

On March 5, 2023 our Siblings of the Lutheran church called Lord of Life, having served North Austin for 27 years, celebrated Holy Closure. That community recognized the importance of their Call from God to all of us in that moment and, with great intention, created a legacy that continues in many different ways today. We are invited to recognize their holy discernment and celebrate the impact of this last year with all those experiencing God's love in our shared present.

Gospel excerpt, March 5th, 2023

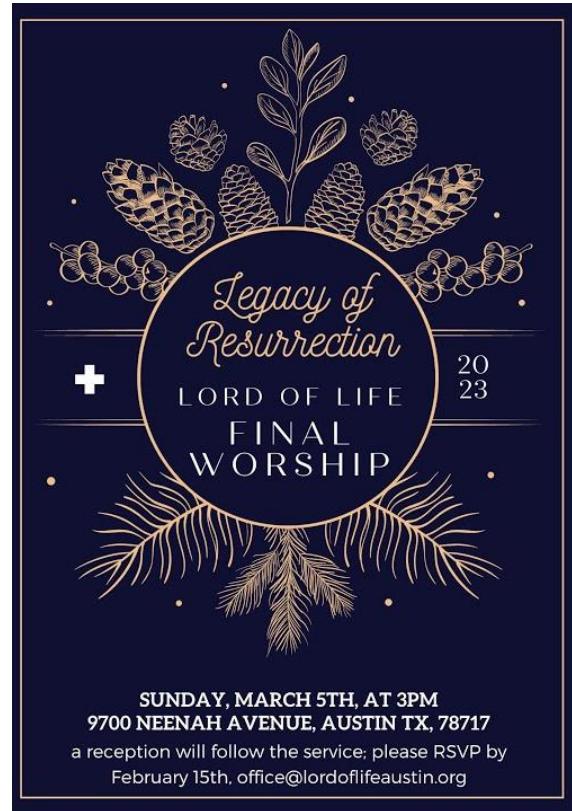
First Nation's Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testamentⁱ; John 3:6-12

⁶The human body only gives birth to natural life, but it takes the Spirit of Creator to give birth to spiritual life. ⁷Do not be surprised that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸Everyone born in this way is like the wind that blows wherever it wants. You can hear its sound, but no one knows where it comes from or where it goes." ⁹"How can these things be?" Conquers the People (*Nicodemus*) asked. Creator Sets Free (*Jesus*) looked gently but firmly into his eyes and continued. ¹⁰"How can it be that a wisdomkeeper and spiritual leader of the tribes of Wrestles with Creator (*Israel*) does not understand these things? ¹¹⁻¹² Listen closely, for you fail to hear what we are talking about. We are speaking about things we know to be true, but if you do not believe me when I talk about things on earth, how will you believe me when I talk about the things from the spirit-world above?"

From the final worship bulletin prayer

Let us pray together.

O God, we give you thanks. **We thank you for being fed here. We thank you for being loved here. We thank you for the siblings you have called here to journey with us, on this day and all the days before today in this expression of community for us. We ask that you guide our thoughts, lead our actions, and reform us always as we grow with your Word wherever we go: learning to reach out, learning to listen, learning to understand that together, we are one in Christ. Amen.**



benedictionⁱⁱ

As you leave this place, may you go knowing that from generation to generation, we have been claimed and loved.

From generation to generation, God has been by our side.

From generation to generation, we are not alone.

The God of yesterday + and the God of tomorrow knows you by name, loves you, and calls you forth, saying, “Go be the person you are called to be, love wildly, do justice, and may your feet be guided to joy and peace; growth and challenge; love and compassion.”

May it be so. **Amen.**

Legacy Stories

Reflections from the Lord of Life Lutheran Church Legacy of Resurrection Endowment partners



Photo credit: Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt; Pastor J. presents an Endowment Certificate to Aubrey Thonvold, ReconcilingWorks Director, on 5Mar2023.

ReconcilingWorks continues to extend its deep and heartfelt gratitude for the generous of Lord of Life Lutheran Church and its legacy gift. It is through their generosity ReconcilingWorks have been able to expand our ministry, accompaniment, and outreach. To try and put into words the impact your generosity has had on ReconcilingWorks feels like not

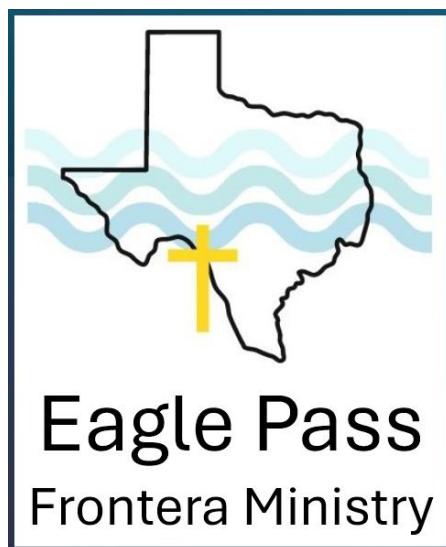
enough, because the ripple affect you have had in this holy ministry cannot be fully named. But I will give it a try.

In this last year your funds have made it possible for ReconcilingWorks have a fully funded diaconal intern from Luther Seminary. This student has had the chance to grow, learn, and lead with ReconcilingWorks and the ministry centered in queer liberation and justice work. This student will be graduating in May 2024 and will be continuing to be a blessing to the church where they are called to lead a life of justice centered ministry. What a tremendous gift!

In the last year your funds have made it possible for ReconcilingWorks to have three additional resources translated into Spanish to help expand our accessibility for more people.

In the last year your funds have also supported the work of ReconcilingWorks outreach and education as the organization support almost 300 congregations on their journey of discernment to become a Reconciling in Christ community. The impact of these congregations' ministry in supporting people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expression along with their commitment to anti-racism will be one that shifts their communities.

The legacy gift has been and continues to be a blessing to ReconcilingWorks, our ministry partners, and the larger church. Thank you for all you make possible!



Hemos tenido la fortuna y la gracia de Dios en este año. Me he dado cuenta que la necesidad nunca termina. Me desespero al ver que ayudar a unos cuantos no es suficiente porque cada día son más los peregrinos que extienden la mano para pedir ayuda. Nunca será suficiente, pero no pierdo la felicidad cuando veo una sonrisa de agradecimiento de alguien que ya no podía continuar porque sus fuerzas habían disminuido por no comer en varios días.

Tal es el caso de Gonzalo, un joven de 19 años que por probar suerte dejó su familia, sus estudios y sus amigos. Gonzalo me dijo que su mamá no estaba de acuerdo en que él hiciera el viaje al norte. Al ver su situación de pobreza extrema y sus padres enfermos, no pudo más. Se fue a escondidas sin que nadie supiera para evitar las despedidas.

Conocí a Gonzalo un día que iba a Frontera Digna, un albergue pasando el Río Bravo al lado Mexicano. Vi que un chico temblaba de frío. Ese día estaba muy nublado y hacía frío. El chico estaba escondido debajo del puente. De la camioneta pude ver como un hombre se le acercaba.

Como estábamos en la camioneta nueva que se había comprado gracias a las donaciones y subvenciones que recibimos en ese año de Lord of Life, era posible pasar de cerca dos veces al joven y observar con atención la situación. Hubiese sido imposible hacer ese recorrido con la camioneta anterior. Así me di cuenta que el muchacho estaba en peligro de ser engañado por aquel hombre. Nos acercamos a los dos y al vernos el hombre mayor se fue. Le pregunté al muchacho si estaba bien. Dijo que sí, solo que tenía hambre y frío. Le ofrecí que se subiera a la camioneta. Fue allí cuando el chico, Gonzalo, me contó que ese hombre había querido secuestrarlo. Gracias a Dios no fue posible que se lo llevara, pues nuestra presencia le ayudó a Gonzalo a salir de esa situación.

Mientras hablaba, me llamó la atención cómo temblaba de frío y la cara de desesperación que tenía. Lo llevé a comprar ropa y zapatos. En el camino nos comentó que fue un martirio pero llegó a Piedras Negras. Ya había cruzado la frontera una vez. Sumergido en el Río Bravo pudo cruzar las boyas pero la migra lo capturó, lo mantuvo preso por tres días y después lo deportaron así mojado y sin comer. No había comido desde haber sido deportado hasta el momento en que lo encontramos.

Después de comer y poner su ropa nueva, lo fuimos a dejar en la estación de autobuses. Al saber que ese chico es Mexicano, de la misma localidad que yo, y que igual que yo migró a los 19 años para probar suerte, recordé mi propia llegada a los Estados Unidos. Me sentí agradecida por todas las oportunidades que Dios me ha dado. Por Dios estoy aquí hasta el día de hoy sirviendo a las personas que siguen probando suerte para obtener una vida mejor.

Photo credit: Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt; Pastor J. presents an Endowment Certificate to Pastor Ellen Williams, representing Eagle Pass Ministry on 5Mar2023.



English version of the Eagle Pass legacy story

We have had the fortune and grace of God in this year. I've realized that the needs never end. I am filled with despair when I

see that helping a few is never enough because every day there are more people arriving and extending their hands to ask for help. It'll never be enough, but I still receive joy when I see the smile of gratitude from someone who was not able to continue because they had lost their strength after not having eaten for several days.

This is the case of Gonzalo, a young 19-year-old man that decided to try his luck and left behind his family, studies, and friends. Gonzalo told me that his mom had supported his decision to come North. When he looked at his situation of extreme poverty and his sick

parents, he could not take it anymore. He left secretly without anyone knowing because he doesn't like goodbyes.

I met Gonzalo one day when I was going to Frontera Digna, a shelter on the Mexican side of the Río Grande. I saw that there was a young man shivering from the cold. That day it was cloudy and cold. He was hidden underneath the bridge. From the van, I could see that a man was approaching him.

Since we were in the new van that we had purchased through the donations and grants we received in this year from Lord of Life, it was possible to pass by the young man two times to observe the situation carefully. It would have been impossible to do this in the previous car. This was how I realized that the youth was in danger of being deceived by the older man. We approached the two and when he saw us, the older man left. I asked the young man if he was okay. He said yes and that he was hungry and cold. We offered to give him a ride. That was when the young man, Gonzalo, shared that the man had wanted to kidnap him. Thanks be to God that it was not possible for the man to take Gonzalo since our presence gave him an opportunity to get out of that situation.

As Gonzalo spoke, I noticed how he shivered with cold and that he wore desperation on his face. I took him to buy clothes and shoes. On the way, he said that the trip had been torture, but that he had made it to Piedras Negras. He had already crossed the border once. Submerged in the Rio Grande, he was able to cross the buoys but immigration captured him and detained him for three days before deporting him wet and without food. He hadn't eaten since being deported.

After eating and putting on his new clothes, we dropped him off at the bus station. When I found out that the young man was Mexican and from the same region as me, and that just like me, he had migrated at 19 years old to try his luck, I remembered my arrival in the U.S. I felt grateful for all the opportunities that God has given me. It is because of God that I'm here today serving people that keep trying their luck to obtain a better life.

It's amazing how tangible assistance can make a difference in people's lives, especially in situations as difficult as those faced by people migrating like Gonzalo. Your intervention and mine not only provide security and support, but also provide the opportunity to move forward. It's admirable how despite the difficulties and challenges, we can continue working together extending a helping hand to those who need it most.



Across Texas every day, Upbring is advancing child wellbeing for children, families and communities. Our lifechanging programs include foster care, supervised independent living for young adults aging out of foster care, children's residential treatment center, children's shelters for unaccompanied minors, Head Start and Early Head Start, and community services. These programs are designed to meet each child's needs and make a meaningful and holistic impact on their lives. Over 13,000 children are impacted by the work we do each year.

The Legacy of Lord of Life Lutheran Church Endowment has enhanced the work we do at Upbring by contributing over \$18,000 in its first year and helping to fund programs statewide. Here are a few examples of how this support has made an impact:



113

teen and pre-teen girls given a safe place to begin their healing journey at Upbring New Life Children's Center



101

children connected with a forever family by Upbring Foster-to-Adopt



2,135

children served by Upbring Head Start and Trinity Charter Schools



35

tons of food distributed through our food voucher program in Lubbock county



4,911

unaccompanied children served by Upbring Children's Shelters and Transitional Foster Care



3,326

households were served with food and utility services

In addition to the endowment gift, Lord of Life also awarded \$2,400 for Upbring to use towards a KUT Business Circle Membership. This support has allowed Upbring to extend its brand campaign across Austin, directly impacting 414,400 listeners. This initiative was a key component of our broader marketing efforts, which amassed 36 million brand impressions. Aimed at boosting brand awareness by 5% in just eight months, these efforts have already yielded tangible benefits-- Upbring is seeing record-low job vacancies, increased partnership interest, notable press coverage, and the Austin Business Journal's CEO of the Year Award—all of which aids Upbring in advancing child wellbeing.

The support received from Lord of Life has been vital in amplifying our mission and impact. Thank you for inviting us to be stewards of the Lord of Life Legacy. It is an honor to serve children and families across Texas and your support is an essential part of our progress.



Photo credit: Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt; [left] Lord of Life's altar, ready to serve the community meal as a reminder of our collective forgiveness from sin through Christ and our togetherness in this celebration; [right] the front façade of the building that housed the community of Lord of Life Lutheran Church since 2006.



Technicolor Ministries continues to be exceedingly grateful for the gifts of Lord of Life Lutheran Church. The past year has brought us new challenges and invited us into new work. We've added two volunteer directors - Callahan Jordan our Camping Ministries Director and Lillian Martinez Rodriguez our Belonging Director - held several virtual worship services, launched an LGBTQIA2S+ centered confirmation curriculum for both youth and adults, protested at the state Capitol for trans rights and drag performance, and held our first queer camping trip, among many other new and exciting things.



*Photo credit: Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt;
Pastor J. presents an Endowment
Certificate, and a check for \$33,000 (to
fund Technicolor Camp Ministry) to
Pastor Katy Miles-Wallace, Pastor of
Technicolor Ministries, on 5Mar2023.*

We continue to be a “backpacking” ministry, light weight, easy to move, and operating on as much of a shoestring budget as we can. And yet, the weighty financial

gifts of the Lord of Life legacy have offered us so much freedom. In our first camping trip, we did ask for small donations to offset costs or for contributions in food, but we were able to run a trip where there was absolutely no obligation to pay anything in order to participate. In dreaming of what might come next for Technicolor Ministries, we don't do that dreaming from a place of scarcity, but from an

abundance - knowing just how far we can make those dollars stretch and that we have more than we could have hoped for at the start. We aren't in a position where our primary function is fundraising to survive, but rather where our focus can be on meaningful ministry and creating meaningful faithful space for LGBTQIA2S+ people and allies, no matter the cost. And, as churchwide budgets get tighter, we recognize that we are incredibly privileged to not worry about what might come, knowing that we don't *have* to be financially dependent on the national church.

Thank you Lord of Life, for the gifts you have given, both in monetary contributions and in the peace of mind and freedom to creativity that they have provided. You've set us up in a place of stability from the start and we couldn't be more grateful!

Lord of Life Lutheran Church Legacy of Resurrection Endowment Partners (*perpetual giving, with links*)

[Technicolor Ministries](#) (25%)

[Eagle Pass/ Frontera Ministries](#) (25%)

[Reconciling Works](#) (25%)

[Upbring](#) (25%)

One-Time Partners/Recipients

[Southwestern Texas Synod](#) (\$195,000)

Supports the creation of a Synod-wide ministry focusing on Holy Fork in the Road Ministries; funds up to six years of ministry leadership

[QWELL](#) (\$50,000)

[Texas Ramp Project](#) (\$25,000)

[Peace Lutheran Church](#) (\$500,000)

On-site emergency family housing project

Scouting (\$3000)

Camp Ministries through Technicolor Ministries (\$33,000)

National Public Radio (\$4800)

\$2400, each, to sponsor business relationships for QWELL and Upbring

[Texas Impact](#) (\$50,000)

[Palabra de Vida Ministries](#) (\$20,000)

LoLLC Holy Furniture will be stewarded by the Palabra de Vida community

You can join this legacy story by contacting [Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest](#) and donating to the Lord of Life Lutheran Church Legacy of Resurrection Endowment or give directly to any of the organizations listed above.

Holy Fork in the Road (HFitR) Ministry continues to steward the Lord of Life legacy through direct ministry impacts in the regions of Austin and San Antonio through the faithful leadership of Pastors J. Mills and J. Cunningham, with support from the Office of the Bishop and many congregational and community partners. HFitR is dedicated to reconnecting the Church with our neighbors through agency, network, and healing widening our Call and mission through intentional discernment of God's Call to us all, in our unique contexts.

While this is a story of Resurrection, we also work in the liminal space of transitions across the Synod, exploring community growth through Rebirth (radical change) and the Call Process (partnering with a newly-called Rostered Leader). The most recent manifestation of this stewardship is the “What’s in your Backpack?” event, exploring the 10 things every congregation needs moving into a transitional ministry space. Want to learn more? Reach out to holyforkministry@swtsynod.org, or call 830-379-9900, ext.17.

“We give thanks for this opportunity to have served, to have worshipped, and to have contributed to this community from our consecration on September 8th in 1996 until today. It has been 27 loving and gospel-filled years of ministry and relationship. As we have experienced the range of opportunity and invitation that is available to us in this resurrection moment, we must also acknowledge the grief that exists in this space with the joy of what lies ahead. We hope to leave space for the grief and invite you to join us in prayer as we sojourn in faith, entering this reality that is not unlike the journey of the Magi... we bear gifts for another community, following the Living God to a new and unfamiliar place with goals to grow and be nurtured in a new space, with new Siblings, always remembering what Lord of Life Lutheran Church has meant to us, and to you. Our hearts set on the radical message of love in the gospel, we set out from this place, carrying our spiritual gifts, memories, and faith needs into the new, following the light of Christ.” (final note, Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Office of the Pastor, March 5, 2023)

*Photo credit: Deacon Darcy Mittelstaedt;
celebratory cake enjoyed during the
fellowship following the final
worship gathering of LoLLC.*



*Photo credit: Deacon
Darcy Mittelstaedt; the
community of Lord of
Life Lutheran Church,
5Mar2023.*

ⁱ Belindo, Barry D., Garland Brunoe, Gordon Campbell, Shandiiin Church, Alvin Deer, John GrosVenor, Antonia Belindo, Bryan Jon Maciewski, Dale and Charlotte Tsosie, and Terry M. Wildman. First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2021.

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