The Gift of Caring

Motivated by the compassion of Christ, we help people improve the quality of their lives.

Through LSS programs you help brighten the holiday season for many with your Gift of Caring.

May the hope born at Christmas fill you with peace all year through.

Motivated by the compassion of Christ, we help people improve the quality of their lives.

LSS Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Inc.
www.lsswis.org
SUNDAY #1: December 2nd
The hustle and bustle of the holiday season can add unwanted stress to our lives. Here are a few ways to avoid holiday stress:

- **Manage choices** - think through what you say “yes” to and don’t be afraid to say “no.”
- **Ask for help** - You don’t need to do it all or be it all. Remember, you can easily do twice as much with the help of others. Know yourself well enough to recognize when you need help.
- **Create balance** - balance is when you feel centered and calm. Take time to stop and breathe! Care for yourself, and you will better care for others.

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) is here to serve; visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org).

SUNDAY #2: December 9th
Poverty and financial problems can destroy families. Lutheran Social Services (LSS) offers programs to help families get by on limited incomes because of loss of jobs, illness or other circumstances. LSS Financial Counseling helps individuals and families with budget and debt counseling, bankruptcy counseling and education, housing issues, debt management plans, credit report reviews and more. Services are offered in person or over the phone. For LSS financial counseling services visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org).

SUNDAY #3: December 16th
The Christmas season, a joyous time for most, can bring about overwhelming sadness for those who have lost a loved one or are feeling lonely. Lutheran Social Services (LSS) counselors can help you or a loved one get back on track; visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org) to find a counselor near you.

SUNDAY #4: December 23rd
Thank you for giving the gift of caring through your prayers and support of Lutheran Social Services (LSS). Merry Christmas and all the best for a happy, healthy 2013 from your friends at LSS! Find out how you can make a difference; visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org).

SUNDAY #5: December 30th
Lutheran Social Services (LSS) is an extension of our congregation’s ministry throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan reaching out to others and meeting the changing needs of people of all ages. Consider serving through LSS and how you can make a difference; visit [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org).
The Gift of Caring
A message from Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

Christmastime brings fond memories and traditions for many. For most of us that means spending time with family, finding a Christmas tree, and buying presents for loved ones. But for many of our friends and neighbors, it’s not that simple. Many families are hurting. Some are struggling just to put food on the table. To them a Christmas tree may be a luxury. Often such parents struggle just to make ends meet, much less buy gifts for their children. Other families may be grieving the recent loss of a loved one, and holiday traditions just don’t seem the same.

At Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS), we understand that poverty, financial problems, grief, or loss can strike any family at any time.

Take Sue, for example. Sue was in a situation in which it became overwhelming for her and her husband to manage their family’s bills. It became increasingly obvious it would be a challenge for Sue and her husband to balance their budget and make ends meet. So, they turned to the LSS financial counseling program. The debt counseling staff worked with the couple on their budget and helped them set up a payment plan to cover their bills. Sue and her husband are thankful for the counseling they received. By coming up with a debt management plan, the couple estimates they will pay off their bills in two years and will be able to start setting money aside to help their daughter attend college.

LSS Financial Counseling helps individuals and families with budget and debt counseling, bankruptcy counseling and education, housing issues, debt management plans, credit report reviews and more. Services are offered in person or over the phone.

This holiday, make time to recognize those who may be facing difficult times and may be having a harder time finding joy in the season. If you or someone you know is in need of a helping hand, LSS offers a variety of services to address financial issues, grief and loss, and more. For more information, or to find an LSS counselor near you, visit www.lsswis.org.

LSS also wishes to take this time to thank you for your support in ministry. Through LSS programs, you have helped brighten the holiday season for many just like Sue. May you have a joyous holiday season and all the best for a happy and healthy 2013!
PRAYER PETITIONS for use in Worship
December 2012

• Lord, be with all who are lonely and distressed. Help us, together, to remind our brothers and sisters in need that they are not forgotten. Together give us faith active in love for our neighbor and the stranger. Bless our ministry through Lutheran Social Services and bring hope and joy to those in need this season. Lord in your mercy . . .

• Gracious God, be with all who are struggling financially whether through poor decisions or no fault of their own. Give them hope and guide them toward a more positive future. Prepare all hearts for the celebration of Jesus’s birth and motivate us by his compassion to help people improve the quality of their lives. Lord in your mercy . . .

• Loving Lord, when the approaching holidays accentuate the absence of loved ones who are no longer with us, let the assurance of your promises and our loving memories provide us with comfort and joy to outweigh our grief. Take our grief in your hand, lift our sorrow, and turn our mourning into gladness. Lord in your mercy . . .

• God of comfort, we are so blessed and have so much. As we celebrate the birth of your Son, our Lord Jesus, give us compassionate hearts to look beyond our own comforts to provide basic necessities to those in need. May we feel compelled to reach out, not only with food and clothing, but also with friendship and understanding. Lord in your mercy . . .

• Oh God, our help in ages past, be our hope for the New Year and throughout the years to come. Bless the ministry of our congregation and all the work we accomplish together through the church-at-large. We give your thanks for our work through Lutheran Social Services and ask you to bless all who serve and all who are served. Let our light so shine that others see our good works and give the glory to you. Lord in your mercy . . .