



# The Living Springs Journal

“CELEBRATE...SHARE...SERVE”  
ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL

December 2023

## Next Steps of Advent & Christmas (from Pastor Eric)



**CHRISTMAS EVE ON SUNDAY, DEC. 24!**  
9:30—4th Sunday in Advent Worship  
5:00—Family/Children's Candlelight Service  
7:30—Festival Candlelight Communion (music 7:15)

+ +  
**1ST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS, DEC. 31**  
9:30—Christmas Lessons & Carols



Next step .... Next step .... Next Step. In my mind (& heart), I see a young girl with a common carpenter traveling on the primitive, rocky road from the village of Nazareth southward to the little town of Bethlehem. She is 9 months pregnant and struggling on the arduous journey. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," Mary mutters over and over to herself.

Next step .... Next step .... Next Step. In my mind (& heart), I see a young man clothed in a rough robe of camel hair, headed out to the Jordan River, where he will fulfill the purpose God had for his life—to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord!" Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," John the Baptizer mutters over and over to himself.

Next step .... Next step .... Next Step. In my mind (& heart), I see the ancient prophet Isaiah courageously walking into the royal court, to speak truth to the king and leaders, lifting up God's promise of "Emmanuel" in difficult times, speaking beautiful words about a "child born for us," offering images of a shalom-filled kingdom where even sheep & lions lie down together in peace. He wonders how his message will be received, not knowing that it will offer hope for centuries beyond his life. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," he mutters over and over to himself.

Next step .... Next step .... Next Step. In my mind (& heart), I see the church, the community of Jesus' disciples, preparing the way for the return of Christ, as together we carry on the ministry of our Lord, to grow hope in  
(Continued on page 6)

**"ADVENT-PALOOZA"**  
Saturday, Dec. 2, 3:30-6:30 (rain or shine)

+ + +  
**DAILY ADVENT E-DEVOTIONS**  
Start Dec. 4 (Monday-Friday)

+ + +  
**MID-WEEK ADVENT PRAYER SERVICES**  
"Pause, Prepare, Ponder"  
Wednesdays, 12:00 & 6:30

+ + +  
**CONG. ADVENT/CHRISTMAS BRUNCH**  
Sunday, Dec. 10 @ 9:20-10:20

+ + +  
**CHILDREN/YOUTH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**  
Sunday, Dec. 10—part of 10:30 worship

+ + +  
**CHRISTMAS CAROLING**  
Saturday, Dec. 16—meet @ 9:00

+ + +  
**LIVE OUTDOOR NATIVITY**  
Friday & Saturday, Dec. 16-17 @ 7pm



## From the Desk of Pastor Carl

Hear Ye!!! Hear Ye!!! Hear Ye!!!

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always.

As the crisp winds of November bid us farewell, we find ourselves standing on the threshold of December, a month that holds the promise of joy, love, and the enchanting melodies of carols that echo through our hearts. I pray this newsletter finds you wrapped in the warmth of gratitude, surrounded by the love of family and friends.

November's canvas painted the world with hues of amber and gold, a gentle reminder of the beauty that unfolds when we embrace the changes in our lives. Our CDC kids and our Jr./Sr. Youth are still processing the next steps and their faith as they Journey with Jesus. Our church has many ways to offer guidance through weekly chapel time with Pastor Eric and myself to Sr. youth Wednesdays and confirmation classes. They are involved and continue to grow.

November also offered our youth a time to grow in their time, talent, and treasure. As we have reflected the "how can we do more," instead of "less" attitude and let me tell you they showed up for the Christmas Tree lot toward the end of the month with unloading, setting up, and running the lot. In their busy worlds of life, to put god first and to be in service to others is a shining example of what we as a church pour into them as they cross our paths. So, let's keep pouring the love of God into them so they can pour the love of God into others.

As we know it, Thanksgiving is behind us, and our hearts are brimming with gratitude for the moments shared and the blessings bestowed upon us. Yet, as one chapter closes, another one eagerly awaits its turn, and December approaches with a twinkle in its eye.



**Mid-Week Advent Worship**  
WEDNESDAYS @ Noon & 6:30 PM

6:30 service also live-streamed  
on Facebook & YouTube  
\*Holy Communion offered  
at end of Noon service

December 6 – Pause  
December 13 – Prepare  
December 20 – Ponder



**DAILY ADVENT E-DEVOTIONS**  
Emails begin 12/3!

Our annual Advent E-Devotions began to arrive in your email—please forward them to family, friends, co-workers, others! A theme & Scripture passage are assigned for each weekday during Advent. Spots are available if you feel a spirit-tug to write a devotion. Sign-up sheet is in the admin building. Sign up as an individual, couple, or family. This is a wonderful way to focus your heart on an Advent message of hope and joy to share with others!



*Living Springs Annual*

**Outdoor Nativity Drama**  
“Love Is Born!”

**December 16 & 17 - 7 pm**

Animals, characters, and more...

Pause from a hectic holiday pace to witness a 35-minute living enactment of God’s gift of love for you...the birth of a savior, Jesus!  
Bring a lawn chair...hot drinks provided.



**Christmas Eve 2023:**  
“Silent Night, Holy Night”  
God’s Gift of Christmas Love!

**5:00pm Family Candlelight Worship**  
(special children’s message & communion)

**7:30pm Festival Candlelight  
Communion Worship**

**LS Outdoor Tree &  
Household Crosses**

Once again, a large tree will light up our church lawn during the Advent & Christmas seasons. Each household is asked to put your name(s) on 2 of our wooden crosses. Hang 1 cross on the LS outdoor tree - and then hang the 2nd cross on your tree at home. Your 2 crosses on the community tree & home tree symbolize that we are all part of a community of disciples that together celebrate the hope that comes to the world through Jesus' journey with all of us (from the manger of Christmas to the cross of Good Friday).



**2023 Advent  
Hope Boxes**

**Set up an  
Advent Hope Box  
in your home!**



At Adventpalooza, we decorate Advent Hope food boxes. If you miss Adventpalooza, you can wrap a box in blue or white (representing Advent colors of hope) and/or draw some Advent symbols. OR, you can just use a plain box! Place the box under your tree, near your Advent wreath, or by a manger scene at home. Bring the filled box to worship on Christmas Eve/Day (or drop it off at the LS office the week prior). Our goal is 2023 total items for our local Christian Assistance Bridge food pantry—one item for every year of our Lord!

\*Also, be sure to pick up your Advent World Hunger Calendar!

## **Christmas Tree Lot Open Saturday and Sunday 12 - 6 PM**

*Support LS Youth Ministry*

Christmas is right around the corner! Why not take one item off of your "To-Do" List and order your Christmas tree or live wreath. Not only will you receive a fresh cut Frazier Fir from NC, but you will also support our youth ministries and help our high school youth make it to New Orleans next summer for the ELCA Youth Gathering.



We were blessed and able to get a variety of tree sizes, 6-7 ft. \$80, 7-8 ft. \$95, 8-9 ft. \$130. Tree/wreath pick up will be available on Dec. 3, 9, 10 from 12:00PM-6:00PM or by requested appointment. At pick up you will be able to pick out any tree from our selection.

Please share this information on your social media outlets to help us get the word out! Visit the Living Springs Facebook page and click to share our post so all your friends and family can participate.

### **Mid-Week Advent Worship**

This midweek Advent series invites us to pause, to prepare, and to ponder. First is the call to spiritual introspection, prayerful waiting, and pausing from the constant busyness of our normal lives. This is juxtaposed with Advent's clarion call to wake up, to rise in action, to prepare the way of the Lord, and to join in God's continued creative work of reconciliation, seeking justice, and peacemaking. Furthermore, we ponder the beginning and end of all things. We prepare for a baby, marveling that the creator of the universe was formed in a woman's womb, full of hope and potential, fragility and vulnerability. We anticipate Christ's imminent arrival here among us, as well as his arrival still to come—where pain, sorrow, injustice, warfare, and death itself are no more—in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness is at home. We pause, we prepare, and we ponder.

***WEDNESDAYS @ Noon & 6:30 PM***

*\*6:30 service also live-streamed on Facebook & YouTube/\*Holy Communion offered at end of Noon service*

December 6 – Pause    December 13 – Prepare    December 20 – Ponder

### **Christmas Outreach Invitation and Billboards!**



Worshippers are asked to take a stack of outreach invitations to prayerfully share with someone and distribute in the community in upcoming days. They contain info about our Outdoor Nativity and Christmas Eve worship.

*Don't forget to look for our billboards on Two Notch (near Clemson), on Clemson (near I-20), Farrow & Hardscrabble, and on I-277 (near Fontaine)!*

### **Congregation Advent/Christmas Brunch**

***Sunday, December 10; 9:20 - 10:20***

Fellowship and Mutual Care is hosting our Congregation Advent/Christmas Potluck Brunch on the Second Sunday in Advent, 12/10 from 9:20 - 10:20 (between worship services). Everyone is invited. Please bring a brunch item to share (i.e. breakfast Casseroles, etc.) Juice and coffee will be provided.

### **Children & Youth Advent/Christmas Program**

***Sunday, Dec. 10, during 10:30 Worship!***

Calling Children & Youth of All Ages... Each year, the children & youth of our congregation prepare and share a special Advent/Christmas program. This year, so that more people can experience their message, the "program" will be part of the 10:30 Sunday worship on the 2nd Sunday in Advent, Dec. 10. Our Sr. Youth are preparing & presenting the program, and there is a spot for children of all ages (toddlers-elementary school) to serve as shepherds, angels, animals. Please contact Leslie Bloss as soon as possible if your child would like to be involved (lbloss3306@hotmail.com or 803-413-1994).

### **Christmas Poinsettias & Candles**

***Due 12/11***

If you would like to donate a set of 5 Moravian candles or have a poinsettia placed in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve in honor or memory of loved ones, please fill out the forms in the narthex or contact the office. Deadline is December 11.

## Youth Elf Store Donations Wanted prior to Dec. 8

Our Elf Store is a unique little shop we create for our children to enjoy shopping for gifts for Mom and Dad and the rest of the family. This annual youth fundraiser provides toddler and elementary age children with a fun, real life learning opportunity of giving to others! Children learn how to budget their money (or your money!) while they shop for gifts under \$5 for Mom, Dad and others in your family! Seeing the joy of giving from the eyes of your youngster is one of the best gifts ever!

*\*If you have any gently used items or would like to donate new items to the Elf Store, please drop them off in the Youth room and mark them 'Elf Store'. Examples of past years are: Christmas decorations, jewelry someone no longer wears, ornaments, new candles, seasonal knick-knacks, etc. The Youth appreciate your donations.*

Our youth will have the Elf Store open on Sunday, Dec. 10 during the Congregation Brunch and after 10:30 worship - in the "bubble area" of the Fellowship Hall.

## 2023 Dove Giving Tree



This year we are collecting wish list items for Rice Creek and Joseph Keels Elementary backpack families. Rice Creek has a backpack family with seven children and Keels has three families that are struggling to give their children a happy Christmas. Lutheran Services has some foster children that they are collecting gift cards for, as well as Richland 2 for the unaccompanied youth high school students. A wide range of options for you to choose where your heart is tugging you.

Please choose a Dove, purchase the item indicated and return your "wrapped" gift with the dove attached or gift card (does not have to be wrapped) by Wednesday, December 13. The wish list items will have the name of the child, age, wish item, and their favorite color if applicable. If you would prefer to donate money, we can do the shopping for you! Please use Givelify, a check (mark "Dove Tree" on memo line) or cash in an envelope and mark it "Dove Tree". Contact Karen Kranz for information.



## God's Corner



In keeping with the Thanksgiving season, please know how grateful we are for all of the prayers, best wishes, cards, prayer shawl, and meals. We are so thankful for our Living Springs family,

*Midge and Todd Gunwalson*

Thank you all for your support through thoughts, prayers and card since my mother's passing.

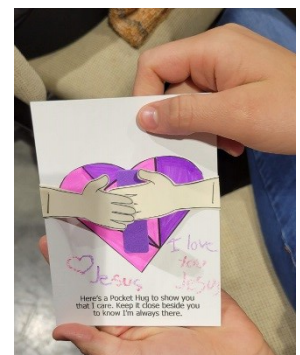
**Karlene Stuart**



## Notes from: *Mission Partnership Team*

### LS Ministries with Cristo Rey! *Today @ 4:15pm*

We provide a Bible lesson, crafts, singing, and snacks for the children of our Mission Partner, Cristo Rey, in W. Columbia. We have team leaders, but 5-6 helpers are needed, plus a snack for up to 20 children. Volunteers meet at LS at 4:15 and carpool. The children speak English, so Spanish is not a requirement.



(Continued from page 2)


people's lives, in a hurting world. "Next step ....Next step ... Next Step," we remind ourselves, as the Spirit empowers us to be who & whose we are.

"Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," someone says, as they walk along a line of tables, packing bags of weekend food for a hungry school child. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," a family says as they purchase canned goods to fill a food box or a Dove tree gift for a youth. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," a teenager says, as they carry a Christmas tree to someone's vehicle, thinking about the faith-filled experience they will have at a youth gathering next summer. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," someone says as they walk up and down a line of traffic, smiling and handing out little bags of hope to weary rush-hour drivers, overwhelmed with the stress of a holiday season.

"Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," a group of servants say, as they walk around in robes, sharing what it might have been like in Bethlehem on that sacred night long ago when a Savior was born for the world. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," a child says, as she comes forward with others to sing at the lighting of another candle on an Advent wreath. "Next step .... Next step .... Next Step," someone says as they walk into the church sanctuary for worship on Wednesdays & Sundays to take time to pause, prepare, and ponder.

Yes, in my mind (& heart), I see all these next steps, and so many more,, in

**"Trees with a Purpose!" YOUTH CHRISTMAS TREE FUNDRAISER**  
*for camp, youth retreats, and youth gathering trip*



**SATURDAYS/SUNDAYS, 12-6pm**

these seasons of Advent & Christmas, as we celebrate the call to "prepare the way" for God's most incredible gift... our Journey with Jesus!

With thanksgiving and love for each of you—and with prayers for the many next steps of joy & shalom we will share together in these holy days of Advent & Christmas ahead, *Pastor Eric*

**"Journey w/ Jesus" Pastor Times: 12/17 @ 9:20; 12/19 @ 10:00**  
**"JOURNEY W/ JESUS" DEVOTION READING—Posted Online Wed @**



**ADVENT FOOD BOXES**  
**for Christian Assistance Bridge**  
 22 non-perishable food items (1 per day)

**GOAL: 2023 Items as "Birthday Gifts" for Jesus**

**LS DOVE GIVING TREE**  
*Christmas gifts for children & youth in need*

**WORLD HUNGER GOOD GIFTS**  
*Give a truly meaningful gift of hope this Christmas for your loved ones!*

**FAMILIES HELPING FAMILIES**  
*Lutheran Men adopted families*

**LUTHERAN SERVICES**  
*Advent/Christmas Season Bucket Offering*

- CRISTO REY MINISTRY—Dec. 3**
- BILLBOARD MINISTRY—Dec. 3-17**
- SANCTUARY DECORATING—Dec. 9**
- BACKBACK FOOD BAGS—Dec. 10**
- RUSH HOUR MINISTRY—Dec. 12**
- CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL MEAL—Dec. 21**
- PALMETTO PLACE MEAL—Dec. 21**
- MEALS ON WHEELS—each Mon & Tues**

YES!!!!!! --- December!!!!

The month that wraps some in snow, some in windbreakers, some in shorts, and I pray many in the tender embrace of love. As we step into this month, I can't help but feel a sense of anticipation, not just for the festive decorations and the delightful scents of the season, but for something far more profound—the arrival of hope, the birth of love incarnate, Jesus Christ.

As our church season ends and begins, let us not forget the true reason for this season—the advent of the One who brought light to our darkness and hope to our despair. The story of a humble manger, a guiding star, and a miraculous birth in Bethlehem is not just a tale from ancient times; it is a narrative that continues to unfold in the depths of our hearts.

As we light the first candle on December 3, 2023, the first Sunday of Advent, let it be a beacon of anticipation, signaling the arrival of Jesus. May our hearts be filled with love, and may the joy of this season be contagious to all we come in contact with as we move about the days. Let the spirit of merriment sprinkle a bit of humor into our days and exchange laughter like gifts beneath the Christmas tree. After all, joy is not just an emotion; it is a celebration of life's little miracles, a dance in the rhythm of grace.

As we embark on this Advent journey through Christmas and beyond, let's remember the words of Isaiah 9:6: "For to us, a child is born, to us, a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." May these words echo in our hearts, guiding us through the Advent season with the promise of hope and the radiant Love of Jesus.

With joyful anticipation, Grace and Peace

**Pastor Carl**

# Notes from: *Living Springs Child Development Center*

## From Tammy Mancuso, Director

Hello and Happy Fall,

I love this season, where the leaves make music as the wind hurries them across the ground, and as they fall from limbs that will inevitably become bare as the branches argue to hold onto their winter coat.

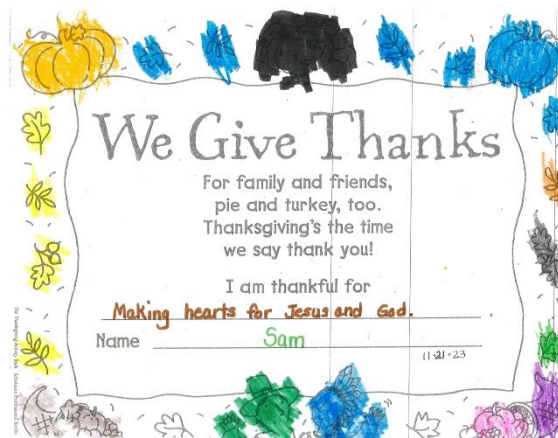
A season where, if we listen, if we watch, if we pay attention, we see the wonders of nature at work. The ground becomes a bit colder, animals begin to burrow and gather food, and bulbs silently grow underground awaiting their grand show. It's as if you can hear Mother Nature quietly whisper "It's time. Take a rest, get cozy, and settle in because a spectacular scene awaits." It's a season of promise, a season of love, a season of Hope.

We have had some exciting moments of Hope as we welcome the upcoming Holidays. Looking forward to time shared with family, friends, and loved ones.

We had our annual Stone Soup luncheon where the children in each class made a pot of soup to share with friends and family. It's always a joy to watch them get excited about trying something they have had a part in creating!



Sometimes we as adults may wonder if, and just how much our littles "take in" when they go to chapel. In case you have ever questioned or wondered yourself, here is what one of our newly turned 4 year olds was thankful for.



Some of our families and staff traveled for Thanksgiving, while others stayed close to home. We are grateful for each and every good wish and happy chat as they relayed stories of how they spent their time. One child told us that they made deviled eggs with their grandfather, and they assured us they made the "normal kind". Although they did use " 'Paperica', I can't use all the letters, it doesn't come out right but that's how did it."

Our Christmas trees are up, lights are on, and decorations are being made. We are collecting items for our Senior Friends Shoeboxes that will go out on Dec. 3rd. We look forward to collecting more items for others in need, as well as making more cards to go with Meals on Wheels, to the Rice Estates and other senior facilities.

Hope is alive and growing as we continue to care for those in need, hold others in prayer and share the love and light of this Hope filled Season.

Wishing you well, Tammy

## Notes from: *Good News Team*

### "LOVE IS BORN!"

#### LS OUTDOOR NATIVITY RETURNS...

Saturday, Dec. 16 & Sunday, December 17 @ 7pm  
(Dress Rehearsal Dec. 15 @ 6:30)

Everyone's help is needed: please sign-up now!

**Group Characters:** Shepherds, Angels, Townspeople

**Helpers:** Set-Up, Props, Costumes, Sound, Lights, Music

Once again there are many roles/tasks - and everyone's help is needed to share the Christmas story. A sign-up board will be at church - and practice opportunities will begin after worship in late November. All ages (adults, youth, families) are welcome - please prayerfully consider how you will help!

All cast rehearsals leading up to the week of the Living Nativity will be held on Sunday after the second service. Please make every effort to attend if you have never participated before in the role you are doing, or have questions. If you are unable to do so, there will be opportunities to "Catch up" between services.



### Rush Hour Ministry

*Tuesday, December 12, 4:30 - 5:30 PM*

There is space for you! Be part of God's growing hope on the sidewalk in front of Living Springs, sharing smiles and blessing gifts to those waiting in rush hour traffic! We will meet around 4:30pm, *but join us at anytime!*



### LS GOOD NEWS JOURNEY WITH JESUS BIBLE STORY PROJECT

*Catch this month's stories in our  
YouTube Journey with Jesus Playlist*



*"Mountaintop Blessings" read by Dawn Willingham  
"Loving and Praying" read by Bob Gill  
"Free from Judgment and Worry" read by John Imbert  
"Freed from Fear, Freed to Love" read by Raegan Prest*

The Good News Team is beginning a new series for their Bible Reading Project in conjunction with the the "Journey with Jesus" Focus of the Month. Each Wednesday, a Bible story from our focus will be read along with sharing for our pastors, deacon, and possibly some of our worshippers. And, you may see some of these readings/discussions from some interesting places! The reading will be streamed, so we are asking you to share on all your social media platforms. By sharing, that story will get to someone who may need to hear it and possibly never heard that story before! We can all be a part of the Good News Team!

### Looking for Readers To pre-record Bible Stories

*Individuals/couples/families/youth*

Want to read a Bible story for our Journey with Jesus Story Project? No need to be here, record yourself/family reading from your favorite Bible, or we can record you at home or a special location. Call the office to schedule or for more questions



# Notes from: *Hope Ministry*

## VETERANS REMEMBRANCE "WITTING" TREE



### Holiday Shoeboxes

Living Springs is contributing about 110 boxes of Christmas items to seniors in the Midlands who are on the Meals on Wheels program. It warmed my heart when I was getting messages from people outside of Living Springs who wanted to participate, so I had to keep asking for more boxes. I know some of the people who have nobody to look in on them will truly appreciate this gesture of good will.

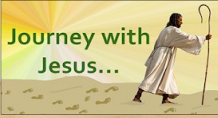


*Cathy Lowman share: My sweet Grands (Avery, 10, helped to decorate the Meals on Wheels folks gift box this year!)*

### Backpack Food Ministry

Our last day of packing will be Dec. 13 and currently we are in need of all items except meat (but if that is on your grocery list, it won't be refused!). Thank you to all who donated food items and monetary donations this year - you all are truly a blessing!

## Notes from: *Lifelong Discipleship*



# My Next Step in Generosity...

## What an Amazing Witness of Faith: Already, 95 Personal/Family Intents Offered in Thanks to God! *(reaching our Challenge Goals of 90 Intents – see below)*



What a beautiful sight to see all the "Next Step" prayer envelopes filling our symbolic path of sand at Jesus' feet! Remember that our "Next Step" Intents of worship, devotion, service, and giving will remain sealed in the altar area throughout the year, as a sign of our personal/family commitments to each take "next steps" in our journey with Jesus, with a generosity that will grow God's hope in many lives in 2024. You may still offer your card in one of 4 ways:

- **Sunday worship (either 8:15 or 10:30)** - pick up a "Next Step" Prayer Envelope in which to seal your Intent & place it in the path of sand at Jesus' feet.
- **Mail card back to church** ("Attn: Financial Secretary"). Your card will be confidentially transferred to a Prayer Envelope & placed at Jesus' feet.
- **Come by the church during the week** and get a Prayer Envelope from the office. You (or we) can place your sealed envelope at Jesus' feet in the sanctuary.
- **Call the church**, and a member of the Generosity Team can bring you a Prayer Envelope and bring your sealed Intent back to church for you.

We give thanks to all who helped reach the special challenge goal of 90+ intent cards! But even beyond, our **ultimate goal is for everyone to make some form of commitment of faith and grow in generosity, in whatever way!** Our challenge families shared what a blessing it was in their own journey of faith, when they began making a regular, intentional giving commitment to God's work. They want everyone to know the joy they've experienced through such a faith practice of regular giving to the Lord (at whatever level you can begin).

## LS 2023-24 "Journey with Jesus" Focus of the Month!



September – Life of Jesus (Part 1)  
October – Miracles of Jesus  
November – Teachings of Jesus  
**December – Prophecies about Jesus**  
January – Encounters with Jesus  
February – Parables of Jesus

March – Life of Jesus (Part 2)  
April – Encounters with the Risen Jesus  
May – The Message about Jesus  
June – More Miracles of Jesus  
July – More Parables of Jesus  
August – More Teachings of Jesus

**THIS MONTH:** *For your Bible reading & faith discussions at home...* (plus our LS Bible studies, group/team "Dwellings in the Word," Wednesday online readings, youth studies, and more!)

**Week of Dec. 3** Isaiah 52:12-53:12, Psalm 22

**Week of Dec. 10** Isaiah 35, Isaiah 40, Luke 1

**Week of Dec. 17** Isaiah 7:10-16, 9:2-7, 11:1-9; Micah 5:2-5a

**Week of Dec. 24** Luke 2:1-40, Isaiah 61:1-11

**\*\*For families with children,** you can use stories from Children's Bible Story books or online Children's Bible videos about these miracles/stories of Jesus!

# Notes from: *Worship & Music Ministry*

## The Wonder of Worship

### Conclusion

I've enjoyed researching and writing this little series of articles on "The Wonder of Worship" for the *Journal* this past year. [I'm going to put them all in one pdf file. Let me know if you'd like a copy.] As someone relatively new to Lutheran liturgy, it's been a great experience to learn more about:



February	What is Worship (Part 1)
March	What is Worship (Part 2)
April	Getting Ready to "Go to Church"
May	Confession and Forgiveness
June	Congregational Singing & Other Forms of Music
July	Apostolic Greeting, Cantic of Praise or Kyrie
August	Lectionary Readings & Sermon
September	Sharing of the Peace
October	Eucharistic Prayer, Words of Institution, Lord's Prayer & Communion
November	Benediction, Sending Song, Dismissal
December	Conclusion

Let's take one last look at the definition of worship we used in the first two articles, a definition written by the father of our own Jason Rimbo:

***Worship is a collaborative engagement across cultures and generations in which God and the people of God 'listen' to each other and are formed in love around each other for the sake of the world. It is an imaginative, risky, and life-giving venture.*** -

- Robert Alan Rimbo<sup>1</sup>

I just love this! I love the parts that speak strongly to the fact that **worship is not just one-way!** It's not just us singing to God, listening to scripture, and taking communion. It's not just God sitting, passively observing and hearing us. No, it's us "collaboratively engaged" with our stunningly amazing Creator God; It's us listening to God as God listens to us!



I love the parts that show the vast scope of God's kingdom, that worship transcends all cultures and generations as people around the world worship Christ the King! Our united worship deeply enriches our own lives, but not just that. It is also important "for the sake of the world." As followers of Jesus, we love, live for, and carry on His work as part of the "kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:1-10).

I love the parts that describe the unique character of worship—nothing, **nothing** like it: imaginative, risky, life-giving, formed and saturated in love.

I encourage you, as I do myself: Do whatever you can and must to keep your life of worship (in and out of the church building) fresh, exciting, and full of anticipation for how we can keep growing and changing and experiencing God's grace ever more abundantly until the day we set foot on the other side and see Jesus face to face. Let's make the choice never to plateau in our discipleship.

Shirl Schiffman [shirl@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:shirl@livingspringscolumbia.org)

<sup>1</sup>"Formed/Re-formed: Engaging worship across cultures and generations," by Robert Alan Rimbo and Justin Rimbo. In *CrossAccent*, Fall/Winter, 2016, 5-14.

## JuBELLation News

The bell choir continues to persevere even though we're short on ringers and we've had illnesses! On November 26th, Karlene Stuart, Jan Berger and Laura Turnmire played (accompanied by Shirl Schiffman) 'How Great Thou Art' for Christ the King Sunday. The ringers will play on December 3rd for Advent and - of course - on Christmas Eve.

In January, the ringers will start reviewing the pieces we will work on at the Lutheridge workshop. We are all looking forward to working under David Harris (director of the Raleigh Ringers) and enjoying time together February 23rd through February 25th.

If you have thought about joining the choir, we would love to have you! We need 2 bass players. If you can count to 6, we can get you going! If you don't read music, we can mark it for you to play. There are a couple of ringers that do not read music. Please see Laura Turnmire (or any of the ringers) if you have any questions.



## JuBELLation Handbell Choir Fundraiser

*Ends 12/3!*

The JuBELLation Choir is wanting to attend the Handbell weekend at Lutheridge (February 2024). This is a pricey workshop to attend, but all will learn a lot. We are not asking for our entire fees to be paid, but just a partial scholarship for ringers. If we receive more than we need for the workshop, it will be used towards the table covers we've had for over 20 years.

If you would like to donate to assist the ringers in attending, we have various levels of giving, or you can donate any amount you would like. The levels are: Bronze Level - \$50; Copper Level - \$25; Tin Level - \$10 Please see Laura Turnmire for a scholarship form or with any questions.

## Veteran's Recognition



## IMPORTANT USHER UPDATE & TRAINING-DEC. 3

*CALLING ALL CURRENT USHERS, WANNA-BE USHERS, THINKING ABOUT USHERING - you are needed!*

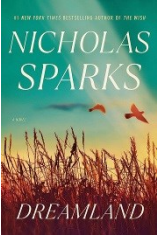
There have been a few changes to our Ushering Guideline, so we are inviting anyone who is currently on the "qualified usher list" (OR interested in being an usher) to meet briefly after the 8:15 and 10:30 worship this Sunday to review our current procedure. Please attempt to attend or let Jim Zieche or Karen Kranz know of a convenient alternate date to review our guidelines.

*This is a vital role to help make our worship experience hospitality - consider serving our Lord in this way!*

## Notes from: *Women's Ministry*

### Ladies Book Club

*Sunday, December 3 @ 2pm*



Our book is Dreamland by Nicholas Sparks and we will gather at Karen Kranz's home - 235 Founders Ridge Rd. (in the Summit) on Sunday, December 3 at 2 pm. The invitation is extended to all - we laugh, share, & fellowship... of course, there is always something to eat & drink! Contact Karen Kranz ph: 716.998.1157.

### Wreath Workshop @ Camp Kinard *December 5th*

Prepare your heart and your home by attending this Advent gathering at South Carolina Lutheran Retreat Center's Coastal Retreat on Tuesday, December 5, from 10:00am-12:30pm. Add a fresh evergreen wreath to your home for the perfect festive touch this season!

Rev. Mary M. Finklea will be leading us as we learn how to create exquisite wreaths from our



**SAVE THE DATE!**

### ISLE OF PALMS ANNUAL RETREAT

*Friday, May 17 - Sunday, May 19, 2024*

Please join us for this inspiring discussion of Noah and the ark, led by Pat George. She will also be covering his genealogy. Single: \$225, Double or more: \$175.

*More information and registration will be available soon.*



## Notes from: *Men's Ministry*

The men of Living Springs have adopted several families from the Families Helping Families program. If you are interested in participating with ensuring that as many families as possible are able to enjoy the Christmas Holidays, please contact Bob Turnmire at [bob.turnmire@gmail.com](mailto:bob.turnmire@gmail.com) or 803-386-5526 to see how you can help.

There will be no monthly meeting in December. We'll meet again on Saturday January 27<sup>th</sup> to kick off the new calendar year.

Bibles & Biscuits @ 7:00 am on Thursday, December 14 and 28.

*Amen for Lutheran Men*



### LOOKING FOR A MEANINGFUL GIFT?

ELCA Good Gifts offer the opportunity to give a gift for a loved one that truly makes a difference! See the ELCA Good Gifts Catalogue for World Hunger animals and other ministry gifts. Together, we can do more than we ever could alone, making a huge collective impact in people's lives. Good Gift Catalogues - along with Gift Ornaments & Note Cards to share with a loved one - are available in the admin lobby.

# Notes from: *Sr. Youth*

## Tree Lot Delivery



## *God At Work*

## Community Thanksgiving



## Christian Assistance Bridge Fundraising Dinner



# From Council ... IMPORTANT YEAR-END GIVING FOCUS!

Dear Siblings in Christ,

In this season, we are truly thankful for all God's amazing blessings in our lives—and for the faithful giving of our Living Springs family that continues to **grow God's hope** in so many lives! We rejoice in the outpouring of love reflected in all your giving for many special efforts, such as Disaster Response; Refugee sponsorship; Family Assistance Fund; Youth projects; Justice Ministry; Campus Ministry (fish fry); Legrand/Lowman Scholarships; Lutheran Men Committee of 100; Backpack food ministry; Stuff-a-Bus, Football devotion ministry; Handbell project; Camp Kinnard appeal, and so much more. We rejoice as well at the amazing response to our seasonal efforts with Dove Tree gifts, Advent food boxes, Families Helping Families, Sr. Resources boxes, Lutheran Services bucket offering, and ELCA Hunger/Mission Good Gifts!

At year's end, we all receive appeals from various sources, and we spend lots of money on material gifts that often end up making little difference in people's lives. **As we each ponder our year-end giving, we ask you to join us in remembering Christ's important ministry at Living Springs through our Regular Offerings — and the foundation it provides for all the ministries that have such a life-changing impact through God's work.** *Throughout this year, we have again had amazing offerings to special ministries & designated giving projects; however, our regular giving, though sufficient, has leveled off in 2023 to-date. We have been blessed to cover all our foundational regular ministry so far, but as we move into December, we prepare for our usual elevated year-end expenditures.*

Our "Next Step" emphasis has had a tremendous response, inviting each of us to deeper places in our faith commitments for the year ahead. We have heard many powerful generosity moments – and every week in the bulletin we see photos showing lives being filled with hope, all because a congregation called Living Springs exists here in this community! We are so thankful for the inspired response of God's people so far this year. We invite you to join us in a special focus on year-end regular giving to help with greater year-end expenses (annual insurance, etc.), plus prepare us to move forward in 2024 with "next steps" in Christ's ministries of growing hope. We give thanks for your partnership in ministry—and pray that the Spirit will continue to inspire our generous response to God's amazing grace as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, God's true Christmas gift of hope. With thanks for you & all the ways you remain a vital part of God's growing hope for the world,

**Consider a special Christmas or year-end gift... remember or honor a loved one with something that truly makes a difference: sharing the hope & love of Christ through LS Ministry!**

Jay Clark      Barbara Lambert      Ashley S.  
London Manoso      Ron R.      T. M. Willingham  
Pastor Carl      [Signature]      Lorenzo H.  
ME Davidson      [Signature]      Laura Sumner  
Humber Priest      Pastor Eric      Brantley D. Smith      [Signature]

## Annual Meeting

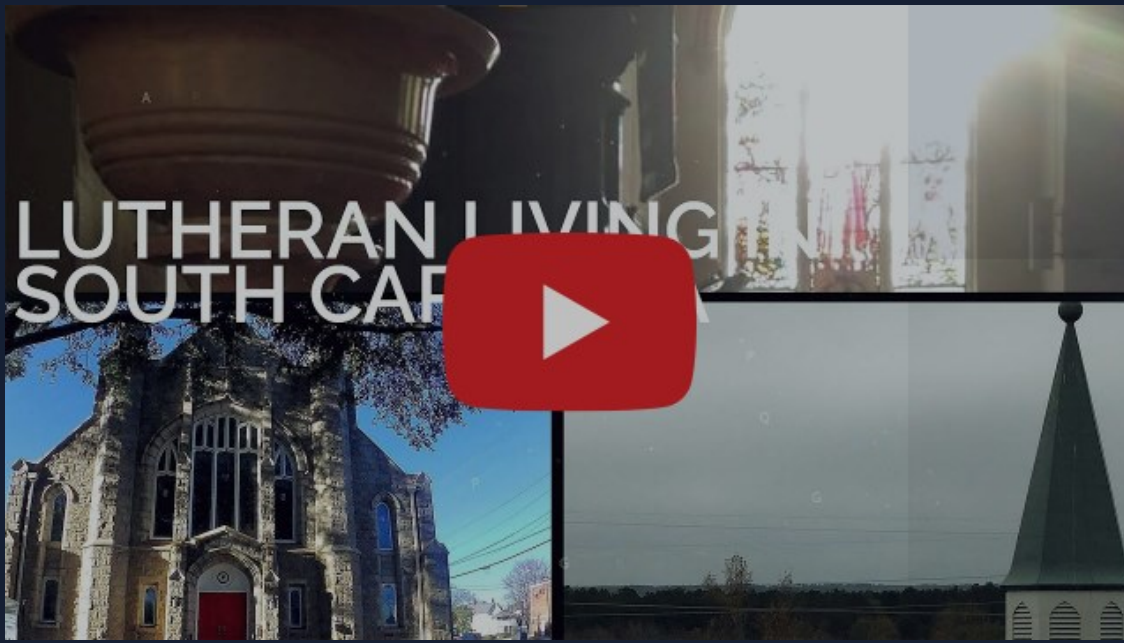


# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>MAIN SUNDAY SCHEDULE</b> 805A Pre-worship "Jesus" Time <b>815A WORSHIP (Sanctuary)</b> 920A Adult Faith Formation 10A Youth "Triple S" Time						
3 *See box above 1st Sunday in Advent 1145A Nativity Rehearsal 12P Confirmation 2P Ladies Book Club 430P Girl Scouts 5P Cristo Rey Ministry (carpool 415) 12-6P Christmas Tree Lot	4 1030A Meals on Wheels 7P Recovery Comes First 7P Boy Scout Troop #737	5 10A Ladies Bible Study 1030A Meals on Wheels 330P LSCDC Chapel 6P Adult Bible Study 7P Handbells	6 10A Preschool Bible Time <b>12P Advent Worship</b> 12 Journey w/ Jesus Posted 330P Afterschool Bible Time 5P Hope Team <b>630P Advent Worship</b> 630P Youth (LSLC) 7P Choir	7 11A Good News Team 330P Backpack Ministry (LSCDC) 515P Disciples of Harmony 630P Recovery Comes First 700P Lifelong Discipleship	1 Sr. Youth Lock-In	2 <b>330-630 Adventpalooza</b> 12-6P Christmas Tree Lot
10 *See box above 2nd Sunday in Advent <b>920A LS Advent/Christmas Brunch</b> (+Elf Store) <b>1030A Children/Youth Christmas Program (during Worship)</b> 1145 Backpack Food Bags/ Elf Store 1145 Nativity Rehearsal 12-6P Christmas Tree Lot	11 1030A Meals on Wheels 7P Recovery Comes First 7P Fellowship/Mutual Care 7P Boy Scout Troop #737 7P Exec Team	12 10A Ladies Bible Study Advent Brunch (Hoppert) 1030A Meals on Wheels 330P LSCDC Chapel 430P Rush Hour Ministry 530P Finance Committee 6P Adult Bible Study 7P Handbells 7P Virgin of Guadalupe (Cristo Rey)	13 10A Preschool Bible Time <b>12P Advent Worship</b> 12 Journey w/ Jesus Posted 330P Afterschool Bible Time <b>630P Advent Worship</b> 630P Youth (LSLC) 7P Choir	14 7A Men's Bible & Biscuits 515P Disciples of Harmony 630P Recovery Comes First 630P LS-CDC Board 7P Council	15 630p Nativity Dress Rehearsal	16 9A Christmas Caroling 12-6P Christmas Tree Lot <b>7P Outdoor Nativity (bilingual w/ Cristo Rey)</b>
17 *See box above 3rd Sunday in Advent 12P Confirmation Class 12-6P Christmas Tree Lot <b>7P Outdoor Nativity</b>	18 1030A Meals on Wheels 7P Recovery Comes First 7P Boy Scout Troop #737 Christmas Dinner	19 10A Ladies Bible Study - JwJ 1030A Meals on Wheels 330P LSCDC Chapel 6P Adult Bible Study 7P Handbells	20 10A Preschool Bible Time <b>12P Advent Worship</b> 12 Journey w/ Jesus Posted 330P Afterschool Bible Time <b>630P Advent Worship</b> 630P Youth (LSLC) 7P Choir	21 4P Backpack Ministry 515P Disciples of Harmony 630P Recovery Comes First Palmetto Place Meal Children's Hospital Meal	22	23
24 Christmas Eve/4th Sunday in Advent <b>930A Advent Worship</b> <b>5P Children/Family Candlelight Worship</b>	25 <b>Christmas Day</b> Office Closed 7P Recovery Comes First	26 1030A Meals on Wheels 6P Adult Bible Study	27 <b>12 Journey w/Jesus Posted</b>	28 7A Men's Bible & Biscuits 8A Facilities Team 630P Recovery Comes First	29	30
LSCDC Closed through Jan. 1						
31 1st Sunday of Christmas <b>930A Christmas Lessons &amp; Carols</b> (unity worship service)	1 New Years Day Office/LSCDC Closed 7P Recovery Comes First	2 10A Ladies Bible Study 1030A Meals on Wheels 330P LSCDC Chapel 6P Adult Bible Study	3 930A Backpacks (LSCDC) 10A Preschool Bible Time <b>12 Journey w/Jesus Posted</b> 330P Afterschool Bible Time 515P Disciples of Harmony 6P Choir 6P Hope Team	4 11A Good News Team 345P Backpack Ministry (LSCDC) 630P Recovery Comes First 700P Lifelong Discipleship	5 <b>5-630P Epiphany Eye Cookout</b>	6 Epiphany of Our Lord



# LUTHERAN LIVING IN SOUTH CAROLINA



In this edition we have stories from our global companions in Tanzania and a wonderful ministry in the Charleston area.

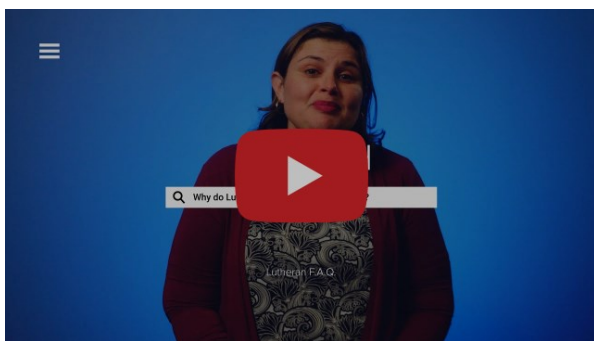
The Rev. Rick Carter shares a resource for leaders, The Rev. James Henricks shares a resource for Congregational Vitality, and The Rev. Emily Hartmann Edenfield brings us another Lutheran F.A.Q.

*On a personal note (Neal here),* I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who has subscribed over the past few months. Your likes, views, and subscription to our YouTube channel will continue improving what we can do to support members through this platform.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

[SUBSCRIBE ON YOUTUBE](#)

## LUTHERAN F.A.Q. | WHY DO LUTHERANS ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS?



The Rev. Emily Hartmann helps to answer the question, Why do Lutherans ask so many questions?

[WATCH VIDEO](#)

[DOWNLOAD WORKSHEET](#)

## A holy gift



Editor's note: This article originally ran Nov. 28, 2019. My mom's death, in December 2013, took my feet out from under me. I couldn't imagine a life without her. But she had always told me ... [continue](#)

## Lectionary blog: Like a man who goes away ...



Lectionary for Dec. 3, 2023 First Sunday of Advent Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37 I write these columns several weeks in advance so they will be ... [continue](#)

## Not a gift from anyone



Vine Deloria Jr., who died in 2005, was many things: a historian, a theologian, a political activist and an author whose 1969 book *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* became a defining ... [continue](#)

## Community is home



November was designated as National American Indian Heritage Month in 1990 and amended to include Alaska Natives 18 years later. American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month invites us to ... [continue](#)

## Birthdays, Wedding and Baptismal Anniversaries

December 2	Deborah DePaoli	December 26	Lexanne Graves
	Lisa Petty		Linda Hayes
December 6	Peg Zieche	December 28	Leena Skiba
December 9	Lucas Shannon		♥ Barbara & Peter Creighton
December 14	Peggy Collins	December 29	Jeannie Hurlbert
	Sara Hale		♥ Marshall & Jeannie Hurlbert
December 17	Teagan Lindstedt	December 31	Kurt Hopwood
December 19	♥ Lee & Barbara Collins		Melanie Mooney
December 21	Ron Ramsey		Randy Sides
December 25	Nicholas Wirth		



### Celebrate Your Baptism

Don't forget to check the bulletin to see if we will be celebrating your Baptismal Anniversary during this month's Sunday worship services. Immediately below the Gathering Music, there are printed the names of those who are celebrating a baptismal anniversary *in that week*. When the gathering music begins, individuals can quietly come forward to meet Pastor Eric at the baptismal fountain. There, he will re-trace the cross with the water on your forehead and offer a special prayer of blessing for you (children may be accompanied by parents). There is nothing to be anxious about - everything is done quietly while the music is being played. For those who know only the month of your Baptism, you can join us on the first Sunday of the month (if you prefer some other Sunday, please let us know). **If you do not know your baptismal information, then please pick a month when you would like to celebrate this gift of God's grace in your life – and notify the office**, so that we can add you to the celebration list (we'll simply mark the choice of your month with an asterisk). Even if you don't know the exact date, it's important to celebrate this special gift of God's grace in your life. Again, we encourage everyone to research your Baptismal date and find out as much information as you can – let us know if we can help!



<b>December 1</b>	Anne Ducate
	Bob Turnmire
<b>December 2</b>	Brantley Smith
<b>December 6</b>	Meg Goldberg
	Evan Turnmire
<b>December 8</b>	Hailey Stoutland
	Brady Stoutland
<b>December 10</b>	Sarah Schultz
<b>December 22</b>	Lexanne Graves
<b>December 23</b>	Karen Kranz
<b>December 24</b>	Jace Martinez
<b>December 29</b>	Scott Graves



## **CHURCH STAFF**

People of Living Springs - Ministers

Rev. Eric Fink – Senior Pastor

[pastoreric@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:pastoreric@livingspringscolumbia.org)

Rev. Carl Taylor - Associate Pastor

[pastorcarl@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:pastorcarl@livingspringscolumbia.org)

Deacon Lexanne Graves – E-Outreach Coordinator

[lexanne@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:lexanne@livingspringscolumbia.org)

Tammy Mancuso- Dir. of Child Development Center

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Lisa Petty – Good News Coordinator

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Shirl Schiffman - Music Director

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Laura & Mark Cunningham - Food Resource Persons

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Sherry Forsgren – Bookkeeper

[sherry@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:sherry@livingspringscolumbia.org)

Laura Turnmire – Handbell Choir Director

[laurabells@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:laurabells@livingspringscolumbia.org)

Seminarian Jace Martinez

[seminarian@livingspringscolumbia.org](mailto:seminarian@livingspringscolumbia.org)

## **CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEMBERS**

[Joel Holmstrom](#) - President

[Laura Turnmire](#) - Vice-President

[Brantley Smith](#) - Secretary

[Mike Davidson](#) - Treasurer

[Bill Ramsey](#) – Financial Secretary

[Hunter Prest](#) - Youth Representative

[Rev. Eric Fink](#) – Senior Pastor

[Rev. Carl Taylor](#) - Associate Pastor

[Gary Bradham](#)

[Barb Imbert](#)

[Lorenzo Hampton](#)

[London Mancuso](#)

[Ron Ramsey](#)

[Ashley Stoutland](#)

[Tom Willingham](#)

## **MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS**

Child Development Center

Deborah DePaoli

Children/Youth Ministries

Leslie Bloss/Jan Berger

Ashley Stoutland/Hunter Prest

Fellowship & Mutual Care

Trish Davidson & Wendy McKenzie

Good News Team

Lisa Petty

Hope Ministries

Karen Kranz

Justice Ministry

Helen Doerpinghaus

Lifelong Discipleship

Steve Bloss

Lutheran Men in Mission

Bob Turnmire

Women of the ELCA

Jan Berger

Worship & Music

Jim Zieche

Facilities

Ed Brennan

Finance

Karlene Stuart

Archives/Pew Bears

Judy Lawrence

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Prayer Requests