

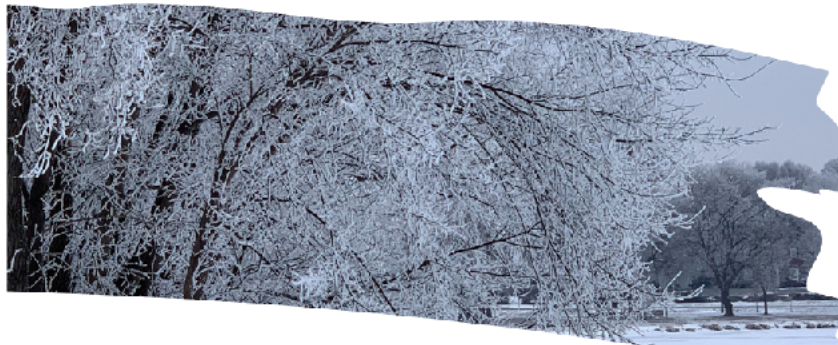
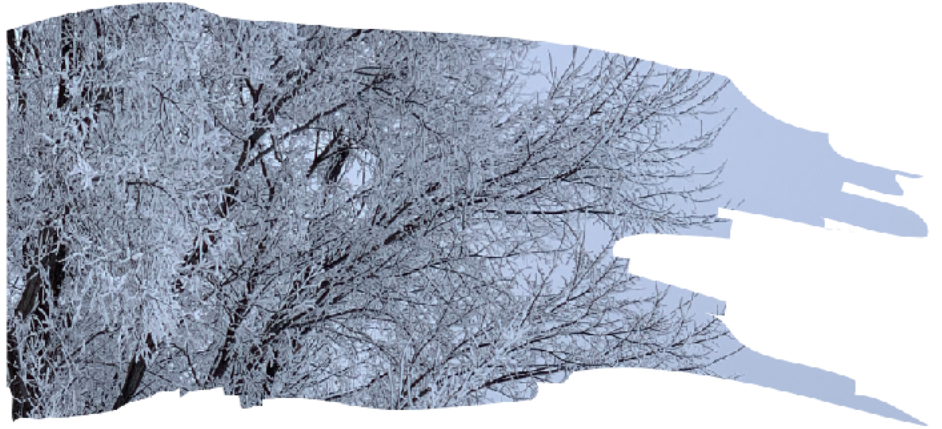
JANUARY 2024

LEWIS LAKE NEWS

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The Importance of Staying on Mission

by Joe Reed

There's a term that gets bantered about sometimes in a church context: "Mission drift." In a church, ministry is designed to accomplish the mission. If mission is the target, ministry is the gun. It's possible to have the right mission and ministry that misses the mark, but only by sheer accident can ministry hit the bullseye if it's not aiming at the target. So, it's good to revisit our mission from time to time. To remember what it is we're all about.

I am thankful our forefathers in the faith understood and stated the church's purpose and mission in a biblical way. Consider Article IV of the Lewis Lake Constitution:

The purpose of this church is:

- a) *To promote the knowledge of the Word of God and perfection in Godly life and character.*
- b) *To proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to seek to win the lost at home and abroad.*
- c) *To further the growth of believers in the Christian Life through preaching and teaching the Word of God.*
- d) *To train, teach and send believers in witness and service.*
- e) *To promote and train in Godly worship.*
- f) *To strengthen believers in Christian Fellowship.*
- g) *To stand firmly for the fundamentals of the Word of God.*

So long as we remain focused on and committed to these things, we will not only be faithful to the mission handed to us by the generations on whose shoulders we stand but faithful to Christ who gave them the mission in the first place.

It's important that we get the mission right, because *the church belongs to Jesus*. Jesus sets the mission. A church is what Jesus says it is, and a church

must do whatever he says it should do. A church only truly exists when Jesus says it does.

If a church drifts from its mission and starts aiming at a different one – even a good and noble one – it really ceases to be a church and becomes something else. Here's a far-fetched example: a church might decide it's going to focus all its energies on rescuing abandoned kittens. And who could be against that? I don't like seeing kittens suffer. Seems like a noble cause. But a group of people intent on saving kittens *isn't a church*. It's something else.

Satan can destroy a church simply by turning its focus away from its mission. If he does that, he can leave the people in harmony, the building packed every Sunday, the programs operating smoothly, and the bank accounts full of money. He might even help build up a church like that! He knows a church off its mission poses no threat to him or his kingdom.

Jesus wrote a letter to the Ephesian church and said this: *"I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first... repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent"* (Rev 2:4-5). When Jesus

threatens to 'remove their lampstand,' he means he won't consider them his church anymore. The people might still call themselves a church, they might keep right on doing whatever they were doing – and they were doing many good things, including defending the faith against error – but in Jesus' mind, they wouldn't be a church. And in the end, his is the only opinion that matters.

So, a fundamental element of a church's mission is to love Jesus. The Ephesian church started out a Jesus-loving church but drifted into becoming something else. It seems they drifted into a total focus on being a theologically precise church. Now it's good to be a theologically precise church. Jesus commends Ephesus

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CHRISTMAS TRAGEDIES

by Bob De Young

It doesn't take long, does it. Like that new iPhone you received for Christmas accidentally being backed over in the garage, so the love and brotherhood of the Christmas season is soon dashed by the realities of a cold cruel world. Almost immediately the "peace on earth, good will towards men" is replaced by a violent clash or a nasty encounter. This year was no different.

A story came to us, through the newspapers recently from the state of Florida, of 2 teenagers who had been arrested after one of them fatally shot their older sister in a dispute over who was getting more presents than the others. It gets more complicated than that, when the second brother shot at the first brother after he had shot his sister. The dead sister was 23 years old and the brother who shot her was 14. Again, this was simply over who was getting more gifts than the others, and whose gifts were more expensive. What a tragedy!

A second story comes to us from the Boston area. A group of Carolers had come from a local Church to sing for an 88-year-old woman who was recovering from a stroke and was paralyzed on one side of her body. While the carolers were singing, two young men came by and started punching a couple of the singers in the back of the head. The two injured carolers were both women in their 70's. Again, what a traumatic experience for these people. The beauty of the Christmas carols quickly changed into shouts and cries.

Sometime after the birth of Jesus we discover this same sort of thing happening to the Holy Family. The news of the presence of this new-born King gets out and soon roving bands of violent young men are sweeping through the towns of Israel, looking for babies to kill. Joseph and Mary have to flee from the land, ending up way down in Egypt for safety. Oddly, Egypt has never really been all that safe of a place to be for God's people. I guess there's an exception for every rule. Many a promise of Christmas joy and love have been dashed by the swords and fists of this evil world.

The book of Revelation has a fascinating section in chapter 12. There is a very glorious woman, who is pregnant. And there is a horrible red dragon who marshals all his power to destroy the child that is about to be born. But God takes the Child up to heaven and sends the woman to a special place of protection. Now the dragon is really angry about all of this and starts fighting with anyone he sees. And what does God do with this "out-of-control" dragon? He throws him down to the earth.

But wait a minute. The earth is where we are dwelling. Later on, in Revelation 12:12 we read;

"Therefore rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. But woe to you on earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short."

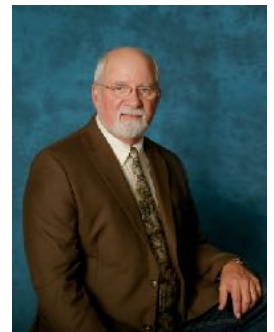
Just great! The devil is really mad, and he is here.

Why is it that the beauty and hope of the Christmas season can so quickly be ruined by the harsh realities of this broken world? I suppose there are many different reasons at play here, but one of them is the presence of an evil, angry, frustrated red dragon. This dragon, the devil, is committed to pulling people away from the true King, Jesus, and bringing as much destruction and pain into people's lives as he can.

Stories of murder and abuse, especially at Christmas time, are tragic indeed, but they are not new. May we be a people who, with God's enablement, say "no" to this dragon, and choose, instead, the way of love and compassion in the midst of this great war.

Pastor Bob

"This dragon, the devil, is committed to pulling people away from the true King, Jesus, and bringing as much destruction and pain into people's lives as he can. "



Pastor Bob De Young has served Lewis Lake since 1982. He is now semi-retired and is enjoying the Honorary title of Pastor Emeritus.



Women Ministries Annual Meeting

Monday, January 8, 2024 at 5:30 PM

We will start with a light supper and then move into the business meeting.
All Lewis Lake Women are welcome! Come and see what we're up to.
Please register online so we can plan dinner.



Our evergreen patio planter class was well attended. Everyone did a great job putting them together. It is so fun to see how they turn out. Thanks Debee for leading the class.

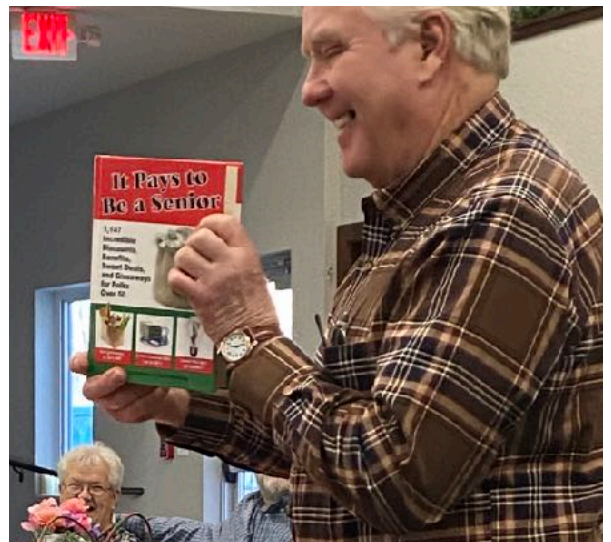




The 50 & Better Advent Luncheon was well attended. Dianna Sholtz catered the meal and it was delicious.

After the meal we played games and sang Christmas carols led by Michelle Seefeld who was eager to do so. 😊

The white elephant gift exchange was hilarious as always. You never know what you are going to get with this bunch.





Simply Christmas

The kids did a great job in the Christmas program. Thank you Betty Herges & Melodee Hall for putting this together and thank you to the volunteers, Sunday school teachers, and parents who made this program a success.



for its doctrinal discernment, and he will chastise the church at Pergamum for failing to correct or even throw out false teachers (Rev 2:14-15). Jesus warns against false prophets (Matt 7:15; 24:11, 24) and Paul insists that an elder must be able to identify and refute false teaching (Titus 1:9).

The very first church “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Notice they didn’t just *do* those things, they *devoted themselves* to, among other things, *the apostle’s teaching*. A church that doesn’t guard its doctrine won’t speak about Jesus accurately, and a church that doesn’t speak rightly of Jesus isn’t a church. Ephesus was right to have no toleration for false teaching. But they were wrong to drift away from loving Jesus. Of course, it’s impossible to rightly love Jesus if we understand Jesus wrongly. That’s why we need sound doctrine. But it *is* possible to have right doctrine and not love Jesus. See how sneaky that can be?

Pergamum was right to love Jesus, but wrong to tolerate false teaching. I suspect they just wanted to be nice and let everyone share their own opinion. At first blush, that seems the path of humility. It sounds arrogant to say, “I’m clearly right and you’re most definitely wrong!” Besides, it’s traumatic to confront or even throw people out of the church, and not everybody in the church will understand or appreciate why it’s necessary. But Jesus warns Pergamum if they don’t do it, he will come and do it himself. The clear implication is, “you don’t want that!” Jesus gave the leaders in Pergamum a responsibility to guard the church’s teaching, and if they failed and Jesus had to do it himself, surely part of Jesus’ cleanup effort would be removing those very kind, humble, agreeable, cowardly, unfaithful, and downright disobedient men. They were failing to keep the church on its mission, and a church on its mission isn’t a church.

“A church that doesn’t guard its doctrine won’t speak about Jesus accurately, and a church that doesn’t speak rightly of Jesus isn’t a church.”

The church’s mission also includes the proclamation and spread of the Gospel – the good news of Jesus’ atoning death, triumphant resurrection, majestic ascension, and impending return. This is the church’s message to the world. “Jesus died for our sins” is both history (Jesus died) and doctrine (for our sins). The church should say other true things to the world (You’re not an overdeveloped ape. Don’t kill babies. Marriage is one man and one woman. Keep sex within marriage. The only race is the human race.), but those things can’t become the church’s main message or mission. If they do, we have drifted into becoming an agent of social change.

Now don’t get me wrong, I’m all for social change. Our society is severely messed up and I for one would love to see some changes. But fixing society’s ills is not the church’s primary mission. The primary mission is loving and worshiping Christ, ‘fishing for men,’ protecting and promoting sound doctrine, training people in holy living and Christian fellowship.

Even if we could remake society in exactly the way we envisioned (we can’t), that *still* wouldn’t solve man’s greatest problem, which is his own sin before God. Anyone doesn’t get that settled through faith in Christ will be lost to an eternity of fiery damnation, even if he lives in the most perfect of all societies. And if the church doesn’t call attention to man’s greatest problem and the only solution, who will? Surely not the Boy Scouts, the VFW, or the Red Cross. They have other missions. If the church isn’t addressing this problem, then what is it doing? And why?

Our founders understood what Jesus wants from a church, and not only pointed the way for us but legally bound us to it! We happily receive this yoke from them as from Christ. Ministry will change over the years – it must change. No doubt there are saints in our cemetery who would roll over in their graves to discover we have

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no Wednesday prayer service, drums on stage, and pastors and women both wearing jeans to church! Does worship in a building without a steeple even count? I suspect our great-grandkids will laugh at our utter dependence on the coffee pot.

But if they do, I hope they will also say “those old-timers might have done ministry in some weird ways, but they were faithful to the mission!” I suppose if I knew today what ministry will look like for them, I’d probably be about as uncomfortable as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs. But if they stay true to the mission,

they’ll be alright. And so long as they’re alright, I’ll sleep soundly in my little spot out there in the backyard waiting for Jesus to come back. And when he does, may he say to all generations of Lewis Lakers, “Well done. You stayed true to the mission!”

Pastor Joe



Joe Reed is the Senior Pastor at Lewis Lake.

Annual All-Church Potluck Meal & Business Meeting

Sunday, January 21, 2024

At Lewis Lake, any time a really big decision has to be made, the congregation comes together and votes. We practice what is called a “Congregational” form of Church polity. The highest authority is the gathered membership of our Church. There are some matters in which the Elders are the key actors, but most of the time it is the congregation.



The congregation normally gathers 4 times a year, the first meeting being our Annual Meeting in January. At this meeting the congregation elects leadership, approves budgets, is informed about the state of things in our Church, and deals with any other points of business that might arise.

People who are not official members of our Church can attend this meeting, but they have no voice or vote.

The All Church Potluck Meal

Watch for a sign up sheet to help with setup and cleanup of the tables & the potluck sign up sheet. Please sign up to bring something if you plan to stay for the potluck so we have enough food for everyone.

The Annual Business Meeting—Follows the meal

Lewis Lake Church Members are encouraged to take part in electing a 2021 Council as well as voting on budget, building, and other items.

Non-Member Friends are welcome to attend and observe.

Financials, Letters of Greeting And Ministry Team Reports

All Items For The Annual Meeting Booklet Are Due To Tami By January 13th

THE CHANDELIER

In the Narthex

The Chandelier in the Narthex was chosen for its symbolism as it prods those who gaze upon it to turn their hearts toward our Lord. Keep these things in mind as you examine and enjoy it, letting it bring God's light into this world of ours.

- The Cross – points us to Jesus.
- The Vertical Lines points us to God.
- The Horizontal Lines point us to right relationships with others.
- The Inner Circle point us the importance of a pure heart as we pray.
- The Crosshairs invite us to be specific in our prayers.
- The 3 Lights point us to the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



The Narthex has a great new look. The space is warm and welcoming and could be a great space for a small Bible study group. Grab a cup of coffee and visit with a friend around one of the high top tables after service.

Artwork will be added to the walls in the future as well as a welcome station and bookshelf.

Thank you Pastor Joe, Zac Sjodin, and David Wisdom for assembling the new furniture.



**Beginning
January 7th**

NEW SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:00am	9:30am	10:45am
First Service	Sunday School	Second Service



Time to put the decorations away.

Sunday, January 7th

Join us after the second service to take the Christmas decorations down. Bring a dish to share for the potluck lunch.

Keeping You Connected



It's not always easy to keep up with everything that's happening at Lewis Lake. Your life is busy, and so is ours. To that end, we've created the Lewis Lake phone app. Watch sermons, check the church calendar, sign up for events and activities, it's the place to go to see what's happening and plug into the madness. So go wherever you get your apps, and look for Lewis Lake. We've also created the Lewis Lake Pulse, a weekly email sent out on Monday mornings with the week's



announcements, along with a few things Pastor Joe recommends for feeding your soul throughout the week. To subscribe to The Pulse, shoot an email to office@LewisLake.org with the subject line "Subscribe to Pulse" and we'll get you fixed up! Or you can scan the QR code here.



MINISTRY TEAMS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Plug In And Serve Your Church Family



Join the Nursery Volunteer Team

The nursery is staffed during Sunday Worship for children ages infant to 3 years old.
Contact Hannah Hoyles 320-469-1333 if you would like to volunteer.



Would you like to help out in the kitchen?

If you would like to help with coffee, make fellowship treats, or even help with cleanup, talk to Dianna Sholtz 763-439-8491 to get plugged in to help.



Tech Team Members

It takes a team effort to make Sundays happen. Are you interested in joining the tech team? Talk to Jesse - we would love to add you to the team. It is easier than you think. Training will be provided.



Ushers & Greeters

If you would like to be a part of this important ministry contact Jackie Farley 320-290-4497.



Notary Services Available

Notary Services are available at zero cost to Members and Non-Member friends of Lewis Lake Covenant Church. You can catch Tami on Sunday mornings or make an appointment to stop by the office during the week.

Go to the website and commit to attend the March For Life.
There will be a group going down. We will meet at church to carpool down.

2024 MCCL MARCH FOR LIFE

*An unforgettable visual
commemoration of the 12,000
unborn lives lost each year*

SAVE THE
12,000 

JAN. 22, 2024 | NOON
MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL

GET INVOLVED AT [MCCL.ORG/MARCH](https://mccl.org/march)



MINNESOTA CITIZENS CONCERNED FOR LIFE
612.825.6831 | MCCL@MCCL.ORG | [MCCL.ORG](https://mccl.org)

