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## News Release

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### **THE LIFE Church: "Church That Is New" Brings Life, Faith to Long Island**

OLD WESTBURY, NY – Over four years ago, the congregation at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Garden City, stepped out in faith to launch a new church in nearby Old Westbury, Long Island. The bold move to open doors of an existing church building, previously known as Redeemer Lutheran Church, blazoned a robust path through an environment of struggling churches.

According to Rev. Justin Vetrano, pastor of THE LIFE Church, the people of Resurrection-Garden City have generously supported their new second campus, fully endorsing the concept of "Resurrection & THE LIFE." "The leadership support, as well as the volunteer, financial and prayer support have been a continued blessing as we build a new community of faith in this area of Long Island," Vetrano said.

As he celebrates the second year of worship services with "Thursdays at THE LIFE," Vetrano gratefully acknowledges significant milestones in building this new faith community in the Westbury/Old Westbury neighborhoods of Long Island. "Through generous donations, we

have recently completed a significant renovation, started a new ESL program, expanded our Homework Help program, and have earned our day care license from the New York State Office of Family and Child Services.”

### **THE LIFE Gets A Facelift**

Renovation at THE LIFE was not an “elective” procedure. The building was looking tired and sad, but the sagging of the exterior was leaving the interior exposed to water and the elements. “We would walk around outside hoping a loose brick didn’t fall on someone,” Pastor Vetrano explained. Those days are history.

The facelift is almost complete. All summer long as hundreds of families would come to the church for the two VBS programs, to register for preschool or for weekly worship services and BBQ’s, eyes would be wide, with oft-repeated, “Wow, the place looks great!”

The facelift also included installation of energy-efficient windows for the classrooms and fellowship rooms.

Pastor Vetrano summarizes, “Most importantly great thanks to God’s Church and His people of Resurrection and THE LIFE who saw the need and responded. The face of THE LIFE speaks volumes to those who see it everyday and marvel at how much God’s people care for their church. We pray that this new creation will make people curious about the passionate people inside and come to hear about how Christ makes us ALL a new creation!”

### **Homework Help Serves Local School Children**

This year is the third year of operating Homework Help at THE LIFE. While continually reevaluating the program, the fundamentals of the program remain the same: young children come to a safe and nurturing environment where they have the opportunity to play, eat and get help with their school work, in an environment of Christian love and respect.

Jackie Kildale, who is currently earning her Master's Degree in Education at CW Post College, will serve as the new Director of the Homework Help Program.

Some people may wonder if this makes a difference in these children's lives. According to Laura Bauer, Site Coordinator, the answer is an unequivocal YES. At the end of the school year, Cheri DeBellis, the head teacher at Drexel Avenue School, reported that the Homework Help Program at THE LIFE is now accepted as a part of their school building and this is making a difference for the children.

Homework Help could not run without the effort of many dedicated volunteers. During the last school year, over 30 volunteers contributed to the program, some arriving to help after spending a full day at work. Over 900 hours of volunteer time were logged.

Through the generosity of a Major Grant Award from Wheat Ridge Ministries, Homework Help was able to take the children on field trips to Nassau County Museum of Art and Old Westbury Gardens. The grant also paid for a visit from an educator from Clark Botanic Gardens.

This coming school year we will be working with children in third and fourth grades. They will play when they arrive, then have a nutritious snack. After snack, the children break into small groups to work with adults on their school work. After the homework activities the children will enjoy the Presidential Fitness Program and a Science Club.

THE LIFE Homework Help program operates under a license from the New York State Office of Child and Family Services. To qualify, the program meets the State's stringent requirements, including the safety of the building and procedures, staff-to-child ratios, and program standards.

## **New ESL Program Reaches Out to Community**

The ESL (English as a Second Language) program started with a training session for staff and volunteers. This session was led by an experienced teacher with a Master's degree in TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages).

This new ministry of The LIFE Church provides yet another opportunity to reach out to international neighbors with the gifts that God has given. The classes meet on Saturday; with lab time and conversation circle on Thursdays. In learning English or improving the students' existing language skills the objective is that lives will also be enriched.

Paulina Janssen, coordinator of the LIFE ESL program, explains that the program depends on more than just words. "We need *the* Word, God's given Word to us, God in action for us, to guide and to transform and renew our lives," she said. "So, as we teach the English language and we string words together in sentences to describe actions, thoughts, feelings, we know that the Word is with us to make sense of those feelings, those thoughts and actions, and to guide us to find purpose in our lives."

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