

Join Us As We Celebrate Only Jesus



# New Life Christian Community

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

Sunday, December 18, 2022

Vol. 16, Issue 10

## Pastoral Pondering

### The Good Shepherd

As we get ready to celebrate the event for which the entire year seems to have been preparing, it is paramount that you get your book reading material ready for the turning of the calendar. No matter the books that become the brick and mortar of that stack, let the Bible have the keystone position. Daily, before you read anything else, first pick up your Bible - take up and read. You may think you've mastered it - but I'll wager my life, you have not mastered it. All eternity will be insufficient to master The Word. Indeed, the "mastering" goes in the other direction. Though some may think they know *more* about the Word, there is really only one category of people. Parishioner, pastor, priest, parson, elder, deacon, clergy, bishop, layman, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother, sister - we are all, at best, students of The Word.

There is one passage that makes this point very clearly. Take your Bible off that stack of books and open to [Ezekiel 34](#). The chapter opens with the Lord commanding Ezekiel to "*prophesy against the shepherds of Israel*" (34:2)! Apparently, Israel's "shepherds" (the religious leaders of Israel), who had been called to care for God's people, had been eating the sheep rather than feeding the sheep. God said to those religious leaders, "*You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep*" (34:3). In other words, the shepherds have believed that the sheep exist for *their* life rather than the shepherd for the lives of the sheep.

So fed up with those human shepherds, God turns and states, "*No longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths*" (34:10). He goes on, "*Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out...I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God*" (34:11,15). God will be the Shepherd.

That word "seek" in [verse 11](#) (also in [verse 12](#)) is a very interesting word. This Hebrew word is primarily used to describe what a shepherd or Priest would have done of an animal prior to an animal's sacrifice. The word is literally "examine." It is the process by which the Priest determines if the sheep are worthy to be sacrificed (searching for blemishes etc.). The shepherd would examine the sheep to determine which sheep were part of His sheepfold. In other words, the Shepherd (who is God almighty) will search out and examine His sheep. He gets into our lives - into our darkest corners and examines us.

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## Pastoral Pondering

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Those who know their Bible history know that the shepherd that God speaks of here in Ezekiel is Jesus Christ. He is God's words fulfilled as God Himself walks this earth and seeks out and examines His sheep. Countless times in the gospels Jesus' actions are a direct fulfillment of Ezekiel's words. Take a look for yourself. Jesus' life is a fulfillment of this shepherding role. Indeed, He is the good shepherd (a direct admission that He is the shepherd of which Ezekiel spoke). This is not hard to see.

The part that we tend to have trouble seeing (and remembering) is the part that this time of year should shout. Not only is Jesus the Good Shepherd. He is also the *only* sheep found worthy to be called The Lamb of God. And despite this backdrop of reality, we have this tendency to believe that when God examines us - we will somehow be found acceptable - but the only Lamb who was examined and found acceptable to God was (and still is) Jesus Christ - that child born in an animal stall. Moreover, the one whose birth the shepherds (who *actually kept their watch*) came to search out - to see and examine this one Lamb! If we are to be found among the sheepfold of the Almighty - we *must* be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ - otherwise, we will be simply named among the goats (see [Ezekiel 34:17ff](#)). To be clothed in Christ means that the spotless Lamb covers us. Just as Adam and Eve were clothed by God in the garden, the Lord has provided another Lamb for our covering.

To all who read this article, please know that there is only one Shepherd. To put it another way, we must all confess that *Jesus is Lord*. And just as there is only one Shepherd, there is only one Lamb in whom we can live.

Let yourself be clothed and led by the Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. He is the beginning and end of our salvation.

May the merriment of Christ continually fill each of our homes as we remember how great a salvation was given to us by the great shepherd of the sheep - the Lamb of God.

Your fellow sheep - led by and covered in Christ,

Tony Minell



If you are a visitor this morning or have only been coming to New Life for a few months we are glad you are joining with us! If you would like to learn more about New Life, be sure to stop by the Resource Center in the front foyer to pick up a welcome bag we have for you. Please join us for fellowship and meal after service today. We would love to meet and get to know you and for you to get to know us more.

## MINISTRY DIRECTORY

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Pastoral Eldership Team:

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Pastor Tony Minell             | 715.417.1982 |
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| Greg Mattson                   | 715.417.2444 |
| Rene Milner                    | 715.557.0185 |
| Jim Nelson                     | 651.283.2132 |
| Jay Swisher                    | 763.587.3472 |

### This Week's Scheduled Events:

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| Tues  | Men's Bible Study– 6:30 am                              |
| Tues  | Women's Precepts– 6:30-8 pm                             |
| Wed   | Every Man's Battle– 6:00 am                             |
| Thurs | Men's Bible Study– 6:30 am                              |
| Thurs | Ladies Bible Study– 10:00 am                            |
| Thurs | Ladies Bible Study– Noon                                |
| Thurs | Ladies Study– 6:30 pm                                   |
| Thurs | GriefShare– 6:30 pm<br>(Adults & Youth meet separately) |

### December Memory Verse:

John 1:14 (ESV)

"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."

### December Fellowship Tip:

As we enter this season of Advent, share with someone a tradition you have that helps you stay centered on Jesus during this busy time.

### Sunday Meals and Fellowship:

|        |                    |
|--------|--------------------|
| Dec 18 | Team 6 ~ Hotdishes |
| Dec 25 | No Meal Service    |

*No one should be spending Christmas day alone, so please consider opening your home to anyone without friends/family to celebrate Jesus with.*

Contact Barbara Judkins if interested in being on a meal team or a helper.

Check out New Life Online  
[newlifechristiancommunity.org](http://newlifechristiancommunity.org)

- **Christmas Eve Service:** Add to your calendars our Christmas Eve service **Saturday evening, December 24th at 6:30pm**. We will gather to sing, pray, and be encouraged through the Word. There are simple invites on the welcome table that you can take and hand out to invite family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers to the service. If you wish the worship wouldn't end Saturday evening, don't fret, we'll meet again in the morning for a Sunday Christmas service.
- **Annual Partners Meeting:** New Life Partners make sure to add to your calendars our Annual Partners Meeting **Sunday, January 22nd at 12:30pm**. Items that will be voted on include the 2023 Budget, Colleen Firkus filling the Treasurer position, Phil Rice being added to audit committee, and the elder board would like to recognize Brian Nelson as a new elder. If you haven't gotten to meet these brothers and sisters we encourage you to take a moment and connect with them before the meeting in January.
- **Women's Retreat:** Ladies if you haven't already be sure to mark your calendars for the **weekend of January 27-29**. Retreat location is in Clear Lake, WI. just about 25 miles from Dresser. The theme is *Adorned* and the focus will be on *Titus 2*. Grab a flier from the welcome table for more information and if you're planning on coming, make sure to write your name down on the sign-up sheet. Contact Shannon Nelson for any questions.



### Meal Team Ministry

*Are you looking for a way to use your talents or time to serve God? Consider joining a Sunday Meal Team. If interested, please, Contact: Barbie Judkins (309) 269-0556, Barb Manship (612) 804-9793 or Rosie Swisher (763) 458-1261*

### New Life Directory

If you would like to be included in our directory or have additions or changes, please send your information to:  
[nlccdirectory@gmail.com](mailto:nlccdirectory@gmail.com)



The wondrous, expectant and exciting season of Advent is upon us! If you would enjoy reading an Advent devotional book to help focus your days, the Resource Center has two titles: *Love Came Down at Christmas* by Sinclair Ferguson and *The Dawning of Indestructible Joy* by John Piper. Advent books abound but these two authors are excellent. Come check out our other resources as well -- perhaps you'll find an item for someone special on your Christmas list!



**Today's Passage:**  
Pastor Tony's message is from the  
New Testament book,  
**Acts 24:10-21**

**Sermon Notes:**