



BY KEITH JOHNSON

## The Good Shepherd

I hope you are engaging with our series, “Outrageous Claims.” This month we continue with four more of Jesus claims (see below), or his “I am” statements, all leading up to Easter and his claim, “I am the resurrection and the life.” I hope you will see that Jesus claims lead to power lessons for our lives.

Among the claims of Jesus are his claims, “I am the Good Shepherd,” and “I am the Gate for the sheep.”

In 2021, a sheep named Baarack received a much-needed shearing after rescuers in Australia found the abandoned animal with more than 75 pounds of wool weighing it down. A video of his transformation on TikTok had millions and millions of views. After rescuing Baarack, the staff of an animal sanctuary gave him the long-overdue shearing and found the fleece clocked in at about 78 pounds.

In a story by USA Today, Kelly Dinham, with Edgar’s Mission Farm Sanctuary, said that sheep need at least yearly shearing to keep their coats light enough for the animals, otherwise it will continue to grow. Baarack’s wool was heavy, impaired his vision and was full of grit and debris.

Well, he survived and was nurtured back to

health. It turns out that to be a sheep without a shepherd can be quite a problem.

We need a shepherd. In our day, however, there aren’t a lot of them around, so we don’t understand them well. Timothy Laniak in his book, “While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks” talks about three key responsibilities of a Shepherd—provision (getting them to food and drink), protection (keeping them from being eaten or stolen) and guidance (getting them to where they need to go.)



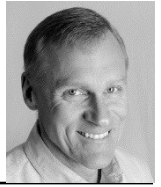
The gospel of John tells us that Jesus in our Good Shepherd who provides, protects and guides us—the sheep of his pasture. We need to be under the care of our Shepherd, otherwise we can wander off or be attacked. We need a Shepherd who, through his loving care, walks with us to peaceful streams and quiet pastures.

### Outrageous Claims

Mar. 4 & 5	I am the Light of the World	<i>John 8</i>
Mar. 11 & 12	I am the Gate for the Sheep	<i>John 10</i>
Mar. 18 & 19	I am the Good Shepherd	<i>John 10</i>
Mar. 25 & 26	I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life	<i>John 14:1-6</i>

# FREE RANGE DEVOTIONS

BY SEAN CONNOLLY



## LIGHT

While preparing for a message about Jesus' statement "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12, NIV), I found a lot of information and commentary about the contrast between dark and light. Such as, the world is full of sin and darkness, so we need to live according to his light. Or God lights our path. Or Isaiah prophetically speaking about the birth of Jesus saying, people living in darkness have seen a great light. Most of what I found boiled down to "The world is dark; Christ is light; so follow Jesus!"

However, when it comes to light, there is much, much more than just a binary contrast between light and dark because light has many more purposes than just illuminating a dark place. Lights are used for guidance by pointing us in a certain direction or toward safety, like a lighthouse in a storm. During a live performance, a spotlight emphasizes or highlights a certain actor when giving a monologue, or a particular musician playing a solo. Lights also help portray or enhance emotions and moods using color or intensity, such as red, yellow and orange to convey warmth or alert us to danger, or cool colors like blue, green or purple to convey

calmness or indicate sadness. When you're feeling down, they don't call them "the blues" for nothing.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells the people, "You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14, 16, NIV). And in Ephesians 5, Paul says "For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true" (Ephesians 5:8-9, NLT).

So if we are going to be light, then we should understand the purposes of light – to guide people toward Christ, to emphasize our faith in him, and to change the mood of situations using forgiveness and grace. These are huge parts of our witness to the world around us, because when we do this correctly according to Jesus' example, we become very visible, especially in a dark place. How are you going to shine today?

Sean points a spotlight on Jesus at [www.seanconnwriter.com](http://www.seanconnwriter.com)



### A Good Time to Say "Amen"

Thank you to all who made the February 24th celebration fundraiser of 40 Years of International Evangelism Outreach (IEO) a success! These include: volunteers who set up tables and chairs, the decorators, table setters, cooks, kitchen and cleanup crews, musicians, sound and video team, child care workers, LCC Staff, bakers of the desserts, and servers from Voltage Youth Group. Thank you to all who attended and generously supported the IEO ministry! Because of all of you, we were able to bless the ministry of IEO! As Bishop Eliudi says, "This is a good time to say Amen"!

### SAVE THE DATES:

Vacation Bible School | June 19th - 23

Family Camp at Glacier Lodge: July 14-16 | Holland Lake Camping Trip: August 10-13

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Family Promise Host Week at LCC

Life Covenant will be hosting another week of Family Promise March 26-April 2. We are excited to have the families staying in our church during our host week! We will provide meals, pantry items, overnight hosts and plenty of hospitality. If you are interested in serving, sign up sheets will be available in the foyer or call Mary Anderson (406-422-2969) or Janice Mackensen (406-459-9148) to participate. Thanks so much for serving!

### 55 and Better March Luncheon

We aren't peddling a load of blarney, it's time to celebrate St. Paddy's Day! Join us on Friday, March 10th at O'Joyce's Irish Pub (also known as the Fellowship Hall) for our annual salute to the Irish! We'll have our usual fabulous corned beef and cabbage with all the fixings prepared by Walt and Norine Joyce. If corned beef isn't your thing, check out the Irish stew! Something for everyone! We hope you'll join us for some good Irish craic (fun)! Let Mary in the church office know you'll be attending!



### Cabin Fever Follies

Join us for our annual "Talent" Show on Sunday, March 19. A family dinner will begin at 5pm and the show will start at 6pm. Show off your talents or just make us laugh. Group and individual acts encouraged. Or, for the not so brave of heart, come be amazed by the vast talent of your LCC family and enjoy a time of fellowship and laughter. If you plan to perform, please sign up on our website, in the church foyer, or by calling the church office.

### Marriage Enrichment Weekend

Are you and your spouse ready to take some time for yourselves? On April 21-23, come join us in Bozeman for the annual Marriage Enrichment Weekend. Led by Keith Johnson, this weekend is designed for couples to learn about their relationship, relax together and share together. The cost per couple is \$240 (includes hotel costs). For more information, check out our website or pick up a brochure in the church foyer. Please register by April 7th on our website or by calling the church office (406) 442-6813.

### Preparing For Your Homecoming

Have you considered these questions--What happens when you die? What preparations should I make for my death? What happens at a funeral home? What does the Bible say about death? What about wills? Over four Wednesday evening sessions, Keith will be sharing on these important questions in a class called Preparing for Your Homecoming. We'll start at 6:30PM with the first session on Wednesday, March 15 in room 201. In addition, this class will be presented at 11:00am preceding the 55 & Better luncheons on 3/10, 4/14, 5/12, and 6/9.

### Missions Team Update: Change of Leadership at Hands of Luke Ministry

The Hands of Luke Board of Trustees appointed Laura Samaniego in July, 2022 as the new Chief Operating Officer (COO) to continue the work of the ministry. Laura was promoted to COO, after her mother Carmen, requested that it was time for her to move to "semi-retirement". Laura stated, "I am extremely grateful that God has granted me the honor and privilege of being the COO and I am so excited for what God has in store for us at Hands of Luke. I look forward to working with you and our Life Covenant Church Family."

Hands of Luke Medical Ministries has established 1 orphanage, 5 churches, 3 medical clinics, a Bible Institute, 3 Nutritional Centers where 2,000 children are fed daily, and 13 Mercy Homes for widows and single mothers. Please pray for Hands of Luke's ability to continue to serve this important ministry at the border and pray for Laura Samaniego to have great wisdom moving forward.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Make Your Own Resurrection Egg Set

Easter is a time to celebrate the sacrifice Jesus made for us and the hope we have in him. No one is too young (or old) to understand the true meaning of Easter. Resurrection Eggs are a fun and engaging devotional tool to tell the Easter story. Come and make your own set of eggs in the Fellowship Hall (one per family) from 4:15-5:15PM Saturday, March 18, OR 10:00-11:00AM Sunday, March 19. All materials will be provided. A light snack, music, and fellowship will also be provided. More details and a sign-up sheet will be available at worship services in March. Or sign-up online using the QR code.



### Children's Ministry Reducing the Risk Training Sessions

Interested in serving children and families? Life Covenant Church takes the safety of our children seriously. In an effort to keep our ministry safe from child abuse, our child protection plan requires every adult working with youth under 18 years of age attend a Reducing the Risk training and screening process every three years. To serve in our children and youth ministries, join us on one of the dates listed below. If you are due for re-training, please attend one of these sessions. You can sign-up in the foyer or by calling the church office. Contact Deanna with questions at 442-6813 or [deanna@lifecchelena.org](mailto:deanna@lifecchelena.org).

RTR Training Dates:

- Saturday, March 4, 4-5pm
- Tuesday, March 14, 6:15-7:15pm (during AWANA)

### LCC Women's Retreat Recap

Thank you to those who spent the weekend with me at Mountain View Retreat in Deer Lodge!! Those who came were free to spend the weekend as they liked - some sewed & embroidered, scrapbooked, colored, knitted, and worked on a diamond painting. All ate delicious food and played a few games - Pictionary was a blast! I came home feeling refreshed and blessed! The dates for the retreat next year are January 25-28, 2024. You can arrive when you'd like - Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. I will open the retreat to LCC Ladies first and see if we have openings for others after Dec. 1st. I am so grateful to be a part of such a wonderful group of ladies!

- Stephanie Metzger



### LCC Preschool Happenings

Registration for the 2023-2024 school year has been a wonderful success so far. Our 3-year-old class is full, and a waitlist has been started. Our 4-year-old class still has a few openings. Please contact the office or pick up a brochure in the front lobby if you are interested in more information and would like to schedule a tour. This month we are wrapping up our unit on the five senses. Our preschool sense detectives have been following the clues and solving a mini sense mystery each day. Next, we'll be talking about how March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb. Our focus will be on the changing weather and the signs of spring around us. Toward the end of the month, we will excitedly prepare for Easter and celebrate the Good News that Jesus is Risen! Thanks to everyone for your support of our preschool ministry. Extra big thanks to our classroom volunteers who generously give their time to helping our preschoolers grow!



# EN FUEGO

## 6th - 8th Grade

Weekly | Mondays at 6:30pm  
March 20th Ice Skating Night @ 6:30pm  
March 27th *NO* En Fuego



## Confirmation

## 7th - 8th Grade

Weekly | Mondays from 6-6:30pm  
Taught by Keith Johnson  
March 27th *NO* Confirmation



## 9th - 12th Grade

Weekly | Wednesdays at 6:30pm  
March 22th Ice Skating Night @ 6:30pm  
March 29th *NO* Voltage



On March 24th - April 1st, our Voltage students will be on a mission trip to Guatemala. Please pray for our students as they seek to bring the light of Jesus to the people of Santa Apolonia.

Use the QR codes or visit [www.lifecchelena.org](http://www.lifecchelena.org) to find out more and view the 2022-23 schedule.  
Pastor of Student Ministries: Sam Bodnar | [sam@lifecchelena.org](mailto:sam@lifecchelena.org) (406) 442-6813



## Ages 2yrs - 5th Grade

- Tuesdays from 6:00-7:30pm
- Dinner at 5:15pm



Use the QR code or visit [www.lifecchelena.org](http://www.lifecchelena.org) to register, order supplies, and view the 2022-23 schedule.

Date	Dinner	Theme	Bring
Mar. 7	Chicken and Rice	Twins/Triplet Night	Find 1 or 2 friends and dress alike
Mar. 14	Mac & Cheese	Pi Day	Wear something with circles on it
Mar. 21	Spaghetti	King and Queen Night	Dress up as royalty
Mar. 28	N/A	NO AWANA	N/A

## Life Covenant Kids

Planting Truth  
Growing Faith

Pastor of Children's  
Ministries:

Deanna Carlson  
[deanna@lifecchelena.org](mailto:deanna@lifecchelena.org)  
(406) 442-6813

At each service, following the offering, we'll dismiss children to one of the pods listed:

- Seedlings / Sprouts pod: ages three and four through 2nd grade (Rm 104)
- Roots pod: 3rd - 5th grade (Rm 202/204)

Our Seedlings & Sprouts will focus on how Jesus shows his love. We will spend time in Bible stories that show Jesus's power over nature, that show Jesus's healing of the sick, that show Jesus's care for those who are left out, and that show Jesus's care for his friends.

Our Roots will dig deep into the final days of Jesus on earth. We will focus on Jesus as the Good Shepherd before celebrating Jesus's entry into Jerusalem as King.



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“I am the gate; whoever enters  
through me will be saved.”

*John 10:9*

“I am the good shepherd. The  
good shepherd lays down his  
life for the sheep.”

*John 10:11*