



December 2018

OUR MISSION:

To grow a loving community of active followers of Jesus,
equipped to take his love and message to the world.

Dear Church Family,

Ever wonder about Santa Claus and what he has to do with Christmas? It wouldn't hurt to read and tell others the real story of Santa Claus written below. Merry Christmas and may the Holy Spirit (the spirit that led St. Nick) be with you always.

Pastor Mark

The real Santa lived a long time ago in a place called Asia Minor. It is now the country of Turkey. His name was Nicholas.

Nicholas' parents died when he was just a teenager. His parents left him a lot of money which made him a rich young man. He went to live with his uncle who was a priest.

Nicholas heard about a man who had lost all his money. He had three daughters who were old enough to get married. But in those days young women had to have money in order to get married. This money was a "dowry" and it was used to help the new family get started. If you didn't have dowry money, you didn't get married.

This family was so poor they had nothing left to eat. The daughters were going to be sold as slaves because they couldn't live at home any longer. They were very sad. They wouldn't be able to have families of their own. And they would have to be slaves—no longer able to decide where they would live or what they would do.

The night before the oldest daughter was to be sold; she washed her stockings and put them in front of the fire to dry. Then all of them went to sleep—the father and the three daughters.

In the morning the daughter saw a lump in her stocking. Reaching in, she found a small, heavy bag. It had gold inside! Enough to provide food for the family and money for her dowry. Oh, how happy they were!

The next morning, another bag with gold was found. Imagine! Two of the daughters would now be saved. Such joy!

And the next night, the father planned to stay awake to find out who was helping his daughters. He dozed off, but heard a small "clink" as another bag landed in the room. Quickly he jumped up and ran out the door. Who did he catch ducking around the corner?

Nicholas, the young man who lived with his uncle. "Nicholas, it is you! Thank you for helping us—I hardly know what to say!" Nicholas said, "Please, do not thank me—thank God that your prayers have been answered. Do not tell others about me."

Nicholas continued helping people. He always tried to help secretly. He didn't want any attention or thanks. Years passed and he was chosen to be a bishop. Bishops look after their people as shepherds look after their sheep. And that is what Nicholas did. When there wasn't any food, he found wheat; so no one went hungry. He always helped people in trouble. All his life Nicholas showed people how to love God and care for each other.

Everyone loved Nicholas. After he died, they told stories of the good and kind things Nicholas had done. Sailors took these stories about Nicholas everywhere they went. Some of the stories were about his special care for children—helping and protecting them when danger threatened. And so more and more people learned about good, kind Nicholas. They wanted to be like him. He is an example of how we should live. And that is why he became a saint.

This is the story of the real Santa Claus, St. Nicholas. To this day people say that St. Nicholas, or Santa, is the special friend of children.

Sunday Volunteers

Worship Greeters: Doug G, Doug N, Mike
Deacons: Randy, Alex, Brian, Keith

December 2:

1st Sunday of Advent

Coffee: Gloria & Dave Rice
Nursery: Lexi Opfer & Megan Hickey
Power Point: Hunter DeBoer
Sound Tech: Mike Brown
Church Lock-Up: Alex Olson

December 9

2nd Sunday of Advent

Coffee: Peg & Gary Hartgerink
Nursery: Sieck Family
Power Point: Heather Riensche
Sound Tech: Brad Riensche
Church Lock-Up: Brad Riensche

December 16: Adult Choir

3rd Sunday of Advent

Coffee: Ilene & Marvin Docter
Nursery: Cramer Family
Power Point: Tammy Goering
Sound Tech: Randy Sieck
Church Lock-Up: Randy Sieck

December 23

4th Sunday of Advent

Coffee: Edna & Lloyd Prange
Nursery: Tysha & Sierra Bryant
Power Point: Maddie Starr
Sound Tech: Keith TenHulzen
Church Lock-Up: Keith TenHulzen

December 30

Coffee: Hal Chase & Mel Harms
Nursery: Samantha & Brenda
Power Point: Tammy Goering
Sound Tech: Cary Prange
Church Lock-Up: Brian Auman



BRANSON GETAWAY NOVEMBER 7-10, 2018

First of all, we want to thank you all for your prayers for us while we were gone on our 34th Branson Getaway. The trip went by very fast with a lot of laughs and good music combined. We can hardly believe that this trip completed 19 years traveling with the nicest people you could ever hope to meet. Our favorite bus driver, Jim Riese, was at the wheel. This makes 17 times Jim has been our driver. Needless to say he's become a dear friend.

We heard a lot of our favorite Christmas music in the shows and enjoyed singing Christmas carols as we rode trams to see the Christmas lights at Shepherd of the Hills. Hot chocolate really hit the spot afterward.

The Hughes Brothers Christmas Show was voted the favorite by the group. They are by far the LARGEST performing family! Their show really put us in the Christmas spirit.

We are already beginning to plan for next year's trips. The dates are September 6-9, 2019 (Friday through Monday), and November 6-9, 2019 (Wednesday through Saturday). Next year marks our 20th year for Branson Getaways and we are going to celebrate! We would like for you to consider going with us. After 2019 Marvin & Ilene will pass the leadership on to Kathy Carlow. Jim & Lois Riese will assist her. Thank you, Kathy, for stepping up so that this fun activity will continue. Be sure and encourage Kathy when you see her and let her know how much you appreciate her. We know Kathy, Jim and Lois will make a great team.

God's Kid's Club

God's Kids Club invites all of you to join us on Wednesday December 12th at 7:00 p.m. for our Christmas program, The New Star. It is being directed by the talented Laura Hilkemann and Jordan Hays. It's always precious to see and hear the voice of young children sing their hearts out.

Our offering from the program will be going to the Norris Area Food Pantry. It's one way we can share God's love with others during this Christmas season.

At GKC, we not only teach Bible stories but we strive to teach kids the value of thinking of others, of serving others and of showing appreciation for all of God's blessings!

We wish each and everyone of you a blessed Christmas! Cherish the time with your families and take time to show love to those around you! We will see you again on Wednesday, January 9th, when God's Kids Club resumes.

Great Commission Team Updates December 2018

Fathers in the Field. Zach McClintock from Fathers in the Field met with the GCT and gave an overview of the program and answered questions.

Operation Christmas Child. This year LLRC filled 59 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. Thank you for showing God's love to a child through this ministry!

Nicaragua. We are looking into the potential for sending a team on a mission trip to Nicaragua in the future. If you have interest in learning more about this opportunity, please contact Diane Mulder.

Todd Becker Foundation. We are planning to team up with area churches to bring an event to the Norris High School in January to share the gospel through the Todd Becker Foundation.

Campus Life. We received a thank you card from Beth Tekolste at Campus Life for our donation of Scrip card proceeds. She wrote, "Thank you so much for blessing my ministry to students through a financial gift. It is only through the generosity of others that we can continue to be on a mission of reaching teens for Christ! Thank you for your support and kingdom investment!" We look forward to hearing Beth talk about her ministry on December 9th for the December Mission Moment!

Century Challenge. In October, \$425 was contributed to the Century Challenge fund which brings the current amount available for special mission projects to \$19,726.

Scrip Card Program. During September and October, \$582.25 was raised for People's City Mission in Lincoln. During November and December, the proceeds from Scrip card sales will go to the (Lincoln) Crisis Pregnancy Center. Thank you for your support!

Mentoring Class

Starting in January we will begin an 9-week journey that will explore some areas of basic theology and apologetics. This journey is for anyone 7th grade or older who is interested in becoming a member of our church at Living Life Reformed or just wants to grow in their understanding of God. Really though, this journey is a process that will allow you to explore your faith, grow in relationship with Jesus, and develop a life-long relationship with a Christian mentor. During our class sessions we focus more on conversation and dialogue rather than lecture and monologue. **It will allow YOU to take control** and have a say in our conversation on pre-determined topics. Even if you don't want to become an "official member" of our church I **HIGHLY RECOMMEND** this journey for any youth or adult, 7th grade and older. We will explore tough questions such as;

"How do we know God created the universe?"

"How does the Bible relate to my everyday life?"

"Why does God allow evil to exist?"

"Why doesn't everyone go to Heaven?"

If you have an 7th to 12th grader at home who has not completed the mentoring class, this class is for them. Also, you will need to find a "mentor" to help guide you through this process. This mentor can be a youth sponsor, an adult that you know and trust, or grandma or grandpa. If you can't think of a potential mentor, Ian can help you find the perfect fit.

The class will begin the week of January 13th and end the week of February 10th. We have not set a specific day of the week to meet as a class, because we will attempt to find a day that works best for the participants.

Let Ian know by Friday December 14th if you want to participate in this class. Again, this journey will begin in January, so if you are interested please notify Ian and if you have any questions Ian can be reached by call/text [402.770.1775](tel:402.770.1775) or email ian@livinglifereformed.org.

In Christ, Ian Opfer - Youth Pastor

2018 Annual Congregational Meeting Journal - November 11, 2018

Living Life Reformed Church called their annual congregational meeting to order at 10:30 am, Sunday, November 11th, 2018. Pastor Mark discussed how each of us can more effectively live out our Mission Statement in the world and opened the meeting in prayer.

1. Tellers appointed for the meeting were: Brian Auman, Jeff Gottwald, Keith TenHulzen and Randy Sieck.
The two nominees receiving the most votes for Elder and the two nominees receiving the most votes for Deacon were to be elected in that order. It was determined by a sign-up sheet of members entering the sanctuary that a quorum was present:
 - 99 members were in attendance and 6 absentee ballots for Deacon and Elder were submitted.It was MSC to destroy Deacon and Elder election ballots following the meeting.
2. A thank you was given to the Deacons that are leaving at the end of 2018: Alex Olson and Randy Sieck.
3. A thank you was given to the Elders that are leaving at the end of 2018: Doug Nieveen and Mike Brown.
4. The election of new Elders was held. Rick DeBoer and Tammy Goering were elected to 3-year terms by receiving the two most votes.
5. The election of new Deacons was held. Chad Bryant and Glen Gana were elected to 3-year terms by receiving the two most votes.
6. Rick DeBoer gave an update on the Great Commission Team with highlights from 2018 on:
7. Mark and Deb Wilson's mission in Cambodia. Our missionary's year-long mission in India. The Love in Action mission in Bolivia. The White Earth Mission Trip in Minnesota. Campus Life's local mission at Norris and in Lincoln. The 'F' Street Church mission in Lincoln. Operation Christmas Child around the world.
He gave some notable figures regarding giving to missions including a rough total of \$50,000.00 given in 2018:
 - Around \$29,000.00 in multiple fund-raising events (the hired hand auction, bake sales, etc.) for the Summer White Earth Mission trip.
 - \$14,145.00 given to the Centennial Challenge to be used for the Classis 25 By 25 Growth project and other long-term projects to be determined.
 - Multiple fund-raising events such as special offerings and other donations totaling \$3,300.00 for the Fall Roofing White Earth Mission trip.
 - A 2.9% return of \$2,135.79 on roughly \$71,830.00 of Scrip Cards purchased which went to Camp Solaris for Vacation Bible School, Campus Life the People's City Mission and the Lincoln Crisis Pregnancy Center.Rick also invited others to join the team with the next meeting being held on Sunday, December 2nd, 2018.
8. Ian Opfer gave a report on youth ministries and shared the following statistics regarding youth in America and their beliefs:
 - 13% of Generation Z youth (currently aged 13 - 18 years old) identify themselves as atheist (which is double that of previous generations).
 - 8% of that generation claim to be agnostic.
 - 14% are spiritually undecided.
 - 59% say that they are protestant or Catholic.
 - 6% don't aspire to any religious belief system.
 - Additionally, 50% of that age group states that they need facts that support their beliefs.
 - We are living in a Post-Christian or possibly anti-Christian America. Youth in our area are not isolated from these national trends.The things that have been shown to solidify Christian beliefs are:
 1. A sense of belonging.
 2. A personal relationship with Christ.
 3. The truth of God and His work.Youth in The Fire were encouraged to invite new friends to come to meetings and that resulted in roughly 65 different kids that attended this year. Taylor TeKolste, Leah Bryson, Amy & Randy Thimm, Tracy & Brad Riensche, and Lexi Opfer will be the 2019 sponsors.
Highlights of the year included:
 - The 2018 Mission trip to White Earth which was the 13th trip on record with the 32 attendees being a significant increase over 2017.
 - The 2019 trip will be June 8nd through the 15th.
 - 32 kids and 6 adults who attended Rocky Mountain High with 3 accepting Jesus as their Savior or renewing their commitment to Him.
 - The group of 6th to 8th grade 4JC youth attending the Power Connection had a good experience and the
 - 2019 trip will be July 26th through the 28th.
 - A good carryover of those that attended 4JC in the past went on to attend The Fire.
 - The 4JC group having an average attendance of 30 kids at the weekly meetings.
 - 40 kids on average attending the weekly Fire meetings with around 70% freshmen and sophomores.
 - Youth asking how they can help with leadership duties indicating their vested interest in the program
9. Pastor Mark discussed possible applications for the Family Life Center and asked whether the mission of the building is mainly for current church attendees or outside guests, noting that it's not primarily for 'us', but others outside of 'us'. He went on to present the possibility of Living Life Reformed Church hosting a Global Leadership Summit presentation on August 8th and 9th, 2019. This conference will be held in 1,375 cities, 625 countries and in 30 languages. Its goal is to help equip both Christian and non-Christian leaders.
10. Doug Goering gave an update on final stages of the Family Life Center project that included:
 - A thanks to the congregation and the building committee.
 - Final flooring, appliance and small incidental needs.
 - The unplanned need for the fire alarm system in the new addition as well as in the older facility.
11. Alex Olson gave the 2018 Financial Report highlighting:
 - The \$3,200.00 average monthly giving to the building project up through October of 2018.

Continued 2018 Annual Congregational Meeting Journal.....

- The expenditure for the HVAC system replacement.
 - Sewer work related to the new building.
 - The costs for the aforementioned fire alarm system.
 - The \$60,000.00 need through the end of the year to meet the 2018 budget.
12. The 2019 budget was presented by Alex Olson who noted:
- There is a 2.74 % overall increase (approximately \$9,400.00) in expenditures, primarily in payroll expenses
 - That insurance costs are actually going down.
 - There are remaining needs for cabinet hardware, appliances, furnishings, sporting goods and other items
 - for the Family Life Center.
 - That any usage may be designated for general or building fund.
- It was MSC to approve the 2019 budget.
13. It was MSC to approve the 2018 Congregational Meeting journal.
14. It was MSC to close the meeting and pray.

Consistory Minutes: November 5, 2018

Our Work Together

1. Mark Starr led devotions on Chapters 18 and 19 of 'Church Is A Team Sport' by Jim Putnam with 2 Chronicles 16:9 as the scripture reference. The passage relates how God strengthens those who are fully committed to Him and the chapters of the book make the analogy of this commitment to that of a trained athlete. The group also talked about the reasons for some to quit or only give a half-hearted effort.
2. Our mission statement '**To grow a loving community of active followers of Jesus, equipped to take his love and message to the world.**' has most recently been lived out through the excellent turnout for the Trunk-Or-Treat event and the video from our missionary in India as a joyous reflection of serving God globally.
3. The consistory discussed the status and publishing of the church Centennial History book and the large amount of work that has gone into the project.
4. **Youth** – Ian Opfer
 - Ian met with Cary Prange, Dave Hobleman and Doyle Petersen to look at the future of White Earth Mission trips.
 - The 4JC group is planning on good attendance at the 2019 Power Connection Trip fund raising meal following the Congregational Meeting on November 11th.
5. **Consistory representative reports**
 - Congregational Care** – Cary Prange and Rod TeKolste
 - Discipleship/Education** – Doug Nieveen
 - A tornado, fire and intruder safety presentation is planned for God's Kids Club teachers and assistants.
 - God's Kids Club Christmas program practice has been going well and the 60 kids in attendance seem to like the curriculum
 - Worship** – Brad Riensche and Keith TenHulzen
 - Randy Sieck has volunteered for the open sound technician position.
 - Building/Grounds** – Alex Olson, Brian Auman and Doug Goering
 - The Fall church cleanup went well.
 - Planning for the contents and timeline for replacing the church cornerstone is in process.
 - Hospitality/Outreach** – Doyle Petersen (absent) and Randy Sieck
 - There were roughly 150 kids and 100 adults at the Trunk-or-Treat event on October 31st. A few guest families were given a tour of the new addition.
 - Great Commission Team** – Jeff Gottwald and Mike Brown
 - The Great Commission Team will be reviewing potential funding for a couple different missions at their December meeting.
 - \$14,145.00 has been contributed to the Century Challenge For Missions with \$19,226.00 for a remaining balance. The current plan is to continue to take donations through the end of July 2019.
 - The recipient of Scrip program proceeds from September and October is the People's City Mission in the amount of \$582.00. \$2,135.79 has been earned on the \$71,830.00 that has been spent on cards to date in 2018. With the Hickey family moving to Oklahoma, a replacement is being sought for Megan who has done an excellent job of managing the Scrip program for Living Life Reformed Church. This person may come from outside of the Great Commission Team.
 - There was a good representation of help from Living Life Reformed Church at the Capps' auction.
 - Rick DeBoer will give a brief summary presentation on Great Commission Team related activities from this year.
 - Information was shared on service project needs for the new F Street Church thrift store venture.
 - Beth TeKolste will discuss Campus Life during morning worship sometime in December of this year.
6. It was MSC to approve the minutes of the October meeting of consistory.

Continued Consistory Minutes: November 5, 2018

7. Calendar of Events

- November 7th - 10th: Branson Bus Trip #2
- November 11th: 2018 Congregational Meeting / 4JC 2019 Power Connection Fundraising Meal
- November 21st: Thanksgiving Eve Service
- November 22nd: Thanksgiving
- December 1st: Firth Christmas Celebration (Caroling With the E-Free Church)
- December 2nd: First Sunday in Advent (Possible Communion)
- December 3rd: Consistory Meeting (Including incoming members for 2019)
- December 12th: God's Kids Club Christmas Program (No family meal or 4JC's)
- December 15th: 4JC Christmas Party
- December 24th: Christmas Eve Worship Service

It was MSC to approve the December calendar of events.

8. Financial Report – Alex Olson

October 2018 Ending Balances: **General Fund** \$31,196.49 **Centennial Challenges** \$19,226.00 **Building Fund** \$14,835.92
Memorial Fund \$13,902.08 **Branson Fund** \$5,480.92 **Rock Mountain High** \$984.11 **Script Fund**-\$196.45

Average giving was up around 30% from that of 2017.

It was MSC to approve the October 2018 Financial Reports.

7. Building Committee – Doug Goering

- Procurement of some of the final needs for the new addition such as appliances will be addressed through a sign-up similar to a gift registry with pre-determined items listed.

8. 2019 Budget Discussion/Approval – Alex Olson

- The proposed 2019 budget was reviewed with changes primarily being related to payroll expenses.
- It was MSC to approve the 2019 budget for presentation at the November 11th congregational meeting.

9. Congregational Meeting Final Planning

- An update on youth groups and their activities will be given by Ian Opfer.
- A building project update will be given by Doug Goering.
- The financial statements and budget will be presented by Alex Olson.
- Mark Starr will share a 2019 Leadership Summit hosting opportunity.
- A Great Commission Team presentation will be given by Rick DeBoer.

The tellers will be Brian Auman, Jeff Gottwald, Keith TenHulzen and Randy Sieck.

10. Feedback on items from the Central Plains Classis

- The classis 25 by 25 program for growth was discussed.

11. It was MSC to adjourn and the consistory closed in prayer.

12. Elder Notes

- The constitutional question was asked.
- The elders reviewed the spiritual needs of the congregation.
- The next date for communion is December 2nd.
- A song-based worship service including a sermon is tentatively planned for December 16th.
- Candle lighting during Advent was discussed.
- The elders closed their meeting in prayer.

Deacon Notes

- Fire alarm system training is being scheduled with General Fire and Safety.
- A scholarship is being awarded to Tyler Auman.
- Jeff Gottwald will be the head of the deacons and Keith TenHulzen will handle accounts receivable for 2019. The individual responsible for taking minutes in deacon's meetings will be determined with new deacons present at the next consistory meeting
- The sewer line for the parsonage has been moved. The project on the sewer under the church is underway and it is anticipated that it will be completed by November 10th, 2018.
- The deacons closed their meeting in prayer.

Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2 Monica Starr | 14 Hunter DeBoer |
| 5 Colson Hesterna | 15 Ilene Docter |
| 7 Marge Helmink | 19 Ray Mulder |
| 10 Terran Goering | 21 Charlotte Mulder |
| 11 Izabella Hays | 23 Patti Wieskamp |
| 12 Samantha Henderson | 25 Jesus☺ |
| 13 Doyle Petersen | 29 Megan Auman |
| | 30 Thelma Schroeder |

Anniversaries

- 1 Glen & Lynn Gana (40)
- 17 Mark & Monica Starr (25)
- 20 Bill & Stacy Boden (23)
- 28 George & Jana Becher (16)
- 29 Rick & Janelle DeBoer (28)
- 31 Jiggs & Mel Maendele (24)

Heading South this Winter?

If so, give Beth your winter address and we'll mail the monthly newsletter and Sunday bulletin!

Mary & Martha Circle

Wed, Dec 12,
12:00pm
Christmas Party!
Lunch: Ann Weber

4JC's: Wednesday, Dec 12 No Meeting
Saturday, Dec 15 Christmas Party 3:00pm

The Fire: Wednesday, Dec 12 Lesson Night 7:45 pm
Wednesday, Dec 19 Christmas Party 7:00 pm

GKC, 4JC's & The Fire returns Wednesday, Jan 9, 2019
Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Church Event Cancellations

The decision to cancel **Sunday Worship** will be made by 7:00am Sunday and will be noted on the church answering machine

Wednesday Evening activities or any other church events or meetings will be canceled if Norris Schools close or dismiss early.

We will try to notify you by email, but if you are unsure of the status of an event, please contact the church (791-5800).



Holiday Youth Activities Schedule

Wednesday Meal: December 5th- Pasta, Garlic Rolls, Salad, Dessert

God's Kids Club: Wednesday, Dec 12 Christmas Program, 7:00pm
(Kids in their rooms by 6:15)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - December

Tuesdays	6:30pm	Prayer Gathering
Fridays	6:00am	Men's Group at Homestead
Sunday, Dec 2	7:00pm	Great Commission Team Meeting
Monday, Dec 3	7:00pm	Consistory Meeting
Sunday, Dec 9	7:00pm	Afterglow Bible Study
Monday, Dec 10	1:00pm	"IF" Meeting (Ilene Docter)
Wednesday, Dec 12	1:30pm	M&M Circle
	7:00pm	GKC Christmas Program (No 4JCs)
	7:45pm	The Fire
Saturday, Dec 15	3:00pm	4JC Christmas Party
Wednesday Dec, 19	7:00pm	The Fire/Christmas Party
Monday, Dec 24	5:00pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Monday, Dec 24-Jan 4		NO SCHOOL NORRIS Christmas Break
Monday, Dec 25		Merry Christmas!!

Living Life Reformed Church
603 Russell, Box 295
Firth, NE 68358



Sunday Morning

8:30-9:00am:

Family Brunch

8:30-8:45am:

Adult Choir Rehearsal

9:00-10:00am:

Worship Service

10:00-10:15am:

Fellowship & Coffee Time

10:45-11:30am:

Sunday School for 3 yrs through High School, and Adults, Life Group will meet.

To Contact Us:

Church Office Hours:

9:00am-12:00pm

Mark Starr: 320-262-9952
mark@livinglifereformed.org

Ian Opfer: 402-770-1775
ian@livinglifereformed.org

Holiday Events

Wed,
GKC
Program
Dec.12
7:00pm



Christmas
Eve
Service
Dec. 24
5:00 pm

