grief, or hardship during the season. It is open for all who need comforting. Come as you are, and allow the peace, hope, love of Christ to renew your spirit, while listening to some great American Blues music. All are welcome.

Children and Hunger Committee

The Children and Hunger Committee is collecting food to put together Christmas meals in partnership with Mt. Carmel food pantry. Sign up sheet is in the Sanctuary.

Poinsettias

Our 2025 Poinsettias this year will come in a foiled 6-1/2" sized pot with 5 or more flowers on the plant. The cost is \$17.00 per plant. Please mark the color you prefer (red or white), how many plants you are ordering and the amount enclosed. Please place your order envelope in the collection plate or give it to the church office by December 14th at the very latest! Thank you!

Karaoke & Krafts

Join us for an afternoon of creativity and joy on **December 13th at 3:00 pm.** Whether you love belting out your favorite tunes or getting crafty with friends, this event has something for everyone. Come sing, laugh, and make something beautiful together. All ages are welcome - bring your voice, your imagination, and your community spirit.



SDA has invited LoL on Saturday night, Dec 20, 2025 at 6 pm to join them at LoL to watch the movie "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" All are welcome.

Un-Decorating the Church

Come and join us to un-decorate the church on January 4th at 11:15 am. Please sign up to bring treats. There is a sign up in the narthex. It will be a jolly good time!

Midweek Service

December 3rd

Brush Strokes 5:00 PM
Holden Evening Pray 7:00 PM
Lord of Life

December 10th

Holden Evening Pray 7:00 PM

December 17th*

Holden Evening Pray 7:00 PM



Pop Culture Spirituality Event We are hosting a special event for high schoolers and young adults on December 6th at 6:00pm called Pop Culture Spirituality: K-Pop Demon Hunter.

Together, we'll watch the movie K-Pop Demon Hunter and explore some of the deeper themes it raises—identity, courage, community, and what it means to stand up against forces that diminish life. After the film, Pastor Adam will lead an explorative conversation about how stories in modern media can connect with our Lutheran understanding of faith, vocation, and what God is up to in the world.

It will be a fun night with popcorn, snacks, and great conversation.

Annual Meeting Reports

All committee reports for the Annual Meeting are due on **January 9, 2026.** The Annual Meeting will be held on **January 25, 2026** after service.



Final Donations for 2025 All cash and check donations for 2025 need to be in the Church office by **10:00 AM on Wednesday, December 31st** to be included in the final count for 2025. All electronic donations for 2025 need to be submitted by **Sunday, December 14th** to be included in the final count. Thank you!

2025 Council Members

- Marilynn Sells - President, Personnel, Worship and Music
- Ron Matta - Vice President, Personnel
- Linda Glover- Secretary
- Jim Kelly - Treasurer
- Connie Allekian - Evangelism, Stewardship
- Marlene Carlson - RIC
- Elsy Eggert - Children and Hunger
- Art Kardatzke - Property Committee
- Ray Kozak
- Debbie McNichols - Hospitality
- Judy Padera - LCW
- Alice Tangorra - Hospitality
- Pastor Adam

We are deeply grateful to Art Kardatzke for his dedicated work in repairing and repainting the front cross. His care and craftsmanship have refreshed this cherished symbol of our faith, reminding us daily of Christ's love and sacrifice.

We also extend our sincere thanks to Ron Matta & Elsy Eggert for their wonderful efforts on the outdoor sign and property improvements. Their hard work has brightened our grounds and made our church more welcoming to all who pass by.

Together, these acts of service are a beautiful example of how love and faith shine through in practical ways. Thank you, Art, Ron, and Elsie, for blessing our church family with your time, talent, and devotion.



Committee Report

Finance:

October donations were fair. The \$15,511 total is the fourth lowest October in the last ten years, trailing a fair 2024 (\$15,828) by \$318 and an extraordinary 2023 (\$44,132) by \$28,622. October expenses (\$22,106) were higher than 2024 (\$21,961) by \$145 and higher than 2023 (\$21,581) by \$525. October operations generated a \$6,595 deficit. The year-to-date deficit increased to \$50,008, the deficit is the second highest the end of ten months not just in the last ten years, but in the last twenty-five years.

At the end of nine months, 83.33% of the year, 82.8% of the budget was spent. Most categories that exceeded 82.8% were highly seasonal. However, it should be noted that in prior years the percent expended has been several percent lower than the completed portion of the year.

Donations through October recorded in Shepherd's Staff agree in total and by fund with the financial records.

No pass-through funds are overdrawn. Twelve on-line donations totaling \$1,133.82 were received by the last counters report date (10/27/25). There were no Thrivent donations (YTD there have been 6 Thrivent donations totaling \$402).

The balance sheet remains strong. There is no long term debt. Total assets have decreased by \$55,074 since 12/31/24. The decrease is due to the operational deficit and the Gathering Place project. Without phenomenal donations during November and December totaling approximately \$88,000, Lord of Life will end 2025 with a substantial operational deficit. James T. Kelly - Treasurer

Council Highlights

Pastor's Report

Community Partnerships

- Darien Arts Council
 - Recent play at Lord of Life was well-attended and well-received.
 - Council expressed gratitude for this ongoing, Spirit-led partnership.
- Broadview Detention Center – Clergy Witness
 - Pastor Adam reported on his participation in the clergy action at Broadview.
 - Congregational response:
 - Several members expressed gratitude and appreciation for his witness.
 - A few raised concerns or questions, which led to good conversations.
 - Anonymous letters (no signature or return address) have been sent to both his home and the church criticizing perceived “liberal” or “left-wing” actions and previous sermons (e.g., on Charlie Kirk).

Pastor Adam:

- Reaffirmed his commitment to preach and lead in line with Jesus' teachings and the Gospel, not partisan allegiance.
- Is open to honest, good-faith conversation where people are willing to listen and learn from each other.
- Christ the King Context
 - Pastor noted this is timely as the church approaches Christ the King Sunday, emphasizing that our ultimate allegiance is to Christ, not political parties

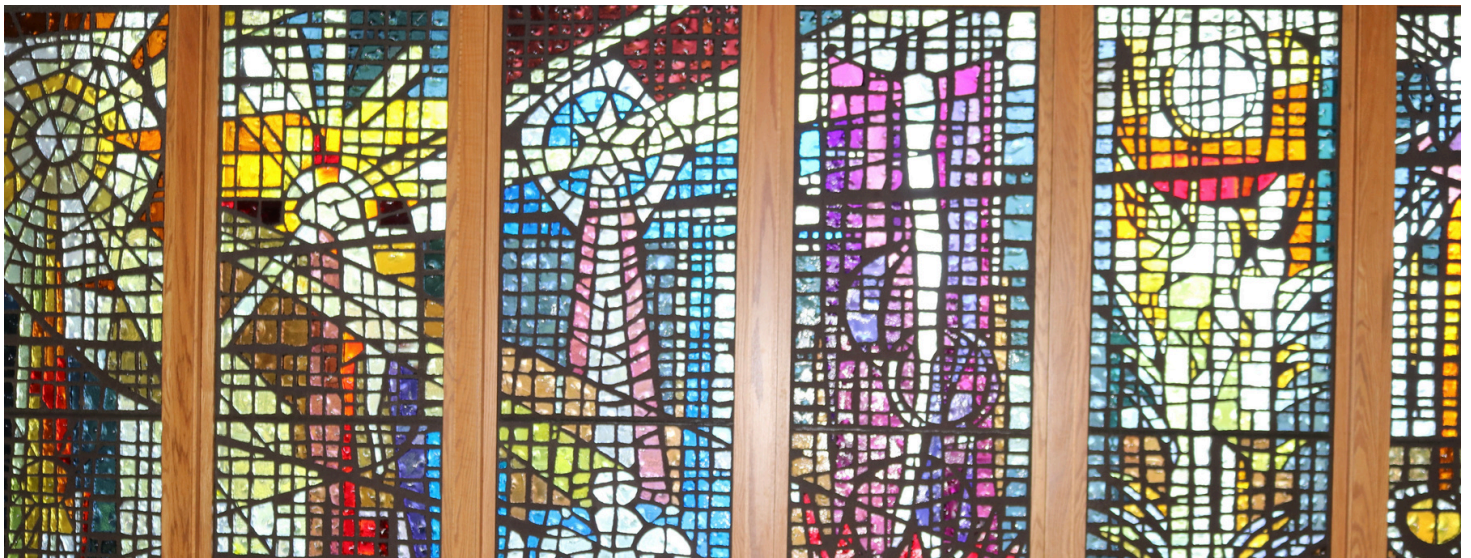
- Attendance & Energy
 - Average worship attendance over the last four Sundays: ~56 people, with no “major” holidays inflating numbers (aside from All Saints).
 - Pastor reports strong energy and spirit in the congregation.
- Youth / Young Adult Event – “K-Pop Demon Hunters”
 - Date: December 6 (evening, day before International Christmas Celebration).
 - Audience: High schoolers and young adults.
 - Content: Screening of the movie K-Pop Demon Hunters (popular animated film on Netflix) followed by discussion of spiritual themes, with pizza/popcorn.
 - Youth from Christ Lutheran (Pastor Carol) and Gloria Dei.
 - This is intended as a first step in rebuilding a youth/young adult program.
- Karaoke & Crafts – Darien Arts Council
 - Date: Saturday, December 13 in the Fellowship Hall.
 - Members invited to attend, sing Christmas songs, and do crafts.
 - A good opportunity to color the ELCA World Hunger nativity sets.
- ELCA World Hunger Advent Resources
 - Free Advent Devotional Nativity Kits (with daily readings, videos, etc.) are available starting December 1.
- “Longest Night / Blues Christmas” Service
 - Date: December 21 at 6:00 p.m. (winter solstice).
 - Joint ELCA service using “Longest Night” liturgy, reframed as “Blues Christmas.”
 - Pastor Craig is organizing, including a live blues band (e.g., “Jesus Just Left Chicago”).
 - Pastor Adam plans to attend and invites council members and congregation to participate.
- Sanctuary Un-decorating
 - Date: January 4, after Epiphany worship.
- Loving Word – 14th Anniversary Banquet
 - Date: February 8 at 2:00 p.m., at a local banquet hall (location TBD).
 - Pastor Adam has been invited by Pastor Betty to preach.
 - Tickets: \$50 per seat (also functions as a fundraiser).
 - Pastor Adam and Pastor Elle will attend, and Pastor plans to purchase ~5 tickets and likely add a donation.
- Budget Requests & Timeline
 - Committees with budget lines (Hospitality, LCW, Property, Evangelism, Christian Education, etc.) need to submit budget requests to Jim Kelly.
 - Deadline for requests: December 10, to allow incorporation into the December 16 council meeting discussion.
- Christmas Food Bins (Mount Carmel)
 - Council agreed to increase from 8 to 10 bins for Christmas, trusting that the congregation can fill them (“abundance, think big”).
- Adopt-a-Plot & Grounds
 - Butterfly Garden & Perennials – Tall grasses are being removed; committee wants to refresh plantings.
 - Members are invited to share perennials from their own gardens in the spring.
- Prayer Flags on Trees
 - Small flags on crabapple trees were from an outdoor worship service about the Spirit/wind and prayer. Pastor confirmed they were not marking diseased trees.

- Holiday Lights
 - Adopt-a-Plot would like to add white lights to several trees near the church for Christmas.
- Memorial Tree Replacement
 - Old stump used for a birdbath split and was removed.
 - Adopt-a-Plot proposes planting a new maple tree (e.g., autumn blaze) as a memorial tree honoring Amanda McCall (former youth member who died at 14).
 - Plan: revisit and implement in the spring.
- Property Committee (“Property Brothers & Sisters”)
 - Cross Repair The front cross has been repaired and repainted (thanks to Art Kardatzke).
- Outdoor Sign
 - The church sign’s cloudy plexiglass has been replaced.
- New Stained Wooden Shelf has been completed and is ready for installation.
- Upcoming Property Tasks
 - Continue cleaning and reorganizing closets.
 - Install a remote sensor for the sanctuary thermostat.
 - Plug in heat tape before freezing temperatures to avoid pipe damage.
- International Christmas Celebration & Raffle
 - Planning committee has met and is well-organized.
 - Celebration will feature readings and/or elements from seven different countries.
- Nominating Committee & Council Membership
 - · Nominating Committee Members: Arlene Danielson, Jim Eckwell, Janet Kardatzke, and Sherry Sejnost.
 - 3 people will be replaced
- Member Compliance / Membership Status
 - Pastor Adam reviewed a list of members with no recorded giving and limited participation:
 - Several wish to remain members, some give cash that doesn’t always get recorded, others have various reasons but still consider Lord of Life their church home.
- Financial Situation & Budget
 - Current Deficit: As of end of October, there is a \$50,000 deficit.
 - Projected amount needed to “break even” (remaining November–December expenses plus deficit): approximately \$88,000.
 - Last year: ended about \$5,000 short of budget.
- Personnel Committee & Staff Compensation
 - Personnel Committee meeting held November 4 to discuss 2026 staff compensation.
 - Raises have been approved
 - Council acknowledged the tension between the deficit and raises, but there was consensus that honoring and retaining staff is important.
- Potential Partnership with Gloria Dei
 - Pastor Adam is exploring a way to reinvigorate the youth program in cooperation with Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Downers Grove. There is potential to formalize a partnership in 2026 and share some of the cost.
- Annual Reports & Committee Updates
 - Annual Reports: Sherry Sejnost requests all committee annual reports by January 9 for the annual report booklet.

- Evangelism:
 - 90 Advent cards were mailed out.
 - New small Advent cards have been placed in member mailboxes.
- Stewardship:
 - Pastor has mailed giving letters (including to those with no recorded giving).
- Other committees (Hospitality, Social Ministry, LCW, Christian Ed, Finance, Property, Vision) had no additional formal actions to report at this time.

December

| SUN 30 | MON Dec 1 | TUE 2 | WED 3 | THU 4 | FRI 5 | SAT 6 |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| 10am Worship Service In Pers 11am International Christmas 12pm Loving Word Service | 1pm Property Committee Meeting | 4pm Set Up for Brush Strokes 5:15pm OA | 10am Bible Study 5pm Brushstrokes and Beyond 7pm AA 7pm Holden Evening Prayer | 5pm Dance Academy 6:15pm Singo @ Freedom Bro | 9:30am Card Group 10am Funeral Cor Peterson | 9am SDA 6pm Youth Event with CLC an |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 10am Worship Service In Pers 12pm Loving Word Service 4pm International Christmas | | 11:30am Lunch Bunch 5:15pm OA | 10am Bible Study 6pm Soup Supper & Holden E 7pm AA | 12pm Senior Spirits 5pm Dance Academy | 9:30am Card Group | 9am SDA 12:30pm SDA Luncheon 3pm Karaoke & Krafts (DAC) |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 10am Worship Service In Pers 12pm Loving Word Service | | 5:15pm OA 7pm Church Council | 10am Bible Study 6pm Soup Supper & Holden E 7pm AA | 5pm Dance Academy | 9:30am Card Group 10am Fill Baskets for Mt. Carr | 9am SDA |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 10am Worship Service In Pers 12pm Loving Word Service | | 5:15pm OA | Christmas Eve 10am Bible Study 7pm AA | Christmas Day 5pm Dance Academy | 9:30am Card Group | 9am SDA |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | Jan 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10am Worship Service In Pers 12pm Loving Word Service | | 5:15pm OA | New Year's Eve 10am Bible Study 7pm AA | Rosita's Work Anniversary New Year's Day 5pm Dance Academy | 9:30am Card Group | 9am SDA |



November in Review



Lord of Life Lutheran Church
725 75th Street
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