

# Lord of Life Lutheran Church

*"Where There's Life For You!"*

Volume 17 No. 11

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November-December 2005

LEIFELINE

ifeline is a Newsletter published by Lord of Life Lutheran Church in Moreno Valley, California.

## Our Mission Statement

*We are a congregation of believers in Jesus Christ, called by the Spirit into a community of faith and love, nurtured by Word and Sacrament, and empowered by the gospel to be God's instruments of love and grace.*



## Inside this Issue:

Edification or Demolition? .....	P. 1
Just For Youth .....	P. 2
Christmas Toy Drive Underway .....	P. 3
Thanksgiving Baskets distributed 11/20 .....	P. 3
LOL Receives "Special Friend" Award .....	P. 4
LOL to Host LWR Fair Trade Fair .....	P. 4
Gentle Thoughts .....	P. 5

# Edification or Demolition?

This edition of the Lifeline draws us into the Thanksgiving/Christmas time of year, a time for fairly renewal, thankful reflections, and gift giving. Some of the most precious gifts given to us are from our world weariness to feel whole and healthy again.

Walter Wangerin, a gifted Lutheran story teller, speaks of this in an article from his "Ragman and Other Cries of Faith." And this story is really appropriate since we are spending more money, not time, at the gas pumps these days and feeling worse about it.

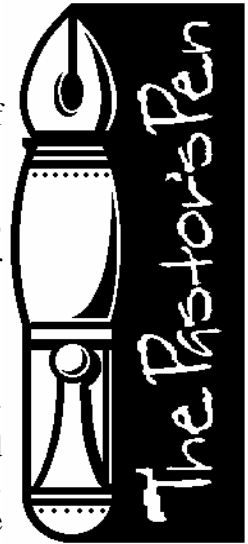
Wangerin tells us of two encounters he had with two very different gas station attendants; One on a chilly rainy night, the second on a sunny afternoon, but with no sun inside the gas station. What caused their differing attitudes we don't actually know, but there could be a host of reasons why one was bitter and the other so cheery. The power to build up other human beings or tear them down is a power possessed by every member of the Church and it is a mighty power indeed.

The first encounter, as I mentioned above, came on a rainy night. Wangerin says his hand was numb from chill and rain as he filled his tank and heard a soft hello behind him. As he turned he saw a smile on the young face of the attendant who, with only a baseball cap shielding him from the rain, offered: "Need any help tonight?" And when he spoke he looked right into Wangerin's eyes. Don't you just love people who look at you and make eye contact when they are speaking to you. I know I do! I value it highly. He was told that, although the offer of help was appreciated, it wasn't needed. The attendant continued to smile and remained while the tank was filled and both the men walked back into the station where a receipt was provided for the \$20 that would probably fill maybe half a tank at today's prices. Then the attendant smiled again and offered his hand in friendship and a hearty thank you along with it. That may seem a minor incident and nearly forgettable. I mean how many times do you fill your tank each month? But I looked into the mirror on my visor and I was

smiling. That attendant had built me up, perhaps without knowing it: **Edification**. I quickly offered up a brief prayer of thanks for him and asked God's blessings for him. It seemed the least I could do since he had done so much for me in lifting my sagging rain soaked spirit.

The other encounter, on a very sun drenched afternoon, found an attendant glued to her seat by the cash register. She seemed to stare at the top of the desk while I paid and when I came back in for some change and a receipt. She had snapped the \$20 from my hand with nary a remark and did the same with some change I was due. I heard her clear and distinct sigh over my request for a receipt that interrupted her staring negativity. I remained there not more than a moment when she spoke up, "You waitin' for somethin' else?" And when she did look up at me with a glance at best, it was not a friendly look, I can tell you. I quickly offered up my "No!" and hurried back into the sunshine outside the station. It was a sure bet I wasn't going to find any of that sun inside! The attendant's hostility had even put a scowl on my face as I viewed the visor mirror: **Demolition**.

What we do for and with one another may seem as commonplace as those two different gas station attendants but they speak volumes to us about opportunity to bring good news, cheer and **edification**. The alternative view of hostility, bitterness and **demolition** is a poor trade off. We will either choose to build one another up or tear one another down, it's really as simple as that in all of life's relationships. We will create or we will destroy. As Wangerin reminds us, "there are no useless minor meetings. No dead-end jobs. No pointless lives . . . Turn your face toward the person before you (my addition: with clear eye contact too!) and for one pure moment, shine. Think them that important, that they are fashioned by God Himself."



## The Pastor's Pen Cont'd . . .

So what will it be this holiday season friends? **Edification** or **demolition**? Bah, humbug! Or joy to the world? I for one, even on my dreariest days, choose **edification** from me and to me. I can't help but remember Paul's words to the Ephesians: "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up . . . so that your words may give grace to those who hear" (**Ephesians 4: 29**). Paul continues on: "Put away all bitterness . . . and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" (**Ephesians 4: 31-32**). Grace, peace and edification to you and yours this holy season. May it likewise flow from you to all others, your great and lesser relations.

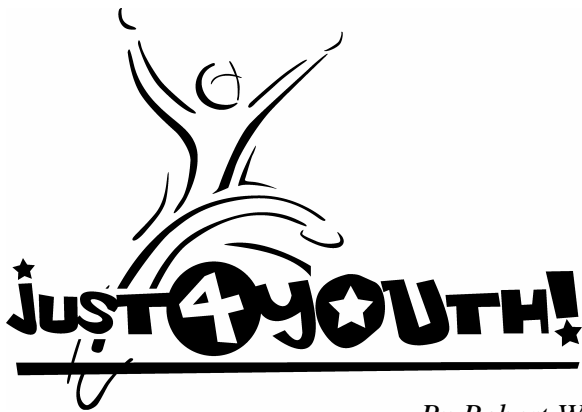
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*By Robert Willis*

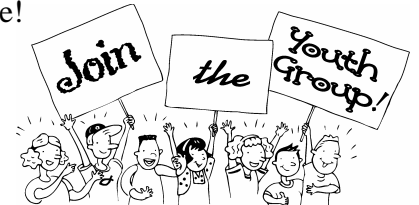
Beginning in Sept. we started meeting every Friday Night at 7 at the church unless something else was going on. We are learning to be good Christians at home at school and in all areas of our lives.

Our first Friday night in September we watched a movie called "Second Hand Lions". This movie helped us to understand that life is difficult at times but that through perseverance and faithfulness we can overcome. We set up a tent at the youth fest at the MV Community Park on Saturday the 24th. Thanks to Terri Hilker, Jeff Egeland, Pastor Dave, Brianna Egeland, Meggie Hilker, Allie Smith for attending. Sorry if I forgot any one. Thanks to Cathy Fulgenzi with helping with the setup. I thought the youth fest booth was a success for Christ. Who says Lutheran's aren't evangelists?

The last Friday of the month several of us went to Knott's Scary Farm, it was a fun night for all.

On the first Friday of Oct. we had our big event with Good Shepard Lutheran Church of Claremont. They brought the youth band and played some songs during worship. We went to Riverside for broomball, back to Moreno Valley Bowl for Cosmic Bowling till 3:30 a.m., then returned to church for games till sun up. On the 14th some of us went to the Third Day concert at Perris So Cal Fair. Coming up in November and December we will have some service projects including Thanksgiving Baskets, Edgemont Wrapping Party. Will also be having a youth Christmas Party on Dec. 16th with Secret Santa Gift Exchanges.

Don't forget we are meeting every Friday Night @ church @ 7:00 p.m. Bring your Bible. There are plenty of chairs available!



*Peace of the Lord Be With You All - Robert*

## **B.I.B.L.E.**

*Submitted by new member Joe Broussard*

A young boy approached his father and told him, "I know what the Bible means." His father smiled and replied, "What do you mean, you know what the Bible means?" "That's easy, Daddy," his son replied. "It stands for *Basic Information Before Leaving Earth.*"

Indeed, he summed it up well. The Bible is the very Word of God, given to us by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It tells us of the Father, who made us; of His Son, Jesus Christ, who saved us from sin, death, and the devil; and of the Holy Spirit, who brings us to faith through Word and Baptism and keeps us in the faith through the Word and the Lord's Supper. Jesus Christ is the heart and center of the Scriptures.

Christ Jesus is the key that opens to us the way to eternal life. In the Bible our eyes are focused on Jesus Christ.

In the Bible we truly have been given what we need: *Basic Information Before Leaving earth.*



## Toy Drive Underway

Our annual **Christmas Toy Drive** for the needy children of **Edgemont Community and School** is well underway! We will be providing Christmas gifts for every child in the school again this year. That will amount to approximately 750 gifts this year!

We invite you to join us in providing gifts - approximately \$10 in value so you might share the joy with us. Some suggested items are: soccer balls, skateboards, Barbie dolls, board games, trucks and cars. No stuffed animals please - they're cute and cuddly, but not really preferred. The gifts may be brought to Lord of Life at any time before December 9. The gifts do not need to be wrapped as that will be done **Saturday December 10** at the **Wrap and Pizza Party** scheduled from **3-7pm** at Lord of Life. Everyone is invited to participate in the Wrap party as well!

We will be delivering the gifts to Edgemont School December 16 at 8:15 AM - you are invited to join us, again! Just wear a Santa hat, if you have one, and we'll meet at Edgemont School.

Remember that many in this area of Moreno Valley receive no Christmas presents, so whatever we do is a big plus for our community. And what a joy we have.

Thanks in advance for your participation in any way in this joint effort to uphold Jesus Christ by serving those in lesser economic circumstances!



## Thanksgiving Food Baskets To be distributed November 20

We are hopeful that you might choose to help us with our ambitious Thanksgiving task of feeding homeless and low income folk in the greater Moreno Valley area. Our goal is to provide 50 baskets of food that include a Thanksgiving dinner complete with Turkey, potatoes, canned vegetables, canned yams, stuffing, cranberry sauce, fruit cocktail, oranges, and dessert.

We will not only provide for those struggling in our area, including Perris, Lakeview and Nuevo, but we will also provide these for the families at the transitional Living Shelters: **Amelia's light** (March ARB) and the **Genesis Shelter**, in Riverside.

Any and all food donations will be greatly appreciated. Please bring all donations to church before November 18<sup>th</sup>. Cash donations are most appreciated.



God bless you and yours with an even more blessed Thanksgiving this year for caring.



## Thanks for your Generosity!

Our commitment is great to the community of **Edgemont**, the most economically challenged area of Moreno Valley. We provide clothing for the needy and some food assistance. But the strongest area of our support is for the children of Edgemont elementary school, a public school with more than half of its pupils qualifying for free breakfast and lunch. We have a Fall uniform drive where every child who cannot afford a school uniform is provided one at no cost by Lord of Life. We also provide new socks and underwear for many children. This year we provided:

- 232 two-piece uniforms**
- 38 extra shirts**
- 523 socks and underwear**
- Several School supplies and backpacks**

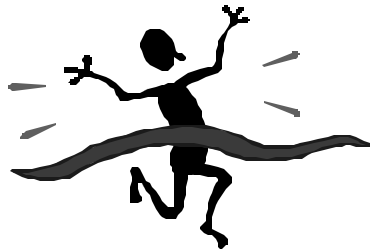


## Lord Of Life Receives “Special Friend” Award

Lord of Life Lutheran Church was recently honored by the American Cancer Society with a prestigious “Special Friend” Award at the annual Salute to Volunteers event at the Mission Inn. Harold and Jeannine Lester graciously accepted the award. Pastor Dave and church members were recognized for exhibiting an “above and beyond” attitude in their support in the fight against cancer. Congratulations!

## Relay For Life News

I know it seems early to announce but the date for the next Relay For Life will be the weekend of April 29, 2006. Becci Van Hoosier was kind enough to once again be our Team Captain. We have a list of those who want to help but if others are interested in being a part of Lord of Life’s team “Daisy’s Chain” please contact Becci. If you would like to be on a committee and help with Team Recruitment, Logistics, Fundraising, Sponsorships etc. or just want to be on the team, please let us know. As you may remember, our team was once again the top fund-raising team in the city of Moreno Valley – raising \$12,391!



Ann Miller, Survivor Chair, and her committee have already made gifts for cancer survivors. They are way ahead of schedule. I hear that the gifts are safely hidden in one of the church closets. At the last Relay, you may remember, Ann and her team made lovely “pasta angels”.

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. It represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported and, the goal, that one day cancer will be eliminated. Funds from the event are used to support patient services, educational programs, research and advocacy programs.

## “Great American Smokeout” is November 17



Will you be one of the millions of people who quit smoking for the day or for longer during this year’s Great American Smokeout? Or, if you don’t smoke, will you encourage the smokers in your life to quit for the day? Sponsored by the American Cancer Society, this annual event will take place on November 17, 2005 to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking and encourage tobacco users to take a step towards quitting.

----- Submitted by Pat Rupert

## Lord Of Life to Host LWR Fair Trade Fair

Nearly two thirds of the world’s population survives on less than \$2 per day. That’s not enough to meet their daily needs! The LWR Handcraft Projects puts you in partnership with artisans in developing regions of the world with great economic challenges. Artisans use their handcraft income to feed their families, educate their children, seek medical care, and improve their communities.

On November 13 & 20 you will have an opportunity to purchase finely made handcrafted items such as nativities, Christmas ornaments, home décor items and jewelry made in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and even part of the U. S. Your purchases will supply vital income to these people which greatly contributes to a life of dignity. In return, you receive high quality handcrafts.



## Gentle Thoughts...

By Jack Pavelich

It's not all my fault! The experts tell us that the loss of someone very close to you is a life changing experience. I don't know about you Willie, but I'm pretty sure my life has changed drastically in the past 16 months. As I drove past the new church sign, made possible by Pearl Rasmussen's memorial fund, I noticed the neighborhood has been changed by that sign! It's almost daylight at night now. How appropriate! Jesus brings light in the midst of darkness. Thanks, Pearl!

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My grieving, since Mary Jean's death, has taken a lot of turns. According to one of the little books I've read on the subject, I am still in the "disorganization" stage. That makes sense – have you seen my garage lately? As I move things from one place or room to another, some of it just ends up in the garage (for lack of a better place.) Our lives are like that, too. When we move our emotions, our hearts, our feelings around; some of them just end up in the garage for a while. It's a kind of a rest from the stresses that drive us. We get that rest each week in worship. A time when we can put ourselves, our hurts, our fears, our anxieties – all on hold for that brief hour while we worship and praise our Lord God.

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Disorganization of my life has my mind whirling about all that's going on, all the memories of the past, and all the days ahead, different from what I had ever hoped and dreamed for. So my thoughts are more like a Readers Digest – short, and quick, with no interludes between scenes. Scatter brained? Now I know what that means! It's pretty descriptive of my thought patterns. These are not unlike the Gospels in their description of Jesus' preaching, teaching, and healing those many early followers: short, and quick, with no interludes between.

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We'll be getting ready to prepare Thanksgiving baskets for 40 or more families who could use a boost around the Holidays. That is such a wonderful thing that we do! But once the leftovers are picked clean within a few days of the holiday, the hungry are hungry once more! Where are we then? What if

we could find a way to put together large food baskets once a month and become partners with those 40? Are we up to it? How do we start?

I was selected for Jury Duty today! I am not one of the original 12, but the first Alternate. I have the same responsibility for diligence throughout the 2 to 3 day trial because at any time I could be called upon to deliberate a man's innocence or guilt – a responsibility no different than that of the 12 jurors. That shouldn't be a difficult role. You see, for many years I have been a disciplined man of God. I can never replace the original 12 who lived intimately with the Christ – but I remain at the ready, and serve Him joyfully each day.

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I have found out that I spend an unusual amount of time keeping my house and yard clean and neat – so they'll be clean and neat. Maybe I should invite guests over for dinner – I just haven't been in the mood for that yet. So, most of my time at home is spent in one room of the house, where I read, or study scripture, or nap, or snuggle with my kitties (please let me know if anything good shows up on the TV – it would be a nice diversion.) That's only a few hours a day during the week. On the weekend, I can enjoy my yard – by mowing and trimming and pruning and clearing. That done, I retreat to the room. So what dirties the house?

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We are really blessed by Pastor Dave's service to us, but are even more blessed by his fellowship with us. David and Ann are such a part of our family, that we will always laugh together, cry together, and grow together. How much of what we learn from him do we accept as our own? Or do our joys on Sunday turn to blues on Monday. If I read David right, everything about the Gospel is to be shown through the living of our lives. Are we growing, yet? Is your Monday a carryover of Sunday? Are we too comfortable in the boat? (To be explained later in the month.)

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My Niece Janet was married in St. Paul, MN, in mid-October. What a joyous moment for her and her Mark; but, one they'll not fully appreciate for a very long time. The mystery of oneness – that greatest blessing from the Creator – is the mystery that ultimately binds us to each other for all time. "I recognized the figure of Mary Jean running toward me as I entered that place. I had never seen her so excited! And now, we were reunited for all time – one with Christ. *Amen?*