

## It's All Just So Exciting

By Pastor Justin Vetrano

I know I started last month's article by mentioning that we had our largest attendance on a non-holiday Sunday. Well, I can start this article by telling you that this past Sunday nudged ahead into the top spot. It's all just so exciting.

A little over a week ago, at about 11:30 p.m. on a Friday night I began hearing laughter, talking and frivolity outside the church. The church that late at night is usually really quiet, so this was unusual. I quickly remembered that this was the Friday night of the lock-in that Vicar Dan had organized with the youth group.

I peered through the window and I saw a group of young people sitting around a firepit, talking, laughing, smiling and having a GREAT time.

*It's just so thrilling  
that we have all  
these young people  
having so much  
fun!*

My mind quickly flashed back to fond memories I had as a young person at church, making friends and having a blast!

I remembered the years I served as a youth minister and organized beach overnights and camping trips. What a great experience and a terrific opportunity for the young people of our church to build those memories and develop friendships that will last a lifetime.

Unfortunately, about 30 minutes later, I had to text Vicar Dan and ask them to keep their voices down

outside a bit. I felt like the old curmudgeon casting a wet blanket over their fun. However, I also know that the village is pretty strict with noise and our neighbors next door have small children.

At the same time, it's just so thrilling that we have all these young people having so much fun!

Last week, I also received a note from our social media team, essentially saying, "Hey, slow down a bit, we can't possibly post so much content." In the past 14 days or so we have had several Bible Study classes, record worship service attendance and a baby shower that collected so many baby items we needed a trailer to deliver it to Lutheran Social Services.

We hosted the youth group Lock-In, received 26 new members, and hosted dinner on Thursday night before church.

The church council had their monthly meeting, we celebrated ALL SAINTS by putting names of our saints on a tree and reading the names in worship of those whom we love who have inspired our faith.

We also hosted a few Halloween parties in the Day School and in our ESL program, communed and visited members who are ill or home bound, we celebrated with a member of the church, Jerry

### Join us for your time of THE LIFE!

Sundays	Worship with Communion, 10am Children's Sunday School, 9:45am
Mondays	Alpha Bible Study, 7pm
Tuesdays	Bible Study, 11am
Thursdays	Dinner, 6:15pm Worship with Communion, 7pm
Nov 6	Men's Ministry, 7:30pm
Nov 18	Women's Ministry, 7:30pm
Nov 27	Thanksgiving Eve Service, 6pm (no Thursday service)
Dec 7	Tree Lighting, 3-6pm

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# Getting to Know ... The Giardino Family

By Tanya Chesterfield

**A**fter getting to know so many people here at *THE LIFE* it seems that most of us can relate to feeling “lost” at some point in our lives; searching for God in a place where you are most at home. For Jennifer and Vicar Dan Giardino that search led them to *THE LIFE* during a particular “season.”

## **TC: What brought you to THE LIFE Church?**

**JG:** After a season of being “lost,” God put on our hearts that it was time to move on from our previous church. We had both felt it was no longer a fit for our family, but at the same time it wasn’t always the right time, for both of us, to leave.

**DG:** It just so happened that two years ago at this season, we both looked at each other and said, ‘Let’s try something!’ That is what triggered us to start looking and it only took one Sunday.

**JG:** A friend recommended *THE LIFE*, and after one visit we were hooked! Our first service was on All Saints Sunday and we were welcomed with open arms by all!



Dan, Christina and Jennifer Giardino enjoy a beautiful day in a favorite spot, Down Under the Brooklyn Bridge.

After being “lost” it felt like coming home. Everything at *THE LIFE* is meaningful in its own way, however, it’s the community that is here that is second to none.

## **TC: What are some of your activities here at THE LIFE? Dan, as a new vicar, have you always wanted to be a pastor?**

**DG:** Yes, I have. I am part of the four-year SMP (Specific Ministry Pastor) program to become a pastor, and I’ll be ordained in 2-1/2 years. My specific ministry here at *THE LIFE* is Youth and Family. My call will be an Associate Youth Minister. Right now, I am the Men’s Ministry organizer and Youth Group Leader. Youth Confirmation is new this year. I’ve always been involved in youth and leadership in some capacity. Through my journey, Jen and I met.

**JG:** I was in choir and music leadership.

**TC:** How come you’re not up there singing now?

**JG:** [Laughs] I learned that I need a season of healing; I sit back and take everything in. Since Dan is very involved at *THE LIFE*, it’s important for me that our family is grounded. Dan and I were married for six years before we had Christina. It was a very conscious decision to have a family. We both really focus on making Christina our priority. I did join Women’s Ministry! I feel like it’s been helpful for me to get to know everyone. Last year Christina had gone through some bullying at school. I am blessed to be able to share my concerns with these women and receive kind words of encouragement and advice.

## **TC: Any milestones or accomplishments you’d like to share?**

**DG:** Jen and I cannot function if we’re not organized! Because of my work life, picking up and traveling for work at a moment’s notice, we must have everything mapped out. We have a family calendar that we all share. And if it’s not on the calendar...

**JG:** It’s not being done! [Laughs] I say that a few times a week!

**DG:** Our biggest accomplishment is really trying to raise Christina in the Christian walk.

## **TC: Do you have a favorite Scripture verse?**

**DG:** We have a family Scripture that Christina brought to us. It was the first Bible verse she ever memorized: Philippians 4:6: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” It puts everything in perspective. **L**

the **LIFE**

LUTHERAN CHURCH  
& DAY SCHOOL

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# Luther: the Rock Opera

By Rev. George Baum

**O**n very short notice earlier this month, my musical partner Michael Bridges and I were able to come to THE LIFE and put on a performance of our original songs that make up what we call “Luther: the Rock Opera.” (Which is probably more aptly called, Luther: the Folk Opera, but nobody’s ever heard of a folk opera before.)

We wrote these 24 songs at the behest of our friend, Rich Melheim, who had previously put together a graphic novel based on the life and times of Martin Luther.

His idea was that we would write the songs to correspond to the events depicted in that graphic novel. At first we said no. But if you know Rich, you know that he takes that to mean he’s just got to call you every day until you give in.

Anyway, three years ago, we began writing those songs. Once we had all 24 completed, we hired our friend John Miceli (of Meatloaf drumming fame) to put together a band and record the songs, which he did. As expected, they did a fantastic job with the songs, and the re-

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Nolan, as he was honored by the Hicksville Fire Department for 50 years of service, and in addition to Neina and I directing the fall drama at LuHi, I ran to the seaside to officiate a wedding.

We accomplished all this while we meet regularly with our four Vicars who are studying and preparing for Ordained ministry, while we continue to plan, dream and prepare for the future especially with Advent and Christmas right around the corner.

Like I said, it’s all just so exciting.

Recording is available on Spotify and Apple music. (Look for the version that says “Concert Version,” since there’s another version that Rich Melheim recorded, adding additional music and using other musicians . . . who probably all said no at first.)

So, now Michael and I take a week in the fall and a week in the spring and travel around playing a one-hour concert of these songs, with images from the graphic novel projected on the screen behind us. Thanks to Pastor Vetrano’s mad projection skills, the images at THE LIFE this month were the best renderings we’ve seen so far!

As we wrapped up our sermon series DEEPLY ROOTED, we explored what it means to be the church, our mission, our focus and all that we are. As the baptized children of God, deeply rooted in Christ we are called to proclaim the Good News of Jesus in all that we say and do.

What a terrific opportunity we have to serve with purpose and contribute our time, money and talents to preserve what God has planted here!

As we journey this November through Thanksgiving into Advent, it is my pray-



Michael Bridges (left) and Rev. George Baum of LOST AND FOUND, sing and play “Luther: the Rock Opera” at THE LIFE.

Thank you to all who were able to come out to the rock opera this month on short notice, and—as always—thanks for singing our songs during worship at THE LIFE.

There really is no higher honor for a couple of songwriters than to know their music is being used to bring praise and honor to the God who redeems and reforms us all. **L**

er to give thanks to God for bearing such wonderful fruit here at THE LIFE. Tremendous thanks to everyone who works so hard to carry out the mission of the church as we SOW SEEDS, TEND THE GROVE and CULTIVATE CONVICTIONS as we are DEEPLY ROOTED IN CHRIST!

As I said, it’s all just so exciting!

See you around Church,  
Pastor Vetrano **L**



# It's the most Boo-tiful time of the year....

By Lisa Dennelly, Day School Director

**H**alloween is the beginning of it all, the “all” meaning the holiday season. On the radio before Oct. 31, we can hear Christmas music playing!

At THE LIFE Lutheran Day School, it begins with a pumpkin patch on the playground and a Halloween Parade, where the three and four-year-old classes parade around in their costumes and sing some frightfully fun songs.

Our next event, for the most wonderful time of the year, will be our Thanksgiving Feasts. The three and



Children (and their teachers) enjoy dressing up for Halloween at the Day School.

four-year-old classes make costumes of Native Americans and Pilgrims and gather for a celebration of their friendship.

Then...the Tree Lighting! The children start practicing their songs on Nov. 1

for the tree lighting, so I guess we also are guilty of jumping to Christmas before we get a chance to celebrate Thanksgiving. It's well worth it in the end, because the children do a fabulous show at the Tree Lighting! **L**

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## Devotion: Our God, we give You thanks

By Deacon Harry Oellrich

***“Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name”.***

***1 Chronicles 29: 12-13***

**R**eflecting on this Old Testament passage in late October, I'm beginning to realize that in a few short weeks we'll be preparing for one of our nation's, and my entire family's most beloved holidays, Thanksgiving! Turkey and its fixings, football and festive gatherings of friends and family.

Thinking about our vibrant and growing congregation here at THE LIFE, I can't help but be so thankful in looking back on the early days in our church-planting process, which culminated in what eve-

ryone is so humbled and honored to be a part of here in Old Westbury less than ten years later. We can be understandably proud (in a good way) of what each and every one of us, working together has accomplished in this place. We've used the skill sets and unique gifts and talents that God has bestowed on each one of us. We have collectively come so far, so quickly, and in the face of significant hurdles, and sometimes seemingly long odds.

I recall praying over, even becoming neurotic over the ultimate location for this project: wondering whether we had the right plans, the staffing, volunteers, financial resources, and the knowledge to actually do something so bold, albeit noble. Later, I recall thinking that—as things began to fall into place and the congregation took shape—how truly blessed we had been to have been brought together by God, to do His

work in this place. And that maybe, just maybe, we might be in a position to pay it forward by planting another church someday.

Now, as we find ourselves poised to actually seriously consider doing so, I am excited to see what plans God has in store for THE LIFE here in this place, as well as in our community and beyond!

As these verses from 1 Chronicles point out so aptly, “You are the source of all wealth and honor. You have the power to give strength to all. Now let us be thankful and praise your glorious name.”

Thanks be to God for what He has done through us here, and for what our future holds, and what He will use us to do for His kingdom with that future...to Him be the glory!

Amen. **L**