



December 2020

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,

I really appreciate the season of Advent and its meaning. The word Advent means “coming” or “arrival”. It’s the season in which we celebrate and anticipate the coming of Christ. What can we learn from this season of Advent?

The Value of Waiting

Advent teaches us about waiting and helps us experience the blessing of intentional waiting. I say this as someone who struggles to wait. I think most people in North America can relate—what else explains the massive credit card debt in our country? Rather than wait to buy something we can afford; we gladly fall deep in debt in order to get it right away!

We are an instant gratification society, no question about it but Advent is about delayed gratification. It’s a time of waiting—we learn the spiritual discipline and blessing of waiting. We remember how the Jews waited for centuries for the Messiah. And we attend to our own waiting for Christ to return.

Waiting intensifies our yearning. It teaches us patience. It reminds us that God is sovereign, and we are not. It challenges us to trust God even when He does not act according to our expectations.

Waiting also intensifies our joy. When we must wait for something, our joy in finally receiving our wish is far greater than if we had received it earlier. Delayed gratification, so rare in our society, actually increases our gratification. Thus, by keeping Advent, we help our delight when we finally sing, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come.”

Confident Hope

Advent is also a season of hope and who does not need hope today? Yet the hope of Advent is not like other kinds of hope. We can hope the economy will be strong, that students can stay in school, and that we will not get that virus that everyone is talking about. But, honestly, we cannot be sure of any of these things.

Advent hope is not wishful thinking. On the one hand, when we remember the hope of Israel, we know that God has fulfilled that hope in the birth of Jesus the Messiah. On the other hand, we look forward to the time when Christ will return and complete the task of restoring creation. We embrace this hope with the confidence of faith.

Advent hope empowers us to live today with greater gusto. We seek to love, knowing that Love will one day be victorious over hate. We seek justice, knowing that the just Judge will one day make all things right. In the third verse of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel,” one of the few well-known Advent carols, we sing of this hope with faithful assurance:

O come, Desire of nations, bind
All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid envy, strife, and discord cease;
Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

May Advent be a season of hope and expectant waiting for you,

In His love,

Mark

Sunday Volunteers

Worship Greeters: Doyle, Cary, Rick
Deacons: Jeff, Chad, Glen, Dave

November 29:

1st Sunday of Advent

Power Point: Avyn Olson
Sound Tech: Keith TenHulzen
Church Lock-Up: Glen Gana

December 6

2nd Sunday of Advent

Power Point: Avyn Olson
Sound Tech: Mike Brown
Church Lock-Up: Dave/Taylor

December 13:

3rd Sunday of Advent

Power Point: Beth Olson
Sound Tech: Brad Riensche
Church Lock-Up: Brad Riensche

December 20:

4th Sunday of Advent

Power Point: Tammy Goering
Sound Tech: Randy Sieck
Church Lock-Up: Chad Bryant

December 27

Power Point: Jenn Childers
Sound Tech: Keith TenHulzen
Church Lock-Up: Jeff Gottwald

Anniversaries

- 1 Glen & Lynn Gana (42)
- 17 Mark & Monica Starr (27)
- 28 George & Jana Becher (18)
- 29 Rick & Janelle DeBoer (30)
- 31 Jiggs & Mel Maendele (26)

Heading South this Winter?

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

Mary & Martha Circle

Wed, Dec 9,
12:00pm
Christmas
Party!
Lunch at
LLRC

New Saturday Night Services at 6:00 pm!

Our recent church survey revealed that many were fine with the safety measures at church right now on Sunday mornings. It also revealed, however, that a good number of people would attend a service in person if masks were worn the entire time. To minister to more people during the pandemic, we are beginning Saturday night services at 6:00 pm in the sanctuary. This is a service similar to Sunday mornings but for those who aren't able to make it on Sundays and willing to wear a mask at all times on Saturday nights!

Church Event Cancellations

The decision to cancel **Sunday Worship** will be made by 7:00am Sunday and will be noted and email announcement will be sent out.

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 (402-791-5800).

Holiday Youth Activities Schedule

God's Kids Club: Wednesday December 9th will be the last lesson night until the new year.

4JC's: Dec 9th 6:30-7:30pm

The Fire: Wednesday, Dec 9 Lesson Night **7:45 pm**

GKC, 4JC's & The Fire returns Wednesday,
January 6th, 2021

Have a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Birthdays

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 Monica Starr | 17 Chester Maendele |
| 5 Colson Hestermann | 19 Heath Skeels |
| 7 Marge Helmink | 21 Charlotte Mulder |
| 10 Terran Goering | 23 Patti Wieskamp |
| 11 Izabella Hays | 24 Larry Hafer |
| 12 Samantha Henderson | 25 Jesus☺ |
| 13 Doyle Petersen | 26 Jaelyn Cejka |
| 14 Hunter DeBoer | 29 Megan Auman |
| 15 Ilene Doctor | 30 Jayci Osborn
Thelma Schroeder |

The Fire and 4JC

4JC and the Fire Thank you!

4JC and the Fire would like to thank everyone who has given to our youth programs over the last few months! This last October, during our first annual Corn Hole Tournament, \$400 was raised towards the Fire's Rocky Mountain High trip for this summer. Over \$1,000 was raised during the November congregational meeting and meal for 4JC's Power Connection trip this summer as well. With these donations, our goal is to have enough scholarships for every youth to attend a summer conference in 2021. These summer conference trips provide an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to grow and transform the beliefs of students and adult leaders into a lifestyle of faith in Jesus. We hope to have other opportunities to donate to our youth programs throughout the remaining school year. Thank you for helping make these trips possible!

4JC and Fire Christmas Break

4JC and the Fire will not be meeting on Wednesday, December 23rd, and December 30th because of Christmas break. We will plan to meet again in-person Wednesday, January 6th. If a hybrid learning scenario takes place within the Norris School District, 4JC and the Fire will continue to meet in-person. Only if the Norris School District anticipates full remote learning will 4JC and the Fire do the same. For week to week updates, please follow LLRC's Facebook page or website for any program time changes, cancellations, or moving to remote learning. Otherwise, please reach out to Robbie Morrison, the Interim Youth Director, at (402) 304-9049 or by e-mail, robbie.morrison@livinglifereformed.org.

Mentoring Class

Robbie Morrison, the new Interim Youth Director, is looking for students interested in confessing their faith through a Christian mentoring course. This course will help students understand the core doctrinal beliefs believes here at Living Life Reformed Church by navigating through scriptures in the Bible, better understanding creation, discussion about sinning, the Holy Trinity, worship, and much more! This journey will also allow students to explore their faith, grow in relationship with Jesus, and develop a life-long relationship with a Christian mentor. We will focus more on conversations and dialogue rather than lectures, or in other words, do life together! If you have a 7th to 12th grader at home who has not completed the mentoring class, this class is for them. Please reach out to Robbie Morrison if you or your student is at all interested! Robbie would like to get this course started by the end of January 2021, so please let him know as soon as possible. Please notify Robbie and if you have any questions. Robbie can be reached at (402) 304-9049 or by e-mail, robbie.morrison@livinglifereformed.org.

2020 Annual Congregational Meeting Journal – November 15th, 2020

Living Life Reformed Church called their annual congregational meeting to order at 10:30 am, Sunday, November 15th, 2020. Pastor Mark opened the meeting with prayer and thanking those who have served.

Pastor Mark shared about the “The Joy and Privilege of a Church Member and the six pledges that speak about this. Pledge #1- I will be a functioning church member. Pledge #2- I will be a unifying church member. Pledge #3- I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. Pledge #4- I will pray for my church leaders. Pledge #5- I will lead my family to be healthy church members. Pledge #6- I will treasure church membership as a gift.

Tellers appointed for the meeting were: Beth Sieck, Chad Bryant, and Alex Olson

It was determined by a sign-up sheet of members entering the sanctuary that a quorum was present:

- 57 members were in attendance.
- 20 absentee ballots for Deacon and Elder were submitted.

1. **MSC** to suspend current bylaws to accept absentee ballots.
2. Robbie Morrison provided an update on the Youth Ministry programs- As the Interim Youth Director, only by the grace of God, that he and the kids have been able to meet in person. 4JC averaging 9 kids a week, they will be serving noon meal after the congregational meeting. They are currently studying Proverbs. The Fire is averaging 15 kids per week and will be starting a 3-week course called “Redeem the Screen” by Kyle Idleman. They currently have 9 kids signed up for Rocky Mountain High. This is a fund raiser for next year’s Power Connection
3. The election of new **Elders** was held. Ron DeBoer and Dean Hestermann were elected to 3-year terms by receiving the most votes.
4. The election of new **Deacons** was held. Andy Johnson and Luke Sieck were elected to 3-year terms by receiving the most votes.
5. Jeff Gottwald gave the **2020 Financial Report** highlighting income and expenses in light of Covid-19. Expenses were down and giving has been good.
6. The **2021 Budget** was presented by Jeff Gottwald who noted significant changes which were: a reduction in the youth pastor expenses, an increase in pulpit supply as Ian filled the pulpit when Pastor Mark was absent. The 2021 budget was developed based on paying an interim youth pastor. Goals for the Deacons as they developed next year’s budget are: 1) Paying off the loan for the Family Life Center as soon as possible, 2) Monitor the general fund due to uncertainty of Covid- impact on attendance and giving and expenses.
7. What is Organic Outreach? This past year we learned about Organic Outreach. A video by Kevin Harney was presented sharing what this is. Sharing your faith naturally, 3 levels; 1) Personal- called to live out a life of faith loving Jesus. 2) Homes and Neighborhoods- Imagine if every home or where you live became a lighthouse. Message of Christ is being shared in where you are. 3) Local Church- Imagine if every local church became a mission statement, proclaiming Jesus and serving faithfully in their community.
8. A thank you was given to the Deacons that are leaving at the end of 2020: Brad Riensche & Jeff Gottwald
9. A thank you was given to the Elders that are leaving at the end of 2020: Doyle Petersen & Cary Prange
10. It was MSC to approve the 2021 budget.
11. It was MSC to approve the 2019 Congregational Meeting journal.
12. It was MSC to close the meeting and pray.

Consistory Notes – November 09, 2020

Our Work Together

1. Doyle Petersen opened in prayer
2. Doyle read from Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12; The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ²He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side. ⁸He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, ¹⁰where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. ⁹Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. ¹²Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.”

As you read these verses, the people have been in exile for 25 years, few remember how it used to be. Many have only negative thoughts. Question for us: As we think about the future, do we see brighter days ahead or do you feel weighed down by the challenges we are currently facing?

Ezekiel's vision is not one of wishful thinking or looking at the bright side, his vision is one of reminding the people what they need, which they cannot create themselves.

Members shared our mission statement, ***'To grow a loving community of active followers of Jesus, equipped to take his love and message to the world'***

3. Youth Update- Robbie Morrison: 4JC averaging 9 kids a week, they will be serving the noon meal after the congregational meeting. This is a fund raiser for next years Power Connection. They are currently studying Proverbs. The Fire, averaging 15 kids per week, currently 9 kids signed up for Rocky Mountain High. Robbie had an opportunity to participate in a ZOOM call with area youth pastors from Iowa, South Dakota, Minnesota and Omaha Nebraska, talking about various youth topics. As with all conversations, COVID-19 was a topic and it sounds like LLRC is doing very well in terms of having the ability to meet for both youth meetings and church service as well.
4. Team Updates
 - Congregational Care** – Cary Prange and Doug Wieskamp
 - Discipleship/Education** – Chad Bryant and Rick DeBoer
 - Worship** – Chad TerMaat and Taylor TeKolste
 - Building/Grounds** – Brad Riensche and Dave Oltman
 - Hospitality/Outreach** – Doyle Petersen and Glen Gana
 - Great Commission Team** – Jeff Gottwald and Tammy Goering
5. Church survey- Reviewed the results of the recent survey and they appear to imply that the current service plan should not be changed, as the majority of membership is either satisfied or accepting of the current arrangements. However, there is a number of additional members who would prefer a second service, either early morning or Saturday evening. In addition to meeting their needs, the second service could also present an opportunity to reach people in the community that we're not currently reaching, due to time conflicts, weekend sports events, etc.
6. **Treasurers Report**-(October) Jeff Gottwald; Income continues to be greater than expenses. As of October 31st, the General fund has increased by approximately \$8000.00. The Family Life Center still needs HVAC water leaks fixed but this will more then likely take place in 2021. Reviewing the building fund, giving specifically to this account continues to decline, no major concerns though as general fund income continues to increase.

General Fund \$ 63,967.76 **Building Fund** \$ (4467.11) **Memorial Fund** \$21,347.08

Branson Fund \$2,790.90 **Rocky Mountain High** \$ 3,654.47 **Script Fund** \$ (16.24)

White Earth Mission \$3,483.00 **Youth Mission** \$8,964.28

MSC to approve October's ending financial balances.

Continued Consistory Minutes: November 9th, 2020

7. Budget Discussion/Approval—Jeff presented the 2021 budget: On average, a 3% increase for positions was given. Overall a decrease in the 2021 budget compared to 2020.
8. Absentee Ballots and Congregational meeting- It was discovered that according to LLRC's Bylaws that we could not accept absentee ballots. The consistory approved that we present this finding to the congregation to vote on temporarily suspending this rule. Will propose a permanent change at a later date.
9. It was MSC to Adjourn and the consistory closed in prayer

Through email, **MSC to approve** the minutes of the October meeting of consistory.

Through email, **MSC to approve** the December calendar of events.

Calendar of Events

Weekly Events

Tuesdays	6:30pm	Prayer Gathering
Wednesdays	5:30pm	Family Meal-GKC/4JC/Fire
Fridays	6:00am	Men's Group at Homestead

December

Sunday, December 6	Second Sunday of Advent
Monday, December 7	"IF" Meeting
Wednesday, December 9	NO SCHOOL Norris Mary & Martha Circle
Saturday, December 12	Firth Old Fashioned Christmas
Sunday, December 13	3 rd Sunday of Advent Afterglow
Monday, December 14	Consistory with incoming members
Sunday, December 20	4 th Sunday of Advent
Thursday, December 24	Christmas Eve Worship
Mon- Thurs, December 21-31	NO SCHOOL—At Norris
Thursday, December 31	New Year's Eve- Office Closed
Friday, January 1 st	New Year's Day—Office Closed
Thurs-Mon Dec 31- Jan 4 th	No School at Norris

Elder's Meeting

- The constitutional question was asked.
- The elders reviewed the spiritual needs of the congregation.
- New Business
 - Communion will be served on December 20th
 - Pastor Mark will be gone Sunday Dec 6th and Dec 27th
- The Elder's closed their meeting in prayer.

Deacons Meeting

New Business

- Approved to support the Norris Area Food Pantry with this year's Thanksgiving service offering.
- MSC to approve consolidating some of the Youth Mission accounts
- For 2021, the Youth Director or volunteer leader will be providing a quarterly report to the Deacons on the Youth Mission bank account balance
- Reviewed miscellaneous end of year purchases.

The Deacons closed their meeting in prayer.

Great Commission Team

Scrip Cards are back! Well, they never really left, but what HAS been normal for the past few months????!!

For those of you not familiar with the Scrip program, everyone here has the opportunity to purchase gift cards from a huge variety of organizations at their face value and Living Life Reformed Church will get a percentage (which varies by the retailer) of that price which we put towards various missions. Yes, that's right, **no extra cost** for something that you would be buying anyway (groceries, gas, department store items, etc.)! Don't agonize over what to get for the rapidly approaching Christmas season - pick up Scrip gift cards! Jeff Gottwald and other members of the Great Commission Team will be at a table in the Fellowship Hall before and after Sunday morning worship. If you have any questions, please contact Jeff or any other member of the Great Commission Team.

God's Kid's Club

As we reflect on this year, we are reminded of the verse from 2 Corinthians 2:15 which says, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift." The year 2020 has been a year like no other in most of our lives. The world has been altered by the pandemic, but our Lord still reigns! We had to end God's Kids Club early and we chose to start it later, to ensure we had safety measures in place for our volunteers and the kids. We are amazed by the faithfulness of our volunteers and of the families who entrust us weekly with their children. It speaks volumes about their desire to know Jesus and to grow in their knowledge of the Bible and in their walk with Him.

We have been collecting our offering weekly for the Norris Area Food Pantry to share with others who need a helping hand. We also have challenged the students to bring in non-perishable food for Project Recycle. To challenge the students, for every forty items they brought in, we gave out a prize. We all need a little motivation from time to time!

As always, your prayers are appreciated for GKC.

God's Kids Club will resume on Wednesday, January 6, 2021!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - December

Tuesdays	6:30pm	Prayer Gathering
Fridays	6:00am	Men's Group at Homestead
Monday, Dec 7	1:00pm	"IF" Meeting (Ilene Docter)
Wednesday, Dec 9		NO SCHOOL NORRIS
	1:30pm	M&M Circle
	5:30pm	Family Meal, GKC, 4JC, The Fire
Saturday, Dec 12	5:00pm	Firth Old Fashioned Christmas
Sunday, Dec 13	7:00pm	Afterglow Bible Study
Monday, Dec 14	7:00pm	Consistory Meeting
Thursday, Dec 24	5:00pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Monday, Dec 21-Jan 4		NO SCHOOL NORRIS
		Christmas Break
Friday, Dec 25		Merry Christmas!!



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



Wednesday Night

5:30-6:30pm:

Fellowship Meal

6:15-7:30pm:

4JC (Middle School)

6:30-7:30pm:

God's Kids Club

6:30-7:45pm:

Women's Bible Study

7:45-9:00pm:

The Fire (High School)

Saturday Evening

6:00-7:00pm:

Worship Service

(Masks REQUIRED)

Sunday Morning

9:30-10:30am:

Worship Service

To Contact Us:

Church Office Hours:

9:00am-12:00pm

Mark Starr:

320-262-9952

mark@livinglifereformed.org

Robbie Morrison:

402-440-8399

Robbie.morrison@livinglifereformed.org

Holiday Events

**Christmas Eve
Service**

**December 24
5:00 pm**

