



January 2026



LCMS Stewardship Ministry

LCMS Life Ministry

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Christians may think of the birth of Christ as His incarnation — His moment of “taking on flesh.” But rather than on Christmas Day, His birthday, Christ’s incarnation took place at the moment of His conception. That which the angel Garbiel announced to the Virgin Mary — “and behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus” (Luke 1:31) — is a pronouncement of Christ’s first coming. The One who is the eternal Word (John 1:1) clothed Himself with flesh and inhabited life in the womb for the first nine months of His life. This month, we celebrate Christ’s birth and the redemption that He won for all flesh, even those who are yet unborn (Psalm 22:23).

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new. Also, He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true” (Revelation 21:5).

In January there is a great deal of “new” talk. Parties are held to ring in the “new” year. “New” year’s resolutions are made to set a “new” course of life in the “new” year. There is date forgetfulness as checks and other forms are filled out without using the “new” year on the dateline.

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We use all this “new” talk because there is very often so much wrong with the old in us. We think back to the “new” resolutions from the previous year that only lasted a few weeks. That “new” person did not shed any pounds and instead, picked up a few. The “new” habits of going to the gym were soon replaced by even more time on the couch binging on Netflix. The “new” person who does not lose their temper, use sarcasm as a lethal weapon and spend more money than necessary, but who worships, prays and serves the Lord and the neighbor, never seemed to stick around. We need “new” talk because the Old Adam is alive and well within every one of us.

But this promise of “new” is a matter of stewardship. It is the Lord Himself who makes the promise of all things being new. These words recorded by St. John are not pious wishes or hopeless promises. They do what they say. YOU, that one baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection, are NEW! These words are indeed trustworthy and true. This “new” comes to you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes free of charge, even without our prayer.

LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY *continued*

This stewardship of “new” is not a vague, someday kind of stewardship either. You are NEW now! Forgiven. Reborn from above. The old is gone, nailed to Calvary’s cross and buried and rotting in a tomb that was only borrowed by Jesus for His resurrection rest. The Gospel is what makes us NEW every morning. Remembering your baptism, you are new. Confessing your sins and receiving absolution makes you new. Hearing the Gospel filling your ears makes you new. Feasting on Christ’s body and blood in the Holy Supper makes you new.

These mercies, totally undeserved as they are, are entrusted to us to steward TODAY even as we long for the Last Day. But we know how often we fail in this stewardship. We hoard God’s creation as if it belongs to us. We belittle and devalue our neighbor because they look or sound or act in a way that we do not like. We seek to make the Holy Word of God softer and more palatable for those, or even ourselves, who refuse to confess sin as sin and repent. We value our comfort over truth, our reputation over faithfulness and our treasure over making sure that people get to hear of the Jesus who has done so much for the world and us.

We, as stewards of the Gospel, need to be made new every day. This is exactly what the Lord does. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel last year, so He gives us a new year. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel yesterday, and He gives us a new day. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel in the last few minutes, and yet in mercy our newness comes with each tick of the clock! Because that is how the Lord works.

As we see this working of all new things in us, it then calls us to be stewards of this newness to the world. This starts right in our own homes. It radiates out to our neighbors. It beams out from our congregations. This newness is teamed at the circuit, district and Synod levels all to shine the newness of the Gospel to those who need it.

Your new talk starts in the newness of the Gospel. Steward this treasure in this new year and this new day. It starts with a new you in Jesus. This is indeed trustworthy and true.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry. (2026, January). LCMS National Mission – Bulletin Blurbs and Newsletter Articles – January 2026.
<https://resources.lcms.org/worship-planning/national-mission-bulletin-blurbs-and-newsletter-articles-january-2026/>



The Sacrifice of Isaac with Origen

by Geoffrey Boyle



After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."
²He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."
³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.
⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar.
⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you."
⁶And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together.
⁷And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"
⁸Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

So they went both of them together.

⁹When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son.
¹¹But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."
¹²He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."
¹³And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.
¹⁴So Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

[Genesis 22:1-14](#)

One thing that makes us nervous about early Christian interpretation of the Scriptures is what we call "allegory" or "spiritual exegesis." And there's no one more famous (*infamous*?) for this than Origen. An allegorical interpretation of Scripture often seeks a hidden meaning beyond the historical context. Origen (c. a.d.185-254) was highly regarded as a teacher of the Scriptures and commented exhaustively upon them. He's said to have lectured and preached the whole OT at great length. Sadly, much is lost due

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC WITH ORIGEN continued

to his condemnation some 300 years after his death. Nevertheless, Origen's allegorical method of interpretation prevails in his surviving commentaries, especially on Genesis. His work *On First Principles* lays out his ideas in depth. Emphasizing the inspiration of the Scriptures, he concludes that as the work of the Holy Spirit, Scripture should be approached *spiritually*. And yet, being written down for us, they also have a body. He says, "Just as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does the scripture, which has been prepared by God to be given for man's salvation" (4.11). *Body* refers to the historical/literal interpretation, which is open to everyone; *soul* attends to the moral/ethical, which requires something of us; and *spirit* pertains to the heavenly, which is alone for the Christian. For Origen, the way to the Spirit is always through the body, a fact often overlooked.

Now, despite the reticence of some toward allegory, which St. Jerome defines simply as "putting forward one thing in the words, but meaning another in the sense,"¹ Origen makes use of this spiritual reading above all for the sake of revealing Christ. What we'll see below in his interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22) is a profound preaching of Christ the crucified. [Here's Origen](#):

Abraham took wood for the burnt offering and placed it upon Isaac his son, and he took fire and a sword in his hands, and together they went off. Isaac himself carries the wood for his own holocaust: this is a figure of Christ. For he bore the burden of the cross, and yet to carry the wood for the holocaust is really the duty of the priest. He is then both victim and priest. This is the meaning of the expression: together they went off. For when Abraham, who was to perform the sacrifice, carried the fire and the knife, Isaac did not walk behind him, but with him. In this way he showed that he exercised the priesthood equally with Abraham.

What happens after this? Isaac said to Abraham his father: Father. This plea from the son was at that instant the voice of temptation. For do you not think the voice of the son who was about to be sacrificed struck a responsive chord in the heart of the father? Although Abraham did not waver because of his faith, he responded with a voice full of affection and asked: What is it, my son? Isaac answered him: Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the holocaust? And Abraham replied: God will provide for himself a sheep for the holocaust, my son. The careful yet loving response of Abraham moves me greatly. I do not know what he saw in spirit, because he did not speak of the present but of the future: God will provide for himself a sheep. His reply concerns the future, yet his son inquires about the present. Indeed the Lord himself provided a sheep for himself in Christ.

Abraham extended his hand to take the sword and slay his son, and the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said: Abraham, Abraham. And he responded: Here I am. And the angel said: Do not put your hand upon the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God. Compare these words to those of the Apostle when he speaks of God: He did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all [Rom 8:32]. God emulates man with magnificent generosity. Abraham offered to God his mortal son who did not die, and God gave up his immortal Son who died for all of us.

And Abraham, looking about him, saw a ram caught by the horns in a bush. We said before that Isaac is a type of Christ. Yet this also seems true of the ram. To understand how both are figures of Christ—Isaac who was not slain and the ram who was—is well worth our inquiry.

Christ is the Word of God, but the Word became flesh. Christ therefore suffered and died, but in

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC WITH ORIGEN continued

the flesh. In this respect, the ram is the type, just as John said: Behold the lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. The Word, however, remained incorruptible. This is Christ according to the spirit, and Isaac is the type. Therefore, Christ himself is both victim and priest according to the spirit. For he offers the victim to the Father according to the flesh, and he is himself offered on the altar of the cross.

This excerpt from a homily on Genesis 22 (Hom. 8,6 8. 9: PG 12, 206-209).

<https://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/media/articles/abrahams-sacrifice-of-isaac-origen/>

First, we need to make sense of a few of Origen's words. He says that Isaac is carrying his own wood for a *holocaust*. For us, that word has a very definite meaning; and, of course, Origen wasn't aware of Nazi Germany. He spoke Greek. When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek, "burnt offering" ('*Olah*') was typically translated "*Holocaust*."

Secondly, Origen speaks of both "figure" and "type," which he uses interchangeably. Later on, these terms will be more fully developed. But for now, Origen means that in Isaac and the ram we see Christ. To be a "type" means that they bear the *imprint* of Christ. Think of a typewriter. The letter literally imprints itself onto the page. That's how it is with Christ, who *imprints* or *types* Himself into the events and people—even the places and institutions—of the Old Testament in such a way that gives Himself to be seen and known through them. The Old Testament isn't *just* history nor *just* pointing forward to Christ, but mysteriously delivers Christ to His people of old.

Also notice how Origen dabbles in some fairly serious Christology while sorting through the two types. Isaac is a type in the way that he carries his own wood (just as Jesus to Golgotha), as he walks alongside of Abraham (demonstrating Jesus' unity with the Father), and willingly and innocently gives himself for the sacrifice. Nevertheless, Isaac doesn't die. As Origen points out, that's akin to the Divine Nature of the Son, which in itself doesn't die. But the ram, which is sacrificed, accords with the human nature. Together, these two types prefigure Jesus who brings the flesh and the spirit together and truly dies for His people. This leads Origen to the classically patristic and beautiful paradox: "Abraham offered to God his mortal son who did not die, and God gave up his immortal Son who died for all of us."

Reading this story with Origen gives us a far more robust view of Christ in the story. We are given to reflect on Christ as both victim and priest, Isaac and the ram. In so doing, we rejoice in the faith of Abraham and the gift of our Lord.

Post navigation

About The Author

The [Rev. Dr. Geoffrey R. Boyle](#) is assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

Boyle, Geoffrey R., (20021, December 14). The Sacrifice of Isaac with Origen. *The Lutheran Witness-Articles-Series: Reading the Old Testament*, <https://witness.lcms.org/2020/the-sacrifice-of-isaac-with-origen/>



LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE

Life Quotes for January

January 4 “Your story might not look as extraordinary as Esther’s. It might not be as exciting as David’s or as tumultuous as Rahab’s or as terrifying as Mary’s. But you don’t have to be extraordinary for God to work through you. He can accomplish great things through something as unassuming as prayer or as simple as a meal for a new mother.” *Grace MacPherson – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life* • lutheransforlife.org

January 11 “A baby is God’s opinion that the world should go on.” *Carl Sandburg – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life* • lutheransforlife.org

January 18 “Our task is to make sure that our fellow Lutherans and our neighbors know how much God loves us just as we are. Look at this fingerprint: God made each of us unique. There is no one else just like you. God knew you before you were born (Jeremiah 1:5). He knitted you together in your mother’s womb. You were fearfully and wonderfully made, and God had a plan for your life even before you took a breath in this sinful, beautiful world that He created for you (Psalm 139:13-16).” *Diane Albers, President of Lutherans For Life – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life* • lutheransforlife.org

January 25 “The One who gives us our new beginning in Baptism is the same God who fashioned us and gave us our first beginning in the womb. It is God who brings forth life. It is God who created us, who ‘knits us together,’ so that we are ‘intricately and wonderfully made.’ Some say that the Bible never mentions abortion, and thus we should not speak against it. How far from the truth! The decisive moral truth of what Scripture teaches is this: Human beings are such from fertilization. And—it is a sin to shed innocent blood.” *Rev. Paul Clark, Lutherans For Life of Michigan – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life* • lutheransforlife.org



Announcements

Women's Bible Study Resumes in 2026



You are encouraged to be a part of the women's Bible study group which meets at the church 6:30-8:00 on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month (not during Lent). Mark these dates on your calendar:

- January 14 & 28
- February 11
- April 9 & 22
- May 13

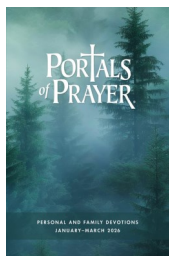
All studies come from the LWML Quarterly. We hope to see you there!

The "Be in the Word" Bible Challenge

Reading your Bible is VITAL!

The challenge is to read one book (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, etc. etc.) in the month of January and then pick out three (3) verses that stand out to you. Write them down with the book name and verse number and put it in Diane Wayner's mailbox. You will then receive a sweet reward!

(P.S. This is for kids too! Parents, help 'em out!)



New Portals of Prayer Now Available

The January—March 2026 Portals of Prayer daily devotions is now available. Copies can be found on the table at the back of the .

2026 Altar Flower Chart

A new year and a new flower chart! This is a great way to remember a special occasion or person. The 2026 Altar Flower Chart has been posted on the double doors at the back of the Sanctuary. Just sign up next to the appropriate weekend. Clearly print the occasion being remembered, who the flowers are for and who they're from. Altar flowers are \$40.00. Please place the monies in an envelope labeled "Altar Flowers" with the date of the weekend and put it in the collection plate.



Altar Flowers

Is there a date or event you would like to celebrate or a special someone you would like to honor or remember. Donating altar flowers is a great way to do that! All you have to do is sign up next to the appropriate weekend on the altar chart, add the occasion or person and who the flowers are from. Be sure to print clearly. The Altar Flower Chart is posted on the double doors at the back of the sanctuary. Altar flowers are \$40.00. The cash or check can be placed in an envelope labeled "Altar Flowers" with the date of the weekend and placed in the collection plate.



December Meeting Minutes

Reports

1. President's Report. (Terry Wakelee) – report provided
 - a. 15 helped with decorating last weekend for the Advent and Christmas seasons
 - b. Parsonage work continues; plumbing to be completed
 - c. Subcommittee met to determine compensation package for call; added vision and dental insurance.
2. Vice President's Report. (Ed Hines) –
 - a. Snowplow contract is in progress.
3. Treasurer's Report. (Russ Walton) – report provided
 - a. October financials were provided. Offerings are down compared to last year.
4. Education Report. (Eric Drake)
 - a. Weekly average attendance - 11 adults, 5 kids
5. Preschool Report. (Starshine Graziadei) – report provided
 - a. Adopt-a-family board is up. Will be provided to families prior to Christmas.
 - b. Next meeting on December 16 for the staff Christmas party.
6. Elder's Report. (Dale Kerver)
 - a. 8 members to be reinstated.
 - b. A membership class will start January 4.
 - c. Pulpit supply through Easter.
7. Stewardship Report. (Diane Wayner)
 - a. Giving tree is up
 - b. Planning something for January or February
8. Financial Secretary's Report. (Jenn Drake)
 - a. New sign will go up this weekend

XXXXXXXXXX continued

9. Outreach Report. (Kelly Hines) – report provided
 - a. Website updates will be done
 - b. 26 shawls completed for Butterfly Kisses and Little Girl Wishes; well attended events in Nov
 - c. Preschool family outreach. Committee will help at preschool events.
 - d. Next meeting January 12.
10. Building & Grounds Report. (Dennis Concoby) – report provided
 - a. New computer being purchased for office
 - b. Fall grounds clean up done around outside
 - c. Oak and pine to be trimmed/removed in coming days
11. Contribution Secretary's Report. (Tom Cardina)
 - a. Offerings were significantly lower than previous years, despite their being 5 weekends in Nov.

Old Business

1. Potential candidate for the preschool treasurer (appointed)
2. Parsonage fence repairs. On hold.
3. Call Committee update – Congregational Call meeting on Sunday, December 7 after 9:30 service.
4. Commercial refrigerator replacement
5. Replacement of church office computer
6. Sanctuary carpet replacement – seeking feedback from the congregation
7. Parsonage tree trimming in fall – scheduled for this week

New Business

1. Christmas Eve services will be 4pm and 7pm with communion

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 @ 6:30pm



From the Preschool

PRESCHOOL

2026-2027 Preschool Registration



Registration

It's that time of year again. St. Paul's Preschool will be planning the 2025-2026 school year. We will begin registering students in February and new brochures will be available soon.

As we start our planning we will be looking for assistant teachers for the fall. If you or someone you know may be interested in being a part of our program please contact Amy Marizek in the Preschool Office (440)354-3000.

January Birthdays

Star Sekanic	2-Jan	Lauren Michalak	22-Jan
Kevin Kiel	3-Jan	Bernie Michalak	22-Jan
Marisa Szoradi	7-Jan	Dennis Concoby	24-Jan
Julie Greig	17-Jan	Nathan Lelle	25-Jan
Annikki Tompkins	18-Jan	Matthew Chaffe	28-Jan
Skip McGill	20-Jan	Lia Graziadei	28-Jan
Valarie Sullivan	21-Jan	Sue Snodgrass	29-Jan
Terry Wakelee	21-Jan	MacKenzi Dewit	30-Jan



January Anniversaries

Dennis and Connie Concoby 50 years on Jan 17



Those Who Serve: January 2026

ELDERS:

6:00 P Saturday Dale Kerver
9:30 A Sunday Jeff Troutman

COUNTERS:

Tom Cardina

LECTORS:

01-03-26	6:00 P	Saturday	Dave Murphy
01-04-26	9:30 A	Sunday	Jennifer Drake
01-10-26	6:00 P	Saturday	Dale Kerver
01-11-26	9:30 A	Sunday	Jack Lelle
01-17-26	6:00 P	Saturday	Dale Kerver
01-18-26	9:30 A	Sunday	Eric West
01-24-26	6:00 P	Saturday	Dave Murphy
01-25-26	9:30 A	Sunday	Terry Wakelee
01-31-26	6:00 P	Saturday	Dave Murphy
02-01-26	9:30 A	Sunday	Dennis Concoby



Scripture Readings for January

Jan 3/4 [Epiphany Observed]

1 Kings 3:4-14
Ephesians 1:3-14
Luke 2:40-52

Jan 10/11

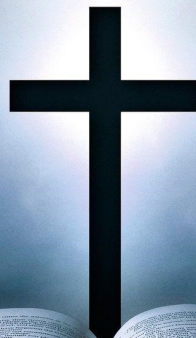
Isaiah 42:1-9
Romans 6:1-11
Matthew 3:13-17

Jan 17/18

Isaiah 49:1-7
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

Jan 24/25

Isaiah 9:1-4
1 Corinthians 10:1-18
Matthew 4:12-25





January Word Search

Trees That Keep Their Leaves in Winter

E	E	R	T	Y	R	R	E	B	W	A	R	T	S
O	Y	F	T	I	K	C	O	L	M	E	H	S	E
N	W	A	L	N	V	S	A	M	E	A	P	S	P
R	N	L	R	C	I	R	Z	H	S	R	N	D	G
S	O	S	A	A	L	S	E	G	U	L	G	M	N
E	A	E	D	N	C	E	L	C	I	P	I	N	E
N	I	C	E	E	A	D	E	M	O	R	D	N	A
H	L	Y	C	L	M	E	A	C	F	I	R	Y	I
P	O	P	Y	L	E	A	T	I	V	O	B	R	A
A	N	R	L	I	R	L	R	E	P	I	N	U	J
D	G	E	L	A	Y	E	W	R	O	P	A	E	R
V	A	S	O	R	L	I	V	E	O	A	K	R	O
O	M	S	H	E	B	O	X	W	O	O	D	E	E
H	I	O	R	E	G	O	N	G	R	A	P	E	S

HEMLOCK
FALSE CYPRESS
AZELEA
MAGNOLIA
OREGON GRAPE
CANELLIA
PINE
STRAWBERRY TREE
ANDROMEDA
LIVE OAK
CEDAR
FIR
DAPHNE
ARBOVITAE
BOXWOOD
YEW
SPRUCE
JUNIPER
HOLLY

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/9336702/>

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St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and Preschool
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"I was glad when they said to me 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" Psalm 122:1

Staff

Matt Chaffe, Organist
Peggy McDonnell, Admin Assistant

Worship Services

Saturday 6:00 pm
Sunday 9:30 am

Sunday Bible Study

Children 10:45 am

St. Paul's Preschool

Amy Marizek, Director
preschool@splcpainesville.org
www.stpaulspainesville.com

Also Supporting



St. Paul's Preschool



A Great Place To Grow

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>  COMMUNION SERVICE </div> <div> January Birthstone Garnet </div>			<div> WORSHIP SCHEDULE Saturdays - 6:00pm Sundays - 9:30am Sunday School - 10:45am Adult Bible Study—8:30am & 10:45am </div> <div> Office Hours Monday-Friday 9:00am-12:00pm </div> <div> Bulletin Announcements Due Wednesdays </div>		1  Church Office Closed	2
3 	January Flower Carnation					
4 	5 National Bird Day	6  Epiphany Preschool—All Classes Resume	7 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Council Meeting	8	9	10
11  Baptism of Our Lord	12	13	14	15 National Hat Day	16 <div> February Newsletter Articles and Announcements Due </div>	17 
18 	19  Martin Luther King Day	20	21 6:30 pm Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm Elder's Meeting	22	23 National Pie Day	24 National Compliment Day
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 National Hot Chocolate Day