

Advent Midweek Services at Lord of Life

November 18, 2015

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol: What Happens When Jesus Comes?

"Jesus didn't enter our world to brighten our December, but to transform our lives."

Rev. Bob Petterson, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Naples, Florida

No story illustrates that message better than Dickens' classic Christmas story of Ebenezer Scrooge - a miserable miser who shortchanges those who work for him, is ruthless to those who owe him money, is coldly indifferent to the pleas of widows and orphans, and has not one charitable bone in his curmudgeonly old body. Dickens says this of Scrooge:

*Oh, but he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge!
A squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching,
covetous old sinner!*

As we know, all that is about to change one Christmas Eve, as Scrooge is visited by three ghosts - the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future, and he is led on an incredible journey of redemption and transformation. And we get to join him on his journey. Because we will have the opportunity to be visited by the three ghosts here at Lord of Life! To aid in our spiritual journey through this Advent Season, we will be reflecting on movie snippets from this classic tale during worship each of the three Wednesdays of Advent. In case you didn't know it, this tale was based on the five major scripture passages of Advent, to help Christians prepare for the coming of Christ, where their lives were in need of repentance and redemption. Here's our schedule:

Wednesday, December 2, 7 PM

Haunted by the Past?

How the Coming of Jesus Redeems your Past

Wednesday, December 9, 7 PM

Haunted by the Present?

How the Coming of Jesus Transforms your Present

Wednesday, December 16, 7 PM

Haunted by the Future?

How the Coming of Jesus Gives you Hope for the Future

Each night, following worship, there will be hot chocolate and holiday goodies to aid in table discussions of these three great themes of "A Christmas Carol" and of the Advent Season. So take this brief midweek time to stop your holiday busyness to breathe, reflect and pray about what this season is about for you. And as we enter this holy season, let me join Tiny Tim in saying,

"God bless us, everyone!"

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Gary

Sign up to receive Daily Advent Devotionals right in your inbox! To get these thought-provoking discussion starters, please text ADVENTDEVOTIONAL to 22828 to get started or go to LOLONLINE.ORG/Advent-christmas/



Advent Season at Lord of Life

There are many ways you can celebrate the Advent season and prepare for the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Here are just a few of the ways you can participate:

Join us for our 3-part Advent series: "A Christmas Carol" & the Coming of Jesus
Midweek Advent Service – Wednesdays, 7:00 – 7:45 pm
The midweek Advent service will use music and liturgy from "Joyous Light" Evening Prayer by Ray Makeever.



December 2: *Are you being haunted by the Past? Jesus Forgives*
December 9: *Are you haunted by your present? Jesus Transforms*
December 16: *Are you haunted by the future? Jesus Gives Hope*

Musical Events to look forward to during Advent:

Sunday, November 29 (Advent I): The Happy Day Singers (K-1) sing at 9:50.

Dec. 1 – the LOL Choir's CD recording of Rutter's Magnificat available for purchase, proceeds benefitting the LOL concert trip to Germany in 2017.



Dec. 6, 6:00pm – The LOL Choir joins with the Woodlands Chorale and the Woodlands Symphony, conducted by Rob Hunt, to present Handel's Messiah (in Lord Of Life sanctuary). Soloists include LOL's Carla Summers, Austin Hunt, J.R. Smith, Jonathan Aigner, and Melissa Givens.

Dec. 20, all morning worship (8:30, 9:50 & 11am) – LOL Choir, Youth Singers, and orchestra lead worship in lessons and carols format.



Dec. 20, 6:30pm – Children's Choir, directed by Katie Phillips, presents "Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem?"

Rituals and Traditions

Advent Candles and Wreath: Light more candles each week as we await the coming of Jesus

Advent-palooza: Advent season is overlooked by culture but is important in our faith journey to Christmas. Join us in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, Dec. 6 from 9:30 to 11:30am to learn more. Stations include: Photo Booth, Advent Plate, Advent Candles, Interactive Video, Service Project Corner & Storytelling. Fun for all ages!

Deck The Halls: Help us decorate the church Sunday, December 6, 12:00pm

Family Movie Night: Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" 6pm Fellowship Hall

8th Annual Men's Breakfast Sunday, December 14, 9:00 – 11:00 am – Free Will Offering – Benefitting Senior Citizens at Harvestwood Apartments

Service of Remembrance: Focusing on coping with Grief and Loss during the Holidays Dec. 19th 5pm

Kids' Christmas Program: "Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem" Sunday, Dec. 20 at 6:30pm

Purposeful Service

Gift Giving Opportunities: Global Barnyard, Interfaith Adopt-A-Family and Adopt-A-Senior, International Seafarer's Boxes, Lutheran Social Services Foster Kids

Opportunities to Serve: Lutheran Social Services Foster Care Christmas Party Saturday, December 12, 11:00 – 1:00 pm

Harvestwood Apartments Christmas Party – Saturday, December 19, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

What if this year was different?

Rediscover Life & Joy!

Looking for a place of welcome this Christmas?

Visit an ELCA church:

Joyful Life, Spirit of Joy!, Lord of Life
See websites for worship times.



JoyfulLifeTheWoodlands.org LordofLifeOnline.org SoJoy.org



Christmas Eve Worship Services

(Candlelighting with Holy Communion)

Family Worship 4:00 pm Family Worship

New Life Worship 6:00 pm New Life Singers & Jazz Band

Traditional Worship 8:00 pm Lord of Life Choir and Brass

Traditional Worship 11:00 pm Pipe Organ & Soloist

Advent-palooza!

Advent: a season that is overlooked by culture but important in our faith journey to Christmas. Join us in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, Dec. 6 from 9:30 to 11:30am to learn more.

Stations include:

Photo Booth

Advent Plate

Advent Candles

Interactive Video

Service Project Corner

Storytelling.

Fun for all ages!



Changing the World One Purchase at a Time

Global Market Fair Trade Holiday Sale

Friday NOV. 20
6:00 pm to 9:30 pm

Saturday NOV 21
10:00 am to 5:00 pm

Sunday NOV. 22
9:00 am to 2:00 pm

All Credit Cards
Free Admission

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
3801 South Panther Creek
The Woodlands, TX
Phone: 281-367-7016
Handsoffaith.fairtrade@yahoo.com

Hands of Faith
Fair Trade Ministry

Christmas Service of Remembrance Saturday, December 19, 2015 at 5:00 pm

Have you lost a loved one recently?

You are invited to come to a Christmas service of remembrance and healing. You will be able to light candles in memory of your loved ones and be anointed for healing for your journey through the holidays. All will be welcome to communion as well. Invite your family and friends to join us. Refreshments will be served following the service.

Educational and Family Events

Sunday School for all ages
Sunday mornings - 9:45 am

Pastor's Bible Study
Tuesdays - 11:30 am

BUNCO
1st Tuesday of month - 7 pm

Baptism Anniversary
2nd Sunday of each Month

Men's Breakfast
2nd/4th Saturday of each month

DRAFT at Goose's Acre
2nd Thursday of month - 8 pm

RuthAnn's Remnants
2nd/3rd Thursday of each month

Hug-A-Bears
4th Thursday of each month

Homeless Ministry
4th Tuesday of each month

Youth Gathering
Sundays - 6 pm

Knitting Group
2nd/4th Saturday of each month

Prayers n Squares
4th Thursday of each month

Food Pantry Sunday
1st Sunday of each month

PJ's Corner

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with your life?



The other night a Gallup Poll survey telemarketer-type person called me and asked if I would participate in a "short" survey. My niece works for one of these companies and I've heard her horror stories from people she's called, so I was trying to be as nice as possible. And yet I did not want to take a survey on politics so I asked a few questions to find out the "what and why" of the call. In the end I caved to the "short" – 30 minute – survey. It was fascinating! All the questions were trying to find out (I think) – are you satisfied or dissatisfied in life?

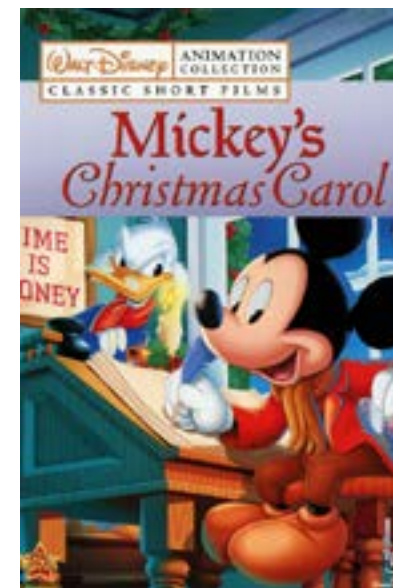
How would you answer that question right now? Is being satisfied the same as being happy? What does it mean to be happy?

Of course to answer these questions I went to Google. I found a site that said, 'to be happy is to be satisfied with your life.' Not helpful in my process to try to get some clarification! But it did go on to say, that 'happiness embodies your judgment about your life, and what matters for your happiness is something for you to decide.' And then the next sentence said that was WRONG! What? It said, 'to be satisfied is just to regard your life as going well enough – it is satisfactory.' Ugh – the internet was not helping me!



Click [here](#) to read the rest of the story or go to lordoflifeonline.org and look under the [media tab](#).

Drive-In Movie Night at Lord of Life



Bring a date, co-workers, friends, family or the kids. Picnics, lawn chairs, blankets and coolers welcomed. Admission and popcorn are free! We will be presenting a DOUBLE FEATURE – and both are related to the season (and to our Wednesday Advent services). We will begin with Mickey's Christmas Carol (it's about a half hour long), followed by A Christmas Carol with George C Scott. Join us for one or both on Saturday, December 12 at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. It's not just a movie... it's an experience!



Worship & The Arts

Music and the visual arts build anticipation for the coming of Christ during the Advent season. Even the lectionary readings from Luke and John brim over with song: the Benedictus ("Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord..." – Zechariah's song), the Magnificat (Mary's song), the Nunc dimittis ("Now let thy servant depart in peace..." – Simeon's song), and the culminating angels' chorus - Gloria in excelsis - that we hear at Christmas.

At LOL, we offer a wealth of artistic expressions enhancing the season of Advent, both in regular worship services and in several special events. You can check out the entire schedule at our website lordsoflifeonline.org or on page two of this publication.

A brief introduction to Handel's Messiah, being performed here at LOL on December 6th at 6pm, for those who may not know this great work:

George Frideric Handel, already acknowledged as one of the world's leading composers, wrote Messiah (the title actually omits "the") over a period of only 24 days in 1741. The motivation to undertake such a project came from the wealthy landowner and political activist Charles Jennens, who had assembled an extraordinary text from the Bible. The libretto (text) surveyed the whole Christian story of salvation, from the promises of the Old Testament to the resurrection and the visions in the book of Revelation. Handel, whose fame had come from success with dramatic forms such as opera and oratorio, was challenged with constructing an extended musical structure that could not rely on dramatic development and theatrical devices.

The result cannot be described using conventional labels: Messiah – unique in all of music history - perhaps can only be characterized as an extended contemplation of God's plan of salvation, as understood by 18th century English Protestants. Handel's musical genius and imagination somehow makes the endeavor work, and holds our attention over the 3 hours it takes to perform the entire piece. (Relax, our performance is a "sampler" lasting no more than an hour and a half!)

The inexhaustible resources of Handel's genius bring alive the words of the text at every point in the epic Biblical narrative: we hear the cracking of the whip (the flagellation of Jesus) in the jagged rhythms of "Surely He has borne our grief;" later sopranos, altos, tenors and basses all "go their own way" musically in "All we like sheep have gone astray." Handel even plays on the 18th-century awareness of musical styles as he uses archaic a cappella choral textures to represent the old pre-Christian humanity, and the sprightly, dance-like idioms of the 18th century to express the joyful life in Christ.

His most thrilling moments occur in the great choruses of praise – "Hallelujah!" and "Worthy Is the Lamb." These numbers achieve their rapturous effect not through musical sophistries, but through simple craft as Handel builds breathless excitement with fugal structures – the quintessential "dry" formal music! Like his countryman J.S. Bach, Handel knows counterpoint like a Hoosier knows basketball.

We hope you can hear our performance on Dec. 6. Many of you will know one or more of our soloists: Carla Summers, our own LOL Music Associate and head choir director at Oak Ridge High School; J.R. Smith, who has sung with our choir numerous times, and is also on the choral faculty at ORHS; my son Austin Hunt, who has sung at LOL, and is the choir director at Wells Middle School and at Spring Woods United Methodist Church; Jonathan Aigner, Director of Music at Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church; and Melissa Givens, nationally-known soprano, recording artist, and faculty member at Sam Houston State University. I am honored to serve as guest conductor of the performance. I am very grateful to Dr. Dave Faber, director of the Woodlands Chorale, for organizing the choral component of our presentation so meticulously. Darryl Bayer, artistic director of the Woodlands Symphony, has auditioned and engaged the members of the orchestra.

For those who can't attend the Dec. 6 performance, the LOL Choir and orchestra will reprise the Advent/Christmas choruses from Messiah as part of the Dec. 20 lessons and carols services at 8:30, 9:50 and 11.



Outreach Ministries Update

Thanksgiving! Christmas! A time of giving—gifts & your time!

Please sign-up right outside the Fellowship Hall to give a gift. There are opportunities to give to foster children (think about it—not being able to be with your own family—placed with a family that probably has few financial resources themselves). There are also opportunities to help a senior citizen, who may receive this gift as their only gift. There also are names for community members in need who may be hidden in our community. May you feel joy as you open your hearts!



Seafarers

Seafarer boxes are lining up!! It is fun buying these very simple items that can mean so much to someone isolated and alone, away from family. We have 80 boxes so far. Our goal this year is 300! Only 3 weeks left to give. Please give generously.

Global Barnyard

The Global Barnyard is an immense benefit to those in remote areas, just struggling to eat every day. It is so hard to imagine that with all we have. Sounds so trite, but make a difference in someone's life!! It is true!! Look for sign up sheets in the hallway in the next few weeks.



Upbring Foster Christmas Party

On December 12, from 11-1pm, we will be hosting a party here for Upbring foster families and children, with a gourmet meal, live music, and crafts for the children provided by the youth group, to support the hard-working foster parents and to lift-up these children who are without their families. We would love to have you help with serving, greet our guests, etc. Just contact Anne at the church office or e-mail to: aswetich@lordsoflifeonline.org. It will be an amazing experience!

Gebert Golf Tournament Update

Many thanks to all who worked so hard on the Gebert Golf Tournament. It was a huge success! And what a great time!! Also thank you to those who gave so generously, so the church can give to others—children in need, to refugees around the world, and to the Lutheran Seminary etc.! The final total has not been announced, but it is over \$30,000!



#GivingTuesday

We've all heard of the shopping frenzy of "Black Friday" and "Cyber Monday", #GivingTuesday is an opportunity for us to give back and to give thanks. This year we join this global celebration of generosity by supporting Acts of Wisdom, a faith-based non-profit organization dedicated to assisting those in rural Africa in their quest to obtain an education. Celebrate #GivingTuesday and consider supporting the mission and ministry of Acts of Wisdom. Donate [online](http://www.acts-of-wisdom.org) or send a check to the synod office with "#GivingTuesday" written in the memo line.

- December 6—** Adventpalooza
- December 13—** Christmas Celebration in Sunday school
- December 20—** Music Mania Christmas Program

Teen Life at LOL



**Summer Mission trip for Sr. High:
Team Effort – Pascagoula, Mississippi,
July 10-16**

This summer we will be heading out to the coast of Mississippi to partner with TEAMeffort again. TEAMeffort does a great job of providing meaningful service projects and worship time for our youth. While in Mississippi, we will get a chance to repair homes and help families that are still struggling from Hurricane Katrina. We will also get to play on the beach (3 blocks from where we're staying) and do some other fun things. The projected cost for this trip is \$500 a person, but we will do fundraisers to help lower the cost throughout the spring. To sign up, see Patrick Nazaroff for a form and pay a deposit of \$150 by February 1st. You can email Patrick at pnazaroff@lordoflifeonline.org for questions or to request a sign up form.

Sr. High Service Project:

On December 12th, Lord of Life hosts Lutheran Social Services foster families for lunch, gifts, and crafts. We will provide crafts and games for young children during that time. The commitment is from 10:30-1:30pm that day, and lunch will be provided. Let Patrick know if you are interested.



Confirmation Camp:

It's time to start thinking about confirmation camp for summer 2016 for our rising 7th and 8th graders. Our group is scheduled to go on June 19-24. The cost for camp will be \$390 a person (with a \$20 early bird discount if paid by March 1st). Registration deadline with Patrick is February 1st. We will register as a group so you will need to contact Patrick at pnazaroff@lordoflifeonline.org

lordoflifeonline.org for more information.

Wookies Vs. Droids: Paintball in October 2015

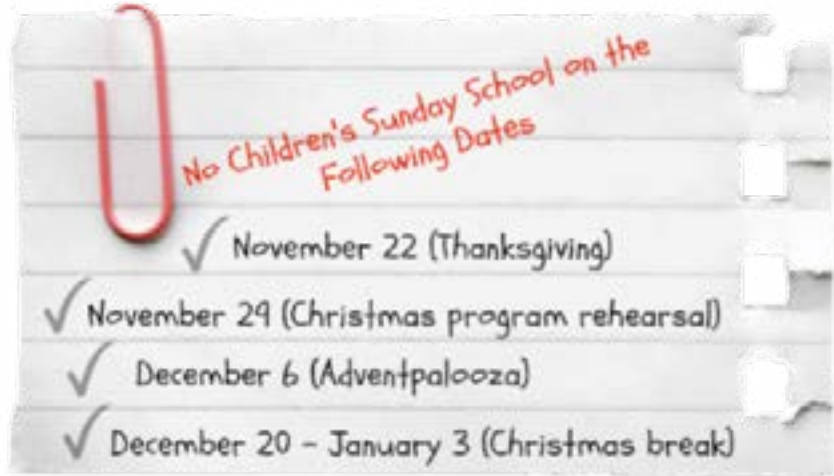


Welcome to the table
First Communicants!



Congratulations
and God bless you!

The holidays herald good cheer, time with family and friends, good food, and **CHANGES in the SUNDAY SCHOOL CALENDAR!**



Please note the dates children's Sunday school does NOT meet.

Thank you to all our children who participated in Service Sunday 10/25 by making 20 busy bags for the Interfaith Community Clinic and over 40 toiletry bags for the Homeless Ministry. Great job kids!

And a big THANK YOU to our parent leaders: Steig and Sheri Erickson, Shari Guttormson, Sarah Lutz, Trini Hoffland, Zuzanne Bristow, and Alisa and Keith Dzygun.

thank you!

Listening Team Update

November Update:

The Listening Team had our first session with coach Jim Merhaut this month. While most people associate the term "coach" to that of a sports team (whistle, barking orders to be followed), Jim explained that we should take the view of "coach" as a term for transportation like stagecoach or motor coach. Rather than telling us what to do, Jim will be helping us move forward in the Tune-In process.



Jim reiterated that this listening process is something entirely different than we, or our congregation, have probably ever been a part of. We do not have a pre-determined goal to work for (i.e. increase attendance or build something new). Allowing a plan to develop through listening, rather than having a plan and working to implement it, has taken our group out of our comfort zone. Here are some nuggets.....

- We cannot serve another well until we first listen.
- People are driven by their values. Values drive commitments. People will commit to what is important to them. Therefore we need to listen deeply to what is most important to the person(s) we will serve.
- As we discover different values we may be discovering new faith points that will change all of us and provide a new pathway to serve in the community.
- As we listen to the community we may hear of things that people care about that we ("the church") haven't known about or connected with before.
- How can we help people meet God where they are?
- The church exists to serve the community around it and to the extent we do that, it makes us who we are as people of God.



As we listen we do so with open hearts, curious minds, wondering voices, and prayerful discernment. Please remain steadfast in your prayers for this team and process.

This month we continue to prepare to collect listening data from the congregation. Be watching for your opportunity to complete a survey, answer some questions, and/or gather in a group to talk about the lives of God's faithful people.



Are you Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning? Or do you have a friend or loved one in

the LGBTQ community? We are offering a group for those in the LGBTQ community, as well as family and friends, for fellowship, support, and information. Please join us at Lord of Life in the upstairs library on Dec. 3 at 6:30 pm. This group is open to anyone, regardless of religious affiliation. Please contact Kirsten Beckler at (832)563-3821 with any questions.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:45



The Wednesday evening Busy Women's Bible Study is taking a break for Advent starting 11/18 and will resume in January.



God uses money to illustrate His power.

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test," says the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:10).

God's Word has more to say about money and material possessions than about heaven and hell combined. Obviously, how we as His children handle what God has entrusted to us is a very important subject to Him.

Money is also the only subject about which God says, in essence, "Prove Me. Trust Me. Try Me." He does not issue that challenge concerning any other aspect of our Christian walk of faith. Not about prayer; not about sharing our faith with others; not even about salvation. Just money.

God said to Malachi, the prophet, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test . . . see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing."

Some promises in the Bible are unconditional in nature. They are going to be fulfilled, regardless of what we might or might not do. Others could be described as "if . . . then" promises. If we will do our part, then God will do His part. This passage from Malachi 3:10 is one of the latter. If we will bring our tithes to God's storehouse, then He will open for us the windows of heaven and pour out for us such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.

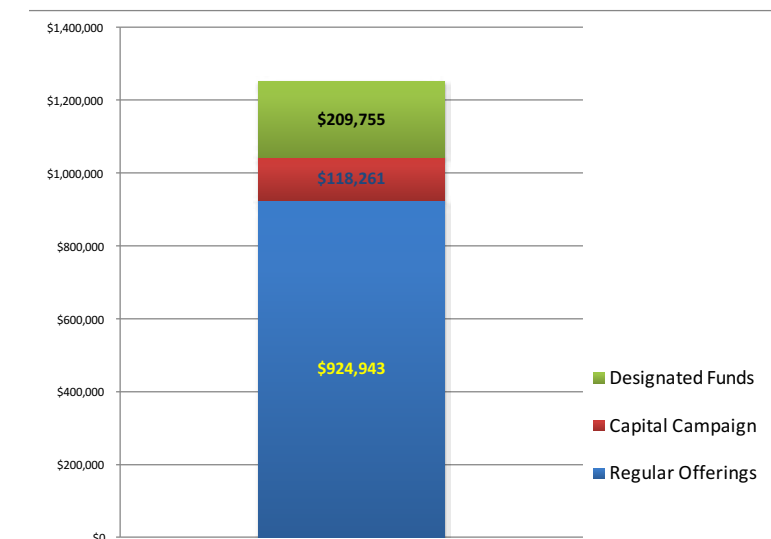
The question is whether we really believe God when He makes a promise like this. If we do, we will take Him at His Word. We will accept His challenge and "test" Him by giving to Him as He direct. And if we do that by faith, then we can be confident that God will meet that "test" by providing all we need — and more.

Council Notes

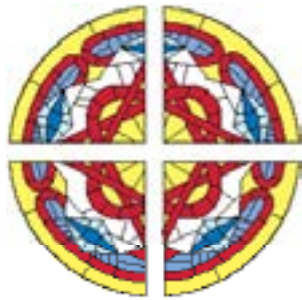
The Lord of Life Church Council meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Here are some of the highlights from the November meeting:

- Discussed initial version of the 2016 proposed budget.
- Prepared for Capital Campaign: Welcome One Another meeting.

Income Distribution 2015



Lord of Life Lutheran Church
3801 South Panther Creek Dr.
The Woodlands TX 77381
www.lordoflifeonline.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Lord of Life Lutheran
Church

281-367-7016

Fax 281-363-4716

www.lordoflifeonline.org

lol@lordoflifeonline.org

Kids of the Kingdom
Preschool

281-298-9901

We invite you to join us for
worship on Saturdays &
Sundays

5:00 pm Saturdays@5

8:30 am Contemporary Liturgical

9:45 am Sunday School

9:50 am New Life Worship

11:00 am Traditional Worship

Your Church Staff

Rev. Gary Heath
Senior Pastor

Rev. Jennifer Fuhr
Associate Pastor

Rob Hunt
Worship & The Arts Director

Lanette Jackson
Director of Finance

Marna Arlien
*Director of Connecting Minis-
tries*

Mark Ruch
Director of Adult Ministry

Patrick Nazaroff
Director of Teen Life Ministry

Jennifer Rowe
Director of Children's Ministry

Anne Swetich
Director of Outreach Ministries

Michelle McGuire
KOK Preschool Director

Janis Armstrong
Child Care Coordinator

Carla Summers
Chorale Associate

Katie Phillips
Children & Youth Music

Sarah Schlacks
Bells of Life Director

Nancy Hauglie
Wedding Coordinator

Sandy DeSelms
Funeral Coordinator

Rick Janacek
Office & Communication Manager

Steve Shirley
Building Superintendent