



Dear Lord of Life Community,

This October marks five years since I became your pastor.

Five years feels both incredibly short and incredibly long. In October 2021, Lord of Life was emerging from the pandemic, grieving the loss of Pastor Todd, welcoming a new pastor, and wondering what the future of our congregation might look like. I spent those first months listening, learning your stories, and getting to know not only Lord of Life, but the community around us.

At the time, you told me that one of Lord of Life's goals was to grow.

Five years later, I think we have learned something important about what growth can mean.

2021 was a year of listening. We were finding our footing after enormous disruption and asking what God might be calling us to next.

2022 was a year of rebuilding. We returned to traditions we had missed, combined our Sunday services into one worshiping community, expanded our livestream, began outdoor worship, and started the Reconciling in Christ process.

2023 was a year of connecting. Partnerships grew, our building became home to more community groups, our RIC conversations deepened, and "We Share God's Love" became more than a phrase—it became the identity we wanted at the center of our life together. Our 2023 report described the hope of becoming a "Kin'dom of inclusivity, love, and service."

2024 was a year of stepping out. We painted windows for Pride, advocated for peace at local city councils, expanded community partnerships, built our Gathering Space, and continued discovering that some of our most meaningful ministry happens when we leave our walls and meet our neighbors where they are.

2025 was a year of becoming. We participated in our first Pride Fest, strengthened partnerships with neighboring congregations and community organizations like the Darien Arts Council, expanded our work with South Loop Community Table, and experimented with new ways of worshipping, serving, learning, and simply being together.

And now, **2026 has been a year of living into who we have become.** Our Reconciling in Christ journey has moved from conversations that began four years ago toward concrete commitments about welcome, racial equity, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, leadership, and how our congregation uses its space. We have continued showing up in our community, welcomed new partnerships, and continued experimenting with worship—from outdoor services and community gatherings to music and experiences that may not look exactly like church did a generation ago.

Through all of this, we have faced real challenges. We have said goodbye to beloved members. The financial realities of sustaining ministry remain. The world and wider church around us continue to change.

But perhaps the most important lesson of these five years is that **growth is not always measured by getting bigger.**

We have grown more connected.

We have grown more collaborative.

We have grown more comfortable trying something new.

We have grown more explicit about who is welcome here.

We have grown more present in our community.

And I believe we have grown in our understanding of who God is calling Lord of Life to be.

Five years ago, I began my first annual report with Paul's words to the Corinthians: "Let all that you do be done in love."

Five years later, I can think of no better description of the journey we have been on together.

We Share God's Love.

Not perfectly. Not always in the ways we expected. And certainly not without challenges. But again and again, God has given us opportunities to share that love—with one another, with our neighbors, and with a world that desperately needs it.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of being your pastor these past five years. More importantly, thank you for being willing to discover together what God might still be calling this little church with a big heart to become.

I cannot wait to see where the Spirit leads us next.

With gratitude and hope,



Lunch Bunch



We will meet at Buttermilk Cafe, 1500 Branding Ave, Downers Grove on Tuesday, October 13th at 11:30 AM. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Ron or Linda Matta at 630-297-8894. Please plan to pay with cash, as cash is preferred by the restaurant.



October 8 Manuel J.
October 14 David S.
October 19 Kristina T.
October 19 Ron M.
October 24 Mark A.
October 28 Benjamin J.

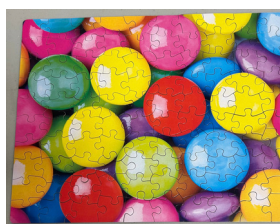
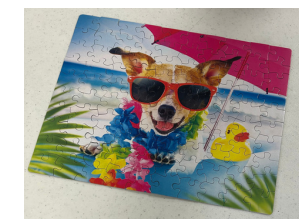
Senior Spirits



Senior Spirits met on September 17th and a good Potluck lunch was enjoyed by all and then we put together Jigsaw Puzzles! Carolyn and Diane won first prize!

On October 15th Seniors meets again for a Potluck lunch and then a presentation by Leslie Goddard! She is going to give a presentation on Gilda Radner! There will be a Freewill offering to help cover her fee! Everyone is welcome to join us at noon!

Any questions or suggestions please feel free to contact Marilyn at 1(630) 927-9996



Outdoor Worship



Join us for a special evening of worship, conversation, and action as we explore what it means to care for God's creation and seek climate justice together.

We'll begin at 6:30 p.m. with worship and Holy Communion, with Pastor Elle joining us and preaching. Following worship, Pastor Elle from Faith in Place will lead a workshop, combining conversation, art, and storytelling as we reflect on how climate change affects our communities.

Most importantly, we'll explore tangible ways we can make a difference together, including letter-writing, petitions, and opportunities to advocate with our elected representatives.

Come worship, learn, create, and discover how our faith can move us toward action. Everyone is welcome!

Looking for Singers

Gloria Dei has asked Lord of Life to join them for their Reformation Hymn Festival on **Sunday, October 25th at 4 pm**. They are looking for people to join the choir. There will be choir rehearsals at Gloria Dei on Wednesday, October 21 from 7-9 pm and Saturday, October 24, 10 am-noon.



Thank you to everyone whose hard work, donations and bake sale goods made the rummage and bake sale a wonderful success.

Team appreciation: The sorters and organizers, thank you for spending hours lifting, sorting, pricing and setting up the items to keep everything neat and accessible.

The Bakers: Thank you for providing a delicious variety of baked goods for the bake sale.

The Logistics and Clean up Crew: Thank you for managing the crowds during the event and handling the heavy lifting and clean up afterward.

The Donors and Shoppers: Thank you to everyone who contributed items to sell and those who came out to support the fundraiser with their purchases.

Pet Blessing

Sunday, Oct. 4, 2026

11:30 AM

All animals and people are welcome!

Stay for a Picnic

Food Provided Free of Charge



Ride Share Ministry

The purpose of our Ride Share Ministry is to connect members who need transportation with members of our congregation who are willing to help provide a ride.

If you would like to transport members of our congregation please fill out the following form. [Ride Share Form](https://forms.gle/325YnqMcCSWnSipx5)
<https://forms.gle/325YnqMcCSWnSipx5>

Once we compile a list of volunteer drivers, we will share it with those looking for a ride.

All Saints' Sunday

Sunday, November 1st is All Saints Sunday. Please fill out this [form](https://forms.gle/66skJFF3AAfAKUek8), <https://forms.gle/66skJFF3AAfAKUek8>, so their names may be read aloud during service. Additionally, bring a picture or a memento of them to be placed on the altar.



2026 Council Members

- Marilyn Sells - President, Personnel
- Ron Matta - Vice President, Property, Personnel
- Linda Glover - Secretary, Worship and Music, Christian Education
- Jim Kelly - Treasurer, Finance
- Marlene Carlson - RIC
- Art Kardatzke - Property
- Kellie Kerfin
- Ray Kozak
- Kathy Kratochvil
- Debbie McNichols - Hospitality
- Judy Padera - LCW
- Joy Prueter - Children and Hunger
- Alice Tangorra
- Pastor Adam - Christen Education, Evangelism, Personnel

Committee Report

Finance:

August donations were good. The \$16,403 total is the third highest August in the last ten years; exceeding a good 2025 (\$15,569) by \$834 and a very weak 2024 (\$9,812) by \$6,591. August expenses (\$19,836) were lower than 2025 (\$20,439) by \$604 and higher than 2024 (\$18,911) by \$925. August operations generated a \$3,433 deficit. The year-to-date deficit increased to \$25,048 and is the fourth lowest at the end of eight months in the last ten years.

At the end of eight months, 66.67% of the year, 62.6% of the budget was spent. Most categories that exceeded 62.6% were highly seasonal. As in many prior years, the percent expended is several percent lower than the completed portion of the year. Donations through August recorded in Shepherd's Staff agree in total and by fund with the financial records.

One pass-through fund is overdrawn. The To Be Determined Later pass-through was used for the Kane County Cougars tickets and will be repaid by individual participants.

Fifteen on-line donations totaling \$994.62 were received by the last counters report date (08/31/26). There were no Thrivent donations (YTD there have been 5 Thrivent donations totaling \$433).

The balance sheet remains strong. There is no long term debt. Total assets have decreased by \$18,860 since 12/31/25. The decrease is due to the operational deficit.

James T. Kelly
Treasurer

Church Council

Pastor's Report

- Faith in Place: Pastor Adam introduced Faith in Place as an interfaith environmental justice organization and encouraged participation in its Environmental Spirituality Summit on September 29 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. The group planned to meet at Lord of Life at 4:30 p.m. to carpool to the 5:30 p.m. watch party.
- Creation Care workshop: Pastor Elle, who works with Faith in Place, was invited to lead a workshop in connection with the October outdoor worship gathering. The workshop will include practical advocacy and education related to creation care.
- Sound System: The sound bar problem was traced to an automatic standby setting. The setting was changed so the sound bar remains on for worship media.
- Elvis Hymn Sing: The September 16 midweek service will feature six Elvis-themed hymns and will be held indoors.
- Pet Blessing and Picnic: The October 4 event remains scheduled. Pastor Betty will be away, but members of Loving Word may still attend. A planning meeting will be held after worship on Sunday.
- Darien Arts Council: Godspell will be presented October 16 and 17 at 6:30 p.m. Council members were encouraged to support participating members.
- Reformation Hymn Festival: The festival at Gloria Dei remains on the calendar. Pastor Adam offered to coordinate carpooling for those interested.
- Trunk or Treat: Lord of Life will not participate in the Darien Park District event this year so that limited capacity can be focused on other fall events.
- Election Day hospitality: Pastor Adam is seeking approval from election officials to offer a lunchtime hot dog barbecue for voters and community members. The existing welcome table will remain part of the congregation's Election Day hospitality.
- December Community event: Council discussed replacing the International Christmas Celebration program with a new gathering. Ideas included Christmas karaoke, gingerbread-house building, a cookie or soup exchange, a cooking demonstration, and a Christmas concert. No final format was selected. Pastor Adam will continue planning and will ask Grant about a possible cooking demonstration.
- Jazz concert: A possible November or December event was discussed. Nick may have greater availability in November; planning will continue.

Rummage and Bake Sale Report

The rummage sale raised \$3,511.05 and the bake sale raised \$407.00, for total proceeds of \$3,918.05 before any remaining reimbursements. Twenty-two people volunteered. Council expressed appreciation for the organization, signs, setup, sales work, cleanup, and the relationships strengthened through the event.

Unsold goods were distributed for community use and recycling, including:

- Clothing to South Suburban Ministry and the DuPage Care Center
- Kitchen goods, linens, games, puzzles, CDs, and household items to Sharing Connections
- Books to the American Association of University Women
- Plants and flowerpots to the Darien Garden Club
- Chairs to Project C.U.R.E.
- Other items to Vietnam Veterans of America, the Salvation Army, and Goodwill
- Stained fabric for textile recycling

A separate debriefing meeting will review the sale and lessons for future events.

Church Council

Old Business

Reconciling in Christ Exterior Signs

The previous pride flag was removed from the outdoor cross after it became torn. The Reconciling in Christ Committee recommended a more durable and visible expression of the congregation's welcome.

Motion: To approve installation of a Progress Pride flag on the northwest corner of the church building and authorize the north-facing Lord of Life exterior sign to be painted using the colors and design of the Progress Pride flag.

The motion was seconded and carried. Council also discussed routine maintenance, possible vandalism, and a future exterior camera; no additional action was taken.

Reconciling in Christ Bylaw Amendments

The proposed amendments would formally incorporate Lord of Life's ongoing Reconciling in Christ identity and commitments, update the RIC Committee's purpose now that the recognition process is complete, and authorize related numbering, grammatical, formatting, and other nonsubstantive corrections. The commitments include the congregation's public welcome across sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions; racial equity and anti-racism; equal access to the sanctuary for LGBTQIA+ weddings and blessings under the congregation's usual policies; openness in the call process; and annual financial support of ReconcilingWorks.

Motion: To forward the proposed Reconciling in Christ bylaw amendments to the congregation for action at the annual meeting.

The motion was seconded and carried.

Narthex Flooring

The preliminary project estimate is approximately \$6,000. The congregation has received a \$100 gift and an offer of \$3,000 toward the project. Council discussed the timing of a matching appeal, the property committee's likely spring work schedule, and the relative safety and maintenance concerns of carpet and luxury vinyl flooring. Additional entrance mats or runners would be considered if vinyl is selected. The matter was tabled pending further review.

Ministry in Context Student

Brandon Fuhr is expected to visit Lord of Life and begin his Ministry in Context placement. Pastor Adam emphasized a supportive welcome, appropriate time and space for transition, and self-care as an important learning goal. A support committee will be organized as the placement develops.

New Business

2027 Pastoral Health Coverage

The Personnel Committee reported that Portico's 2027 health insurance premium is expected to increase approximately 15 percent and recommended continuing family coverage through the Select Copay option. Council also discussed asking Ed to review whether a comparable alternative is available before the October 14 enrollment deadline.

Motion: To approve the Select Copay health option for Pastor Adam and his family; authorize Lord of Life Lutheran Church to pay the associated premium as part of the pastor's compensation and benefits package effective with the 2027 plan year; and authorize the appropriate officers and staff to complete the necessary

Church Council

enrollment and administrative requirements.

The motion was seconded and carried

Confirmation Program

Pastor Adam is developing a flexible, course-based confirmation program combining core subjects with independent study, reflection, conversation, creative work, projects, and spiritual practices. The approach is intended to make participation more workable for families whose schedules do not permit a single fixed weekly class.

Committee and Ministry Reports

- Personnel: Met and presented the 2027 health coverage recommendation.
- Hospitality: A meeting is needed.
- Reconciling in Christ: Met and presented the exterior-sign and bylaw recommendations.
- Finance: Routine bills and payroll will be scheduled in advance during the treasurer's September 30 departure and three-week trip. Critical matters can still be handled as needed.
- Property: The west-side roof leak appears to have been repaired. Glenn Davis Roofing will clean and inspect the roof, seal other areas as needed, and complete work on October 2 for \$888.
- Property: Work continues on the vestibules, beginning with preparation and painting of the west vestibule and then moving to the east vestibule and hallway. Door hardware has also been cleaned and polished.
- Property: Aging exterior siding will require continued monitoring and may eventually require major repair or replacement. CIF funds may be needed for siding or future HVAC work.
- Property: Delta will provide a replacement power supply and module under warranty for the intermittent women's restroom faucet.
- LCW and Pet Blessing: A planning meeting open to anyone willing to help with the pet blessing and picnic will be held after worship on Sunday.



Month in Review



October

SUN 27	MON 28	TUE 29	WED 30	THU Oct 1	FRI 2	SAT 3
10am Worship Service 1pm Loving Word Mini 1pm Loving Word Serv		5:15pm OA 5:30pm Faith in Place:	10am Google Meets -I 10am Bible Study 7pm AA	Pastor Adam Anniversa	9:30am Card Group	
4 11:30am Pet Blessing 12pm Church Picnic 2 more	5	6 5:15pm OA	7 10am Google Meets -I 10am Bible Study 7pm AA	8 6pm Harry in Kitchen	9 9:30am Card Group 6pm Darien Arts Coun	10 9am SDA 12:30pm SDA Lunche
11 10am Worship Service 1pm Loving Word Mini 1pm Loving Word Serv	Columbus Day	13 11:30am Lunch Bunch 5:15pm OA	14 10am Google Meets -I 10am Bible Study 2 more	15 12pm Senior Spirits 6pm Godspell Rehear:	16 - Godspell (Darien Arts) 9:30am Card Group 6:30pm Godspell	17 - Godspell (Darien Arts) 9am SDA 2 more
18 10am Worship Service 12pm Loving Word Mir	19	20 5:15pm OA 7pm Google Meets - C 7pm Church Council	21 10am Google Meets -I 10am Bible Study 7pm AA	22	23 9:30am Card Group	24 9am SDA 12pm Loving Word Set
25 - Reformation Sunday 10am Worship Service 3 more	26	27 5:15pm OA	28 10am Google Meets -I 10am Bible Study 2 more	29	30 9:30am Card Group	31 - Halloween 9am SDA



Lord of Life Lutheran Church
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