



725 W. 75TH STREET DARIEN, IL 60561

Dear friends in Christ,

As we turn the calendar to January, I want to begin with gratitude.

As a congregation, we ended the year about \$11,000 short of our budget. That is not the number we hoped for—and it's also not the end of the story. It does not erase the faithfulness, generosity, and love that filled this past year. And it certainly does not define who we are.

I am deeply grateful for everyone who gave as they were able, especially those who stepped forward in December to help close the gap as much as possible. Every gift—large or small—was an act of trust and care for this community we love.

What matters just as much as the bottom line is what we did together.

This past year, Lord of Life lived into its mission of Sharing God's Love in real and tangible ways:

- We gathered faithfully for worship—indoors, outdoors, and in new formats—creating space for joy, honesty, lament, and hope.
- We welcomed neighbors and strangers through community meals, shared celebrations, and partnerships beyond our walls.
- We supported one another through grief, illness, transition, and uncertainty with prayer, presence, and compassion.

- We created meaningful moments—festivals, music, art, fellowship, and service—that reminded us we are not alone and that God is still at work among us.

Mission is not an abstract idea. Mission is what happens when people feel seen, known, and loved. Mission is when a church becomes a place of belonging. Mission is when generosity—of time, talent, and resources—helps change lives quietly and faithfully.

As we step into this new year, we do so clear-eyed and hopeful. We will continue to be thoughtful stewards of our resources. We will continue to listen, adapt, and dream. And most of all, we will continue to share God's love—because that is who we are called to be.

Thank you for being part of this community. Thank you for your generosity. Thank you for your trust. And thank you for walking into the new year together, grounded in grace and guided by love.

With gratitude and hope,

Pastor Adam

## Lunch Bunch



We will meet at Chicken Basket, 645 Joliet Road, Willowbrook, on Tuesday, January 13th at 11:30 AM. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Marilynn Sells at 630-927-9996. Please plan to pay with cash, as cash is preferred by the restaurant.

## Happy Birthday

Jan. 7 Joe S.  
Jan. 8 Arlene D.  
Jan. 11 Debbie S.  
Jan. 17 Elsy E.  
Jan. 17 John M.  
Jan. 28 Alex K.  
Jan. 29 Connie A.



## Children and Hunger Committee

Thank you to the more than 30 families who generously donated food items for the Christmas meal boxes. Thanks also to the more than a dozen volunteers who packed and delivered the meals to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish. This time we increased the number of meal boxes by 25% to 5 for families of 6-8 people and 5 for families of 3-5. Each box provides a full Christmas dinner and more to a family in need.

## Senior Spirits

Senior Spirits met on December 11th for our Christmas Celebration! We enjoyed a wonderful Potluck, Played Christmas Bingo with prizes and played some Christmas Word games! We also had a gift card exchange! It was a very nice way to end the year!

Our next meeting is on Thursday, January 15th at noon with our Potluck luncheon!

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who comes out every month and supports our group! It is truly my pleasure to lead Senior Spirits! Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

Marilynn

## Un-Decorating the Church

Come and join us to un-decorate the church on January 4th at 11:15 am. Please sign up to bring treats. There is a sign up in the narthex. It will be a jolly good time!

## Chicago Wolves



Save February 15th for an afternoon of exciting Chicago hockey with the Wolves. If you are interested, please call the office 630-323-3161, email [lordlifesecc@gmail.com](mailto:lordlifesecc@gmail.com) or sign up in the Sanctuary.

## God's Work Our Hands

As the cold weather settles in, we're gathering socks, hats, gloves, and hygiene items for South Loop Community Table. Every small gift brings comfort, dignity, and warmth to someone facing a difficult season. Donations can be placed in the wooden chest in the narthex throughout the month. Thank you for sharing Christ's love in such a practical, compassionate way.

# International Christmas Celebration

The International Christmas Program was held on Sunday December 7. The program was wonderful starting with a lovely solo by Nancy Urban and highlights about Christmas in Mexico, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Ukraine, Ireland, and Africa. Loving Word ended the program with their choir singing an upbeat and energetic song.

There were approximately 92 tickets sold but a little less than that were in attendance. There were 16 raffle items including four \$100 gift cards for local stores. Raffle sales this year were much more than twice last year's amount.

The committee continues to work extremely well together writing the program, performing in the program, making center pieces, getting raffle items, cooking and baking delicious food, setting things up and of course cleaning up. This was truly another very successful and enjoyable event.

Special thanks to the International Christmas Celebration Committee. Piano music performed by Rosita Yao. Program participants: Bobbie Sejnost, Nancy Urban, Janet Kardatzke, Connie Allekian, Jan Teibachs, Laurenz Pott, Pastor Betty, Judy Padera, Marilyn Sells, and Arlene Danielson. Other Committee members working hard cooking, baking, etc.: Pastor Adam Dowd, Connie Allekian, Marlene Carlson, Elsy Eggert, Linda Glover, Janet Kardatzke, Linda Matta, Debbie McNichols, Judy Padera, Bobbie Sejnost, Sherry Sejnost, Marilyn Sells, Ellie Spiers, LeeAnn Swanson, Jan Treibachs, Sue Tomaszek, and Bruce and Arlene Danielson. And special thanks to Pastor Betty Starks and the Loving Word Choir.

We netted a profit of \$1,170 from ticket sales and \$475 in the raffle for a total of \$1,645. Profits will go to the Ministry Fund.

# Poinsettias

Thank you to everyone who donated plants to beautify the sanctuary for Christmas.

## Everybody Has a Story

A Night of Storytelling is a live storytelling event presented by the Darien Arts Council that celebrates the power of personal narratives. Taking place on January 17, 2026, at 6:00 PM, the evening will feature real people sharing real stories from their own lives—ranging from funny and surprising to heartfelt and deeply moving. This community-centered event invites audiences to listen, connect, and reflect through the art of spoken storytelling.

Held at Lord of Life Church in Darien, Illinois, the event also welcomes those who want to take the stage and share their own story. Storytellers are invited to present 4–7 minute stories and will receive free admission. General admission is \$10 per ticket. Whether you come to listen or to tell your own tale, Everybody Has a Story promises an engaging and memorable night that highlights the voices and experiences within the community.

## Annual Meeting Reports

All committee reports for the Annual Meeting are due on **January 9, 2026**. The Annual Meeting will be held on **January 25, 2026** after service.



**Learn *God's ways* of handling money.**

In this 9-week class, you'll learn the proven plan to help you keep a budget, beat debt, and build wealth!

**CLASS STARTS:** Sunday, Jan 11 @ 3pm at Gloria Dei

**\$99.99 includes** 9 classes, a digital workbook and 3 months of the premium version of the EveryDollar budgeting app.

 

## 2025 Council Members

- Marilynn Sells - President, Personnel, Worship and Music
- Ron Matta - Vice President, Personnel
- Linda Glover- Secretary
- Jim Kelly - Treasurer
- Connie Allekian - Evangelism, Stewardship
- Marlene Carlson - RIC
- Elsy Eggert - Children and Hunger
- Art Kardatzke - Property Committee
- Ray Kozak
- Debbie McNichols - Hospitality
- Judy Padera - LCW
- Alice Tangorra - Hospitality
- Pastor Adam

## December Church Council Recognition

Goes to Arlene and Judy. Words cannot fully express how much we appreciate the time and energy you've devoted to the International Christmas Celebration. Your hard work and dedication were essential to the success of this event, and we are so grateful for your unwavering commitment. Your efforts are a true testament to the love and service that defines our church community.

## Committee Report

### Finance:

November donations were outstanding. The \$30,324 total is the highest November in the last ten years by more than \$10,000, exceeding a fair 2024 (\$12,565) by \$17,760 and a good 2023 (\$15,622) by \$14,702. November expenses (\$19,603) were higher than 2024 (\$18,889) by \$703 and higher than 2023 (\$17,616) by \$1,987. November operations generated a \$10,722 surplus. The year-to-date deficit decreased to \$39,286, the deficit is the third highest the end of eleven months not just in the last ten years, but in the last twenty-five years.

At the end of eleven months, 91.67% of the year, 90.3% of the budget was spent. Most categories that exceeded 90.3% were highly seasonal. However, it should be noted that in prior years the percent expended has been several percent lower than the completed portion of the year.

Donations through November recorded in Shepherd's Staff agree in total and by fund with the financial records.

No pass-through funds are overdrawn. Twelve on-line donations totaling \$833.82 were received by the last counters report date (11/24/25). There was one \$45 Thrivent donation (YTD there have been 7 Thrivent donations totaling \$447).

The balance sheet remains strong. There is no long term debt. Total assets have decreased by \$44,009 since 12/31/24. The decrease is due to the operational deficit and the Gathering Place project. Without phenomenal donations during December totaling approximately \$58,500, Lord of Life will end 2025 with a substantial operational deficit.

James T. Kelly  
Treasurer

# Council Highlights

## Pastor's Report

Pastor Adam reported on a very full and active November and early December, noting both gratitude and awareness that the calendar may have been overly full. Highlights included:

- Christmas Tree Decorating: Successful, with new volunteers stepping into leadership roles
- South Loop Community Table: Approximately 14 volunteers participated; strong interest in repeating the ministry (possible Easter or Super Bowl Sunday meal)
- Brush Strokes / Holden Evening Prayer / Darien Arts Council: Good participation; interest in refining and expanding outreach to local artists in the future
- Youth & Young Adult Ministry:
  - Pop Demon Hunter event with four students
  - Strong discussion and relational momentum
  - Desire to continue building this ministry incrementally
- Crafts & Karaoke with Darien Arts Council: Highly positive experience, especially with participants with disabilities

## Worship Attendance:

- Nov 23: 40
- Nov 30: 31
- Dec 7: 45
- Dec 14: 47
- Monthly average: 41

## Upcoming Events:

- Blue Christmas / Longest Night service
- Storytelling event (rescheduled to Saturday at 6:00 PM)
- Annual meeting rehearsal proposed for January 24 at 4:30 PM

## Ministry Reports

- International Christmas Celebration - Reported by Judy
  - Approximately 92 tickets sold
  - Loving Word contributed \$350
  - Net proceeds: Total: \$1,645
  - Event was described as joyful, collaborative, and well-received
  - Recommendation: rehearse program in advance next year; review food planning
- Baskets Ministry
  - Number of baskets increased from 8 to 10
  - One family volunteered to sponsor an entire basket
  - Ministry described as deeply impactful and sustainable
- Music Ministry Update
  - Organist Rosita Yao announced retirement effective end of December
  - Personnel Committee will begin search for a new organist/pianist
  - Interim coverage identified for early January



## New Business

- Sock / Winter Items Drive
  - A motion was made and seconded to hold a January drive for socks, hats, gloves, and hygiene items to support South Loop Community Table. - Motion carried.
- Property Items
  - Discussion of improving banner storage behind the organ
  - Exploration of repurposing existing platforms and reducing clutter
  - Property committee to continue review

## Committee Updates

- Nominating Committee: in progress
- Personnel: upcoming meeting

# December Month in Review



# January

SUN 28	MON 29	TUE 30	WED 31	THU Jan 1	FRI 2	SAT 3
<div><div>+</div><div>10am Worship Service In Perso</div><div>12pm Loving Word Service</div></div>		<div><div>5:15pm OA</div></div>	<div><div>New Year's Eve</div><div>7pm AA</div></div>	<div><div>Rosita's Work Anniversary</div><div>New Year's Day</div></div>	<div><div>9:30am Card Group</div></div>	<div><div>9am SDA</div></div>
<div><div>4</div><div>10am Worship Service In Perso</div><div>11:15am Un - Decorate the Chu</div><div>12pm Loving Word Service</div></div>	<div><div>5</div></div>	<div><div>6</div><div>5:15pm OA</div></div>	<div><div>7</div><div>7pm AA</div></div>	<div><div>8</div></div>	<div><div>9</div><div>9:30am Card Group</div></div>	<div><div>10</div><div>9am SDA</div><div>12:30pm SDA Luncheon</div></div>
<div><div>11</div><div>10am Worship Service In Perso</div><div>12pm Loving Word Service</div></div>	<div><div>12</div></div>	<div><div>13</div><div>11:30am Lunch Bunch</div><div>5:15pm OA</div><div>6pm Church Council</div></div>	<div><div>14</div><div>10am Bible Study</div><div>7pm AA</div></div>	<div><div>15</div><div>12pm Senior Spirits</div></div>	<div><div>16</div><div>9:30am Card Group</div></div>	<div><div>17</div><div>9am SDA</div><div>6pm Everyone Has a Story with</div></div>
<div><div>18</div><div>10am Worship Service In Perso</div><div>12pm Loving Word Service</div></div>	<div><div>19</div><div>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</div></div>	<div><div>20</div><div>5:15pm OA</div></div>	<div><div>21</div><div>10am Bible Study</div><div>7pm AA</div></div>	<div><div>22</div></div>	<div><div>23</div><div>9:30am Card Group</div></div>	<div><div>24</div><div>9am SDA</div><div>4:30pm Annual Meeting Practi</div></div>
<div><div>25</div><div>10am Worship Service In Perso</div><div>11am Annual Meeting</div><div>12pm Loving Word Service</div></div>	<div><div>26</div></div>	<div><div>27</div><div>5:15pm OA</div></div>	<div><div>28</div><div>10am Bible Study</div><div>7pm AA</div></div>	<div><div>29</div></div>	<div><div>30</div><div>9:30am Card Group</div></div>	<div><div>31</div><div>9am SDA</div></div>





Lord of Life Lutheran Church  
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