



PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH

44 CHAPEL ROAD – KENMORE, NY 14217

(716) 875-5485

www.pilgrimkenmorelcms.org

A Congregation in Mission, Community and Service

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

DECEMBER 2023

PASTOR: Rev. David Walsh

SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:00 AM

EDITOR: Mary Werth

BIBLE STUDY: 9:00 AM

ASSOC. EDITOR:

WORSHIP: 10:00 AM



*The
Word
became
flesh and made
his dwelling among us.*

John 1:14



“Increase Our Joy, Lord God”

By Pastor Chris Wicher

Forgiveness, healing, wholeness, peace of mind, contentment, personal life-balance, a committed desire to serve and share, life purpose - these are among the countless gifts the Savior brings to all the earth. The list can go on. Promised by the prophets, sung by angels, proclaimed by apostles, declared through the ages by the church. In Jesus, born of the virgin Mary, God indeed has come in undiminished deity “that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10).

Check out the hymns we use for the Advent – Christmas season. See how they too lift our voices to sing praise to God who has brought healing and health to the nations. This is a wonderful time of the year to once again draw close to His great story Incarnate, Jesus who truly is the greatest blessing above all. He is the Prince of Peace.

One familiar Christmas hymn “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” rings forth the truth that in the newborn king Jesus, our merciful God shines forth in all glory for the health and healing of His people. The 18th English church reformer Charles Wesley wrote over 6000 hymns. Here is one verse of that great hymn:

*Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace,
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His Wings.
Now He lays His Glory by,
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the New-born king!"
(Lutheran Service Book 380)*

“Risen with healing in His wings” is a quote from the Old Testament prophet Malachi, chapter 4, verse 2: “*But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.*” (NIV). To the Old Testament faithful it was certain that the Messiah would bring

life and wholeness to His people. It was also certain that His coming would stir a joyful reaction in His people. They “will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.” That sounds like a happy response to me. “Released from the stall” must feel very liberating and freeing. Finally young calves could jump and run and explore God’s good creation as they were created to do.

I don’t consider myself living in a “stall”, yet there is tremendous contentment and joy even when I consider the blessings of Jesus, my Messiah. I wonder how much happiness and joy I show because God has come to us and lives in me through faith in Jesus? How many churches sing like there’s no tomorrow? How many preachers proclaim the Word boldly because “[Jesus] has overcome the world.” (John 16:33) In Him “we are more than conquerors”. (Romans 8:37).

Take the opportunity this Advent and Christmas with me to repent, return, and renew yourself by the Holy Spirit that the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, would warm your hearts with God’s joy.

Have a blessed Advent and Christmas season.



Gloria
IN EXCELSIS DEO



SUNDAY SERVER SCHEDULE

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

DECEMBER 2023

WEEKEND OF	Dec. 2/3	Dec. 9/10	Dec. 16/17	Dec. 23/24	Dec. 31/Jan 1
READER	D. Griebel/Eric Fellner	Rhonda Mohr/Mary Werth	Rhonda Mohr/D. Wuerch	Doreen Griebel/Jim Hartz	Rhonda Mohr/Tyrone Bryant
USHER	Mike Wuerch	Jim Miller	Melody Keef	Tegwanda Alford	Eric Fellner
COMMUNION ASSISTANT (Sat/Sun)	Dave Porter/Jim Hartz	Rod Mohr/Tyrone Bryant	Rod Mohr/Eric Fellner	Dan Griebel/Dooley O'Rourke	Dave Porter/George Alessi



This year, make your Advent an ADVENTure by attending one or more of the mid-week Advent services with other congregations. Mark your calendar. This year's schedule looks like this: 6 p.m. soup and sandwich dinner; 7 p.m. Advent Worship

- Wednesday, December 6th, at St. Luke, 900 Maryvale Drive, Cheektowaga
- Wednesday, December 13th, at Holy Cross, 8900 Sheridan Drive, Clarence
- Wednesday, December 20th, at St. Paul, 7720 Goodrich Rd, Clarence Center



ESTHER CIRCLE

There is no meeting in December. Our next meeting is Monday, January 8, 2024, at 12:30 pm at the church. After a brief business meeting, we will begin to discuss the book "Joining Jesus in His Mission" by Greg Finke. If you ordered a book, see Sharon McGuan.

The women's breakfast in November was a big success! We hope to plan a Spring event for next year.

We will be assembling holiday gift bags and delivering to the shut ins. We are selling Terri Lynn nuts as a fundraiser. Refer to the flyer and help support our mission outreach. Thank you!

For Pastor Walsh's Installation reception, we will need desserts. There is a sign-up sheet on the board. Any contribution will be appreciated.

REMINDER: Dash's receipts go to Sue Holway, cancelled stamps to Sharon McGuan and mites to Karen Smith.

In December we celebrate Advent and Christmas - the coming and birth of Jesus. Pilgrim is also celebrating a new pastor. Welcome to Pastor David Walsh and Margaret! We give glory to the Lord for these blessings 🙏

Carol Obot & Sue Holway



We are looking for people interested in joining the choir.

The plan is to meet each Wednesday for an hour in the church sanctuary by the piano, from 6:30-7:30 pm.

Please contact Ruth Whitmer for any questions: 716-803-2677.



Paul Holway	Dec. 2
George Alessi	Dec. 4
Nancy Partridge	Dec. 10
David Porter	Dec. 16
Ruth Whitmer	Dec. 25



Holiday humor

Much planning and preparation goes into worship during December. But that doesn't mean Christmas services and pageants are always picture-perfect. For anyone who's experienced holiday chaos (who hasn't?!), take comfort in knowing you're not alone.

Church leaders who shared stories with Outreach magazine describe an alarming number of Christmas candle vs. hair incidents. Here's what else has transpired:

- One pastor was sharing the Nativity story when he bumped the button on his singing Christmas tie, which didn't have a mute button. So congregants had to listen to the entire verse and chorus of "Jingle Bells."
- A child discovered a live mouse in his chocolate-filled gift bag on Christmas Eve. Although the creature jumped out and scurried out the door, worshipers saw it return for the next service.
- After flames were distributed for the candlelight service, a pastor said, "Now that we're all good and lit ...," causing laughter throughout the pews.
- Children tend to go off-script during Christmas plays, as evidenced by all the bloopers available online. (Check out the YouTube clip titled "Sheep, Mary tussle over baby Jesus in children's pageant gone hilariously awry.")



On November 19th, a special Voters Meeting was held after the service. We welcomed twelve new members from Nazareth. They are Janie McClain, Donna Vogel, Nancy Loster, David Wheeler, Mary Wheeler, Diane Reynolds, Mary Kern, Leonard S. Rollo, Carrol Rust, Mariam Liebler, Jerald Vogel, and Janie Vogel. (There will be more joining Pilgrim after the final dissolution of Nazareth.) We welcome all of you to the Pilgrim family!

An amendment to the Lutheran Church Extension Society's constitution was voted on and approved. There were a few minor changes. George Alessi is Pilgrim's representative and he said we should have a second one. If you are interested, please contact him.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17th. We will be voting on the budget for 2024. There will be two vacancies on the Council for Vice President and Treasurer. If you are interested in serving, please contact Mike Wuerch or anyone on the council.

The meeting was adjourned, and we closed with the Lord's Prayer.



The elders greatly appreciate the blessing of Pastor Chris Wicher serving as our interim pastor since September 1st. On behalf of the members of Pilgrim, we thank the Lord for sending Pastor Wicher and his wife, Bev to us. We are grateful for his officiating our worship services and preaching his thought-provoking sermons. We have been blessed by his Sunday morning Bible studies, Children's Sermons, enthusiasm for the Esther Circle and LWML Sunday, and graciously giving his time to meet with the elders and other congregational leaders. A deep appreciation has also been expressed by the congregation's hospitalized, sick and shut-ins for his compassionate pastoral visits.

Pastor Chris and Bev, we look forward to seeing you at future circuit Advent and Lenten services and other church related events. We pray God continue to bless and keep you both in His loving care.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church invites you to join us as we
celebrate the

Service of Installation

for



Rev. David Walsh

Sunday, December 10th at 3:00pm

Pilgrim Lutheran Church

Reception will be held immediately following the service.
Fellowship Hall

Invited Pastors to participate in the service, bring robe, with stoles in red. Please gather downstairs before the service.

Kindly Sign Up by December 3rd



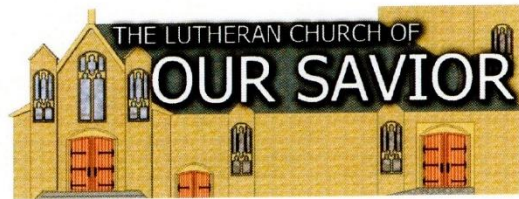
Beginning 2024 Counters will be on a Weekly Rotation

SUNDAY COUNTERS SCHEDULE

Date	January 7	January 14	January 21	January 28
Lead Counter	Carolyn A.	Mike W.	Dianne W.	Jim H.
Counter	Ruth W.	Kathy K.	Dolores Z.	Mike W.
Counter				

We still need a few more congregational members to help count offerings after Sunday Service on rotating schedule.

**If you feel the calling to do so, please contact
Carolyn Alessi, Dianne & Mike Wuerch, Jim Hartz**



Our Savior Lutheran | 26 Brunswick Blvd Buffalo 14208

**We are collecting donations to send monthly.
All donation amounts are welcome.
Please designate amount on your offering envelope.**

Message From Your Financial Secretary

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Dear Pilgrim Congregation, Family & Friends,

Everyone should have a name tag on a lanyard, **please let me know if you do not.** We will need to wear them when Pastor Walsh arrives, so he and his wife Margaret can learn who we all are.

I would advise they be left in your mailbox after the service/fellowship.

New mailboxes will be assigned soon. Amber Trimmer and I are still working on removing/adding names, so you may be in a new area. Mailboxes will be arranged alphabetically. Please check your mailboxes weekly!!

I will be distributing 2024 Offering Envelopes during the next Voter's Meeting December 17th. Your envelope number will change, please discard any envelopes from previous years.

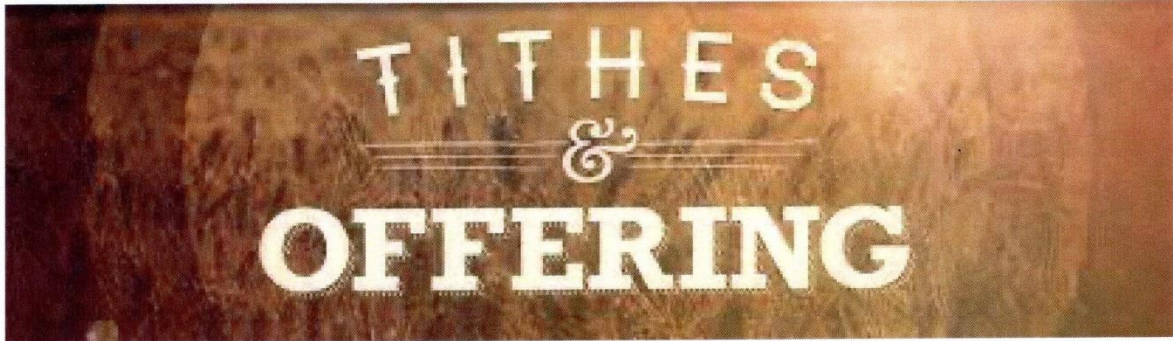
If you attend Saturday Services your Offering Envelopes will be in your mailbox.

I will be printing out your End of the Year Offering Statements the beginning of January. They will be in your mailboxes, unless otherwise directed.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, you may reach me anytime.

God's Blessings,

Dianne Wuerch
Financial Secretary
diannefeyeswuerch@gmail.com
716-481-2599



Your Weekly/ Monthly Gifts/Offerings are very personal. There is no minimum (or maximum) gift and Pilgrim Lutheran Church does not place requirements or expectations on any of our members' giving.

What is taught throughout the Old and New Testaments encourages us to give a percentage of what we receive. Most frequently it is taught as a "tithe," which means 10%.

Begin by committing to regular giving, such as weekly or monthly. Both can be done at our Saturday and Sunday Services.

Then set the goal to grow in your generosity. Perhaps start with 2 or 3% for one year. Then as your faith grows, grow your giving by 1% per year.

Offering Prayer

Father, as we lay before you our financial offering, we give you all that we are and everything that you have entrusted to us. Come bless these gifts for the sake of your Kingdom and glory.
Amen.



Pilgrim Prayer Partners

It has been one year since women at Pilgrim formed Prayer Partners. In 2023 women of Pilgrim were blessed to have a partner in prayer.

During the month of November and up until December 15th, women are invited to call 716-803-3767, or email their name to Sharon McGuan at salmcq23@gmail.com, if you would like a Prayer Partner for 2024.

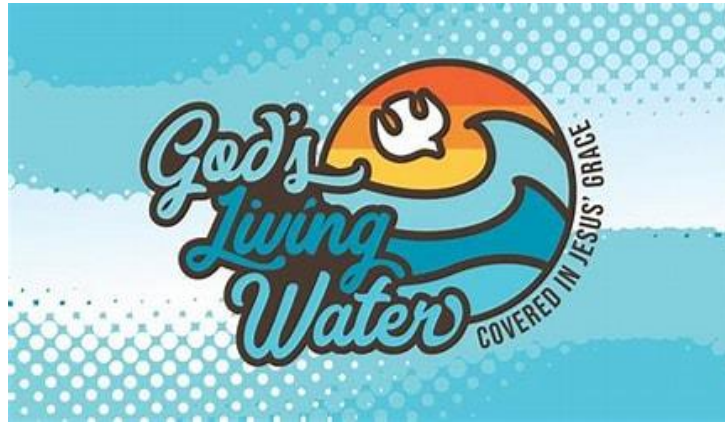
On December 15th, Prayer Partners will be randomly assigned. Your name will be placed in a box. Two names are drawn out at a time. You and your prayer partner will receive an email, or a call from Sharon McGuan and you can begin to contact and or pray for your 2024 Prayer Partner. You will be notified of your new Prayer Partner on December 15th, or shortly thereafter.



The Esther Circle Sponsors Mission Book Study

The Esther Circle will read and discuss **Joining Jesus On His Mission: How to be an Everyday Missionary** written by LCMS Pastor Greg Finke and published by Concordia Publishing House. Pastor Finke's book shares his insights as to ways we can join Jesus' mission to share the Gospel in our everyday lives, "recognizing where Jesus is present and at work, in our neighborhoods, workplaces and schools". Pre-ordered books will be distributed after November 26th worship service. Please see Sharon McGuan for your book. The books came to \$7.50 per book. We currently have 21 people interested in joining the study. Five additional books have been ordered to accommodate other members who might wish to join in. The exact time of our discussion meetings will be determined at our next Esther Circle meeting, January 8th.

* As of November 17th, members of Kindle Unlimited may borrow the book for free on their Kindle. You may borrow up to 20 books with a Kindle Unlimited membership.



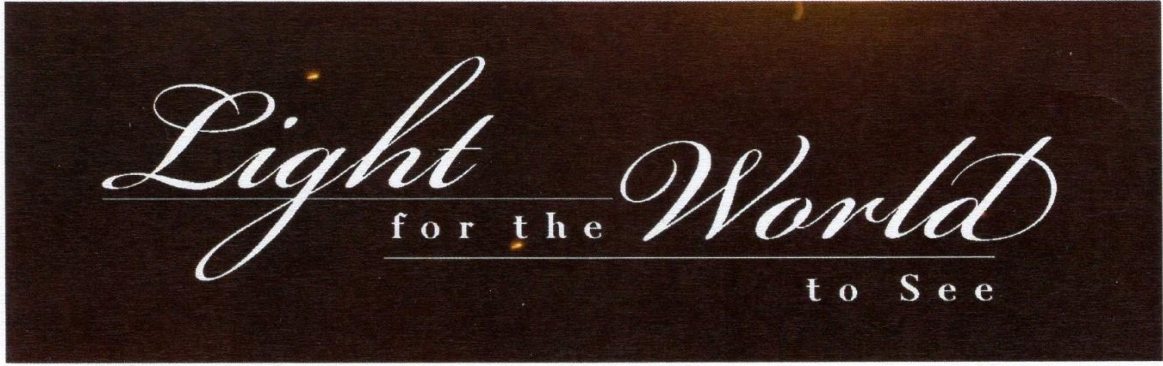
God's Living Water - December 10, 2023

Our December VBS theme will focus on Advent. So instead of reflecting on the theme: **God's Living Water**, the adult and children's sessions will reflect upon Jesus, the Word made flesh, who came to live among us. The adult and children's class will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The children's lesson will include their Advent lesson, craft, small snack and Bible video. The children will also be singing **Away In the Manger** at the beginning of the 10:00 worship service. Pastor Wicher will be leading the adult class and the 10:00 worship service. There will be no Fellowship Time after the worship service. We welcome you to celebrate December VBS Sunday with us.



Members of Pilgrim: Thank you for Supporting the Medical Missionary Team to the Dominican Republic!

Members of Pilgrim collected over 80 pairs of glasses to accompany a medical missionary team traveling to the Dominican Republic in January. Two days before we delivered the glasses to George Fretz, we were given another 400 plus pairs of used glasses! God is good, all the time!



The 67th
Candlelight Christmas Vespers

Sunday, December 3, 2023 | 5 p.m.

FIRST TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
1570 Niagara Falls Boulevard
Tonawanda, New York 14150
(716) 835-2220

Enjoy Christmas carols old and new with choirs and orchestra. Featuring guest organist, Jacob Weber, of St. Louis. Pre-service music begins at 4:30.

The readings, hymns, anthems and message tell us that Jesus calls us to be the light of the world. Jesus calls us to embrace our identity as bearers of His light, allowing it to shine brightly in every aspect of our lives, so that our words, actions, and deeds reflect the love, grace, and truth of our Savior. By doing so, we will not only impact those around us but also bring glory to our Heavenly Father.

For the benefit of the Valparaiso University Guild and the Music Conservatory at First Trinity, Holy Cross and St. John Lutheran churches. Advance patron donations are welcomed!

Questions? Email David Werth at dwerth@FirstTrinity.com.

The pastor's longest walk

A young pastor was called to serve a 3,000-member church where the retiring pastor had served for 26 years. On his first Sunday, the choir began proceeding up the center aisle, singing the opening hymn. The pastor nervously trailed behind.

The pulpit appeared to be very far away; the endless aisle seemed as long as a football field. The pastor was walking but felt as if he were getting nowhere. The hymn dragged on forever. His hands shook, and he was perspiring. He felt unsure of himself. Would he be accepted? Could he communicate clearly?

Later, when the pastor described the experience to friends, he said it felt like the longest walk he'd ever taken. Now that he's been that church's pastor for 10 years, he doesn't think that aisle is so long after all.

Like in the famous "Footprints" poem, God had carried this man during a time of anxiety. By relying on God's strength, the pastor was able to face uncertainty and gratefully serve God in return.

Appreciating your pastor

Many people have complex relationships with their pastors because faith, church and God involve a mix of emotions. We have particular ideas about church practices, congregational priorities, the minister's use of time, money, authority and more.

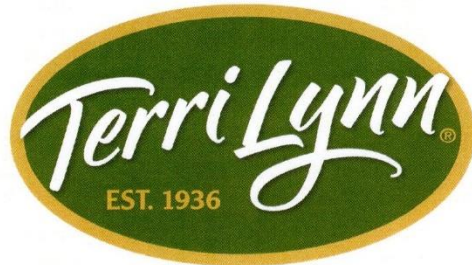
But most pastors are deeply devoted to Christ and believe that God has called them to serve in a certain place. They have the best of intentions and work hard to share the good news of the gospel. So, consider the following:

God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called. Your pastor may need time to learn and develop certain skills. (Everyone does!) Bless pastors with your patience.

We don't change the message; the message changes us. You probably won't like all your pastor's sermons or newsletter columns. But instead of complaining, ponder that something may rub you the wrong way because God is trying to change you. Keep an open mind and heart.

If a church wants a "better" pastor, it just needs to pray for the one it has. Pray often and caringly for your pastors, church leaders and their families. The role is challenging, so support them spiritually and ask God to reveal his love and grace to these special servants.

**Terri Lynn's Signature Nuts & Snack Mixes will be for Sale
During Sunday Fellowship Until Supplies last.**



**Pilgrim Lutheran Church Terri Lynn's Webstore is
contactless, safe, and easy!!**

<https://pilgrimesthercircle.terri Lynn.com>

Terri Lynn's Signature nuts, snack mixes, and chocolates are delicious on their own; but they also make great ingredients for your homemade, tasty creations. Check out their recipes online and share them.



All profits are used to support local charities such as Ken -Ton Meals on Wheels, Local Church Food Pantries, Lutheran Bible Translators, Lutheran Hour Ministries plus many others. Please help us support them. Thank you!



Dear Friends in Christ,

During this Holy Season, if anyone is interested in purchasing my mom's book about the Lord's Prayer, entitled, "God's Rainbow of Promise", please let me know and I can get a copy for you. It's a wonderful gift to give to friends and family. The cost is \$14.00. You can call me at 716-835-9075 and leave a message if I'm not able to answer. Thank you.

I hope you enjoy my mom's poem, below.

I wish everyone a Blessed Christmas!

In Jesus' Love,

Marilyn R. Schneck



THE CHRISTMAS TREE

I gazed upon a Christmas tree
And much to my surprise
I saw true symbols of God's love
Before my very eyes.

I saw shimmering ornaments
Reflecting smiles of joy
The laughter of a little child
Beholding a new toy.

I saw the lights so brightly shine
Just like the star that night;
It told us of the Savior's birth
That gave the world its Light.

I saw the tinsels gently sway
Reflecting colored beams,
Just as a child's face does glow
And shows God's love, it seems.

I saw the branches proudly bowed
Bedecked with gaiety
As if to tell the world it's glad
To be a Christmas tree.

I saw the needles – numberless
As stars that shine above;
They told the story ever-true
Of God's own precious love.

So, when you see a Christmas tree
Remember what it means –
A Child was born in Bethlehem
Fulfilling all life's dreams.

12-15-2009 Doris V. Neumann



Orphan Grain Train Servant Center

Orphan Grain Train, U.S.

About This Mission Grant

Orphan Grain Train (OGT) has carried out the mission of the Lord for thirty years by providing humanitarian service. They work through the church so the Gospel always accompanies their service. They have assisted orphans, carried out domestic disaster relief, gathered, sorted, packed, and distributed food, clothing, medical supplies, equipment, and educational materials for those experiencing poverty in the U.S. and internationally.

The original facility in Norfolk, Nebraska, is outdated and lacking adequate space to carry out their expanding work. They need to build an additional facility to increase their mission capacity and increase the safety level for volunteers. With an increased work area, larger groups of volunteers can work on donations received and the output of mercy meals can double to 10,000,000 meals annually. This grant will help OGT complete their building project.



*This is the front entrance to the new Servant Center,
looking west on 6th Street.*



This is the architect's rendering of what the inside of the warehouse portion will be.



This is the architect's rendering of what the break room/educational area will look like.



SHARING CHRIST'S LOVE IN SRI LANKA

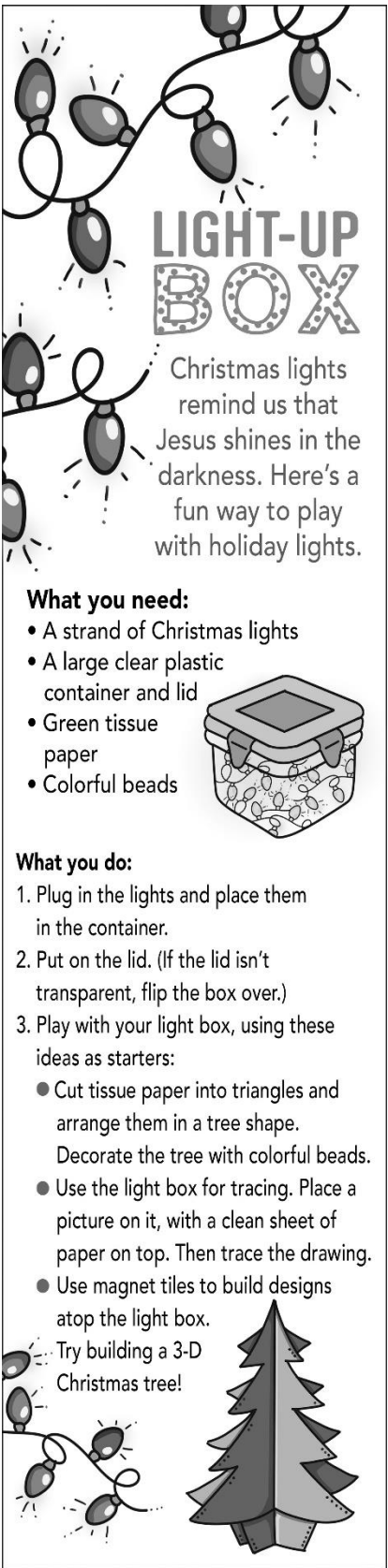
Ongoing political turmoil and an economic crisis have provided challenges to the efforts of **LHM—Sri Lanka** staff in sharing Christ's love with people throughout the country. But by God's grace, they have been able to reach significant numbers of people through their radio programs in the Sinhalese and Tamil languages. These two programs provide dramas, discussions, stories, short messages, Christian songs, and a Bible quiz and are being heard by people from many religious backgrounds. The broadcasts have opened the door to tell people about the hope and comfort provided by Christ.

While Mahinda comes from a non-Christian background, he says he looks forward to hearing the broadcasts because they have helped him increase his spiritual knowledge and offered comfort during a time of crisis. He says that he enjoys the music and has purchased song CDs from the LHM ministry center.

Staff have also shared the Gospel through **Bible Correspondence Courses**, youth programs, and their Facebook page. Three recent youth gatherings brought God's blessings to nearly 250 people who attended, including more than 80 individuals from other religious backgrounds. Attendees participated in various group activities like games, group discussions, a Bible quiz, and more. A Bible study session was also held. Most importantly, many of these young people heard the Gospel message of Jesus Christ for the first time and the Holy Spirit has started to work on their hearts. Pastors and church leaders thanked our staff for conducting programs like this in their congregations.

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSES CHANGE MAN'S OUTLOOK ON LIFE

Robert is 48 years old and works as a prison warden. After years of serving in a maximum-security prison, he became jaded by the constant violence and despair by which he was surrounded. He felt like something was missing in his life, but he didn't know what it was. He considered himself a Christian but was not actively practicing his faith. Robert grew up in a community where people loved drinking, and he eventually became addicted to alcohol. One day, he was introduced to the **Bible Correspondence Courses** offered by **LHM—Kenya** and began to examine his thoughts and open his mind to the possibility that there was more to life than he previously believed. Robert was renewed and strengthened in faith by the power of God's Spirit. He has a new outlook on life and now approaches his work with more passion and empathy. Robert eventually became a chaplain so he could use his experience as a warden to help others find meaning in their lives. "LHM—Kenya changed my life in such a profound way," he says. "They opened my eyes to a new way of thinking and gave me a sense of hope and purpose. My faith has changed the way I approach my work, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the inmates I serve."



LIGHT-UP BOX

Christmas lights remind us that Jesus shines in the darkness. Here's a fun way to play with holiday lights.


What you need:

- A strand of Christmas lights
- A large clear plastic container and lid
- Green tissue paper
- Colorful beads

What you do:

1. Plug in the lights and place them in the container.
2. Put on the lid. (If the lid isn't transparent, flip the box over.)
3. Play with your light box, using these ideas as starters:
 - Cut tissue paper into triangles and arrange them in a tree shape. Decorate the tree with colorful beads.
 - Use the light box for tracing. Place a picture on it, with a clean sheet of paper on top. Then trace the drawing.
 - Use magnet tiles to build designs atop the light box.

Try building a 3-D Christmas tree!

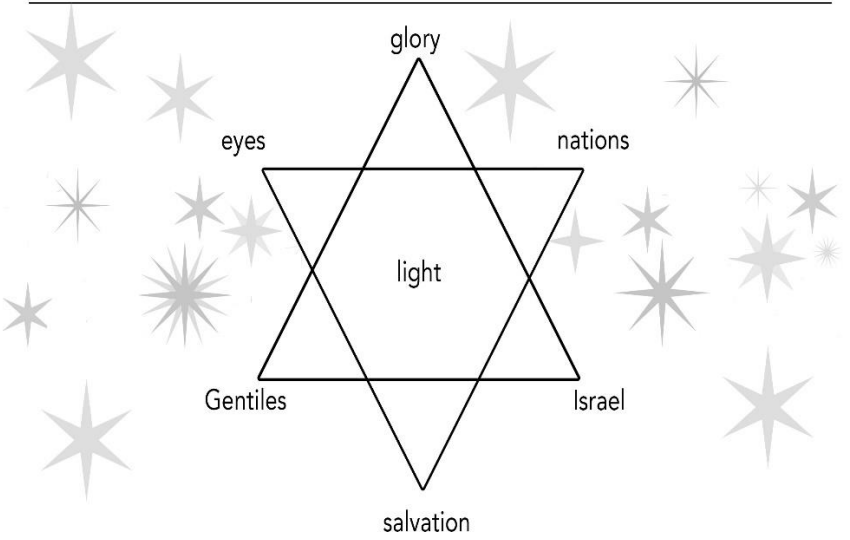


PUZZLE

SIMEON'S SIGHT

When Joseph and Mary brought baby Jesus to the temple, they heard a special prophecy from Simeon.

Directions: Using the star key, write the words in the correct spaces to complete Luke 2:30-32, NIV.



The star key puzzle consists of a six-pointed star (hexagram) with the word "light" in the center. The points of the star are labeled with words: "glory" at the top, "salvation" at the bottom, "eyes" on the left, and "nations" on the right. The intersections of the star's lines are labeled "Gentiles" on the left and "Israel" on the right.

"For my _____ have seen your _____, which you have prepared in the sight of all _____: a _____ for revelation to the _____, and the _____ of your people _____."

Luke 2:30-32, NIV

Answers: eyes, salvation, nations, light, Gentiles, glory, Israel

THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER IS DECEMBER 22ND.