

Downtime

By Pastor Justin Vetrano

The time of the year in the liturgical calendar between Epiphany and Lent seems to be some downtime as far as church goes — especially as we have come off the rush of the Advent and Christmas season.

However, a lot of work has been happening behind the “altar” as we may say here at the church. Work continues on the transition to being a freestanding congregation. We just received our certificate of incorporation, and meetings have been happening between representatives from THE LIFE and Resurrection. God has truly blessed us with incredible people and opportunities in ministry, and we are so thankful for how smooth this has been going thus far.

The office has been busy training up the newest member of the office staff, Beth Jarvis. She has done a fantastic job tran-

sitioning into the position following in Susan Weickert's footsteps. Susan is now enjoying life as a retiree, and it has been great seeing her in church looking very relaxed!

The Day School is also in high gear as registration for next year opened recently. As of today, we have 59 students registered with many more in the wings to sign up. At this time last year we had 19 registered. Lisa Denny is working hard coordinating the opening of new classrooms and trying to negotiate with me for more space all over the building! These are great problems to have, and we are so thankful for the ministry of the Day School and all the teachers and staff.

The ESL program has been growing tremendously as well. The Saturday classes are jam packed, and we have recently added a new class. On Tuesday nights Neina Vetrano is teaching GED in Spanish to a group of 16 students who are trying to get their high school equivalency diploma. It's a terrific class, and Neina brings such a joy-filled welcome to these students who are working to better their lives.

Confirmation classes continue on Sunday evenings. The youth group returned from an awesome weekend retreat in Boston, you can read an article about that in this newsletter. The Men's and Women's ministries have been meeting to plan upcoming events and activities. The Homework Help program is in full swing. The faithful cooks are here to cook for Meal-a-Month, and so many other things are happening at this church.

Finally, preparations are underway for LENT! The schedule is set with the deacons and assistants for our Compline services, the Holy Week schedules are set up, bulletin covers have been ordered, and John Bruno, Ginny Raffa and Pr. Baum are hard at work getting all the publicity materials set so we can communicate all the ways in which we come together to observe this holy season at THE LIFE.

Finally, be on the lookout for my upcoming Bible study, beginning in March on Luther's Small Catechism AND information about the Germany trip in October is right around the corner.

This and so much more. What seems like some downtime in the liturgical calendar is just a moment to catch our breath as we continue to journey on in the Good News of Jesus Christ!

See you around church.
Pastor V. 

Join us for your time of THE LIFE!

- Sundays** Worship with Communion, 10am
Children's Sunday School, 9:45am
Bible Study, 11:30am
- Thursdays** Worship with Communion, 7pm
- Feb 16-23** LuHi Mission Trip to Nicaragua
- Mar 1** Ash Wednesday, Lent Begins, 7pm
- Mar 3** Nightly Compline begins, 7pm
- Mar 8** Men's Ministry, 7:30pm
- Mar 13** Women's Ministry, 7:30pm

Getting to Know...Tanya Chesterfield and Doris Wenner

By Elisa Bruno



Tanya Chesterfield and her grandmother, Doris Wenner.

Tanya Chesterfield found *THE LIFE* after driving past it many times and seeing a sign out for Thursday night service. At her first Thursday service she was wowed by the band and Pastor Vetrano! Prior, she had been going through a rough time and feeling that God had forgotten her. Did Tanya find *THE LIFE*? Or was God answering her prayers? Soon after, Tanya attended Sunday services and was joined by Doris, whom we have all come to know lovingly as "Grandma." At the time of this interview, Grandma was at home resting from an injury. She told us that she does not like missing church.

T: I wanted to express my spirituality and wanted to contribute to the church. From the beginning I was a member of the Sunday service implementation committee. When Pastor introduced me to Beth (Jarvis) we started the Alter Guild committee together. Then, I helped initiate the Altar Flower dedications. I was also an ESL Saturday LIFE Kids volunteer, then group leader for middle school kids for three years. Now, I manage the flower calendar and mentions in the weekly bulletins, write for the Getting to Know... interviews, assist at Sunday School, and reader during services.

Doris first came to a Saturday Easter Vigil with Tanya and loved it. She later became a member and has stated: "I love my church family!"

E: Was Grandma the one who encouraged you to practice your faith?

T: Grandma was always the one to give me spiritual guidance. She taught me the importance of prayer and going to church. I grew up going to church on Sundays.

E: What is your favorite hymn?

D: Amazing Grace, when the girls [The Vetrano sisters] sing it and "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

T: [My favorite is] "I Want Jesus To Walk with Me."

E: I love that one too! What is your favorite verse from Scripture, and why?

T: Psalm 91. I feel the presence of God's angels in my life almost daily; I know they're always watching over me at his bidding, and there is a line that says: "For He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in thy ways."

E: Have you ever clearly seen God at work in your life?

T: When I was sick, suffering physical symptoms from stress, I was in pain on the floor with my Bible and got help from my doctor who found a trial medicine which really helped me.

E: What are your interests outside of church?

T: I LOVE LOVE LOVE Zumba! I've started taking the instructor's Cardio Dance Class on Thursday nights. I enjoy decorating my home according to the seasons. Right now it's "Winter" themed; [next I'm] getting ready for Valentine's Day.

According to Tanya, Doris keeps close relationships with her siblings, keeps fit by walking and loves to go shopping. Doris and Tanya make it a tradition to shop together at Lord & Taylor every Christmas season. Doris also loves to cook.

T: I try and get Grandma to cook for me all the time!

E: What is your favorite thing to cook?

D: Turkey chili and/or BBQ Ribs.

E: What did Grandma used to do for work?

T: Grandma used to be a dietician at Goldwater Memorial Hospital on Roosevelt Island and was active in the union. After retiring, she took care of her husband who had dementia.

Doris and Tanya, We thank you for this interview and for your devotion to THE LIFE! **L**

the **LIFE**

LUTHERAN CHURCH
& DAY SCHOOL

THE LIFELine

is a publication of
THE LIFE Lutheran Church
One Old Westbury Road
Old Westbury, NY 11568
516.333-3355 • thelifeny.org

STAFF

Rev. Justin Vetrano, Pastor
Rev. George Baum, Social Media Coordinator and Content Editor
Beth Jarvis, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor
Lisa Dannelly, Day School Director
Jay Campson, Facility Manager
Ginny Raffa, Editor/Outreach

The LYG Takes Boston!

By Jennifer Moglia

Over the weekend of Jan. 28, THE LIFE Youth Group went on a youth retreat to Boston, Massachusetts. For many of the kids in the group, it was their first time at a youth retreat. For others, it was one of many. For the seniors in our group, it was a bittersweet trip, since it would be their last.

Fourteen kids ages 10-17 piled into three cars on Friday afternoon and set off on a long drive to the Holiday Inn in Dedham, Massachusetts. Once we got there, we were greeted by musical guest Agape, also known as Dave Scherer, spoken word poet Joe Davis, and speaker Dan Scharnhorst. Which guest made the weekend one to remember? According to chaperone Fred Obermeier, "Joe Davis really stuck out. [His poetry] is just different and instantly grabbed my attention."

The Friday night celebration was filled with music, storytelling, games and prayers. We were all definitely ready to go to sleep that night!

We woke up bright and early the next morning, ready for another day of worship and fun. Our first activity of the day was a morning celebration with music from Agape, poems by Joe, and a message from Dan.



Nothing like a dinner at Bertucci's to celebrate a wonderful day of workshops. Around the table, from left are Greg Jarvis, Brandon Sweeney, Taylor Kurz, Kassie Vetrano, Samantha Beecher, Gia Ventimiglia, Julianne Verwys, Stephen Oderwald, Christian Verwys, Josh Sexton, Jeanette Oellrich, Justin Sloan, Grace Giordano, and Jen Moglia.

We spent the rest of the morning packing over 3,000 meals for those in need! Our group worked cooperatively together to

include important components of the meal in each bag and pack them into boxes.

Later on, we participated in amazing workshops like Dan's Bible Trivia Game Show, Agape and Joe's "power shuffle" session and fun Bible-related science experiments. The activity that really helped our group grow was the power shuffle, where we were able to open up about our stories to the other members of the group. Sophomore Gracie Giordano says, "because [the power shuffle was] so powerful, I really bonded with the other members, and we all came together praising, praying over one another, and just having a great time together."

Saturday night was "Crazy Dress Night," which included another fun celebration, dancing, and ended with prayer. We ended the night singing worship songs with our entire group (and Agape!) and shared our high and low points of the day. Sunday morning brought one last celebration before it was time to leave.

THE LIFE Youth Group had an amazing time at Youth Quake 2017! Big thank you to Jenn Kurz for organizing the trip, and thank you also to our chaperones, Jeanette Oellrich, Jenn Kurz, and Fred Obermeier for accompanying us.

If you would like to join THE LIFE Youth Group, see Jenn Kurz to find out when our next event is. 



ASH WEDNESDAY

MARCH 1

7:00pm (Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes)
Ashes available in the sanctuary 10am - 5pm

"For dust you are, and to dust you will return." - Genesis 3:19

Amazing Nights for Family Fun

By Lauren Cassino

Family Fun Night is a great opportunity for children to spend time with their classmates and family while they play, explore, and create. For October's Family Fun Night, children dressed up in their Halloween Costumes, decorated pumpkins, explored in a spooky sensory table, played with Play-Doh and had a dance party.



Family Fun Nights include making a craft the children can take home.

In December, the children made candy cane tree ornaments, decorated ice cream cones as Christmas trees, made snowmen out of marshmallows, played with peppermint moon dough and shaving cream.

February's theme is Valentines. We will have a Valentines themed sensory table and hopscotch. Children can make heart paintings, bead bracelets and necklaces, and play with glittery slime.

Family Fun Night is held on the third



O-o-ooh, what fun! The children really get into a big pile of shaving cream at the sensory table.

Friday every other month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. All family and friends are welcome. Every Family Fun Night has a different and exciting theme and is filled with fun activities, crafts, and snacks for the children. Hope to see you there! 📍

February Devotion: God's Love

By Anthony Giordano

1 John 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

God's love has always been a difficult thing for me to grasp. On any given day, I am fairly unlovable. Why does God love me? Why does God love you?

When we ask those questions, we've already missed the point. We are using our understanding of love, human love, and comparing it to God's love.

Human love is the love of the lovely. It is dependent on the object of our affections. When a teenager says they've fallen in love, it means they have found the most beautiful or most handsome creature on the campus. Sometimes next week, there's a new beautiful or handsome creature, and the old one has become a troll.

The best comparison we have to the love of God is the love we have for a baby. A baby has done nothing to draw love out of us. It does not have a great job, it does not have a sense of humor, and let's be honest, some of them look a little squished. They eat, they cry at all hours of the day or night, and they make messes in their diapers. That baby is loved by its parents and family because it exists.

Although this may seem silly, this is close to how God loves us. We cannot "do" for God. We cannot catch his eye with our clothing or bring him flowers. We cannot earn His love. God loves us because of who He is, not because of who we are. This is wonderful! It means no matter what happens or what we do, He love us! On my worst day, He loves me. On your worst day, He loves you.

Once we accept and believe that God loves us in this way, we become better equipped to handle what the world throws our way. Whether it's illness, or the loss of a job, or a divorce, or a death, we can get through it, because we are loved by Love Himself! God loves us because God is love. 📍