

Living Waters News
January 2023



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Greeting, may you let the light of Christ lead you in every way.

I pray everyone had a Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year celebration.

Epiphany Season: In the second lesson for Epiphany, St. Paul says, "The Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

Ephesians 3:6

"Epiphany begins at Bethlehem, but it deserves to be more than a half-baked rerun of Christmas – it has much to offer on its own. The magi followed an unmistakably bright star previously unknown, a luminous sign from God to pay attention. During the season of Epiphany we also celebrate the baptism of Jesus, introducing the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Sundays and Season (Augsburg Fortress-04)

When the Feast of Epiphany comes, we hear from the text of Matthew where the magi bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, having followed the Star across the land. Coming from different parts of the world, these wise men will find Messiah, who comes to all people of the world. This is the fruition of the John 3:16 verse, where we know that because God loves us so, he sent His only Son. God's promise is in this reading from Matthew 2: 1-12. We also should be aware that the "light of the star" is God's beacon for us too.

We are called to follow the light of Christ, to come out of the dimness of our lives, and celebrate the light of hope and salvation.

"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." A song from the younger days which is just as applicable today as it was when we were growing up and singing it in Sunday school. The light of Christ is always burning to show us the way, we are indeed "children of the Heavenly Father," we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and know that Christ is calling and will show us the way to the kingdom.

May the New Year bring light, hope and peace to each and every one of you.

Peace be with you, Pastor Jack

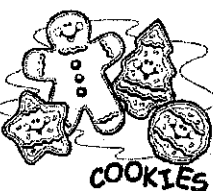






You Are Invited!

We invite you to come and visit us anytime you are in our area or to plan a mission trip to the Cherokee Indian Reservation and join us for Worship. At Living Waters we honor our culture and Native Traditions as well as our Lutheran Theology. We begin our Worship Service by smudging to cleanse our hearts and minds and prepare us for worship. We open our worship service using the hand drum and singing the Cherokee Morning song. Living Waters is blessed to have Partners in Ministry who support us through financial giving, Spiritual support, and visits.

If you would like to become a Partner in Ministry with Living Waters we invite you to contact Pastor Jack at prjack@frontier.com

To those who have separated themselves from the Church, my dear friends, there is a place for you here. Come and add your talents, gifts, and energies to ours. We will all become better as a result.

 <p>COOKIES</p> <p>Thank you to everyone who brought cookies and goodies to the Church Cookie Exchange. A great time was had sampling all the different cookies and candies.</p>	<p>Women's Group Officers</p> <p>Dorine George – President Debra Uhler – Vice President Josephine Teesateskie – Treasurer Lisa Russell – Secretary</p> <p>For more information, please contact Any women's group member.</p>
 <p>The women of Living Waters who participated in the 2022 Secret Sister group met at Asian King for lunch and the Big Reveal of each other's Secret Sister then went to the Performing Arts Center to watch Rudolph, the Musical. A grand time was had by all. Thank you to those who helped prepare the goody bags for each of the women.</p> <p>If you are interested in participating in the 2023 Secret Sister group please see Dorine or JoJo. More information will be coming soon.</p>	 <p><i>It's a New Year!</i></p> <p>New Year's resolutions are notoriously hazardous. But if you have resolved something that will enhance your life and the lives of those around you, you may ask the Holy Spirit to sustain you in carrying out your resolution. This is the right place to do it - to do it week after week. Welcome to our church! May this new year be for you a year of growth and faith and obedience.</p>
<p>BRINGING True Joy to the WORLD</p> <p>The late Dr. Norman Vincent Peale preached a helpful sermon to prepare his parishioners for entry into a new year.</p> <p>A brief paragraph from the message follows:</p> <p>We become what our attitudes are. If your attitude is that tomorrow is going to be a bad day, it's a bad day for you before it ever starts. You have condemned it to be a bad day, and so it will be a bad day. If, on the other hand, you affirm that by the grace of God tomorrow is going to be a wonderful day, it's a wonderful day for you before you ever begin it because you have affirmed it as a wonderful day. I'll guarantee this: By reversing sick attitudes that you've had up to this time and making them healthy attitudes, you can make [the coming year] a wonderful year. It's amazing what you can do with yourself if you make up your mind to.</p>	<p>JESUS LOVES YOU</p> <p>A key Epiphany theme is sharing the news of Jesus. "Ordinary" Christians can do that best by listening for an opening when visiting with someone and sharing part of their faith story in relation to something the other has said. There's no need to accost strangers on street corners. Just be yourself, let the Holy Spirit guide you and invite your listener to follow Jesus, too.</p> <p>The traditional color for Epiphany is green, indicating life, growth, hope and eternity. Symbols for the season include a light, candle or star; a crown or three crowns; three gifts; and a globe. In the modern church, Epiphany has become a time to focus on reaching out and "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people.</p> <p>It's also a reminder to engage in Christian community and to heal divisions among God's children.</p>
 <p>Congratulations to Shelly and Annie Durant Both graduated on December 14th from Southwestern Community College Cosmetology program.</p>	 <p>The Russell family would like to thank all those who contributed to the gifts we were given for Christmas.</p>

"If you can imagine enjoying God, instead of trying to repay him, then you can imagine grace."
 Max Lucado



Living Waters Food Pantry
 January 4th & 5th
 18th & 19th

If you or your organization would like to have a food drive for LW food pantry please contact Lisa or Pastor Jack. If you would like to contribute financially to the Living Waters Food Pantry please designate your check in the memo line to Food Pantry.



Thank you to everyone who made it possible for Living Waters Resource Center to help 142 families with **Christmas this year.**

With the help of many individuals, organizations, churches and workers we were able to **Make Christmas a little brighter for these families.** Many attended the annual Christmas store and were able to pick out the gifts they wanted for their families.



Current wish list of the Food Pantry and Resource Center
 Canned Meat, Cereal,
 Pop Tarts, Toilet Tissue,
 Dish Soap, Shampoo, Deoderant, Bar Soap,



Thank you to those who contributed items, helped prepare and helped deliver 8 Christmas Dinner baskets to families in our community. The families were thrilled.



Thank you to John Davis for delivering a load of Christmas items and other items for the food pantry and resource center. We appreciate all you do.



Thank you to all those who contributed money, gifts and food for the Christmas Store. We could not have done it without your help.



Thank you to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Brevard for donating items for the food pantry, resource center and the Christmas Store.



Thank you to Allison McVann for delivering a trailer load of Christmas decorations for the Christmas Store.



A Special thank you to Granny Nubs, Bugs, McGyver, Le, Iann, Tire Stabber, X, Zhy guy, Hop-a-long, Junior, Rick and JoJo for all their hard work in helping set up, work and clean up the Annual Christmas Store. These folks are awesome and we really appreciate your commitment and hard work.



During 2022 our hard working food pantry crew served 10,634 families/ 33,874 individuals. If you have ever volunteered with us on a distribution day then you realize how much work these wonderful workers put into helping others in our community. Thank you to all those who have helped pick up food, sort food, prepare boxes, distribute food and deliver boxes this year.



Thank you to Iann for preparing the Christmas goody bags that were given out on Christmas morning.

Thank you to the Resource Center for providing a Special Christmas Bag of treats for each family on Christmas Day.

To get back good stuff, genuine love, respect, consideration, give those things out.

When you always keep your word, always speak the truth, always act with respect and consideration, people will trust you. By earning and keeping the trust of others you give yourself a significant advantage in achieving what you seek to achieve.


COMMUNICATIONS
Coordinator

If you would like to receive a Text Message reminder of happenings at Living Waters please make sure that Le has a current cell phone number for you.

If you've ever tried to work with homeless or addicted, you know it can be discouraging and frustrating, yet God does still patiently change lives. Sanctification is a long process, and when we struggle with our own besetting sins we shouldn't be surprised that others with perhaps more visible sins do as well. The people we serve at Living Waters have real problems — massive, sometimes unsolvable problems. Pious platitudes just won't do. Quoting Scripture at them, even though it's the tool God uses to change lives, isn't enough, either. When we want to see the lives of others transformed, we cannot hold anything back in our own lives — secret sins, past hurts, or running from an issue we have never been willing to face. Some visitors have left our ministry defeated because they were unable, or unwilling, to allow God to change [them]. All of us are broken in some way. If we're allowing God to continue His painful work of change within us, if we are willing to admit we're struggling, we can still help others change. If we deny we have problems, or hide our struggles, how can we tell others God can transform and change their lives?

And so we have persevered in prayer until God showed Himself.

This past year we were humbled by the folks who came to us for relief, for support, for encouragement. Many thanked us for what we were doing. But, it is we who are Blessed to get to know some of these folks and their families. We have seen first hand the difference it can make in a person's life when someone believes in them. When someone encourages them and offers a hand up. We have been in the trenches with them and we have been on the mountains with them, but through it all we have been led by God to show His love. One situation that stands out in my mind is - a young lady came to us asking for a sleeping bag. That was it — just a sleeping bag. As I was getting her the sleeping bag we began to talk. I asked her usual questions; did she have a safe place to stay? Did she need a bookbag (food)? Questions I ask to start the conversations in the hope we can gain their trust. As we were chatting I fixed her a warm cup of soup and gave her a cup of hot chocolate. She ate like she hadn't eaten in a few days. After she finished and we were packing her bookbag with some foods and other things she would need I ask her where she was going to go and what her plans were? Her reply actually surprised me (That is hard to do these days) She said "I am going to get me a job, then a car and then I am going to get me a place to live." Then she smiled and said "and I AM going to do it." I grinned, hugged her and told her I believed she would. As we kept talking and we figured out some strategies to help her with her goals I came to find out that this young lady was different than most of the walkers who come to us. She knew what she wanted and she was determined to get it. We helped her get a job and stayed in touch with her as she pursued her goals. 6 months after our first meeting she had a job, had a car and had a place to live.

She came by one day to thank us for helping her and told me she had new goals for this year.

She wants to go to college. We gave her resources, helped her with enrollment papers, worked with her and she will be starting school this January.

This is one of many people who have changed their lives because someone believed in them. Because someone was willing to give them a chance. Because someone said to them — you are never too far gone or lost — we love you and we will help you help yourself.

We pray that this coming year we will be given the opportunity to show God's love to others who have been pushed aside, bruised by this world and told they were not enough. What an honor it is to be able to do this work, to show God's love and to do His work.

Instead of being busily active, BE active with PURPOSE.

GRATEFUL Thankful & BLESSED

December was a very busy month for the Food Pantry and Resource Center. Along with distributing food boxes, giving out Christmas Food Baskets,

Working with our walker population, helping with emergency food needs for other agencies, Adopting 4 families for Christmas, helping those who needed household supplies, clothes and other personal items and the Annual Christmas Store we were also Blessed to be able to be part of gleaning produce on 2 occasions, salvaging items from 3 truck wrecks, salvaging frozen food from a store whose freezer broke, and given the opportunity to salvage food products from a pantry that was closing.

The interesting part of this situation is that at the beginning of December we were concerned that we would not have enough food to distribute to those who came seeking relief. Our shelves were almost bare at times. We decided we would leave it in God's Hands and allow Him to show us what He would have us to do. We would have Faith that what was supposed to happen, would happen. Once again, God not only provided enough for our pantry but we were able to share some of the items we salvaged with other pantries who were also struggling.

OUR GIVING MATTERS!

The faithful church treasurer resigned because there was never enough income to cover expenses. Another member - the owner of the local grain elevator - volunteered to take the position. He had one stipulation - for a period of one year, the church would require no report from him.

The board members were puzzled at this strange request, but knowing him to be an honest man who processed most of their grain, they granted it.

At the end of the year, the new treasurer gave a glowing report. The church's indebtedness on the building had been paid in full! The pastor's salary had been increased by 15 percent! There were no outstanding bills! In fact, he showed a cash balance of nearly \$7,000!

The shocked, but delighted, congregation asked for an explanation.

"Most of you bring your grain to my elevator," the treasurer replied. "When I paid you, I simply withheld 10 percent on your behalf and gave it to the church in your name. You never missed it. Do you see now what we could do for the Lord if we were to willingly return the first tenth to God, who really owns it?"

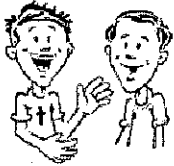
-Cumberland Baptist Church

You have the ability to do whatever is necessary to reach any goal you set for yourself. Convince yourself of the worthiness and desirability of what you intend to do. Once you are committed, you'll be able to get other people convinced and committed. When it means everything to you, you'll make the commitment to do whatever it takes. And with that commitment, you'll get it done.

Experience life's meaning through your participation in bringing that meaning into existence. Give of your time, your resources, your knowledge, your presence, and you'll find yourself in the very heart of life's richness.

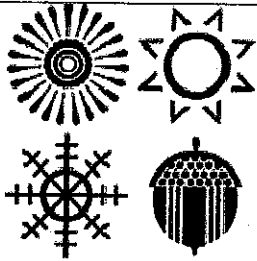
Whatever you have, or know, or care about is of minimal consequence if you keep it all to yourself. Make it matter by offering it to life.

Invite someone



I asked one of our church members how he came to Christ. He said, "For 10 years I was in a searching mode. I was trying to find out what life was all about and what was worth pursuing. I wondered about Christianity. I wondered about Eastern religions. But I didn't know where to turn, and nobody during that 10-year period offered me any help. Then one day I was out jogging. A man from our neighborhood started jogging with me, and when he learned I was new to the area and didn't attend church, he invited me to visit church with him. I did, and I met Christ. I don't know where I'd be if that man hadn't invited me."

Fill yourself with appreciation for the immense potential of right now
and live it in the best way you can imagine.



A church year for liturgical congregations. The church seasons, which correspond to key events in Jesus' life, begin with the four-week Advent period of preparation for our coming Savior at Christmas. After the 12-day season of Christmas is Epiphany, which begins January 6 and continues through Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. That period of preparation culminates in Holy Week, and then Easter marks the pinnacle of every church year. Forty days after the Resurrection we celebrate Ascension, and 10 days after that, the Pentecost season begins; it lasts until Advent, when the cycle begins again.

"Like a great waterwheel," writes Joan Chittister, "the liturgical year goes on relentlessly irrigating our souls, softening the ground of our hearts, nourishing the soil of our lives until the seed of the Word of God itself begins to grow in us, comes to fruit in us, ripens in us the spiritual journey of a lifetime."

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Scroll down and click the "Get Started" button in the "How do I Direct My Designated Choice Dollars" box
Log in and enter your user ID and password

Look for your Choice Dollars to direct on the right side of your screen

Search for "Living Waters Lutheran Church" in "Cherokee, NC" to be taken right to our listing.

Click on "Direct Now" to direct your designated Choice Dollars to benefit

Living Waters Lutheran Church.

By Phone

Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice"

Press 1 to direct Choice Dollars or press 2 to hear the Thrivent Choice program terms and conditions.

Please be sure to specify that you want to designate Living Waters Lutheran Church in Cherokee, NC



Kindness
Is Never
Out of
Season

I've Got This

I have said this so many times to people who have offered to help me.

I'm fine, I don't need to talk.

I'm okay, I can handle it.

It's good, I can get it done.

And as a result, running myself thin, ragged, Taking on too much stress.

Bearing the weight all on my own.

It is always the friends who ignore my stubbornness and showed up anyways in ways that are not always so obvious that have made my load a little lighter.

Sending a quick text. Mailing a card of encouragement. Calling (leaving a message) with words of hope.

There are so many times I should have ended up spralled on the ground from trying to do too much on my own, but instead I stayed upright because of these thoughtful gestures.

It matters. This year has been heavy and we are all exhausted in our own ways, for our own reasons.

Mentally, physically, emotionally.

If you don't "Got This" - say so.

It you have a "I've Got This" friend - show up anyway.

Everyone is bearing a little extra weight and we all need reminding that we don't have to carry it alone.

Each person you come in contact with provides you opportunity to offer kindness,
a positive presence, genuine connection.



I know, I know you have already ask Him a million times. I see those eyes rolling.

But today, ask Him a million and one. Yes, Ask Him AGAIN.

Ask Him for that child to come home. That marriage to be healed. That mountain to be moved.

Ask Him again for that friendship to mend. That work to begin. That end-of-the tunnel light to appear.

Ask Him again for the one who needs rescue, the one who needs direction, the one who needs healing,
guidance, new focus.

Even if the "one" is you. Ask Him again for what you need. For what you want.

For joy in the sorrow, help in the struggle.

A sip of water in the heat of your busy schedule, time to just sit at the well.

Ask Him again to provide springs in your land, and while you're at it, give thanks for the land, no matter how
dry it is now, Knowing He has given it to you with good purpose.

Ask Him again to dig up the soil and plant the seeds.

Ask Him to stir up and settle, make and remake, pour out His peace that passes all understanding. We could all
use a hefty dose of Peace about now.

Ask Him again for all that seems lost and all that seems nowhere near possible. And ask Him believing He can.

Ask Him again, not because you don't think He heard you the first million times, but because you are realizing
the longer you live, that persistence is a very strong faith builder and it keeps you closer to Him for whom all
things are possible and nothing is too hard, and because faith to preserve and closeness to Creator is what we
really need.

Ask Him again with fresh eyes and renewed Spirit and a passionate resolve that He can and
if it's His will.. He will. And if it's not, you will keep on asking. You will keep on seeking, You will keep on
believing. Because persistent faith is where it's at. It fastens it's glaze on Hope. A hope that is always providing
the perfect focal point. And it never disappoints.

Love is not always nice. Kindness is not always agreeable.

When you care deeply, about yourself or anyone else, a big part of living out that care is with truth.

You are not doing a favor to anyone by being dishonest or overly accommodating.

There's no benefit that comes from supporting negative behavior in your own life or in the people you care
about. Love means having the courage to admit what is true and to insist on integrity.

The aim of such love is not to discourage. It is to strengthen.

It is not about preaching or authoritarian control, or guilt or shame.

It is about offering challenge, with respect and the highest expectations.

Love is at its most transformative and beneficial when aligned with truth.

Give love and kindness based on truth, wherever that truth may lead.

Jesus doesn't turn away.

Jesus doesn't turn away from your pain, or your struggles. Jesus doesn't turn away from your heartache. Jesus
doesn't tur away from your insecurity, or your anxiety. He doesn't turn away from the things that make you
different from the crowd.

He doesn't turn away when you mess up. He doesn't turn away when you feel lost or when you fail or when
you are at your absolute lowest. He doesn't turn away when you get pushed to the back of the room and he
doesn't turn away when you get looked over. He doesn't turn away when you stumble.

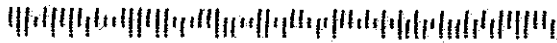
No matter who you are. No matter where you've been.

No matter what anyone says about you, or what you have or haven't done. No matter why.

When you come to him. When you call his name. When you reach out.

Jesus doesn't turn away. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not ever!

Care, even if nobody is looking. Care,
even when there's no possibility anyone will ever know.
Care, because it is the right thing to do, not because it looks good.
Care, without caring so much about who gets credit.
Care, by doing more than just clicking a button in support of a cause.
Care by taking action, not merely by saying you care.
Caring can be painful, burdensome, inconvenient, frustrating,
and at the same time, fulfilling. Genuine caring feels good, and right.
Care, make a positive connection to all that is, and gain a new sense of purpose.
Care, and be a conduit through which life supports, heals,
nourishes, encourages, renews and rewards itself.
Care, and let it bring out your best. Care,
and learn how vital and loving you can be.



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