

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His. We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death He died He died to sin, once for all, but the life He lives He lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:1-11)

It might come as no surprise that I have been contemplating Holy Baptism lately, being as we just celebrated the baptism of my third child. And it is certainly something worth celebrating! As St. Paul explains so eloquently in the above passage, baptism is the means by which God applies the death and resurrection of Jesus *to you*. If someone were to ask you, "When did God save you?" one answer to that question would be, "When Jesus died on the cross and rose again two thousand years ago." And indeed, Jesus meant it when He declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30). And yet, it would be equally correct to answer, "When I was baptized," because in the waters of baptism, we have died with Christ, and we have been raised with Christ.

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Important Dates:

July 4: Independence Day
 July 31: First day of school for grades K-8



Baptism is God's means of salvation for you; it is God's pledge and promise that you are His child and an heir of His kingdom. It is the sign, or mark, of the new covenant. But because it is the sign of the *new covenant*, one may wonder why God chose to use baptism when that was not the sign of the old covenant (which was, instead, circumcision). Did God have a change of heart? Was water not useful for the old covenant but is effective for the new?

While there are significant differences between the old covenant and the new, it would be inaccurate to say that God had a change of heart, or that there is no relation between the old and the new. Jesus Christ has clearly taught and commanded that baptism is the mark of the new covenant, but a careful observation will show that the Old Testament foreshadowed this washing of water and the Word many times over. Baptism did not come out of nowhere. God foreshadowed what Jesus has revealed.

One of the earliest foreshadowings happened in the flood during the days of Noah. The story of Noah's flood begins: "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart. So the LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.' But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:5-8). In the days of Noah, the purpose of the flood was to wash away the wickedness of man from the earth. Noah and his family—eight righteous persons—were saved through the waters which cleansed the earth of mankind's wickedness. Granted, Noah's flood did not erase the curse of sin. But it did foreshadow that God would use water to effect a true washing away of sin. The Apostle Peter makes this connection in his first epistle: "Baptism, which corresponds to this [Noah's flood], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

Another example of this foreshadowing of salvation through water occurred when God led Israel safely through the waters of the Red Sea. Before God's rescue, they were trapped between the impassable sea and Pharaoh's horsemen and chariots. Death was coming for them! And so, God parted the waters and led them safely through. In a very real sense, they passed from death to life. Meanwhile, the forces of evil who pursued them were drowned in those waters. The Apostle Paul makes the connection between this event and baptism in his first epistle to the church in Corinth: "For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

After Israel had settled in the Promised Land for many years, there was a miraculous cleansing that took place in the waters of the Jordan River. In the days of the kings, the commander of the Syrian army was a leper by the name of Naaman. His disease could not be cured, but he had an Israelite slave girl who informed her mistress about the prophet Elisha, saying that he could heal the disease. Naaman journeyed to Elisha, who didn't even come out to greet him, but sent his servant to tell Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan. Naaman was angry because he expected something that looked like a great and miraculous work. He vented to his servants that the rivers of Syria were better than the Jordan. But one servant convinced him to wash in the waters because of the promise that the prophet had given. And so Naaman did wash in the Jordan seven times and was cleansed. Because of this, he went back to Elisha and declared that he would worship no god except the God of Israel.

There are many more allusions to baptism throughout the Old Testament, far more than can be shared here. But with the eyes to see that we worship the God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, we can look back and see all these connections. God did not "change His mind" about how to save us. It's simply that the sign that was needed in the Old Testament—circumcision—has been fulfilled in Jesus. And the sign of the New Testament—baptism—has long been foreshadowed and has now been revealed by Jesus. We look to our baptism as God's sure and certain promise that our sins are forgiven, our shame is cleansed, and we have been rescued from our enemies. In baptism, we have died and risen with Christ. Amen.

Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

July 2024

*“Built on Christ, we join together as God’s house of
prayer for all nations.”*



Summertime, Summertime! Last month we talked about taking a pause from the busyness of the year. With some of our activities still on “hold” let’s continue to look at scriptures we can pray for ourselves and others as we pause and spend some extra time with the Lord this summer. I will write out a few short scriptures and I’m sure you can find even more as we pause and refresh in the Lord. The first one bears repeating from last month so I will repeat it!

[**Side note:** Who are the *others* for whom we pray? Those we love, friends and family, church family members, those who lead us, those we don’t know, those we meet at summer activities, those we see on screen, in media, at the doctor or dentist’s office, the mall, etc...]

Remembering that when we pray according to His Word, we are in His will, we pray:

*“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” -
Psalm 46:10*

*O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. – Psalm 63:1*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit
you may abound in hope. – Romans 15:13*

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your
hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. – John 14:27*

*They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that
is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to
sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!—
assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put
off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful
desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, - Ephesians 4:18-23*

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you
may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. – Romans 12:2*

*You keep him in perfect peace
whose mind is stayed on you,
because he trusts in you. – Isaiah 26:3*

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*I waited patiently for the LORD;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the pit of destruction,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the LORD. – Psalm 40:1-3*

*but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint. - Isaiah 40:31*

*“... I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world.” – John 16:33*

And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” – Exodus 33:14

“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

The Rewards of Godliness

It's no secret that you can't bribe your way into heaven. No amount of good works will impress God enough to open heaven's door for their sake. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23) and the person who "keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it" (James 2:10). Rather, salvation is "the free gift of God ... in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6:23).

So, your good works won't earn you the reward of heaven. But does that mean that there are no rewards at all? Consider what the Small Catechism says in the "Close of the Commandments":

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, "I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Ex. 20:5-6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands. (SC II)

God promises to bless you in keeping His commandments. What might these blessings be? Well, consider what Paul says about keeping the Fourth Commandment: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise), 'that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land'" (Eph. 6:1-3).

And think about what your life would be like if you went around stealing (breaking the Seventh Commandment), telling lies about people (breaking the Eighth Commandment), and generally being cruel to those around you (breaking all the commandments!). That is obviously not a blessed way to live. In fact, you'd be miserable living that way.

And Jesus says more about what is in store for those who make sacrifices for His sake: "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life'" (Matt. 19:28-29).

So don't grow impatient in doing good. Follow the Lord who has freely given you everlasting life.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship





Birthdays of the Month

July Birthdays

		Date
Le	Guericke	1
Verline	Vandiver	1
Maxeene	Monica	3
Mary	Martin	9
Ruth	Staffeldt	11
Susan	Weber	11
Carol	Moore	15
Toni	Roof	15
Ben	Wood	15
Karen	Springer	24
Karen	Jensen	25
Janice	Pfotenhauer	27
Benjamin	Micklevitz	31

*Happy
Anniversary*

July Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Ken & Mary	Martin	5	38
Don & Janis	Hallem	17	20
Robert & Beverly	Scaling	17	53
Harvey & Jan	White	19	56
Mark & Amy	Krohn	25	43
Ray & Darci	Grothman	29	7

Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in July.

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.

JULIETs Lunch

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

Thursday, July 11 — Chili's Grill and Bar

426 S. Telshor

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



WINGS/LWML

The next gathering of WINGS (Women in God's Service) will be on Monday, **July 8**, at 6:30 PM in Luther Hall. All women are invited for fellowship and Bible study. Dessert will be provided.

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Voters' Assembly
March 10, 2024

President Doug Lorenz called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. There were 29 of the 50 members in attendance.

Pastor Cave led us in opening prayer.

Lunch was served and the meeting re-convened at 11:50 a.m.

Debra Echtenkamp moved and Frank Brennan seconded that the minutes from the December 10, 2023, voters meeting be accepted as submitted. The motion passed.

Pastor's Report: See attached. Pastor Cave reminded us that there will not be a potluck meal on the 5th Sunday as this will be Easter Sunday. There will be a potluck dinner following the Easter Vigil on Saturday, March 30.

Brad Springer moved and Carol Moore seconded that the 8 people who signed in as new voting members be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice President (Wade Echtenkamp): See attached. Right now the parents of children ages 7 and older are unable to attend Bible class because there is no Sunday School or other classes available for those age groups. We need volunteers to lead all of the age groups. If we had as many as 8 leaders, no one would have to commit to leading a class every week.

Secretary (Carol Cooper): No report since Carol was absent from the meeting.

Treasurer (Brad Mueller): See attached. In Brad's absence, Doug Lorenz explained the need for an update to the housing allowance provided to our pastor and called teachers. Frank Brennan moved and Shirley Miller seconded that the revised housing allowances be approved. The motion passed.

Financial Secretary (Carol Moore): No report.

Board of Elders (Richard Turk, Chair): See attached. Richard reported that the elders are considering ordering a new processional cross and are reaching out to people in their care groups for their opinions.

Trustees (Brad Springer, Sr.): See attached. Brad presented bids from two different vendors for replacing the aging HVAC system in the church sanctuary. He recommended the bid from Aire Serv because the system they would install can be repaired as needed. The cost will be approximately \$15,000 and the recommendation is that we approve the expense now so that it can be installed before outside temperatures begin to rise. The current system nearly failed last summer. Brad Springer moved and Alma Lorenz seconded that we approve the purchase. The motion passed.

Outreach (Brad Springer): Brad is proposing a "hoodie project" which would involve purchasing a number of black hoodies with Luther's Seal on the front and back. Brad explained what each symbol and color in the seal means. Anyone agreeing to obtain one of the hoodies would have to agree to either memorize the meaning of each of the symbols and colors in the seal or else carry such explanation with them. The idea being that people would ask about the seal, providing an opportunity for outreach. Brad would like to gather feedback from each person who wears one of the hoodies. If this turns out to be successful, we'll look into t-shirts for the summer. Anyone interested in participating should email or text

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Brad.

School Board (Darci Grothman): In Megan Wood's absence, Darci reported that a validation team will be here in April to approve our accreditation. She also reported that we are seeking candidates for a new school administrator (the Grothmans are moving to the D.C. area in June), as well as a teacher to replace Jill Messina (grades 1 and 2), and a teacher for grades 7 and 8. Enrollment is now open to the public. Tuition has been raised to \$5,750/year. In an effort to be more visible to the community, we had an electronic billboard near Sam's Club for several weeks. Darci did receive some phone calls during that time. We were also voted the best private school in Las Cruces for the 2nd year in a row. She asked members of the congregation to do a Google review of our school as a way to encourage more people in the community to consider sending their children here. The link to do a review is on the school website.

An additional shed is needed for storage now that all of the classroom space in the building will be used for classrooms. A shed will be donated by a member of the community whose children attended our school some time ago. Voters were asked if anyone had any questions or problems related to installing another shed. Since no one objected, we will proceed with the acquisition.

Regarding possible moving expenses for any of the new positions, we discussed how best to manage such a need. Alma Lorenz moved that we set aside \$15k for moving expenses, not to exceed \$10k for any called teacher. Frank Brennan seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Old Business: Carol Moore asked about the status of the phone system which needs to be replaced. We are still waiting for a solution for the alarm system if we go to a wireless telephone system.

Amendments to some of the bylaws have been proposed (see attached). Doug Lorenz explained each one and also explained that a second voters meeting is required before we can vote on changes to the bylaws. The changes presented were approved at this meeting and will be voted on at the next meeting.

We developed a strategic plan some time ago that needs to be revisited. Pastor Cave requested a copy.

The bylaws require that both the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary be audited yearly. An audit committee composed of Frank Brennan, Karen Springer and Austin Nathaniel will schedule audit meetings with Brad Mueller and Carol Moore.

Brad Springer, Sr. moved and Debra Echtenkamp seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol J. Moore

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 May '24 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: May 1, 2024

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of Apr '24</u>	<u>FY24 thru Apr '24</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>			
MLC General	\$38,805	\$257,455	\$253,660
MLS Total	\$22,174	\$246,190	\$273,280
Designated / Other	\$26	\$10,898	\$3,333
	\$61,006	\$514,543	\$530,273
<u>Expenses:</u>			
MLC Total	\$14,000	\$176,171	\$177,473
MLS Total	\$29,733	\$324,822	\$343,641
	\$43,733	\$500,993	\$521,114
Net Difference	\$17,273	\$13,550	\$9,159

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

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,765
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	<u>\$6,191</u>
Average Weekly Surplus/Shortfall:	\$426
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$272,393
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	<u>\$253,660</u>
Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/Shortfall:	\$18,733

Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	Morgan Stanley/E*Trade (as of Apr 31, '24)	\$112,862
	Strasser Endowment (as of Mar 31, '24)	\$82,186
	Thrivent (as of Apr 31, '24)	\$436,811
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account	\$12,875
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #1	\$51,501
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #2	\$51,134
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #3	\$50,640
	TOTAL	\$798,009

<u>Current Assets:</u>	Shepherd's Staff Checking (as of Apr 30, '24)	\$34,289
	LCEF Checking (as of Apr 30, '24)	\$48,222

		Youth Activity Fund	\$3,766
		Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	minus	MLS Reg/Tuition Holding	\$2,475
		MLS Angel Prog/TA Holding	\$7,029
	Dedicated	COVID Grant	\$35,734
	Funds	Apple Tree Donations	\$794
		Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$3,013
		School Security Grant	\$8,844
		Staffeldt Scholarship Fund	\$7,425

Total Checking Available **\$931**

Liabilities: None

Comments:



*Independence Day is
Thursday, July 4*

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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