

# MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

## Pastor's Pen

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31)

But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3:15)

Despite the fact that I am a pastor, I don't consider myself to be particularly outgoing. I have known people who love canvassing neighborhoods and who will deliberately pick the longest lines in the grocery store just so they can have more time to talk to strangers about Jesus. Meanwhile, I'd most often rather do self-checkout, try not to make eye contact with anyone, and be on my way as quickly as possible!

Sometimes, however, God places me in situations where I find myself sharing the faith with complete strangers even though I never had any prior intention of doing so. Just about a week ago, while we were out of town on vacation, I was watching my children as they were playing at the park. There was another dad there who was watching his children, and he struck up a bit of a conversation. The conversation started with how many children we each had (he has ten!), where various family members live now, and how nice the weather was that day. But as soon as he asked me what I did for a living, the conversation became far less small talk and much more in-depth. When I told him that I was a pastor, he explained that he was a Roman Catholic missionary. When he found out that I am a Missouri-Synod Lutheran, he had many questions.

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## Important Dates:

August 8: JULIETs lunch  
August 12: WINGS/LWML fellowship and Bible study  
August 14: First day of preschool  
August 21–September 8: Carol Moore is on vacation



We must have talked for an hour about various theological topics, everything ranging from discussions of our understanding of the nature and proper use of the Sacraments, the relationship of works and faith, our understanding of justification, and the nature of indulgences (that's when the conversation really got interesting, but we had to leave).

After we left that conversation, Emily asked me how these sorts of things seem to happen to me. This wasn't the first time that I had found myself in long, detailed theological discussions with people I'd never met before. I hadn't sought it out. I wasn't wearing a clerical collar or anything else that would indicate that I am a pastor. And yet, God orchestrated things so that this conversation would take place.

This makes me consider the above verse from 1 Peter. While it is true that Jesus told His apostles, "Settle it therefore in your minds not to meditate beforehand how to answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict" (Luke 21:14-15), that doesn't mean we shouldn't be "prepared to make a defense." We might not be rehearsing the exact words, because after all, we don't know exactly who we will be speaking to or what exactly we will need to answer. But we ought to be prepared in that we ought to know the content of our faith.

I would have never guessed that I was going to be talking to a Roman Catholic missionary, and so there was no way I could think beforehand how to answer. I had to speak about my faith in the moment. And while I can't really speak for myself whether I answered well or answered poorly, there are a few things that come to mind as far as how we can all be "prepared to make a defense."

First, know that "these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." It's far too easy to read the Scriptures in isolation from one another and not see them as one unified whole. And because of the inclinations of our human nature, we have a tendency to read certain parts of the Bible as merely history. Other parts of the Bible we might read as moralistic tales. Still others, like the poetic portions, we might read as emotional reflections on the human condition. But the key to understanding the Scriptures is that they are all one unified whole, and what unifies every Scripture, from the first verse of Genesis to the last verse of Revelation, is the Person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself affirmed that all the Scriptures bear witness about Him (John 5:39).

And this naturally leads to the second point, and that is that we ought to know what the Scriptures say. And the only way to do this is to regularly be in the Word. This is done in multiple ways. We can read or listen to the Scriptures in our own private devotions. We can study the Scriptures together in Bible studies and small groups. And we can hear the Scriptures read and expounded on in the Divine Service. All of these have their place, and all are necessary for knowing the Word.

And finally, we must be in prayer. When I was speaking with the missionary, I was praying for words of wisdom. I was praying that I would be able to accurately hear what the man was saying. I was praying that I would be able to witness to the faith that I believe. When we find ourselves giving a defense of our faith, we dare not do this by our own wisdom and strength. We must be constant in prayer to our Lord.

As an aside, I will say that I rather enjoyed our conversation. It's one thing to read about what others believe. It's a whole other thing to hear from someone who actually does believe these sorts of things. And I would say that I learned a lot from this experience and would welcome further conversations.

I'm sure there's much more that could be said about how to be prepared to make a defense of the faith. There are many great resources available concerning apologetics and ways that we can make opportunities to open conversations with others. But primarily, being ready to make a defense of the faith is about knowing Christ through His Word and being constant in prayer so that from Him we would receive His words of wisdom. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave



# Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

Prayer for children—both in our congregation and in our school—was among the first prayer priorities when the Prayer Ministry was first commissioned and our congregation termed itself at “God’s House of Prayer” in 2014. The Lord has answered that prayer in ways we couldn’t have imagined at that time! Since then, we have recognized the school as one of our greatest mission fields. As we begin another school year at Mission, it’s time for our “house of prayer” to join in prayer for our upcoming school year. As our staff was commissioned on July 28<sup>th</sup>, we all agreed to support them with our prayers, so let’s join together to pray for them regularly. Below is a starting point if you aren’t sure where to begin.

First and foremost, let us begin with a prayer of thanksgiving! With God’s leading, we have expanded to include all of middle school, added more and new staff (including an excited and motivated new administrator) and new students. Let’s pray for a year that nurtures staff and students as they grow together in their walk with the Lord.. Let’s pray also for continued growth, that more children and families are reached with the saving knowledge of our Lord!

Below are updated prayer targets used by the prayer ministry team as we pray for the Christian education at Mission Lutheran School. They are broken into 7 parts as we attempt to cover the whole school in prayer. You may wish to pray for one section each day in your personal prayer time. Please consider saving these targets and praying for our school throughout the school year!

**Sunday**—pray that God will:

- Use Mission Lutheran School (MLS) to attract children and their families to Jesus.
- Draw the congregation and school together to reach out to others with the message of Jesus as their Savior.
- Provide protection and security throughout our campus.
- Bless and increase the numbers of those who support our school through time, talent and treasure.
- Work among congregation, staff, parents and students that all reflect Christ’s love.

**Monday**—Pray for the Christian Education taught at MLS, that:

- Children are nurtured to maintain a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- The number of students continue to grow and that more families would have a deep desire for their children to receive the knowledge of Christ as part of their education.
- Our students will be fully prepared to transition to other education, whether Christian or secular, when the time comes for them to leave MLS.
- Children will be strengthened as they study God’s Word as part of their education.

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**Tuesday**—pray for the students at MLS, that:

- Each student will know Christ as their Savior who cherishes them.
- They will be protected from worldly influences
- They will hunger for learning and be persistent and disciplined in study.
- They will develop loving, respectful and compassionate relationships.
- They will exercise the gifts with which God has blessed each one.

**Wednesday**—pray for teachers and other staff, that:

- God will strengthen them to be powerful witnesses of Jesus to students and parents.
- They will have wisdom and compassion as they teach, encourage and discipline.
- They will model the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- God will protect them from discouragement and bless them in their lives: spiritually, physically, emotionally.
- That a spirit of unity flourishes among staff.

**Thursday**—Pray for parents at MLS, that:

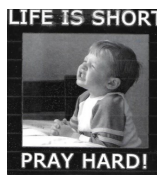
- Parents and grandparents will know Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- That they are Christ-like role models in their children’s lives.
- That they take an active role in their children’s lives and education.
- That they support and encourage the MLS staff.
- That they insure their children are part of regular worship.
- That they would be granted wisdom, patience, strength and love as they parent.

**Friday**—Pray for the MLS School Board, Administration and Pastor, that:

- Each one gathers strength and wisdom from their own personal time with the Lord.
- They provide wise oversight and direction to provide the Bible-centered education God desires, always remaining faithful in doctrine, scripture and LCMS guidelines.
- That all relationships are Christ-like.
- That they are blessed and guided in all decisions.

**Saturday**—Pray for the Parent-Teacher Organization and school volunteers:

- All would graciously serve the school, students and administration in support of the ministry of MLS.
- All would communicate openly, encouraging and edifying one another.
- God would lead, inspire and bless all PTO and volunteer activities and plans.



*“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks;  
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

1 Thessalonians: 16-18

# Stewardship

## *Mercy and Grace Lead to Generosity*

“Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift” (2 Cor. 9:15)! This is St. Paul’s exclamation upon hearing the Corinthian church’s response to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his request for support for the church in Jerusalem. The Christians in Corinth heard and received God’s mercy in Christ, and they responded to St. Paul’s call to support Christians in Jerusalem with a collection. The Corinthians’ joy filled Jerusalem’s need.

This is the reality of stewardship. Because of God’s generosity in the giving of His Son to die on the cross for us, we are to be generous with all that we receive from Him. What do we receive? Everything. All that we are and all that we have is the Lord’s. He is the creator and the giver. We are His creatures and those who receive what He gives.

It sounds easy. And it is. But then again it isn’t. Stewardship is easy because it is God’s work. Through what God gives, we give to others. Through what God gives, we support the work of the church for the life of the world. He gives; we receive. And like our generous Father in Heaven, we, as His children, use what He gives to us to love and serve others.

But stewardship is also difficult. That is because it goes against our natural inclination to think that what I have is mine to do what I want with. This is our sinful nature. It is our selfishness and our greed. How can we who have been given everything — life, food, clothing, house, home, forgiveness, divine sonship, an eternal inheritance — be so stingy with what we give to the church, the place where we hear about and receive all that God gives us and does for us? We are all guilty of this kind of thinking. And the only godly response is to repent and trust in the Gospel.

For if God has given you His own Son, will He not give you all things? Yes. He will. This is His sure and certain promise. God provides for His people. He provides everything we need for this body and life and for the life that is to come.

The church is a mercy place. It’s a place where God’s mercy in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, is given and received. For us who believe it means forgiveness, life and salvation in the face of sin, death and the power of the devil. Here in the church, we inhale God’s mercy in Word and Sacrament, and exhale this same mercy in love and service to our neighbor. And that is an enduring, joyful thing to do. Our joy fills our neighbor’s need because His joy filled ours (Heb. 12:2). Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!

LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)





# Birthdays of the Month

## August Birthdays

		<u>Date</u>
Barbara	Honda	7
Greg	Fant	10
Bradley	Springer Sr.	10
Jeannie	Brennan	11
Pastor Andrew	Cave	11
Wade	Echtenkamp	11
Krista	Helton	13
Vince	Ryan	15
John	Eisenbraun	16
Arlyn	Bartels	20
Madelyn	Sanchez	20
Cheryl	Ryan	27
Pamela	Kell	28
Matthias	Cave	29
Eric	Gunderson	29
Chuck	Spicka	31

*Happy  
Anniversary*

## August Anniversaries

		<u>Date</u>	<u># of years</u>
Nick & Codie	Wolf	5	52
Rev. Andrew & Emily	Cave	8	9
Andy & Sonya	Perry	10	39
Vince & Cheryl	Ryan	14	26
Doug & Alma	Lorenz	24	56

*Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in August.*

*May God continue to bless you.*

If your birth and/or anniversary date is missing or incorrect, please notify Carol Moore  
in the church office.

## LCMS International is Looking for Missionaries!

Are you ready to take that leap of faith? Serve as an LCMS missionary! It's the perfect time to explore the many opportunities the church has for you. Christ died for all. You get to tell them! Missionaries are blessed to bring the message of Christ and Him crucified around the world as they spread the Gospel, plant Lutheran churches and show mercy. Serve according to your God-given gifts as a layperson or a church worker. Areas of service include church planting, deaconess ministry, theology, music, education, communications, business, project management, English as a Second Language (ESL), you name it. You get to tell them! Visit [lcms.org/international](http://lcms.org/international) to learn more.

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## A letter of Thanks

Community Action Agency wishes to thank the entire Mission Lutheran congregation for their steadfast commitment to Coats for Kids over so many years! You have done so much to keep our children, especially those who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford a warm weather coat, warm in the winter. Over 2,900 coats were distributed across the County including Las Cruces last year. Children are identified through their school counselor or social worker. If you know of any child in need of a coat, please get in touch with us at 575 527 8799 and mention Coats for Kids. Blessings from all of us!

Mark A. Hohnstreiter, C.F.R.E.  
Development Officer  
CAASN/Ngage New Mexico



# JULIETs Lunch

All women in the church are invited. And bring a friend!

Thursday, August 8 — Farley's Pub  
3499 Foothills Drive

We meet at 11:30 am.

So that the restaurant can be prepared, please notify Debra Echtenkamp at least 2 days in advance if you plan to attend.

Call or text Debra at (901) 830-7216



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## WINGS/LWML

The next gathering of WINGS (Women in God's Service) will be on Monday, **August 12**, at 6:30 PM in Luther Hall. All women are invited for fellowship and Bible study. Dessert will be provided.



MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

MAY 21, 2024

President Doug Lorenz called the Mission Lutheran Church Council meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Other Council members present were: Pastor Cave, Wade Echtenkamp, Vice President, Carol Cooper, Secretary, Brad Mueller, Treasurer, Carol Moore, Financial Secretary, Richard Turk, Board of Elders, Megan Wood, Chairman, Mission Lutheran School Board, Brad Springer, Jr., Outreach/Fellowship/Stewardship, and Brad Springer, Sr., Board of Trustees. Pastor Cave opened the meeting with prayer.

The minutes of the April 14, 2024 Council Meeting are attached and were approved as corrected for a misspelling and omission of the statement that the Treasurer's report was attached to the minutes.

Council member reports were as follows:

Pastor's Report: Pastor Cave's report is attached.

Vice President: No report from Wade Echtenkamp.

Secretary: No report from Carol Cooper.

Treasurer: Brad Mueller's report is attached. In preparation for voting on the FYE 06/30/2025 annual budget, Brad shared the following observations: 1) To maintain the FY2025 budget as a "balanced budget", weekly giving must increase \$2,102. 2) If giving does not increase as budgeted, we have invested funds which if liquidated as needed, are more than adequate to fulfil the goals of the budget.

Financial Secretary: No report from Carol Moore.

Board of Elders: Richard Turk's report is attached. Regarding Item 2 "a new processional cross", Richard provided pictures of processional crosses to choose from. He clarified that the new cross would not replace, but would be used interchangeably with the cross we have, as a processional cross. The new processional cross would be a gift from a parishioner.

With regard to the third item of Richard's report, Council discussion revealed that attendance records provided in each of the pews are not being signed. The attendance records enable the Board of Elders to follow up with members who are not attending. It was suggested that the congregation be reminded to sign the attendance record sheet each Sunday.

After the conclusion of the Board of Elders report and during the Mission Lutheran School Board report, Doug Lorenz inquired about the status of a "Peaceful Release" to Darci Grothman who serves as Mission Lutheran School Administrator until June 1. The Board of Elders recommended a "First Peaceful Release" be prepared before the next council meeting.

Board of Trustees: Brad Springer, Sr.'s report is attached. Additional discussion centered on "finishing" the 12'X12' metal shed donated by a relative of an MLS student. Brad estimates the cost to finish the shed for providing much-needed storage will be about \$1,400, and he believes the job can be completed by July 31.

Outreach Committee: Brad Springer, Jr. reported that:

We have a lot of participants in the "Hoodie Project.

Amy replenished the "Bible Box" and has taken on changing the messages on our sign; the sign had previously been maintained by Sonya Perry.

Brad is open to other activity ideas. "Joy & Junk" is a Lutheran Hour program hosted by Dr. Ziegler and is a good source for activity ideas like "Tuesday evening Pizza gathering".

School Board: Megan Wood report is attached. The great news is that our accreditation is in "Good Standing".

President: Doug asked the Council if there were thoughts or items that were not captured in the Minutes of the April 14 Council Meeting and Retreat. No one spoke of follow-up thoughts.

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Doug advised that the first 2-minute video had been completed by Pastor Cave and Carol Cooper, and he asked if members have responded to our invitation to serve on an Education Committee. At that point, we had not had any responses, but Megan Wood shared that Emma is interested in serving on the committee. Other topics that followed:

Doug reported that he and Brad Mueller did follow up on the idea of integrating a digital phone system with our security system; they learned that will not work. They will continue to look for a contractor and decide on a phone system (possibly digital); to minimize disruptions, it would be good to accomplish that while teachers and students are on break.

Karen Jensen has taken a lot of pictures for our new directory. Doug will compile the pictures, and Emma and Nova Wood will “format” them.

Doug had prepared a “Security” handout for the Council Retreat in April, and we were asked to consider how the handout might be presented to the Congregation eg 1) Introduce the handout in a 2-minute video and make available to the Congregation; 2) Do a presentation in a Voters’ Assembly; 3) Email to members; he also asked us to consider who should be responsible for keeping us mindful of safety precautions and procedures.

Carol Moore suggested that we update our Ministries handout.

The Voters’ Assembly will meet June 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 AM in Luther Hall.

Before adjournment, Pastor Cave led us in praying The Lord’s Prayer.

The motion to adjourn was made by Brad Mueller and seconded by Carol Cooper.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper, Secretary, MLC COUNCIL



**Note:** Board Reports that are indicated as being attached are available from the church secretary upon request. They are not included in the newsletter in order to save space.

# MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH and SCHOOL

## Treasurer's Report for the July '24 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: July 1, 2024

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of June '24</u>	<u>FY24 thru June '24</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>			
MLC General	\$29,796	\$305,625	\$305,545
MLS Total	\$8,270	\$278,996	\$303,650
Designated / Other	\$1,790	\$22,507	\$4,000
	\$39,856	\$607,128	\$613,195
<u>Expenses:</u>			
MLC Total	\$14,107	\$212,793	\$209,964
MLS Total	\$29,827	\$386,770	\$419,112
	\$43,934	\$599,563	\$629,076
Net Difference	<b>-\$4,078</b>	<b>\$7,565</b>	<b>-\$15,881</b>

### MLC General Fund Contributions – FY24 (Thru June 30, 2024)

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,765
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	<u>\$6,237</u>
Average Weekly <b>Surplus/Shortfall:</b>	<b>\$472</b>
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$330,542
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	<u>\$305,545</u>
Fiscal Year-to-Date <b>Surplus/Shortfall:</b>	<b>\$24,997</b>

### Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	Morgan Stanley/E*Trade (as of June 30, '24)	\$116,410
	Strasser Endowment (as of Mar 31, '24)	\$82,186
	Thrivent (as of June 30, '24)	\$458,228
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account	\$13,013
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #1	\$52,077
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #2	\$51,613
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #3	\$51,207
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$824,734</b>

<u>Current Assets:</u>	Shepherd's Staff Checking (as of June 30, '24)	<b>\$41,515</b>
	LCEF Checking (as of June 30, '24)	<b>\$48,271</b>

	Youth Activity Fund	\$3,766
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
minus	MLS Reg/Tuition Holding	\$3,725
	Angel Scholarship Program	\$15,783
Dedicated	COVID Grant	\$28,154
Funds	Apple Tree Donations	\$794
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$5,850
	School Security Grant	\$8,774
	Staffeldt Scholarship Fund	\$19,425

Total Checking Available **-\$8,985**

Liabilities:                      None

### Comments:



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***2752 N. Roadrunner Parkway***

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***School: (575) 532-5489***

***Emails: pastor@missionlutheran.net***

***secretary@missionlutheran.net***

***office@mlschool.net***

***Elder on Call: Nathan Graff (505) 280-4927***

**We're on the web!**

**<http://missionlutheran.net>**

**<http://mlschool.net>**

## **Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2024**

President	Doug Lorenz	Elders, Chairman	Richard Turk
Vice President	Wade Echtenkamp	Elders, Vice-chairman	Nathan Graff
Treasurer	Brad Mueller	Trustees	Brad Springer, Sr.
Secretary	Carol Cooper	Outreach	Brad Springer
Financial Secretary	Carol Moore	Day School Education	Karen Springer