



www.thanks-giving.org

January 2015

Volume 31, No.1

Forty of Thanksgiving!'s high school students recently attended a transformational retreat called Teens Encounter Christ (TEC). This retreat offers students a significant and powerful opportunity to experience the love and grace of Jesus Christ and has proven to be a truly life-changing experience for many students. Here's what a few of this year's participants took away from this year's retreat:

Morgan Keith



God used TEC to change my life! He started working in my life on Friday night when I arrived, and hasn't stopped working since. He helped me die to my sins, let go of hate and heartbreak and allowed me to rise and be reborn into my beliefs.

I was most affected by 'Die Day'; where I was forced to face, analyze and address areas of my life I had been avoiding. Having people I love standing beside me, sharing the same experiences, supporting me through this process, is what made this possible. Since that weekend, I've returned to the 'real world'. The biggest challenge I have faced is remaining changed in an unchanged world. Fortunately, God assured that TEC leaders equipped me with everything I need to meet this challenge. I view life through a lens of optimism. I no longer allow grudges or worries to rule over my life. I've handed them over to God and he now fills that space. I've been set free from life's struggles, simply because I said YES to a weekend away where God had a chance to speak into my life.

Elisabeth Jackson

About three weeks ago I went to my first-ever TEC retreat. To say the least, it was an eye-opening experience. Going into the weekend, I had no expectations. I was solid in my faith – I was sure there was nothing God could want to say to me; this would be just another weekend away from home. Was I in for a surprise! From the moment I walked in the doors Friday evening, I could *feel* Him – and not just because we were in a church; it was different, I could feel God weighing down on me already, and he seemed to be saying '**buckle up, this is going to be a long ride**'.

I've always had a hard time carving out God-time. I've always struggled to give myself time to really think and pray about God and what he means to me. My life was go, go, go 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. At TEC, time didn't matter; all time was God-time. God gave me the opportunity to truly get my priorities straight – to understand that God's plan is above any plans I think I have going on. TEC was God's way to dig down deep into not only me, but all of the teens there. We gave God our weekend, and in return, He gave us His eternal plan.



TEC—by Brandon Lacy

Tec is not what I expected it to be.
To be honest leaving my family overnight frightened me.
And I didn't know what I was going to do or say.
But as I went up to give my life to God.
I remember Jesus Christ in me to this day.
He was guiding me along the way.
But then I stopped to think
Finishing my math homework was gone in a blink
I started to cry
I used up the tissue box
Which made my Leader say, "Oh my"
Jesus touched me in many ways
He solved many of my issues
And now the only thing I think about is...
After last time I need to remember bring more tissues.

MISSION MOMENTS

from Pastor David

Mission. What is our mission statement by the way? ***Our mission is to reach out and gather people into the family of God, equipping them to be disciples of Jesus Christ***



Thank You! God Bless! Merry Christmas!



These three phrases - Thank You! God Bless! You Merry Christmas! – were said over and over again as I watched the children open presents. But these weren't just any children or gifts. I had the honor of being your ambassador at Lutheran Family Services North Omaha Center for Healthy Families Christmas party and watch the children the Center serves open the 376 gifts you, our T!LC family, donated!! One by one the children sat (or sometimes not sit!) on Santa's lap and opened their presents. The smiles on the children's faces and the thankfulness of their parents was touching.

It is amazing how God works in people's hearts to move them to reach out and help others. And often it is in the midst of helping others that God touches and inspires us. Every step of our North Omaha Christmas outreach gives God opportunities to break through into our lives. It could be when someone shops for just the right present for the child they selected from the tree. Or when one of the gift wrappers picks up small, warm outfit, knowing that Jesus would make sure the child who received it would be warm and loved by many. Or when the team delivers the toys to the North Omaha



Center and sees the overwhelmed looks on the faces of the center's employees. Or when we watch the children open those presents, and over and over again you hear and see the heartfelt thank you. God uses these Kairos moments to break into our lives and direct our attention to what really matters. As one of our gift wrappers said, when we are listening to His call lines fall away between God's people and His circle of love expands to encompass everyone. That is what I witnessed at the Christmas party. To every person who in any way supported this year's Christmas in North Omaha, I want to tell you what those children and parents shared with me:

Thank You! God Bless! Merry Christmas!



A big thank you also goes out to Thrivent Financial—they were able to match donations given up to \$500.00. Thank you Thrivent Financial for your continued support for the ministries at T!LC.

PASTOR'S PAGE

***In the beginning the Word already existed.
The Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He existed in the beginning with God.
God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.
The Word gave life to everything that was created,
and his life brought light to everyone.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.***

John 1:1-5 NLT

I so appreciate these words from the Gospel of John! During the long nights of winter, John's image of Jesus' light shining in the darkness is a powerful one. For most followers of Jesus, the good news of Christmas is a time of great joy as we celebrate his light first breaking into the darkness of the this world as an infant in Bethlehem; and also as we eagerly anticipate his second coming as our triumphant King at the end of the age. For many followers of Jesus, especially those who are struggling in the darkness of sorrow, fear, hopelessness, or shame, the light of the Christmas gospel shines in the darkness with tender and gracious words of comfort, consolation, and hope. Jesus' life is a brilliant light shining in the darkness, and because of his victory the darkness can never extinguish it!

Questions Even Christians Sometimes Ask – Have you ever noticed how there are some faith questions that just keep coming up – either in your own mind or heart, or in conversations with other people? We thought we would attempt to address a few of them. Please join us for this 4-week preaching series, with the following central themes.

01/11 – *Who is the Real Jesus?*

01/18 – *What's the Big Deal about the Sabbath?*

01/25 – *Can the Bible be Trusted?*

02/01 – *Why would I Want to Tell Anyone?*

Wednesday Night Bible Study on Hebrews – Join me on Wednesday nights from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in the "donut room" for a study of the Book of Hebrews, in which Jesus is presented as the source of our salvation because He is the *author* and *perfecter* of faith. This is a great study which also looks at the Old Testament sacrificial system as an important lens through which to interpret the person and work of Christ, and the covenant relationship which only He can give us!

The 2014 Nominating Committee is currently receiving names of candidates to serve on the Congregation Council (3 year term), and on the 2015 Nominating Committee (1 year term). If you would like your name or the name of another person to come before the committee for consideration, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee: Hugh Finerty – 402-707-8556, hughpf3@gmail.com; Carolyn Johnson – 402-880-8561, mljandcej@cox.net; Kevin McArthur – 402-293-1881, kevin_mcarthur@cox.net; or Pastor Glenn Harless – 402-292-2695, pastorglenn@thanks-giving.org.

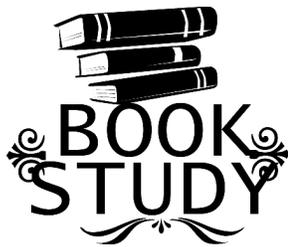
The 2015 Annual Meeting of the Congregation is February 7, at 6:30 pm. We will begin our evening at 5:30 pm to worship together. The message time will be used to hear testimonies of how God is working in and through the people of T!LC. Then, at 6:30 pm, we will convene the business portion of our meeting (child care will be available) with the following action items on the agenda.

- ♦ Vote to elect three persons to the Congregation Council.
- ♦ Vote to elect two persons to the 2015 Nominating Committee.
- ♦ Vote on the Proposed 2015 Budget.

Candidate Bios and copies of the Proposed 2015 Budget will be available in the lobby of the building beginning January 17.

A SCARED SPACE: New Worship Opportunity

Throughout Scripture, we are called to “set apart” time to worship God. This time is apart from corporate worship services and gives us time to worship and spend time with God. Many of us can do this easily in our homes. For others, family life makes it difficult to have that “set apart” time. Additionally, it is God’s great gift to us to be able to join together with like-minds and hearts and worship Him. For these reasons, a new worship opportunity will begin January 10 for all the people of TILC. Please join us Saturday mornings for a time of quiet, prayerful, contemplative worship. We will meet in the Family Life Center from 8:30-9:30am each week. A variety of music (not live) will be utilized, from contemporary to instrumental allowing both times of worship and “soaking” in God’s love. If you have any questions please call or e-mail Sheryl VanSteenbergen at 402-660-4980 or reidvanb@gmail.com.



Women’s Book Study will be held at 7:00 PM on Monday, January 12th at the Quail Creek home of Katie Peterson at 4506 Anchor Mill Road. To reach the Peterson home from church, take 39th Street (the street west of the SAC Credit Union) south to Coffey Avenue. Turn right and continue up the hill (now Quail Drive). Once you’re up the hill, take the second right which is Anchor Mill Road (watch street signs only on the right; street name on the left is Bob White Circle). Katie’s home is on the right.

We will be continuing our study of *Gideon: Your Weakness, God’s Strength*. Study Leader Karen Rowell asks us to do work book pages 69-91. We will watch Session 4 video with viewer guide on pages 92 & 93.

If you cannot attend the session, please call or email Katie (402-292-8847; Banderz@cox.net) or co-hostess Charlaime Schmidt (402-619-5517; schmidtcharl@yahoo.com).

Know you’ll remember this is a scent free evening.
Hope to see you there.

Ring in the New Year with Three Days of Prayer!

By Rev. Mark Vander Tuig, LCMC Service Coordinator



Join with us for our Third Annual Three Days of Prayer. This is an occasion for us to join together across our association to come before God Almighty and bring our concerns, our ministries, our people and our future to the throne of grace and to the foot of the cross.

Day One, Tuesday, January 6, 2015 is a day of confession, recognizing that we have sinned against God, against each other and ourselves. We have been caught up in big arguments about small things when there are those we love who do not know Jesus, and not connected to His church.

Day Two, Wednesday, January 7, 2015 is a day of petition. There are so many things, people and issues to pray for and about, this day is committed to bringing our petitions to God. We know that He hears our prayers and is at work in ways that we can see, and ways that we will never know.

Day Three, Thursday, January 8, 2015 is a day of seeking God’s vision for your church, and for our association. The church belongs to Jesus and we simply ask the Lord of the church to lead, guide and direct our mission and ministry.

Prayer is the most effective tool in our toolbox and the most powerful piece of equipment in the arsenal. The church of Jesus Christ will not rise up until we first get to our knees.

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP
PASTOR BRUCE KOTILA
PASTOR.BRUCE@THANKS-GIVING.ORG

Winter 2015 Offerings



Four Keys to Restoring Your Life examines the four areas of life that keep us from experiencing the abundant life that Father God has for us. Family patterns, incorrect thinking, unresolved hurts and negative spiritual influences all serve to rob us of the peace and joy that characterize the Christian life. Come and explore God's answers for each of these areas and more.

Meets Thursdays in the Heritage Sanctuary – 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. – Running for five weeks from January 8th through February 12th. (No meeting 1/15/15). While there is no cost to attend this class each attendee must purchase and read the book *Restoring the Foundations* by Chester and Betsy Kylstra. This book may be purchased from the TLC office for \$30.



Alpha is a worldwide phenomenon. It's found in over 169 countries and it's given more than 19.6 million people the opportunity to explore the meaning of life. Perhaps it's just what you need.

Meets Tuesday in the Mission Room – 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. – Running from January 20 through March 31, 2015. There is no cost to attend Alpha, but you will have an opportunity to participate in the free-will offering for the meal. *The Day-Away Retreat* will be held at St. Benedict Retreat Center on March 27th & 28th.



Financial Peace University is a life-changing program that teaches you how to make the right decisions with your money. You'll be empowered with the practical skills and confidence needed to achieve your financial goals and experience true financial peace.

Meets Monday in the South Campus Conference Room – 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. – Running from January 12 through March 16, 2015. The cost per family for Financial Peace University is \$89 for a membership kit. To sign-up for this class please go to: <http://www.davedramse.com/fpu/locate-class/> and select Thanksgiving Lutheran.



Cleansing Stream Seminar and Retreat is an experience designed to introduce believers in Jesus Christ to the basic tenets of discipleship that lay a foundation for continued spiritual growth and position us for a life of victory over sin, the temptations of the world, and the devil's schemes.

Meets Sunday in the Heritage Sanctuary – 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. – Running from February 1 through April 19, 2015. The cost per person for the CS Seminar is \$40 for a workbook and \$15 for one supplemental book. *The Cleansing Stream Retreat* will be held at TLC on April 24th and 25th. The cost per person for the CS Retreat is \$40 includes Saturday lunch.



Doorway to Discovery Silent Retreat is a guided retreat that includes a mix of worship, prayer, teaching, reflection and extended periods of silence for the purpose of allowing God to teach you to pray, and to pray more effectively. Teaching and reflection times will follow the invocation, various petitions and benediction of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).

Meets at St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska. The retreat begins at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 12th and ends at 12:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 15th. The cost per person to attend the Silent Retreat is \$240 for lodging and meals.

For more details visit our website at www.thanks-giving.org and click on the Discipleship tab
Contact: Pastor Bruce Kotila at pastorbruce@thanks-giving.org or 402-292-2695 x308

The Great Exchange

“Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.” *Isaiah 61:7 NKJV*

January is a month of exchanges – people exchange clothes that don't fit or items they don't want for something more fitting who they are. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have access to a divine exchange, what some have referred to as The Great Exchange. Jesus takes our sins and burdens and gives us blessings instead. Everlasting life instead of death. Honor instead of shame. Love instead of fear. Peace instead of anxiety. Joy instead of mourning. Clarity instead of confusion. Are there things in your life you'd like to exchange for something more fitting of your God given identity? Things like guilt, shame, unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, fear, worry, anxiety, striving, grief, pride, regret, frustration....? The Cleansing Stream Seminar and Retreat provide a wonderful opportunity to experience the Great Exchange and get rid of negative things in our lives and receive the Lord's blessings instead. Following are some testimonies from people who participated in Cleansing Stream and experienced The Great Exchange:

I learned I had to forgive myself. It is a feeling you can't describe. Once I released all my guilt of my past, once I lifted that up to Christ...it was like a burden lifted off my shoulders. I've learned patience. Now when I go to work I'm not anxious. I'm not hurrying. I've just learned to be calm. I know the Lord is in control and He is guiding me through the day. I've learned to pray more all through the day. I thank Him every morning when I wake up that I've had a restful night and He's going to guide me through the day. This is a wonderful experience. You just have to experience it. **Ron Barnes**

My wife went to Cleansing Stream and after there was a huge change in her attitude and outlook....she was insistent that I should attend. I went with an attitude, apprehensive that it would be like being sold a timeshare. Oddly enough I wasn't being sold anything – I was being given something. It was many people blessing me, encouraging me, praying over me. By the time I finished I really felt a burden had been lifted, I really felt lighter – physically, mentally, spiritually,. An easier go in my step, a bounce, I really felt the Spirit move in me. No longer is picking up the Bible just reading words but reading God's message and having an understanding and connection with the words. Romans 6:20 says that a person is doomed if they carry sin but the next verse is that if you trust God you are set free from all of that and that is what I was, I was set free. I don't go to bed angry, with regrets, with doom and gloom hanging over me. I go to bed knowing I had a good day with God and look forward to the next day. **Rick Pitts**

The classes were really eye opening and informative. They allowed us to look at things through a spiritual filter rather than our own personal filter. I lived with a lot of baggage that I didn't even know I was carrying. The classes and retreat really allowed me to break into freedom. I was able to let go of a lot. I'm now able to line up my thoughts with God's Word. I've learned how to forgive. Once I started realizing God works on pieces of you when you're ready I felt so much better about taking those pieces one at a time and eventually all those pieces came together allowing me a huge breakthrough. I had to control everything but once I submitted that control to God and let Him do all the work it allowed me to focus on more beautiful aspects of life and my walk in freedom. I feel like I've come alive. It's been so powerful to me I almost don't have the words to express how amazing it's been for me and for my family. **Jennifer Sullivan Triplett**

The thing that was a big eye opener was it isn't an issue of strength and doing but an issue of surrender. God's plan for me is so much bigger and better. It's Biblical..that there will be things in our lives, generational things we're carrying and we're so unaware of how it's driving us, impacting us, and influencing us. Until you give it to God and walk away from it you're not as good as you can be, as healthy as you can be.. you can't be who He really wants you to be. You have to understand who Jesus is and how he lived His life because that's how we're to live ours. You have to have a relationship to the Holy Spirit because it's through Him that we hear God. When I really understood that and could live that every day it's an entirely different life. It's better than it's ever been.. **Deb Robinson**



Eyes to the Heavens

Genesis 1:14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as **signs** to mark seasons and days and years." The Wisemen knew to have their eyes to the heavens to be ready for the sign of the coming of the Savior. Today the stars continue to shine bright and remind us that God loves us so much he sent to us the light of the world, our precious Lord Jesus. The star in our Christmas Program was played by Elizabeth McAcy, a shining, beloved child of God!

Wonderful Cast of the 2014 Children's Christmas Program

Narrators: Madilynn Marburger, Ella Ferguson, Kaitlyn Eickmeier

Co-Captains: Kailey Waszak, Kristen Lee, Heidi Riker, Ailey Marburger

Joseph: Ethan Stankus **Mary:** Caitlyn Kadow **Star:** Elizabeth McAcy

Angels: Emily Beckham, Maren Ferguson, Moriah Witkop, Arabella Kallhoff, Phoebe Bevins, Marlee Ferguson

Shepherds: Eliot Althof, Jeremiah Witkop, Caleb Lee, Adam Williams

Sheep: Baaaaaa! Nate Witkop, Shaelynn Marburger, Amara Mitchell, Hailey Lundquist, Aidan Riker, Jameson Dowse **Leader Sheep:** Nicholas Serwatowski

Wisemen: Jacob Witkop, Caleb Shipwash, Alex Althof

There are many people behind the scenes that help make the program such a blessed event. I would like to thank Tracy Knights, Susan Betchel, Cindy Sand, Ryan Cinfel, Meagan Cinfel and all the parents of the cast that shuttled their children to the practices and helped out in many other ways. A special shout out to the Sunday school teachers – "You rock!"

Ministry Help Needed: We are in need of a second teacher for our first grade Sunday School Class at 9:30am. You will be working with an experienced teacher and we will provide training. Please contact Connie Barnhart, childmin@thanks-giving if interested.



Questions? Contact Lisa Sager at awana@thanks-giving.org or (402) 292.2695
 Or visit our website at <http://thanks-giving.org/awana-club>

Themes for January

7: Bring an apple to eat at handbook time

14: Drive- In Movie Night *



21: Wear your favorite rainbow color

28: Family Fun Night

***Drive-In movie Night has become a well received theme in years past! If you need ideas on how to make a cardboard car, google "cardboard cars" or search pinterest for different ideas to suit everyone's taste.**

Reminder for Parents:

As winter comes, please remember that if Bellevue Public Schools has cancelled school or evening activities, there will not be Awana that night.



HEY CLUBBERS!!!!

The start of 2015 brings new challenges and resolutions. As you start the new year, the Awana Team challenges you to make an Awana Goal for yourself. What's Awana all about? Fun, friends and learning about God and Jesus. We can learn more about God by memorizing our Bible verses. So, if your currently saying 1 verse a week try to do 2 a week. If you are almost done with your book, you can help a friend with their verses.

It's awesome to hear verses said throughout the whole church, from Puggles in the Nursery, to the 5th and 6th graders saying LONG verses. We are so proud of you!

Since we are in January, you only have a little over four months left to work in your book! That's only 16 more times to say verses! But don't worry, it's not too late to get back on track if you're behind! Here are some tips to help you:

- Practice at least two-three verses every week
- Make flashcards
- Challenge your parents to memorize with you
- Keep the verses you're memorizing in your backpack to practice at school
- Make the verses into a song – www.awana.org offers CD's that puts all the verses in their handbook to songs. (Kindergarten – 4th grade.) It's a great way to learn verses in the car too!
- Recite your verses every night at dinner

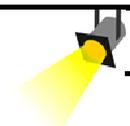
Parent Corner:

As your child makes a goal further themselves in their book, we also have an important goal and reminder for you. Please remember, you have the most influence on your child's spiritual development. That's why we want Awana to be a tool for you to use as your children grow and mature from preschool through their elementary years. Our goal for you is to help your child with their spiritual walk by helping them memorize verses. The more of a priority it is for you, the more they are going to want to make it a priority for themselves.



Volunteer Spotlight!

This is Ken and Nancy Summerfield's first year as leaders at Awana. They enjoy leading the Sparks and watching each of them grow in their faith. Their favorite thing about Awana is seeing all of the kids!





January 2015

www.thanks-giving.org/youth_ministry

Club 56

For 5th and 6th Grade Students!

Junior High

For 7th and 8th Grade Students!

High School

For 9th—12th Grade Students!

For summer activity information please visit the Thanksgiving! website at
www.thanks-giving.org
or call the church office at 402-292-2695

Club 56

It's hard to believe we are heading into the New Year already! We have exciting events coming up for Club 56; with the next big event being the 2nd Annual Family Ice Skating Event at Mahoney State Park on January 18th from 6:00pm-8:30pm. If you want to carpool, plan to meet us at the youth room at 5:30 pm and return to the youth room at 9:00pm. The cost is \$5/person or \$20/family, plus \$5/vehicle to enter the park.

Other events to look forward to in the spring and summer include camp! The spring recharge at Okoboji is scheduled for May 1-3 and summer camp at Riverside will be from July 19-24th. There will be more details to follow but for now, mark your calendars and invite your friends!

Upcoming Events:

January 18th - Ice Skating @ Mahoney 5:30pm-8:30pm \$5/person or \$20/family

January 29th - First Communion Class 6:30pm-8:00pm (5th grade)

February 1st - Movie Making Competition 2:00-4:00pm

January 29th & February 5th - First Communion Class 6:30pm-8:00pm (5th grade)

February 7th & 8th - First Communion (All services)

February 15th - OUTreach Event

March 1st - Bowling @ Papio Bowl 4:00pm-6:00pm \$5/student

March 15th - Food Drive Scavenger Hunt 2:00pm-4:00pm

April 5th - Happy Easter!

April 19th - Papio Fun Park 2-4 pm \$16/student (Last Club 56 Social Event for the School Year)

May 1-3 - Spring Recharge @ Okoboji Lutheran Camp

July 19 -24 - Summer Camp @ Riverside Lutheran Camp

Junior High

7th & 8th grade parents! A letter is being sent home about our two tracks for the Jr. High program this spring. The first track is to participate in Jr. High Live!, Sunday School, and any other activities as normal. The second track is called "Confirmation of Faith". Confirmation of Faith is a two-year commitment to grow in one's faith through instruction that is designed to help your son or daughter understand their identity, learn more about God and the role God wants to play in their lives. There are several requirements to be completed over the course of the 7th & 8th grade year and they are outlined in the letter that you will receive.

If you would like your son or daughter to participate in the Confirmation of Faith track, we invite you to attend a parent and student meeting from 5:30-6:00pm in the Heritage Sanctuary where we will cover the basics of confirmation, the requirements, the confirmation project details, and answer any questions you might have. We look forward to partnering with you and your family in this Confirmation of Faith journey.

Upcoming Events:

January 18th - Ice Skating @ Mahoney 5:30pm-8:30pm \$5/person or \$20/family

March 27th & 28th - Spring Retreat @ Camp Kitaki

April 24th & 25th - 30 Hour Famine @Youth Room, 6:30pm Friday - 6:30pm Saturday

May 13th - Confirmation Pictures @FLC, 6:30pm

May 15th - Confirmation Banquet @FLC, 6:30pm

May 16th - Baptism and Reaffirmation of Baptism

May 17th - Confirmation Sunday @TLC, 8:15am and/or 11:00am

July 5-10 - Summer Camp @ Okoboji

High School

Sr. High Newsletter Input January 2015

Things continue to rock and roll with the Sr. High Youth Group. The first Sunday of the month is our family Potluck nights sponsored by one of our D-Teams. Last month, we had 40 youth and family members attending. We'd love to see more of you there! We have plenty of food! Come join us January 4th as Mike Treachler's D-Team hosts this month's Potluck. There will be games, fellowship, food and a lesson.

Upcoming Events:

January 4th – Family Potluck; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Youth Room

January 11th – Lesson Lite; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Youth Room

January 18th - Family Ice Skating @ Mahoney 5:30pm-8:30pm \$5/person or \$20/family

February 1st – Superbowl Party; 5:00pm-10:00pm; Youth Room

UPDATE from T!LC's Operations Manager, Harold Carlson
 Any Questions or Comments about the information below can be directed to
 Harold Carlson: harold.carlson@thanks-giving.org

“Staying the Course”

Is the name of our 2-year capital campaign that began the weekend of May 4, 2014. Like our former capital campaign, the goal of *Staying the Course* will be debt reduction as we continue to retire the mortgage on the Family Life Center. Estimates of giving received were; 102 estimates of giving for \$249,074 over a 2-year period. Actual contributions received through November were \$139,613.88 or 56.1% of the estimates of giving. Additional principal payments from the Pathway to Freedom campaign and *Staying the Course* campaign (May 2012- Nov. 2014) now total \$531,537.36 and will save approximately \$474,246 in interest payments over the loan period and effectively reduces the loan period by fourteen years and four months. We will continue to make regular additional principal payments from the *Staying the Course* capital campaign as they are received.

Christmas Eve Offering

As a reminder to all of us that Joseph and Mary were in need of shelter that first Christmas night, all of the contributions received during Christmas Eve services was split between the Open Door Mission and the T!LC Emergency Fund to support individuals and families in need of shelter in our local community. The contribution figures were not available at the time of this publication and will be reported next month.

2015 Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2015 were again sent to our Covenant/Kingdom partners via the U.S. Postal Service. If you did not receive your envelopes please contact Harold Carlson

2015 Budget

The 2015 annual meeting of the congregation will be Saturday, February 7, 2015 at 6:45 pm in the Family Life Center immediately following services Saturday night. Copies of the 2015 proposed budget will be available for review at informational meetings the weekends of January 17-18 and 24-25, 2015.

Simply Giving

Did you know that T!LC has the ability to receive electronic funds transfers (EFT) through a program called *Simply Giving*? *Simply Giving* is a safe and reliable electronic funds transfer program. To enroll go to our website (www.thanks-giving.org) and click on *Simply Giving* under the member quick links at the top of the home page. You can also contact our *Simply Giving* Coordinator, Harold Carlson at the church office at 402-292-2695 for more information about the *Simply Giving* program.

Automobile Donation Needed

Do you or someone that you know, have a reliable automobile that could be donate to T!LC? We continue to receive requests from families in need of reliable transportation. Please contact Harold Carlson at the church office for more information.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to e-mail me or call me at the church or stop by my office.

GENERAL FUND

**Thanksgiving! Lutheran Church
 General Fund - November 2014**

Income				
Line Item	November Actual	November Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Estimates of Giving	113,368.43	109,577.00	1,158,470.64	1,144,949.00
Non-pledged Giving	31,872.82	42,469.00	317,930.08	380,581.00
Other Revenue	25,203.49	29,531.00	307,222.14	282,017.00
Ministry Challenge	0.00	0.00	65,000.00	65,000.00
From Savings Acct.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Expense				
Line Item	November Actual	November Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Facility/Operations	38,436.46	35,501.00	454,792.32	415,926.00
Ministry	63,338.38	52,568.00	544,026.41	561,646.00
Personnel	81,806.53	83,079.00	877,738.67	893,376.00

Total Income	170,444.74	181,577.00	1,848,622.86	1,872,547.00
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Total Expense	183,581.37	171,148.00	1,876,557.40	1,870,948.00
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In December Harold Carlson spoke to the 3rd – 6th graders of Awana about tithing. He talked about what that means and why it is important. The Awana Club kids then had the opportunity to tithe with their Awana shares (earned for reciting bible verses and meeting other requirements for Awana). They did an outstanding job and really took to heart what Harold talked about. They had an opportunity to vote between two ministries they would like their tithing to support. The result was 295 shares were collected to sponsor a block party for Abide Network. That was a 6% tithe; not bad for our first time! Thank you Harold for spending time with our young Awana clubbers!



The T!LC Library Corner

It's Your Library

January 2015—Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all of you! Once again, the library had a surprise visit from an angel that left us several huge boxes of books that will be categorized and available soon. This librarian is anxious to get the news out to everyone that you must come visit the library and make sure you look at the cart during the months ahead.

Please continue to check your homes to see if you have any items checked out this year or in previous years and have yet to be returned as this list continues to grow. This holds true for all categories. Thank-you in advance for checking and to all those who returned items in November and December.

This month we are featuring books, CD's and DVD's for all ages in the Devotional and Spiritual Growth area. Why not help the young ones in your family get used to doing a daily devotion.

CD's

God's Song! Lord, Use Me by God's Song Production
Children's Bible Stories by Compton New Media
25 Bible Action Songs by Brian Green

DVD's *Though None Go With Me* by Jerry Jenkins –“If you liked Nicholas Sparks' *The Notebook*, this film will hold you in its emotional grip!”

BOOKS – Devotional

Each Day with Jesus by Rudolph F. Norden
Together faith Jesus by Richard E. Lauersdor
Devotions for Women on the Go by Stephen Arterburn and Pam Farrrel
Little Visits with God by Jahsmann/Simo
365 Read-Aloud Bedtime Bible Stories by Daniel Partner: “The most important ten minutes in your child's day.”

BOOKS – Spiritual Growth

A Young child's Garden of Christian Virtues by Susan Lawrence
“Children learn by doing. Turn family devotion time into an opportunity to explore God's word through sight, sound, taste and touch.”
Whispers from Heaven by Ann Barrow
“A whisper may not be loud, but it can carry a powerful message. It can lead you, guide you, comfort and protect you. Read the stories by people from all walks of life who have listened to, and been inspired by, the voice of God!”
All God's Creatures: Spiritual Lessons From the Animals of the Bible by Gary Richmond
“Follow America's favorite zoo keeper on another wondrous adventure into the marvels and mysteries of the animal kingdom. Each chapter is a vivid portrait of the nature and nuances of animals mentioned in the Bible and the great spiritual lessons they can teach.”
The Passionate Church by Mike Breen and Walt Kallestad

The Library Corner” will undergo its yearly clean up and organizational period over the next few months. We look forward to you coming in and exploring all it has to offer. This area should be on the top of your list as “free entertainment” for you and your family.

God's peace and blessings to you in this New Year!
Vicki D

JANUARY WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

Heritage (Traditional) Worship: Sun 8:15am Jubilation! (Contemporary) Worship: Sat 5:30pm, Sun 9:30 & 11:00am

Time	Worship Assistant Team	Ushers All of January
January 3 & 4—Holy Communion		
5:30pm Jubilation Service	Saturday Night Worship Team	
8:15am Heritage Service	Team 1—Gary & Molly Baumert	Rick Power, Gerry Leseberg Chuck McNeill, Bob Maxwell
9:30am & 11:00am Jubilation Services	Team 1—Sue Hooegeven Pam Engelbart	(9:30) Chuck & Maxine Scott, Dennis Lutterman, Frank Pasteka (11:00) Rob Madden, Tom Tritsch Al & Jeanne Zamiska
January 10 & 11		
5:30pm Jubilation Service	Saturday Night Worship Team	
8:15am Heritage Service	Team 2—Shelly Haer & Melissa Polson	
9:30am & 11:00am Jubilation Services	Team 2—Finerty's & Boever's	
January 17 & 18—Holy Communion		
5:30pm Jubilation Service	Saturday Night Worship Team	
8:15am Heritage Service	Team 3—Diane Heying & Tami Maxwell	
9:30am & 11:00am Jubilation Services	Team 3—Rhonda Wiebers/ Chrys Frey	
January 24 & 25		
5:30pm Jubilation Service	Saturday Night Worship Team	
8:15am Heritage Service	Team 1—Gary & Molly Baumert	
9:30am & 11:00am Jubilation Services	Team 4—Deb Brandt	
January 31—February 1—Holy Communion		
5:30pm Jubilation Service	Saturday Night Worship Team	
8:15am Heritage Service	Team 2—Shelly Haer & Melissa Polson	
9:30am & 11:00am Jubilation Services	Team 5—Amber Zakaras	

QUESTIONS OR NEED A REPLACEMENT? PLEASE CALL ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Alter Guild: Karla Koval—712-323-4559

Usher Director: Kirk Engelbart 402-292-6249; Usher Captains (5:30) Steve Tyler 402-291-7192
(8:15) Tom Riggs 402-292-3653
(9:30) Terry Wilson 402-215-5135
(11:00) Craig Christians 402-658-9647

WE APPRECIATE OUR VOLUNTEERS

Parish Events

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

01/01 Chloe Mohr
01/01 Daniel Bior
01/01 Ralph Boyce
01/01 Greg Schneider
01/02 Charles Scott
01/02 Lisa Peterson
01/02 Elly Dow
01/02 Kevin O'Donnell
01/02 Kayla Brooks
01/02 Ailey Marburger
01/03 Lacey Earwood
01/03 Douglas Roe
01/03 Bill Clausen
01/03 Nicholas Schriever
01/03 Makayla Lewis
01/03 Steve Lebedz
01/04 Jennifer Ventura
01/04 Kathy Zaloudek
01/04 Carol Coy
01/05 Brett Engelbart
01/05 William Coy
01/05 Marsha Schneider
01/05 Audrey Martin
01/06 Frances Taylor
01/06 Amy Hegarty
01/06 Megan Brannen
01/06 Denny Crain
01/06 Jack Irwin
01/06 Christopher Buck
01/06 Corey Dyrstad
01/06 Janet Larson
01/06 Michael Jarvis
01/06 Megan Schaaf
01/06 Barbara Johnson
01/07 Greg Ryba
01/07 John Taylor
01/07 John Johnson
01/07 Marlee Ferguson
01/07 Maren Ferguson
01/08 Rachel Betz
01/08 Chong Cha Furby
01/09 Joyce Kamrath
01/09 Hunter Tonn
01/09 Ron Brockhaus

01/10 Cassie Broniecki
01/10 Thomas Schwendtner
01/10 Nancy Pierce
01/10 Tom Culbertson
01/10 Walter Marz
01/11 Daniel Muckey
01/11 Elijah Cameron
01/11 Sheri Heckens
01/11 Kristine Wiebelhaus
01/11 Lauren Hull
01/11 Emily Rohn
01/11 Jackson Dorn
01/12 Logan Jenison
01/12 John Thomas
01/12 Jaden Dramse
01/12 Emily Phillips
01/12 Tate Gauchat
01/12 Angela Bowman
01/12 Nick Greiner
01/13 Jessica Hicks
01/13 Ryan Dick
01/14 Michael Smith
01/14 Kjersten Schuttler
01/14 Jenna Lempke
01/14 Michael Duros
01/14 Kirsten Schenck
01/15 Andrew Zamiska
01/15 Kelly Lucis
01/15 Taylor Wiitanen
01/16 Deb Dydyk
01/16 Mallory Carnley
01/16 Frank Bruch
01/16 Leslie Mason
01/17 Rachel Smith
01/17 Kari Balaberda
01/17 Grace Overby
01/17 Larry Wedel
01/17 Aaron Atkins
01/18 Austin Klausen
01/18 Jenny Fundus
01/18 Phillip Marburger
01/19 Hannah Velehradsky
01/19 Darrel Jensen
01/19 Rachel Sager

01/20 Trinity Thompson
01/20 Kirk Mass
01/20 Jill Hoeft
01/21 Matt Neumann
01/21 Jason Ragone
01/21 Shelby Kauk
01/21 Dennis O'Connell
01/21 Breck Williams
01/21 Carter Brandt
01/22 Kristen Lee
01/22 Corky Rice
01/22 Tyler Fay
01/22 Gerrit VanSteenbergen
01/22 Aaron Homme
01/22 Rose Woerner
01/23 Connor VanOrman
01/23 Laura Jackson
01/23 Stephen Burkholder
01/23 Rudi Thrasher
01/23 Jimmy Ganger
01/24 Joy Lee
01/24 Christy Finley
01/24 Larry Sand
01/24 Karen Harned
01/24 Dawn Dramse
01/24 Eric Carlson
01/24 Matthew Tritsch
01/25 Linda Simodynes
01/25 Carson Ahlers
01/25 Karli Ahlers
01/26 Hudson Willrich
01/27 Kristopher Covi
01/27 Stephanie Burkholder
01/27 Lori Woodard
01/27 Angela Wolken
01/27 Blake Schaaf
01/28 Macie Nichols
01/28 Robert Jensen
01/29 Wendy Ellis
01/29 Tina Haeder
01/29 Jane Lewis
01/29 Kimberly Ecklund
01/29 Elizabeth Kinzer
01/29 Rilee Albaney
01/30 Gisela Lacy
01/30 Jana Koth
01/31 Magnus Johnson
01/31 Melanie Anderson
01/31 Emma Evans

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

01/15/1954 Robert & Louise Ramsey
01/02/1959 Gerald & Phyllis Leseberg
01/16/1971 Joe & June Towne
01/30/1971 Tex & Shari Teixeira
01/22/1972 Johann & Kathy Onnen
01/04/1975 Keith & Karen Carlson
01/19/1979 Joe & Julie Fullenkamp
01/15/1982 Warren & Rose Woerner
01/03/1983 Maurice & Patricia Schriever
01/26/1985 Kirk & Pam Engelbart
01/03/1987 Trevor & Becky Peacock
01/19/1990 Charles & Deborah Kinzer
01/14/1992 Corey & Jennnifer Weitzel
01/07/1995 Stephan & Kathy Broniecki
01/03/1998 Mike & Melanie Anderson
01/07/2005 Greg & Rose Ryba

BAPTISMS

December 21, 2014

GODS PEACE AND COMFORT

Gerry & Phyllis Leseburg in the death of Phyllis' sister Susan Harrison.

Baya Hope Isaacson, daughter of Amy & Jason Isaacson. Sponsors are Erin & Jake Willrich.

**The February
Newsletter
Deadline is:
January 16**

**NewsLetter
DEADLINE**

**For Care
Ministry
Assistance . .
During Church
Office Hours:**

Please call 402.292.2695

All Other Times:

Please call our dedicated 24/7 voice
mail number **402.292.7633** and
leave a message. Rhonda Rupert,
Care Ministry Coordinator
will contact you.



Dates to Remember:



December 31	TLC Office Closed
January 1	TLC Offices Closed Happy New Year
January 4	TEC Reunion
January 7	Confirmation Parent Meeting
January 8	Four Keys to Restoring Your Life Begins
January 11	Thankski Meeting
January 12	Financial Peace Begins
January 18	Student Ministry Ice Skating—Mahoney
January 20	Alpha Begins
January 29	1st Communion Class
February 5	1st Communion Class
February 1	Cleansing Stream Begins

Weekly updates on events and church happenings

are located on our website!
Registration for several events are
available! Check it out at:

www.thanks-giving.org



Did you know.....

You can receive this newsletter
publication via email? If you would
like to begin to receive the Newsletter via email in
place of your mailed copy send your name and email
address to

sara.zivny@thanks-giving.org.

You can also read it on our website at:

www.thanks-giving.org/newsletters



**ARE YOU IN NEED OF PRAYER?
VISIT OUR NEW! PRAYER
REQUESTS LINK ON T!LC
WEBSITE**

You can now submit prayer requests to the
T!LC Prayer Team through the website at:
www.thanks-giving.org, on the homepage
under Daily Links/Prayer Requests.

THANKSGIVING! LUTHERAN CHURCH
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BELLEVUE NE 68123-1206

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



OUR VISION STATEMENT

*Our Vision is for All People to Live Transformed Lives by **Belonging** to the Family of God, **Believing** in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and **Becoming** Spirit-Empowered Servants of Christ!*

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to reach out and gather people into the family of God, equipping them to be disciples of Jesus Christ in our community, nation, and world.

OUR IDENTITY STATEMENT

We are followers of Christ who aspire to Be Like Jesus in every way, living life Up, In and Out!

CHURCH OFFICE

Hours: Monday-Friday - 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 402.292.2695
Fax: 402.292.0248
E-mail: thanks@thanks-giving.org
Website: www.thanks-giving.org
Care Ministry: 402-292.7633
T!LC Preschool: 402.292.0315

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

5:30 p.m. Saturday *Jubilation!* Service
Sunday: 8:15 a.m. Heritage Services
9:30 & 11:00 a.m. *Jubilation!* Services
Nursery Available for All Services
Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Weekends

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

September through May , , ,
* Saturday Night Kidz Church (during 5:30 Worship)
* Children's Sunday School 9:30am
* Youth Sunday School 9:30am
* Adult Sunday School 9:30am
* Wednesday Night Awana (PreK—6th grade)
* Confirmation (Grades 7 & 8)
* Numerous Weekly Senior High Youth and Adult Small Group Bible Studies

T!LC STAFF

Pastors:

Rev. Glenn J. Harless, Senior Pastor
Rev. David S. Witkop, Executive Pastor
Rev. Bruce L. Kotila, Pastor of Discipleship Training

Operations Manager	Harold Carlson
Facility Manager	Ambrose Heying
Office Manager	Sara Zivny
Care Ministries Coordinator	Rhonda Rupert
RTF Ministry Director	Lisa Zaloudek
Worship & Music Coordinator	Michael Treachler
Handbell Choir Director	Liane Kirmis
Preschool Director	Dana Crosgrove
Children's Ministry Director	Connie Barnhart
Kidz Church Leaders	Richard Zolnowski/Traci Johnson
Awana Director	Lisa Sager, Meagan Cinfel
Student Ministry Director	Pastor David Witkop
Student Ministry Admin Asst.	Kelly Marz
Nursery Director	Bonnie Carpenter
Kids of the King Director	Ryan Cinfel

***Life Change
through
Life in Christ!***