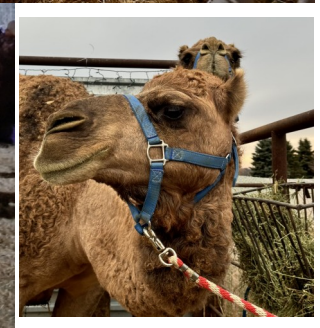


# LIVING+WORDS

LIVING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH

605-438-9672

JANUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER



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## WHAT'S INSIDE

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## Announcements

**Dear Church Family at Living Word,**

There are no adequate words to use as I attempt to thank you for the many kindnesses extended to me during my time with you and again, during this Christmas Season. Each card and gift are treasured and I **thank you** from the bottom of my heart. It was such a privilege to be with you for over two years and there is a very special spot in my heart reserved for each of you. May God richly bless you as you move forward in ministry into the future. With love and thanks, Melanie.

### RightNow Media

RightNow Media is a streaming video library of free Bible Studies. We believe the mission of the church matters and we've seen how God can change lives through video resources. If you are interested in joining RightNow Media contact the church office at 605-438-9672.

### COMMUNION SERVERS

We have, for several years, had just the members of the Church Council assist as communion servers. It has come to our attention there may be others within the church family who would like to serve in that capacity. A training session would be provided for those who have never served before. If you would like to be included in the rotation for serving or would consider being on a substitute basis, it would certainly be welcomed.

### Bible Study Opportunity

Pastor Simonson is presenting the Bible study series "**The Chosen**" at the church on **Thursday** evenings from **6:30 to 8:30 p.m.** Invite a friend to attend this series and learn more about the life of Jesus and those who followed Him on His walk on earth.

### Benefit for Kimber Downes

A benefit for 5-year-old Kimber Downes, recently diagnosed with cancer, will be held on **Saturday, January 11, 2025**, from **4:00 to 8:00 p.m.** at the **Milbank School**.

Kimber faces 42 weeks of chemotherapy and cannot attend large gatherings due to the risk of infection.

This benefit is an opportunity for us to support her and her family during this challenging time.

Our church will be contributing bars for the benefit.

The benefit organizers are seeking **Silent Auction items**. If you'd like to contribute an item for the auction, your generosity would be greatly appreciated.

For more information or questions, please contact

**Anne Lester** at **(218) 639-2134** or **anne.lester@kl2.sd.us**.

Let's come together to support Kimber and her family with our prayers, presence, and contributions.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

# SUNDAY SCHOOL

## Sunday School Christmas Program

Our Sunday School children joyfully shared the good news of Jesus' birth through their heartfelt Christmas program. It was such a delight to hear their singing and see their smiling faces as they spread God's love to all. We are deeply thankful for our dedicated teachers and volunteers who lead our children each week in Sunday School, teaching them about God and His promises.

Sunday School will resume on January 5 with our Ten Commandments curriculum. As we embark on this new year of learning and growth, we encourage everyone to continue praying for their Sunday School prayer partner. Your prayers and support make a meaningful difference in the lives of these children!

Laurie Maas, Education Committee





## Looking Ahead to Vacation Bible School

We are eagerly planning for another exciting week of Vacation Bible School (VBS) this summer! This year's theme, **True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World**, will take us on an adventure to the Alaskan wilderness as we learn how to trust Jesus to lead us through life. We are so fortunate to have the unwavering support of our congregation, which makes this program such a success for our children and community. To bring this Alaskan adventure to life, we will need teachers, helpers with students, kitchen assistants, and volunteers to assist with decorating needs. Additionally, we are looking for specific items to help decorate our rooms and sanctuary, including:

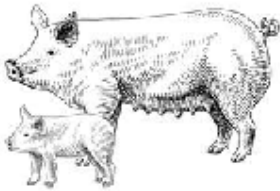
- Christmas trees
- White, purple, green, and blue Christmas lights
- Logs and firewood
- A smaller canoe and paddles
- Large fake rocks

We also hope to provide t-shirts for each child attending this year. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months as we get closer to this exciting event. Let's work together to point kids to Jesus through this incredible Alaskan adventure!

## PIGS FOR PASTORS CHOSEN FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERING

The PIGS for PASTORS program of Awakening Lives to World Missions has been chosen by the Education Committee as the recipient of the Sunday School offering this year.

Should you wish to join in support of their efforts, the Little Red Barn will be located in the fellowship hall for financial gifts.



## PIGS FOR PASTORS

- ❖ Goal to raise \$1900-2000
- ❖ Buys shelter, sow, 10 piglets and feed.
- ❖ For Pastor to have small pig farm to support his family.



Heart for Mission Laos -Thailand, a ministry of ALWM, exists to support the churches of Laos, Thailand, and the Mekong Region of Southeast Asia. It has been serving the Mekong Region since 2009. Heart for Mission is co-directed by Pr. Tom & Pr. Deuane

Thorstad. Pr Tom is on the LCMC & NALC Clergy Rosters, and is a Global Worker of the NALC.

## LAOS

- Population: 7.6 million
- Communist govt since 1975
- Buddhism and Animism: 96%
- Christianity: 3%

## LAO EVANGELICAL CHURCH (LEC)

- Started ministry in the early 1990's with only two churches in the Capital city. Only 26 Christians remained.
- In the whole country, less than 15,000 Christians,
  - with less than 150 churches.
- As of now, there are 1,400 churches and house churches in every province all over Laos

## Growing Church

- New churches are opened every year
  - Last year alone almost 100 new churches were opened.
- Last year about 43,000 people heard the Gospel,
- People get converted every day;
  - about 10,000 people received Christ
- People baptized every week.
  - Last year about 4,000 got baptized.
- Now over 15,000 Christian in Vientiane
- Christian population in Laos is now about 250,000 people. (from 15,000 in 1990)

## Challenges Facing the LAO EVANGELICAL CHURCH (LEC)

- Many churches in Laos cannot be self-supporting
- Most pastors are not fully supported.
- Cannot follow up all new believers.
- Not enough pastors and workers.



## Social & Community Development

- Lao Evangelical Church (LEC) has a major impact on social work and rural development throughout Laos.
- Strengthens good relationship between Church leadership and local authorities.
- Involved with the life of the community through social development programs and services.





## DYNAMIC DISCIPLES

### Dynamic Disciples Spread Holiday Cheer

The Dynamic Disciples have had a heartwarming and joyful December filled with opportunities to share love, laughter, and the true spirit of Christmas.

Earlier this month, the Dynamic Disciples visited at St. William's Care Center for an afternoon filled with meaningful connections and holiday cheer. The children decorated cookies, played bingo, and created beautiful ornaments with the residents. What a joy it was to bring together young people and older residents for such a special time! Laughter echoed through the room, treats were shared, and hugs abounded, creating memories that will last long after the holiday season.

To celebrate the birth of Jesus, the following Wednesday was an extra special day. The children proudly adorned their brand-new Dynamic Disciples shirts and came together for a festive celebration. Kristi Seehafer generously donated delicious goodies for the occasion, and the children filled the room with Christmas spirit by singing beloved songs, performing a delightful reader's theater, and crafting ornaments and stars. The fun continued with more rounds of bingo, spreading excitement and smiles all around.

None of this would be possible without the incredible support of our volunteers, dedicated parents, and the loving congregation who faithfully supports this children's ministry. From everyone at Dynamic Disciples, we wish you a Merry Christmas! Thank you for making this ministry a beacon of joy and love. We can't wait to gather again in January and continue our journey together!

Laurie Maas, Education Committee





## LIVING WORD LUTHERAN WOMEN



Happy New Year!!

In December, I transitioned to the Coordinator position of Living Word Lutheran Women (LWLW). This will be my first contribution to the newsletter so I hope that I can be helpful and informative.

The LWLW is a fellowship of the women of our church. You do not have to be in either of the Circle groups in order to be a part of the Living Word Lutheran Women. In fact, I just recently realized that “Circle” is the term used for Bible Study. So there are 2 sections of Bible Study. One in the morning and one in the evening of the same 3rd Tuesday of the month. Both circles are studying the same material. We also have a Sunday morning Bible Study that meets during coffee time.

Living Word Lutheran Women facilitate numerous mission projects during the year. You will often see us collecting things for different missions. Usually, the collection point is in the Fellowship Hall. Currently, you may have noticed a lot of pillows, sheets and blankets under the table in the back. These donations are going to the group Sleep in Heavenly Peace. You will hear more about this group later. The mitten tree proceeds are always well-received at the schools where we donate them. For this month and February, we are collecting items for hygiene kits. I have included the list of the items we will need. We appreciate any donation you are compelled to give-even if it's one of the items on the list. You do not have to donate a full kit. There is also a need for money to help cover the cost of shipping.

Each year, the Living Word Lutheran Women host several family events. This past year, Pastor Melanie and Roger shared with us high-lights from their trip to the Holy Land; we hosted a campfire around the firepit; 30 of us packed meals at the Orphan Grain Train followed by a chili cook off competition; and we hosted the annual St. Lucia Breakfast just a couple of weeks ago. We appreciate all who attend our events as our goal is to promote and nurture a family and community feeling among our fellow worshippers. We will be hosting an event in the near future so stay tuned for the details. Everyone is always welcome to join us for food and fellowship.

As I close my letter, I reflect on the simple phrase Happy New Year! For many, it evokes the exciting feelings of a fresh start, the slate is clean for new possibilities. How wonderful as Christians, that God has given us that feeling through his grace, every day, every minute.

Thank you and God's Blessings to each of you.

Brenda Seehafer





## LIVING WORD LUTHERAN WOMEN



# HYGIENE KITS

### CONTENTS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 bath towel              | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 sturdy comb  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 wash cloth              | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 band-aids<br>( $\frac{1}{2}$ " or $\frac{3}{4}$ ") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 bath-size bar of soap   | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 small package facial tissues                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 plastic soap box holder | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 nail clipper                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 toothbrush              | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 piece of strong ribbon or cord                     |

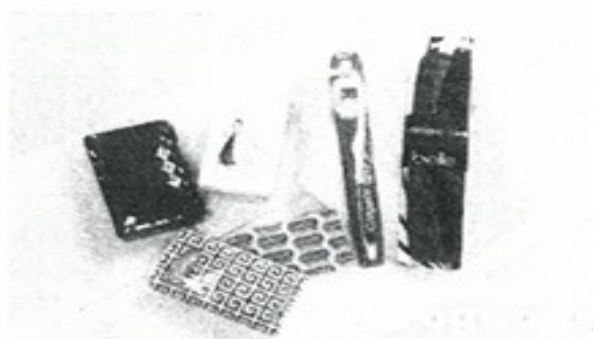
### ASSEMBLY

1. Lay out the towel on a flat surface.
2. Fold over about 5" on each long side.
3. Place the rest of the items in the center under the folds.
4. Roll up the towel.
5. Use ribbon or cord to tie the towel together in the middle.

### PLEASE NOTE

- Dark colored linens are recommended.
- We recommend leaving contents in the original packaging, but it is not required.
- No additions, deletions, or substitutions.
- Do not add money, photos, or personal notes.
- Do not include items with religious, camouflage, patriotic or military symbols.
- Pack only new or gently used items.
- Do not include plastic bags.
- It costs an average of \$11 to ship each box of kits. Please consider a donation to your local OGT branch to help with shipping.

*Although well-meaning variations are tempting, please do not do this. It may result in heavy fines and/or the entire shipment being confiscated by customs officials.*



*Thank you for making a difference in these children's lives. Your love of your Savior, Jesus Christ, is sent with each kit packaged. May God continue to bless your life as you serve Him.*





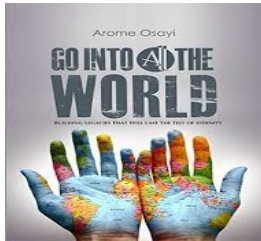
# LIVING WORD LUTHERAN WOMEN



Saint  
Lucia  
Breakfast







## IMPACT MISSIONS

Vital Links Vietnam distributed Christmas gifts to a total of 60 children across four Gospel Houses, with a total amount exceeding \$1,400.

At the Phuoc Long Gospel House (Dr. Hang), Vital Links provided Christmas gifts and cash amounting to 5,000,000 VND (\$199).

At the District 8 Gospel House (Ms. Bao), the children were taken shopping for clothes at AEON Mall, and cash amounting to 7,000,000 VND (\$278) was provided. This cash is to be used for purchasing additional clothes and food in preparation for the Lunar New Year.

At the Long Thanh and Phuoc Thang Gospel Houses in Ba Ria province, Vital Links sent funds to purchase Christmas gifts for the children there.

Thank you so much for supporting the children and Gospel houses. May God bless the benefactors and the Church.

Van Phan,  
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
Jan 1st 2025  
Vital Links Project Manager







*"Great trip,  
and the work  
in Cambodia  
and Vietnam  
was  
awesome!"  
team member*

## 2025 ALWM Mission Trip May 27-June 10 Vietnam



(May 29-June 3)

## Cambodia



(June 4-9)



**COST: \$1250 +**  
**Int'l Airfare + visas**



- 🕒 Gospel Kids Orphanage
- 🕒 Medical - Evangelism – Reading glass Outreach in rural villages
- 🕒 Weekend ministry in the ALWM Mission School in Preh Vihear
- 🕒 Teach conversational English to nurses

for more details Visit  
[alwm.org/missiontrips](http://alwm.org/missiontrips)  
or write  
[missionshelp@alwm.org](mailto:missionshelp@alwm.org)

**REGISTER NOW to  
reserve your  
place!  
Deadline Jan. 31,  
2025**





## PASTOR'S LETTER

Dear Brother's and Sister's in Christ Jesus,

With a new year comes new ideas, new plans, new resolutions, and new problems. If you ever want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans! No matter how hard we plan for 2025, the devil is going to do whatever he can to divert your eyes from God and onto yourself. The more we draw closer to God, the harder the devil is going to work, to convince us to question or even doubt God's promise.

Ever since Adam and Eve, the devil's best trick is to make us doubt God's Word. He wants us to doubt whether or not God is in control and to believe that we have a role to play. After all, sin is nothing more than unbelief. Sin is not trusting in God's promise. If the only thing God asks of us is faith in Him, then why is it so easy to doubt what He has already done for us?



The moment we are baptized, or the moment we come to faith, our sins no longer have any power over our salvation. The moment the Holy Spirit enters your heart, He has you in His hands and He won't let go. The only thing that can separate us from His mercy is if we do not believe in Him. It is a gift from God, not of works, so that none of us can boast.

So rejoice! Thank the Lord and sing His praise! Tell everyone what He has done! He had come to us, wore our sins onto the cross, died for our sins, and then rose from the dead! He has gone before us to prepare a place for us in heaven with Him. Let nothing in 2025 separate you from the love, forgiveness, and mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And may He continue to bless Living Word Lutheran Church and all who enter her door.

In Christ,

*Pastor Curtis Simonson*





# COUNCIL MINUTES

## LWLC COUNCIL MEETING REPORT December 11, 2024

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** President Jackie Olson, Pastor Curtis, Tim DeJong, Moe Reede, Laurie Maas, Adam McMahon, Steve Strege, Deb Buttke, and Julie Berger (Kelly Peterson present for financial report. Scott Maas and Dale Prisinger from the Building Committee.)

**OPENING:** Jackie gave the opening prayer.

**TREASURER/FINANCE REPORT:** Deb indicates we have some funds for the stained glass window project. Kelly gave financial report. Scott comments/explains Barlund fund. Motion by Deb to keep \$20,000 in the Youth Fund and invest the remaining balance. Second by Laurie. Motion carried. Steve made a motion for money collected at Lenten meals to go to Noisy Change. Second by Laurie. Motion carried. Deb made a motion to give a \$1,000 bonus to Janice Beck for filling in with secretarial duties. Thank you, Jan, for the countless hours you gave.

Income:	\$24,786.00
Expenses:	<u>\$16,451.11</u>
Profit	\$ 8,334.89

**BUILDING COMMITTEE:** Scott and Dale reporting on the building project. Laurie made a motion for Scott and Dale to address church in January, with the architect to come answer questions at a later date after their presentation. Tim second; motion carried.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:** Moe made a motion to approve; second by Adam. Motion carried.

**PASTOR'S REPORT:** Live nativity preparation is going well. Set for December 15 at 4:30-6:30. Pastor attended an event with Dynamic Disciplines at St. William's to visit the residents. Pastor reported on pastoral care visits. Deb moved to approve the pastor's report, seconded by Moe. Motion carried.

**PROPERTY AND MANAGEMENT REPORT:** No ice machine yet. We will go somewhere else if no results after one more contact. Key box discussed for outside of the church for emergency entry (i.e. fire, police). Checklist is to be compiled for maintenance duties. Steve made a motion to approve; second by Moe. Motion carried.

**WORSHIP AND EVANGELISM REPORT:** Nothing new to report. Everything is going well. Motion to approve made by Moe; second by Adam. Motion carried. There was discussion about being more welcoming to new people that attend church service. Council decided to table the discussion until next meeting. Motion by Jackie to move Christmas Eve service to 5 p.m.; second by Steve. Motion carried.

**YOUTH AND EDUCATION REPORT:** Laurie reports. Christmas celebration today. Nursing home visit went well. We were invited back. Children's behavior was excellent. Dynamic Disciples got new t-shirts. Supplies will be ordered for vacation bible school. There will be an education meeting in January. Gene is organizing a fishing trip. A game night is being planned. Motion to approve was made by Tim; Adam second. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Pastor suggests getting Living Word merchandise for sale. Laurie volunteered to be on the committee. Deb motion to approve; second by Adam; motion carried.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** January 8, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion was made by Moe; seconded by Deb. Motion carried to adjourn. The meeting was closed with the Lord's prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Berger, Church Council Secretary

## A Message from our Council President

Greetings,

And just like that, another month has passed by and it's time to write another letter for the newsletter. Does anyone else feel like time can go by so quickly?

It has been great to see the many activities in our church this past month—from the Sunday School Christmas program, to the live nativity, the LWLW Christmas gathering, Advent services, bible studies, and many more that I am probably not even aware of. With programs and activities in place such as these, it's an opportunity for fellowship and for Christians to gather to read the Word and keep our eyes focused on Jesus.

Currently the Church Council is being informed about and discussing a variety of topics, including the stained-glass windows, needs within our church and the community, the proposed building project and more. Each of these topics require decisions that need to be made....decisions made by many people, including you. We see many examples in God's Word where people would seek the Lord in prayer before making decisions or stepping out. They prayed for wisdom, direction, guidance, and God's will to be done. They sought the Lord in prayer. As a new year approaches, I am asking each one of you to commit to spending time in prayer for our church. What is God's vision for our church? What is His plan and purpose for our church and this proposed building project? Are there needs within our community where He wants us to focus on and serve in a way that no one else can?

Recently I was reminded that not every good idea is a God idea. Good ideas are limited to our potential and resources. They can often take a lot of time or energy or hard work to pull it off. A divine vision, on the other hand, is from God and we know that anything is possible with God. He takes care of the "how" and the "when". He is our source. I'm fairly confident that the people in our congregation want to be in alignment with God's will and what His plans are for us. Let's continue to seek the Lord, to ask and listen, to step out in faith, to wait upon Him and His timing... all while remembering who He is and worshipping Him.

Love, Jackie

God, we know you have a plan and a purpose for us. We want what you want. Thank you for the vision you gave the men and women who stepped out in faith years ago to begin this Living Word Lutheran Church. We continue to seek your guidance and wisdom, and pray for unity within our church. We want to bring you glory. We welcome the Holy Spirit to move among and within us. What is your vision for our church? Speak Lord, for your servants are listening.



# January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Church & Office Closed	2 9:00 Community Fellowship 6:30 The Chosen Study	3	4
5 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Coffee Fellowship 10:00 Worship/Communion	6	7	8 3:30 Confirmation 3:30 Dynamic Disciples	9 9:00 Community Fellowship 1:30 Impact 6:30 The Chosen Study	10	11
12 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Coffee Fellowship 10:00 Worship/Noisy Change 11:00 Chapel Communion	13	14 9:00 Quilting 10:30 Ministerial Association 6:30 Church Council	15 3:30 Confirmation 3:30 Dynamic Disciples	16 9:00 Community Fellowship 6:30 The Chosen Study	17	18
19 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Coffee Fellowship 9:00 February Servant Team meets 10:00 Worship	20	21 9:00 Faith Circle 7:00 Love Circle	22 3:30 Confirmation 3:30 Dynamic Disciples	23 9:00 Community Fellowship 6:30 The Chosen Study	24	25
26 8:45 Sunday School 9:00 Coffee Fellowship 10:00 Worship	27	28 9:00 Quilting	29 3:30 Confirmation 3:30 Dynamic Disciples	30 9:00 Community Fellowship 6:30 The Chosen Study	31	

# JANUARY BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

Happy  
Birthday



HAPPY  
ANNIVERSARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Kelly Peterson (b.)	2	3	4
5 Grayson Brotzel (b.) Gretchen Weber (b.)	6 Jason De Jong (b.) Gary Meister (b.)	7	8 Orgene & Karen McCrea (w.)	9 Taylor Balling (b.) Shaylee Pekelder (b.) Dale Prisinger (b.)	10 Craig Randleman (b.)	11
12 Sue De Jong (b.) David Kloster (b.)	13 Paul & Jennifer Anderson (w.)	14	15	16	17	18
19 Larry & Peggy Brook (w.)	20	21 Ron Anderson (b.) Jason McMahon (b.)	22 Randy Dockter (b.)	23 Eleanor Maas (b.) Grayson Maas (b.)	24 Larry & Pat O'Farrell (w.) Carolyn Randleman (b.)	25
26	27 Jamie Pekelder (b.)	28	29 Isabella Quinn (b.)	30 Curtis Simonson (b.)	31	



# LWLC Committee Contacts

## 2025 Council Members:

**President:** Jackie Olson, 605-949-1386  
Email: jackieolsonmk@outlook.com

**Vice President:** Moe Reede, 605-949-1482  
Email: mreede97@yahoo.com

**Secretary:** Julie Berger, 320-815-9248  
Email: jjberger77@gmail.com

**Youth & Education:** Laurie Maas, 320-305-0887  
Email: laurie.a.maas@gmail.com

Moe Reede, 605-949-1482  
Email: mreede97@yahoo.com

**Worship & Evangelism:** Sandy Christensen, 605-880-4452  
Email: sandy.christensen@k12.sd.us

Steve Strega: 605-949-0669  
Email: grainbelt01@hotmail.com

**Treasurer/Finance:** Deb Buttke, 605-467-1458  
Email: mdbuttke@itcmilbank.com

**Property & Management:** Tim DeJong, 605-949-0422  
Email: t\_dejong54@hotmail.com

Adam McMahon, 320-760-4158  
Email: adam.l.mcmahon@gmail.com

**Newsletter:** Mary Hepper, 605-438-9672, livingword@itcmilbank.com

**Website:** livingwordmilbank.com

## Living Word Lutheran Women Officers:

**Coordinator:** Brenda Seehafer, 605-880-1788  
**Vice-coordinator:** Sandy Christensen, 605-880-4452  
**Secretary:** Lori Kasuske, 605-949-2032  
**Treasurer:** Annette Redepinning, 605-432-6688  
**Mission Action:** Gloria Cooley, 605-445-1555  
**Mission Growth:** Linda Wagner, 612-201-2110  
**Mission Community:** Kim Wink, 303-596-1097  
**Advisor:** Marcia Heinje, 605-237-0373  
**Pastor:** Curtis Simonson, 708-359-1491

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