

LIVING WORDS

LIVING WORD LUTHERAN CHURCH

438.9672 CHURCH

JUNE/JULY 2026 NEWSLETTER



SENIOR RECOGNITION SUNDAY

Congratulations to our seniors Ryan Keeton, Sean Keeton, Will Pekelder, Hunter Reede and TJ Wojahn



**WHAT'S
INSIDE**



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**Reminder:
The church/office
will be closed
on both June 19
and July 3 for the
holidays**

OUTREACH

Sierra Leone

Pastor Melanie and Roger Reiners participated in a three-week mission trip to Sierra Leone from April 16 through May 9. This trip was their twenty-seventh trip together to Sierra Leone over the past 22 years as a part of Central Global Vision Fund, Inc. Roger has made several more trips since the building of the eye hospital in 1982. They were accompanied by Dr. Deb Gess-Ristvedt, ophthalmologist of Alexandria, MN, and Dr. Marshall Dorsett, optometrist of Aberdeen, SD. 105 patients received sight-saving surgery through cataract surgery, glaucoma stent placement, laser intervention for glaucoma and other specialty surgery. The support of Living Word Lutheran Church is so deeply appreciated. The financial contributions and the beautiful gifts of quilts, shoes, and pillowcase dresses have been distributed in the name of Jesus to the poorest of the poor in that impoverished country.



ABOVE: Surgical patients from the severely impoverished northern region of Sierra Leone received a t-shirt along with a beautiful quilt made by the quilters at Living Word. 105 patients were treated during the April/May outreach trip.



LEFT: Little girl received a beautiful doll made by a member of the Lutheran Women Quilting group.



RIGHT: 4 year-old Emmanuel lives in an orphanage which houses 70 children. He has a vision condition called Duane Syndrome with Nystagmus. He had corrective muscle surgery which will allow him to thrive in school. (He so much wanted to come home with us!)

RIGHT: 11 year-old boy, shown here with his parents, received sight-saving laser surgery for glaucoma at the Central Global Vision Eye Hospital in Sierra Leone.



LEFT: Modeling her new pillowcase dress sewn by Gloria Cooley. One of hundreds she has supplied for Central Global Vision in Africa and Orphan Grain Train.

FAMILY FUN AT THE LAKE



BOATING

PONTOON RIDES

SWIMMING



GAMES

HOT DOGS,

CHIPS,

DRINKS, SMORES



Bring Dish to Pass

VOSTAD CABIN AT FISH HAVEN

SUNDAY JULY 26 AT 4:00

GUEST SPEAKER-TERRI MIELITZ

BUILDING OUR FAMILIES

BRING LAWN CHAIRS

EVERYONE WELCOME

SIGN UP SHEET ON TABLE IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

TO HELP WITH A COUNT FOR FOOD

YOUTH



Sunday School Wrap-Up

We wrapped up another wonderful year of Sunday School on May 10 with the children sharing their joyful songs during the worship service. There is nothing quite like the sound of children singing their hearts out — even if a few were more focused on waving at grandparents, making funny faces at friends, or trying to remember all the hand motions at the exact same time!

This year was filled with Bible stories, music, laughter, learning, crafts, questions, snacks, and countless special moments as our children grew in faith and friendship together. From preschool giggles to middle school discussions, our Sunday School classrooms were always full of energy and love.

A very special thank you goes out to our incredible Sunday School teachers and leaders:

Angel and Rachel — Preschool
Adam and Lacey — Elementary
Tina and Lori — Middle School
Jessica — Music
Laurie — Sunday School Coordinator

These wonderful volunteers gave their time, patience, creativity, and caring hearts week after week to help plant seeds of faith in the lives of our children. Whether they were teaching Bible lessons, helping with songs and crafts, calming wiggles, searching for missing crayons, or reminding children that glue sticks are not lip balm, they did it all with love and dedication.

We are so thankful for each person who helped make Sunday School such a meaningful part of our church family this year. Thank you for sharing God's love with our children in such special ways!

DYNAMIC DISCIPLES

DD News

What a fun and faith-filled end to the year for our Dynamic Disciples crew! The month of May was packed with laughter, cookies, creativity, and plenty of memorable moments.

During the first week of May, the Dynamic Disciples visited the residents at St. Williams Care Center. The children shared smiles, decorated colorful cookies, and played several lively rounds of bingo. (Let's just say some of the residents may have become more competitive than the children during bingo time!) The children also handed out special Jesus magnets they had made for each resident. The room was filled with laughter, conversation, and joy as young and old spent time together.

The following week, the children watched a short video reminding us how hurtful words can make people feel small, while kind and encouraging words can lift others up and brighten their day. After our discussion, we headed outdoors to enjoy the beautiful weather and create bright stained-glass butterflies. Between flying tissue paper, sticky fingers, and butterflies blowing across the lawn, it turned into quite the adventure!

For our final week of Dynamic Disciples, the children enjoyed a special trip to Pizza Ranch and then to the park for our last day together!

As another wonderful year of Dynamic Disciples comes to a close, we want to extend a huge thank you to our leaders, Laurie Maas and Sue DeJong, for faithfully leading the children each Wednesday throughout the school year. We also want to thank all of the amazing helpers and volunteers who stepped in to assist — especially during those weeks when Laurie or Sue were away. Your kindness, patience, creativity, and willingness to help are such a blessing to this ministry.

Thank you for helping our children grow in faith, friendship, and fun — one Wednesday at a time!



Rainforest Falls

VBS is Swinging Into Action!

The vines are hanging, the monkeys are chattering, the songs are echoing through the halls, and Rainforest Falls VBS is officially underway! This year we are bursting at the seams with excitement as 48 children and more than 25 adults have come together to make this wild rainforest adventure possible.

Throughout the week, the children are discovering the love of God through songs, games, Bible adventures, crafts, laughter, and probably a little extra jungle-level energy! Somewhere between the singing, dancing, snacks, and occasional monkey business, amazing memories are being made. We can't wait to share pictures and highlights from our rainforest adventure in July, but for now we have one very important mission for our church family:



MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND COME WORSHIP WITH US!

On our final night of VBS, June 4, the children will present special songs while Adam and Rachel guide everyone through some of the exciting things we learned during the week. The program begins at **7:45 pm**, immediately following our final evening of VBS activities. To close the evening out, we will have the

commissioning of Hunter Reede and TJ Wojahn.

The children would absolutely LOVE to see the church filled to the brim with smiling faces cheering them on. Trust us — you are in for a treat! There is nothing sweeter than hearing children joyfully singing about God's love... even if a few enthusiastic dance moves resemble rainforest animals escaping from the zoo!

So grab your family, friends, grandparents, neighbors, and fellow jungle explorers and join us for this special evening. We promise plenty of smiles, joyful music, and enough excitement to make the whole church feel like a rainforest celebration!



Meals On Wheels

This was taken from the June 2024 newsletter:

"Some of the local churches take turns delivering Meals on Wheels. I believe Living Word comes up about 2 times per year to deliver the meals. The church agrees to provide people to deliver the meals. The obligation is one month two times per year. The meals are delivered by volunteers from Living Word. The route lengths change from time to time and the last time we delivered meals, the routes were short on the number of people receiving meals. (Usually 8 – 10 meals and at times it is less.) If you don't get caught in traffic, it takes 30 to 45 minutes. What is rewarding is that the people you take the meals to are very thankful for the meals being delivered. During one of the deliveries Susan and I made, we delivered a meal to a person and made a serious error. The directions on the delivery list said "No Gravy". Guess what, I had given that person a meal with gravy and by the time we figured it out, it was too late. The next day I sheepishly approached the person and started apologizing for the error. The person said not a problem and I thanked them for understanding. The point here is that we seem to have a



shortage of persons willing to deliver meals. The obligation can be for a day, a week or on an as needed basis. Please consider volunteering delivering Meals on Wheels. Living Word makes a difference. Gene Vostad."

In July, Living Word will again be responsible for delivering meals for 60's Plus Dining (what is commonly known as meals on wheels). There are three routes, and each route usually has about 7 to 10 households to deliver meals to five days a week. Grab a friend to help with this; one of you can do the driving and one can do the delivery of the meals. It is a time to visit with the other person helping you as well as with those receiving the meals. If you are able to help in any way (even if it can only be three days out of a week), please sign up in the fellowship hall. If you have any questions or want to know more, please contact the church office.

Firstly, thank you so much for allowing us to come and share our music with you all on April 15. It was a blessing to us probably as much as it was to you, and we felt and appreciated your warm hospitality. Secondly, thank you for the generous offering; it was definitely not something we requested in the slightest, but it is appreciated. We will use it specifically for further choir/music development - and hopefully we meet again in the future. - Megan for the MCF childrens choir

Community Kindness Hunt

This summer Building Our Families is excited to launch their first Community Kindness Hunt in partnership with First Bank and Trust and in recognition of KDIO Radio's 70th Anniversary. Community Members will be invited to nominate individuals and families in Grant County, SD and Big Stone County, MN who deserve a little kindness. There are

5 categories: **1. FAMILY IN NEED** recognizes a family currently facing financial hardship or an unexpected life change such as struggles in housing, employment, transportation, medical issues, etc; **2. YOUTH SHOWING KINDNESS** recognizes a child or teenager who consistently shows kindness, compassion, leadership or service to others; **3. FAMILY OVERCOMING A CHALLENGE** recognizes a family working hard to move forward through a significant challenge or life transition such as overcoming addiction, rebuilding after hardship, working through medical or mental struggles, grief, violence, etc; **4. LITTLE STEPS, BIG FUTURES** provides support connected to childcare, early childhood needs or opportunities that help parents maintain employment and create stability for their children; **5. FULL PLATES, BRIGHT DAYS** focuses



on reducing food insecurity and helping children have food at home or school.

Community members are encouraged to submit letters of recommendation for individuals or families they believe should be considered for these cash awards. Letters will be accepted through June. Please access the Building Our Families site for Milbank, SD on the internet. Click on

"view event details" at the beginning of the site to learn further details. Then go back and click on "Nominate Someone" to fill out the application.

The event is designed to celebrate kindness, resilience, hard work and the strength of families in our rural communities. Through this partnership, First Bank and Trust is helping Building Our Families provide meaningful support and encouragement to local families, while KDIO helps us share these stories of hope throughout the community. Because sometimes the smallest act of kindness can change someone's future.

Information from this article taken from the Building Our Families site. For assistance with working through the process, talk to Annette in the office or Marcia Heinje.



Mother Daughter Sister Friend Event Well Attended Again for the 2nd Year in a Row

The 2026 Mother Daughter Sister Friend event was held on May 9 at Living Word Church. There were over 30 in attendance and the theme was “Baked with Love.” All attendees enjoyed sharing stories about their favorite apron, learning the history of an apron, and how the apron has been a tried and true piece of history through a female

servant’s heart. There was great conversation and fellowship, games played, and prizes gifted. I hope this will become a tradition for Living Word for years to come.

Laura Dallman



LW WARRIORS

Luminary Bags Available

Luminary Bags are available anytime from a team member of The Warriors. If you are interested in purchasing a luminary bag contact any of the team members listed: Laura Dallman, Cheryl Schweer, Sandy Christensen, Rhonda Beckman, Lois Norris, LaDonna Taylor, Jessica Lewno, Rochelle Reede, Megan Bilben.

If you have people who you'd like to dedicate a bag to, there are 2 options: *In Honor Of* or *In Memory Of*. We will have a signup sheet and take payment when you sign up. The bags will be made by our team and displayed the night of the walk. Please find a team member to claim your bags; time is running out.

Friendly reminder: the It Only Takes a Spark cancer walk is June 12-13. All are welcome to attend. The Warriors will have a booth and sell a variety of items. Come check us out – all sales the night of the walk support our current fiscal year for fundraising. There is a competition between teams to see who can fund raise the most.



Laura Dallman
The Warriors' Captain

OUTREACH

June Noisy Change

Noisy Change for the month of June will go to the Milbank Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). FCA seeks to see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes. Its mission is to lead coaches and athletes into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

July Noisy Change

Noisy Change for the month of July will go to the Gospel House Orphanage. Sue DeJong and Vicki Strege visited the orphanage a couple years ago when they traveled to Vietnam and shared their experience with us upon their return from the trip.



WOMEN OF LIVING WORD

SUMMER! Yes it is finally here... but the weather doesn't seem to reflect it. As I write, it is a typical Memorial Day weekend, cold and cloudy. Still, school is out, church service time is now 9 am rather than 10 am and baseball games are the night time entertainment. Yes, life is good!

A big **THANK YOU** to Marcia Heinje for coordinating the Senior Recognition activities Sunday, May 10. It was a wonderful celebration for our five graduating senior boys: Hunter Reede, TJ Wojahn, Will Pekelder and Ryan and Sean Keeton. Again, good luck to these young men in their future endeavors.

MISSION PROJECT NEWS includes an enthusiastic THANK YOU from **RHONDA STENDEL AND THE SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE ORGANIZATION**. They continue to receive bedding and pillows from us and are extremely thankful. The June mission project is items for the **BEACON CENTER** in Watertown, SD. Again items may be brought to the church and we will take them to the Beacon Center. July's mission project has yet to be determined.

Faith Circle invites the congregation to the **GENE AND SUSAN VOSTAD LAKE HOME** July 26 beginning at 4 pm for an enjoyable evening



of games, a cookout, and pontoon rides if the weather permits. Please sign up on the sheet in the fellowship hall to allow for food planning. Hot dogs, buns, and smores will be provided. Please bring a dish to pass and your own lawn chairs. This will be the **LWLW JULY GENERAL MEETING**.

Do you enjoy Bible Studies? At Living Word we are fortunate to have a variety of ways, times and different Bible Studies to offer. Faith and Love Circles are always open to having new members join. Jackie Olson's Bible Study Group meets during coffee hour on Sundays and currently a group is meeting with Terri Hjelle studying Joyce Meyer's book *What About Me?* If you are interested in one of these or starting a study of your own contact Pastor Melanie or the church office, 605-438-9672.

As is the way of summer the days will fly by. So until August be safe and enjoy! See you in church.

Sandy Christensen

Women of Living Word Coordinator



PASTOR'S LETTER



Growing in Grace

DEAR CHURCH FAMILY OF LIVING WORD,

Several years ago, we received a phone call from a man who said he lived in Minnesota and he had some questions about the mission program we were a part of in Sierra Leone. He was very interested in traveling to that poor country on the west coast of the African continent, nine degrees off the Equator. As we continued our visit, he told us he was a pastor, that he had a group of people from the church he was serving, traveling in mission to Sierra Leone within a short time. He just had some questions. He then said, "I'm not traveling with them, but I am their cheerleader!" A couple of years later, we met Pastor Duane Sarazen in Sierra Leone, when he was not only their pastor and their cheerleader, but also an active participant on a mission trip.

His conversation has always stayed with me. He was a caring pastor who served as the cheerleader for the programs of his church. I knew that I wanted to have the same approach to ministry — I wanted to always be a cheerleader for the various programs of the church.



It is easy to be the cheerleader of the mission program at Living Word. When Impact the World for Missions was established in this church several years ago, it took root in a solid way and continues to do amazing things for many types of outreach through missions — some are financial and others are very intentional hands-on work.

From May 31 through June 4, Rainforest Falls Vacation Bible

School will reach 50 children who are connected to this church as members or connected through our members. As I was reflecting on this program and others, it brought me to realize we must all be "cheerleaders" for the vision and growth of the church. We are not just maintaining the past, we are cultivating new soil for the next generation and it is a calling of great responsibility — it is a calling to Plant One Seed.

It is the challenge of the church today to build a bridge between our rich history and the calling of tomorrow. Let us vision together what that calling should be.

In Christian love, Melanie

IMPACT THE WORLD MINUTES



LWLC MAY 2026 IMPACT MEETING REPORT

A decision was made to suggest to the Council that the 6% of the benevolence that has been going to Bible Alive now be designated to the Network for Children. This is the orphanage in Sierra Leone that has the children that are in the Ebola study that Pastor Melanie and Roger work with. Pastor Kent had informed us that we do not need to support Bible Alive any longer.

There was \$651.43 given to Noisy Change to be used for the Vietnam Mission Trip. There was an additional \$335 given to the trip through offerings. \$500 will be given to Hunter and to TJ to be used for lodging and travel as their flight leaves Minneapolis at 6 am. They have been asked to bring 120 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste on the mission trip. Hunter spoke to the congregation on May 8 regarding assistance in this. (Sue DeJong was given over 100 toothbrushes and sample toothpastes by Johnson Dental to be used for the trip the day after the May meeting.) We want to thank them for their generosity. A large amount of craft supplies are being shipped to the church for the boys to pack in their second suitcase with the toothbrushes. There will be a

commissioning for Hunter and TJ on May 31 during the church service. Vicki and Sue will meet with them and their parents before the trip as a helpful orientation. They will see if Randleman's can be included in the meeting. \$375 will be given to ALWM to pay for 500 pairs of reading glasses to be taken on the trip.

Noisy Change will be given to FCA in June and to Gospel House Orphanage in July. The Noisy Change for March was for the Alpha Center and was \$473.39

Secretary, **Marcia Heinje**



RIGHT: Hunter and TJ packing supplies for their ALWM Mission trip.

June 2026

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 5:00 VBS Rainforest Falls	2 11:00 "What About Me" Study 5:00 VBS Rainforest Falls	3 1:00 Romans Bible Study 5:00 VBS Rainforest Falls	4 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship 5:00 VBS Rainforest Falls 7:45 VBS Program	5	6
7 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	8		9 9:00 Quilting 11:00 "What About Me" Study	10 1:00 Feeding South Dakota 5:30 Council Meeting	11 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	12	13
14 9:00 Worship 10:00 Chapel Communion 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	15		16 9:00 Faith Circle Meets 11:00 "What About Me" Study 7:00 Love Circle Meets	17 1:00 Romans Bible Study	18 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	19 JUNETEENTH Church/Office Closed	20
21 FATHER'S DAY 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 10:00 July Servant Team meets	22		23 9:00 Quilting 11:00 "What About Me" Study	24	25 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	26	27
28 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	29		30 11:00 "What About Me" Study				

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Ryan Hepper (b.) Scott & Laurie Maas (w.)	2 Nathan Bien (b.)	3 Donald Peterson (b.)	4	4	5 Bob & Pam Nelson (w.)	6
7 Charles Veen (b.)	8	9 Brian & Laura Dallman (w.) Karen McCrea (b.)	10 Ethan Sullivan (b.)	11 Megan Bilben (b.) Gwendolyn Quinn (b.)	12 David Kruger (b.)	13	13
14 Darrel & Cheryl Gullickson (w.) Kristi Seehafer (b.)	15	16 Rachel Berdan (b.) Barbara Hornstein (b.) Scott & Jean Leininger (w.)	17	18	19 Karlie Bakeberg (b.) Matthew Christensen (b.) Gary Ingber (b.)	20 Warren & Janice Beck (w.)	20
21	22	23 Howard & Marcia Heinje (w.) Kateri Morsette (b.)	24	25 Shane & Megan Bilben (w.)	26 Bradley & Jackie Olson (w.)	27 Dave Hystad (b.)	27
28	29 Linda Prisinger (b.) Eugene & Susan Vostad (w.)	30 Nanci Van Peurse (b.)					

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	3 Church/Office Closed	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
5 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	6	7 11:00 "What About Me" Study	8 Valley Fair Trip for Youth 1:00 Feeding South Dakota 5:30 Council Meeting	9 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	10	11
12 9:00 Worship 10:00 Chapel Communion 10:00 Coffee Fellowship	13	14 11:00 "What About Me" Study 1:00 Impact Meeting	15 6:30 Church Women Meeting	16 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	17	18
19 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 10:00 August Servant Team Meets	20	21 9:00 Faith Circle Meets 11:00 "What About Me" Study 7:00 Love Circle Meets	22	23 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	24 Newsletter Items Due	25
26 9:00 Worship 10:00 Coffee Fellowship 4:00 Fun at the Lake	27	28 11:00 "What About Me" Study	29	30 9:00 Community Coffee Fellowship	31	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Sheila Bien (b.) Pat O'Farrell (b.)	2 Sharon Hyde (b.)	3	4 Deb Buttko (b.) Will Pekelder (b.)
5 Randy & Lori Dockter (w.) Sam Wilson (b.)	6	7 Jeffrey & Julie Berger (w.)	8 Tim De Jong (b.) Deven Weinkauff (b.)	9 Amanda & Adam McMahon (w.)	10	11
12 Terry & Heidi Meister (w.)	13 Lance & Sheila Bien (w.)	14 Sharon Brown (b.) Roger Hansen (b.) Teri Hjelte (b.)	15 Beverly Zeigler (b.)	16	17	18 Aaron & Teresa Meister (w.)
19	20 Peggy Brook (b.) Bailey Nolting (b.)	21 Angel Campbell (b.) Jacqueline Redepenning (b.)	22 Abbey De Jong (b.)	23	24	25
26 Stephanie Hansen (b.)	27 Daria Loeschke (b.) Mark Loeschke (b.) Mason Meister (b.) Martin & Shirley Schmidt (w.)	28	29 Alec Bien (b.) Steve & Vicki Strege (w.) Jessica Van Peurseum (b.)	30	31 Jaxon Berger (b.) Larry Brook (b.) Phil & Kristi Seehafer (w.)	