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Congregational Council
Alecia Harrison President
Julie Bogle Secretary
Lindsay Crocker Treasurer
Tess Andrews Deputy Treasurer
Terry Barnes Financial Secretary
Sarah Watkins, Steven Brantley

December 2021



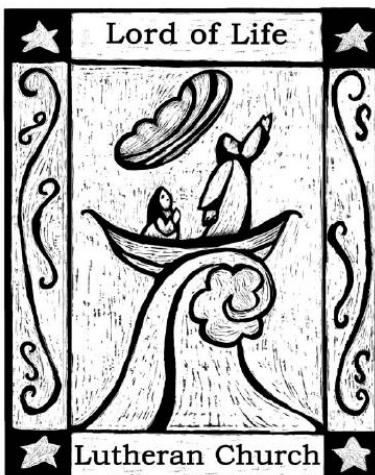
Lord of Life
Lutheran Church
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Sundays: 10 am – In-Person Worship
10 am - Live Stream Virtual Worship via Facebook Live
<https://www.facebook.com/LoLLCGarner/>

Eucharist: Every Sunday



Life-Lines

December 2021

WONDERMENTS FROM PASTOR WAYNE'S WORLD

Christmas is the time we celebrate Jesus' Birth as a wonderful event. God in love sends His Son, Jesus, into the world as One of us. That Incarnation is the beginning of Jesus' work of salvation. That is all good and we sing hymns expressing our joy. The Incarnation, God taking on human form is, from the beginning filled with hope for the downtrodden, those on the margins of society, the less fortunate. But the Incarnation was also a warning to the powerful.

In the Magnificat, Mary's response to God after she learns she will give birth to God's Son, she says, "He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty." The infant that the angel directed the shepherds to was not being hosted by relatives or even able to stay in a shelter. They found Him in a lowly place, a home to barn animals. The wise men brought gifts for royalty; gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They must have thought their GPS was faulty when they arrived at Jesus humble home. He was not born in a gilded palace but in a lowly, dirty place.

Jesus' Birth is seen as a wonderful event that we celebrate. It is indeed a "Wonderment".

Nonetheless, 2000 years ago in a territory of the Roman Empire, His Birth was a disruption. His Birth discomforts the political elite. King Herod orders the genocide of male children in the region. As He enters into His ministry, Jesus confronts the religious elite constantly. He upends what is normal eating with prostitutes and befriending tax collectors.

At times this One prophesized as Prince of Peace is a disturber of the Peace, getting in the faces of those who want to stone an adulteress, and overturning the

tables of moneychangers in the temple. He stood with the poor, the hungry, the homeless; all those who had no voice. Yes, He even died between two criminals whose punishment was just. His was sacrificial.

From Jesus' Birth to His death and resurrection, and all the events of Jesus' life in between, the Love of God for us, His people, shines through. May Jesus' Light shine through in our decorations, our Christmas. May Jesus' light shine through as we gather together for worship first as we prepare for Jesus Birth, then celebrate it. May Jesus' Light shine through as we graciously receive gifts of love from family and friends in the same way we receive God's gift of love to us in the form of His Son. May Jesus' Light shine through as we look upon all God's people in a Radically, Holy, Inclusive Way. (I thank my family who gifted me with a cap which reads "Radically Inclusive".) May Jesus' Light shine in all of us.

~ Pastor Wayne



CHURCH COUNCIL



From the Desk of Your Council President

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
Galatians 6:9, NIV

Your church Council is still working hard for you. We have our 2022 goals and are still working to determine ways that we can measure achievement in each area. We are continuing to work with the Synod Coach to guide us through this process.

I am PLEASED to announce that we have 5 members of the Congregation that have agreed to join the Council. Sylvia Lambert and Sarah Watkins have agreed to run for the two 1-year terms. Terry Barnes, Tim Clark, and Gale Isaacs have agreed to run for the three 3-year terms. Bios will be posted in the near future. Elections will be held at our Annual Congregational meeting. Returning Council members are Julie Bogle for a 1-year term, and Tess Andrews, Steve Brantley, and Alecia Harrison each have two more years to serve on the Council.

ANNUAL MEETING



The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 23rd immediately after worship. We will approve the 2022 Church Budget and get an update on the Kitchen Renovation and Sanctuary Camera installation in addition to voting on new Council members.

Please let me know if there are any other issues you would like to discuss with the entire Congregation.

Our Leadership Retreat will be on Saturday, February 6th at the church. Tentative time is 9 am until noon. All new and old Council members should plan to attend AND all Committee Chairs are encouraged to attend. And as always, Council meetings are open to the Congregation. Anyone may attend, just please let me know that you are planning on coming.

We continue to need members to sign up for worship assistants and fellowship providers each Sunday. There are many opportunities for all of us to serve. Consider what you can do today!



Plan to attend the Annual Mary Jo Albert Christmas Concert on Monday, December 13th at 7 pm. Ray Green and Dr. Brad will not disappoint!

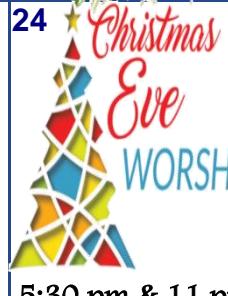
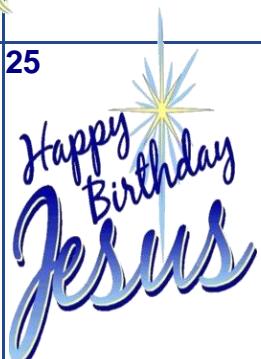


And finally, I am looking forward to the Annual Christmas Party sponsored by the Men's Group. This is one of my favorite events of the year. I laugh from my belly as people try to steal gifts during the Dirty Santa gift exchange. There is a \$15 limit on the gifts this year. The festivities start at 7 pm. Try to be there!

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand"
Isaiah 41:10, NIV

Blessings,
Alecia Harrison, Council President

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Every Sunday 9 am Coffee & Old Testament Bible Study w/Pastor Wayne 10 am Worship			1 Rotary Breakfast	2	3	4
5  SECOND SUNDAY OF Advent	6	7	8 Rotary Breakfast	9	10 ○ Holy Night at Camp Agapé Friday & Saturday	11  O Holy Night
12  THIRD SUNDAY OF Advent	13 Annual Mary Jo Albert Christmas Concert 7 pm	14	15 NO Rotary Breakfast	16	17  Christmas PARTY	18
19  FOURTH SUNDAY OF Advent	20	21  WINTER starts today!	22 NO Rotary Breakfast	23	24  Christmas Eve WORSHIP 5:30 pm & 11 pm	25  Happy Birthday Jesus
26	27	28	29 NO Rotary Breakfast	30	31	 HAPPY NEW YEAR

My Christmas Wish:

Come Back to Church

REMINDER: We were NOT made to walk through this Christian life all by ourselves. We are blessed to be part of an incredible, reciprocal home team that embraces us all... it's our very own Lord of Life Lutheran Church. We are it; it is us. With this knowledge entrenched firmly in our spiritual lives, you must realize that it's time to come back to church... ALL of us! Okay, so maybe since around March 2020 you have watched every online service, OR somewhere in between, OR not at all. Somehow, given the changing landscape (albeit slowly) you have not made it back into the building... you have not returned to church.

Perhaps going/coming to church has gotten more complicated. It is entirely possible that maybe you were attending in the first place from force of habit; you know what I mean... something you were "supposed" to do... something obligatory (even hardcore attendees have been down that road), and then along came this pandemic 'reset'. Suddenly we had months of good Sundays without leaving the house, and a new 'virtual' way to rev up our spirituality... so you haven't come back. Please be fully aware that this isn't a '*to-each-his-own*' kinda thing... we all need YOU! (yes, just like the Uncle Sam poster).

Before you make a decision though, take a minute to reflect on the importance of our gatherings such that the desire to meet and intermingle GROWS instead of atrophying. For me it was *All Saints Day* 2020; I needed to light a candle IN church for my mother who died four months prior. When I came into the building and realized that I could sit worshipfully in a pew behind the camera as the service was being recorded and still participate in the service, to quote Stevie Wonder, I was "*Overjoyed!*" Shortly thereafter, when the mandate moved to ten (10) persons in a space, we were able to take advantage of that wonderful opportunity. It filled my soul with gladness! I was IN church, SEEING people, wave-GREETING, air-HUGGING each week... awesome!

Just last week I missed a church pal who has been AWOL for a couple of weeks, so I called him. I must admit that I was somewhat surprised that our usual banter was skewed a bit. As he went on to talk about fulfilling his spiritual needs, or lack thereof, it reminded me of soooo many people over the years

who have told me a similar story version wherein a particular person (usually a spouse) didn't make them happy. I told them each, "You are responsible for your own happiness, no one else." There is something called personal responsibility to ourselves... the way in which we react to situations causes us to be happy or unhappy and we seem to feel that the wonder of happiness is a 24/7 all-round- us phenomenon; it's not! So, we apply that equivalent to situations when we need an excuse to flip (or flop). We are each responsible for our spiritual journey, and at this point, honesty is a better policy. If you're musing that our restored gatherings are too restrictive (they aren't), and/or our online options are so readily available (uhh, there are internet glitches) and streaming is very convenient, then excuses have intruded into your life! That mindset screams, "Why should we even meet in person?" Excuses! Unless you need to stay home for health reasons, please come on back! The sanctuary is OPEN!

This is my official wish for Christmas... we are not ethereal creatures made to float in virtual space. Come back IN. We need you and your gifts; you need us and support, plus, the Bible instructs us to come together in groups to worship our Heavenly Father. In our hearts and souls, we know these things to be true: 1) the Church is one body; 2) we're a spiritual family; 3) the sermon is a sacred and reflective moment; 4) there's nothing better than singing together [the choir sits among you]; and 5) we need communion.

We are God's people and we should all gather again... I prayerfully wish, during this season of the Holy Child, that you will reflect on pre-2020 and re-join us in church. Our spiritual vision of Heaven doesn't resemble a quarantine, a Zoom call, or a livestream... it's a face-to-face encounter with the risen Christ and a respectful reunion of Lord of Life saints and angels. Have a wonderful Christmas Season and let's make 2022 a Lord of Life reunion! Be Blessed!

Gale J. Isaacs

**LOOKING FOR
A SIGN FROM
GOD TO COME
TO CHURCH?**

Well, this is it!



"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Hebrews 13:16, NIV

The Angel Tree is UP! This year we chose to sponsor 25 children from the Aversboro Road Daycare Center.



ANGEL TREE

rapid response to take gift tags! And all your gifts are due back to the church on Sunday, December 12th.

Social Concerns will provide a small reception after the **Annual Mary Jo Albert Christmas Concert** on Monday, December 13th. The Concert begins at 7 pm. The music will be a blessing and this event is sure to put you into the Christmas Spirit.

The Social Concerns committee made our annual donation to the ELCA Good Gifts campaign. We purchased bees, a school uniform, a scholarship for a girl to attend school, a lantern, a piglet and part of a cow.



We continue to collect food for the Garner Area Ministries Food Pantry. As you can imagine, the needs are great this year. So many people are struggling to recover from the pandemic. Please consider buying an extra can of whatever you are getting



for your family to donate to GAM. The collection baskets are in the narthex by the front door. We have consistently donated over 100 pounds of food each month in 2021. We hope to maintain this level of giving. And thanks to YOU for making this happen! We donated 224 pounds of food in November and were the only ones to donate turkeys for Thanksgiving! Yay us! We are living up to our reputation of "The Little Church that Could"!

"This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you."

John 15:12, NIV.

Alecia Harrison and Gale Isaacs
Co-Chairs, Social Concerns Committee



Midweek Simple Suppers/Vespers

Each Wednesday during Advent we will have Simple Supper at 6 pm, followed by Vespers with the focus on the book of Haggai.

Simple Supper will be merely soup and bread.

Pastor Wayne will host December 1st.

Alecia Harrison will host December 8th.

Please sign up in the fellowship hall if you'd like to host on the 15th or 22nd.

Advent
Soup Supper
& Worship Service



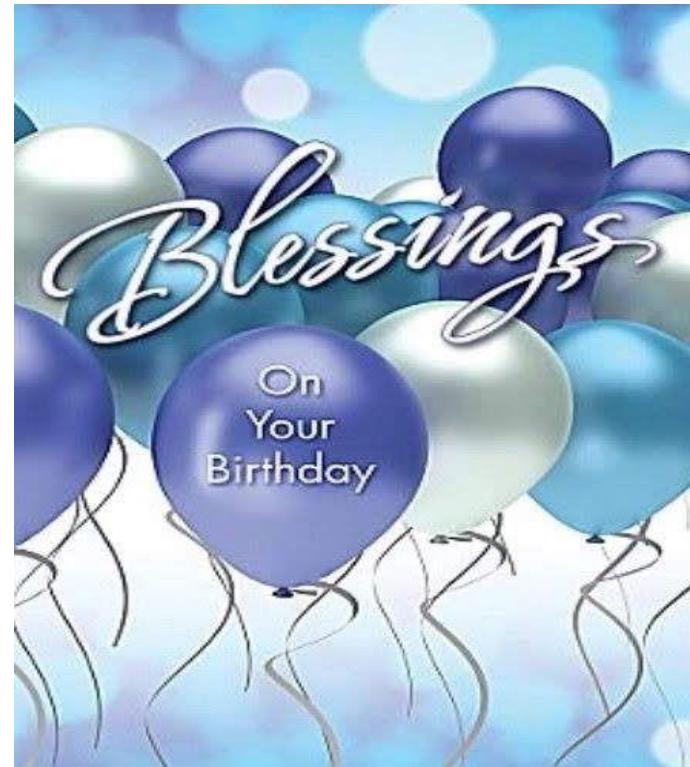


We pray for our world and those in it with hope for our future.

Family of James Nielsen Andrews – Harry Albert's Uncle; Jim Powers; Shirley Poole; Joan Stuart – broken hip; Mary Langworthy's mother, Evelyn Peterson – broken femur; Eric Roeser, MS; Julie Roeser, eye surgery; Julie Roeser's brother, Paul Panek; Shannon Thomsen – bicycle accident; Jim Powers; Jonathan McCoy; Bob Savoysky – pancreatic cancer; Karen Morassi, cousin of Anne Marie Dubnansky; Ingrid Albee, long-time friend of the Dubnansky's; Lora Clark's friend, Rebecca Bowman, breast cancer; Sheryll Albert's father, John Pope, and his wife, Barbara Pope; Kevin & his family, stage 4 cancer; Dennis King; Ginny King's niece, Robin Littleton – recurrence of breast cancer; Peg Stamp, myeloma & back surgery; Julia Lochra's friend, Tom Chism - ALS; Tess Andrews brother, David Van Benschoten, multiple myeloma; Tess Andrews friend, Jon Driggers – heart surgery; Karen Rodgers, stage 4 cancer; Lindsay Crocker's Nephew, Daniel Harman, health and healing; Karen Wright's mother, Carol Goodford, heart issues; Pam Klawiter's co-worker, Carolyn Harbertson, breast cancer; Holly Hans' sister, Heather House and her family; Holly Hans' mother, Carol Hardy; Shannon Thomsen's niece, Kylie Gardner, tumors

and Turner Syndrome; Paul & Kerri Blanchard's son, Jason, mental disability; Chuck Wallace, Don Wallace's nephew, health

problems; Susie, Benjamin and Bryce Lowe.



December

December 5	Rebecca Swanson
December 7	Amanda Babel
	Jim Rebbeor
December 8	Lisa Grayson
December 9	Neil Brennecke
December 14	John Nalepa
December 20	Pastor Dave Brooks
December 26	Becky Babel
	Drew Cook
December 28	Karen Wright
December 30	Verity Eggert

January

January 6	Holly Hans
January 7	Becky Roof
January 8	Grace Barnes
January 9	Anne Marie Dubnansky
January 14	Jamie Bredell
	Becky Von St. Paul
January 15	Rita Clark
January 18	Gere Savolainen
January 19	Amanda Childress
January 21	Ryan Macurdy
January 24	Barbara Kyles
January 25	Pastor Wayne Dubnansky



Advent is here – what are you doing about it?

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.

You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations."

Psalms 89:1-4, NIV

Advent is a time for waiting, hoping, and looking forward to the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We have such anticipation with our Christmas celebrations. But I will try a new personal goal this year: NOT to be caught up in the busyness of the season. I will look for the better part. I am reminded of the Martha and Mary story, and I thank Helen Holderman for sharing this devotion with me. Often this time of year, an unwelcome guest shows up in my life called *anxiety*. I am barely getting through my days now with all my activities and then I add on baking,

Christmas cards, parties, decorating, etc. In our Bible story from Luke 10:38-42, Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet soaking in every word that He is saying. Martha is scurrying around preparing meals and cleaning up. Martha complains to Jesus that Mary is not helping her with all her work. Jesus wants us to know HIM. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. Mary chose the better part and we should too. I pray that you have a MARY Christmas!!! (pun intended)

Our little church is doing such a great job reaching out to our community. As individuals we can make a slight difference in someone's life but together, we can change the world! Or at least our little corner of the world. Many of our routine activities can get you into the Christmas Spirit. We already have enough Scrooges around. We could use some more Tiny Tims.

You could:

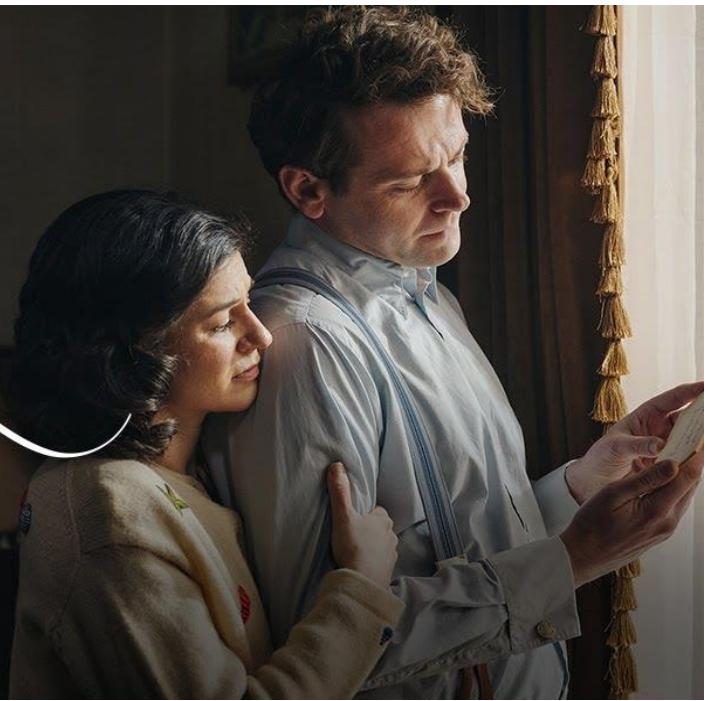
- ❖ Participate in a Worship Service as a choir member, reader, greater, usher or Assisting Minister.
- ❖ Bake Communion bread or donate wine for Communion.
- ❖ Buy a Christmas gift for a child in need.
- ❖ Buy food for the GAM Food Pantry.
- ❖ Attend the Mary Jo Albert Christmas Concert.
- ❖ Attend the Annual Christmas Party sponsored by the Men's Group.
- ❖ Bake cookies for your neighbors.
- ❖ Make hot chocolate for the neighborhood kids.
- ❖ Start collecting children's books for the Wake Up and Read book drive in January.
- ❖ Plan to bring something for Fellowship after church.
- ❖ Attend a midweek Simple Supper and Vesper service.

These are just a few suggestions. But we have the awesome responsibility OR privilege to be the Face of Christ to someone that just needed a smile today. You have no idea how much a simple act of kindness can touch someone, and the ripple effect that it creates. The World tells us to worry about ourselves first, but God tells us to Love our Neighbor. God is LOVE. Be that person that spreads love instead of doubt and confusion.

Blessings,
Alecia Harrison

SABINA

TORTURED FOR CHRIST
THE NAZI YEARS



SABINA, TORTURED FOR CHRIST: A Review

Sabina is the story of how God's love transformed an ambitious, hedonistic atheist into one of the greatest Christian women of the 20th century. This was written by one reviewer. He goes on to say that Sabina's amazing true story has redefined the concepts of love and forgiveness for millions around the world. There is one scene where Richard Wurmbrand, her pastor husband, (the title of Sabina's book is "The Pastor's Wife") who spent 12 years in Soviet prisons, is talking to a SS soldier who may have had a part in the murders of all Sabina's family. Richard tells him that, even though Sabina knows his role in the deaths of her family, she will probably make him dinner. Well, almost, she hugs the man and proclaims Christ forgives him because, for her, Christ's forgiveness is so much more important. If Christ gives forgiveness, she does also.

Now I said in one of my daily notes that Sabina evolved in her Christian, so did Richard. When the Germans invaded Romania the Wurmbrand's homeland, they were debating what to do. They thought about leaving the country, but then with one statement from Sabina, "We've got work to do here", they abandoned that idea.

One huge take away from Sabina is she never gave herself credit as being able to do the things she did, but she described it as always "Christ in her". Her acts of love were not only for the "good guys". The film opens with her helping Nazis escape the Russians who had just rolled into Romania and Bucharest. One of the soldiers asked her, "Why would she, a Jewish Christian, risk her life for her enemies, the army that killed her entire

family?" By her actions, not by anything she said, she was proclaiming the gospel, Christ's love.

The story of Sabina is a love story, her love of Christ, but also her love for Richard which he reciprocated. They were married 64 years, many of them apart physically due to imprisonments; but always thinking of one another. Their hard early lives must have made them strong physically, because they both lived into their 80's and died within months of each other. There is a scene where they, along with their baby, Mihai, were being hospitable to their new neighbors by bringing a food dish to them. The neighbors rejected it a number of times, but the Wurmbrands persisted, and later we see their neighbor helping them save Jewish girls.

Apparently when Richard was arrested the second time by the Soviets after only a short time of freedom following his first imprisonment, he said to Sabina, "Give my love to Mihai, his son, and the pastor who denounced him.

I have made the statement to some, that this film is perhaps the best, if not one of the best Christian-themed films I have ever seen. Not because of great filming (it does give a travel log of Romania, in particular Bucharest), not because of the acting, but simply because the love of Christ is so genuine as well as the Wurmbrand's love for each other. Ok then, I guess the acting is great as well. When the DVD becomes available, I will purchase it, and it is my hope there will be congregational interest in viewing it.

~ Pastor Wayne



Christmas 31 Day Scripture Writing Plan

Each of the scriptures below takes ten minutes or less to copy out. Commit to spending ten minutes each day listening to God's voice as you simply copy these texts out of your Bible.

Day 1-Isaiah 7:14-17
Day 2-Isaiah 9:6-7
Day 3- Isaiah 11:1-5
Day 4-Isaiah 11:6-10
Day 5-Isaiah 40:1-5
Day 6-Isaiah 52:7-10
Day 7-Jeremiah 33:14-16
Day 8-Psalm 72:1-7
Day 9-Psalm 72:8-14
Day 10-Psalm 72:15-20

Day 11-Psalm 95:1-7
Day 12-Malachi 3:1-3
Day 13-Matthew 1:18-20
Day 14-Matthew 1:21-25
Day 15-Matthew 2:1-6
Day 16-Matthew 2:7-12
Day 17-Luke 1:26-29
Day 18-Luke 1:30-34
Day 19-Luke 1:35-38
Day 20-Luke 1:46-50

Day 21-Luke 1:51-56
Day 22-Luke 2:4-7
Day 23-Luke 2:8-12
Day 24-Luke 2:13-16
Day 25-Luke 2:17-20
Day 26-Galatians 4:4-7
Day 27-Philippians 2:5-8
Day 28-Philippians 2:9-11
Day 29-James 1:16-18
Day 30-Titus 3:3-7
Day 31-Choose your own verse



Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.
Psalm 119:18