

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. (Philippians 4:10-14)

Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me," is a well-known verse. And it's perhaps one of the most misused or misunderstood verses from the Scriptures. It's not uncommon for this to become a sort of "theme verse" for Christian sport teams, and one will often see it stenciled on the walls of church gymnasiums. A moment's reflection, however, reveals that we can't do all things we might want to do in the context of sports or other physical activities simply by invoking Christ's name. After all, I'm not likely to become an excellent basketball player simply by quoting Philippians 4:13 right before an attempted lay-up!

Philippians 4:13 is also a verse that is frequently chosen as a Confirmation verse, and in many cases, that's getting much closer to the Apostle Paul's intended meaning. Young people taking their Confirmation vows will be thinking about a verse that holds meaning throughout the rest of their lives, and they will face many challenges that can only be endured through the grace of God.

And when one reads the context of Philippians 4:13, one can readily see that the Apostle Paul was talking about his ability to remain content in all circumstances, whether he had an abundance of earthly goods or was suffering from great lack. In any and every circumstance, Paul was content.

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Important Dates:

- February 9: Super Bowl Sunday – Super Bowl Might Mites
- February 14: Valentine's Day dinner in Luther Hall
- February 17: Presidents' Day



And when we think about the challenges we will face throughout this life, discontentment is most certainly a challenge each and every one of us will face! I was recently going through the Small Catechism with the Confirmation class as we were discussing the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, which are about coveting. To be covetous is the opposite of contentment. To be covetous is to have a sinful desire for what we don't have, oftentimes justifying ourselves by saying that we really do *need* more than we currently have.

I explained to the students that we live in a culture that thrives on discontentment. We are constantly bombarded with advertisements that are purposefully designed to make us discontent with what we currently have. These messages often claim that if we purchase their product or service, then we'll be much happier than we are right now. And as many others have comedically noted, we often don't even realize a certain product or service even exists until we see the advertisement, and then suddenly what we had never known about becomes something we feel we desperately need!

Now, it's fair to ask if all desires for more are inherently bad. And the answer to that is "No." For example, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul wrote, "Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise, he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ" (1 Corinthians 7:20-22). In other words, a bondservant who had become a Christian is encouraged to gain freedom if the opportunity arises. But he should not obsess over the matter or try to gain freedom in an underhanded way. Paul reminds both those who are bondservants and those who are masters that all people have freedom in the Lord and at the same time are all bondservants of Christ. The bondservant is encouraged to find his contentment in the Lord rather than in his circumstances.

And that's the key for true contentment. Contentment that is based off of our circumstances is not true contentment because our circumstances can change. There are times in our life when we are healthy, and times when we are not. There are times when our finances are solid, and times when money is tight. There are times when our plans are coming together well, and times when it seems as if nothing we try is working. Our circumstances change.

But our Lord does not. Our Lord has promised to be with us always, in any and every circumstance. We human creatures are very often concerned with the things of this life. Sometimes we are concerned with things that are trivial, even by human standards. Other times, we are concerned with things that are truly needed for this life, things like food and shelter. And our Lord Jesus knows that we need these. He famously said in His Sermon on the Mount, "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33).

That's how the Apostle Paul could be content in all circumstances, even though he often faced hunger and exposure as well as hostility and persecution. Ultimately, he faced his execution for his testimony of Jesus Christ. But despite all of these trying circumstances, he remained content. He remained content because he knew that Jesus Christ had forgiven him his sins and cleansed him from all iniquity. He knew that Jesus had prepared a place for him in heaven, and his eternity was a promise sealed for him by the Holy Spirit in the water of baptism. He knew that nothing in this life could separate him from the love of God is Christ Jesus. In any and every circumstance, he found the secret to being content. He could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave





Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry



All you need is love!

If you're about my age, you might have a Beatle's song pass through your mind as you see the title of this article. Before we begin to wonder whether the Beatles understood the importance of the greatest love of all... Would you like to join me in spending part of your prayer time this February praying and meditating on love? With Lent beginning a bit later this year, we have this opportunity to reflect on our dire need for our Heavenly Father's love, the depth of His love for each of us, and the power of this love that is so great, we cannot keep it to ourselves.

I wonder how the following passages about love from God's Word will lead each of us to pray this month? Some are so familiar we may be tempted to pass over them, yet the bear pondering. There are so Bible passages about love, but here are a few to savor in our prayer times as we pray for ourselves and others:

John 3:16:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 15:13:

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

Romans 13:10:

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

1 Corinthians 13:13:

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love.

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John 13:34-5:

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Romans 8:39:

nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 John 3:1:

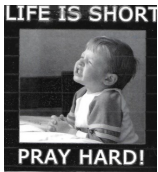
See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

1 John 4:18-29

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

1 John 4:7-8:

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.



***“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

“Christ’s Life, and Love, and Light”

Open our eyes Lord to see Your love’s intent,
To know with minds and hearts its depth and height
May thankfulness be days in service spent
Reflection of Christ’s life, and love, and light. (LSB 788)

As stewards enter the month of February, it is fitting that we look at the last stanza of the stewardship hymn, “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788). It is in these words that we see that the heart of stewardship is indeed love. Love has flowed from our Lord to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This love is then to flow from us to others. Being a conduit of love is really the central task of what it means to be a steward. The Lord entrusts us with His love that reconciles us to Himself, so that we might be stewards of the Gospel reconciliation that is freely given through us to those around us.

If we don’t see this love from God to us, then through us, to others, our eyes will be closed not just to the needs of those around us. They will also be closed to the very heart of the Gospel itself. This is why the hymnist prays that the Lord would “Open our eyes, Lord, to see Your love’s intent, To know with minds and hearts its depth and height.”

Only when we are immersed in God’s Holy Word, washed in Holy Baptism’s life-giving water and fed on the holy, precious, body and blood of Jesus in the Holy Supper, will the Spirit be able to open our eyes to see the Lord’s loving intent for us, and those we know and love. Sin blinds us. It makes us think that we are the center of our world, and our pleasure is the key.

In the Word, the Lord shows us the depth and height of His love. The depth of that love is what moved Him from His throne in heaven into our world. There He would don our human flesh, walk the dusty roads of Palestine, and set His face toward Jerusalem. Once there we get to see the height of His love, as He is elevated on a Roman cross to die a death that we deserve. But that would not be the end. He would be lowered into a tomb for three days. On that third day we then see the heights of love ascended to in His resurrection. This resurrection is already ours too!

The depth and height of this love poured out on us by the Holy Spirit then is distributed through us to others. Christ’s servant love is shown in our servant love. The hymn utters the prayer of every Christian steward:

May thankfulness be days in service spent
Reflection of Christ’s life, and love, and light.

This is the task for which stewards were originally created. Bearing the image of creation and redemption, we reflect Christ’s love to those around us. The light of Christ shining through us to others is the true stewardship to which we are called. It takes place in our homes. It is lived out in our workplaces and classrooms. As we bear the life, love and light received in Word and Sacrament, we carry it out in service to our neighbor and for the glory of God!

Forgive us, Lord, when our stewardship of thankfulness is shallow or lacking! Fill us with Your life, love and light! Not just for us, but through us to those we know and love, that they may know Your life, love and light for them!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



February Birthdays

		<u>Date</u>
Jace	Melton	8
Kay	Swedberg	8
Betty	Coughlin	10
Maya	Nicholson	10
Rachel	Monica	11
Mark	Krohn	14
Kenneth	Springer	16
Jean	Bartels	20
Sheila	Fulwiler	22
James	Turquette	24
Alise	Ornelas	25
Dianne	Wensel	26
Walt	Roof	29

Happy Anniversary

February Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Michael & Shirley	Kaiser	2	23
Walt & Toni	Roof	13	43

Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in February.

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.

Please join us for the
“Love Your Seminarian”
Valentine’s Italian Dinner



Hosted by the LWML

In sponsorship of seminarian Noah Oloff and his wife Abby

When: February 14, 2025, at 6:00 PM

Where: Luther Hall

What: All dinners include salad, bread, choice of entrée, and dessert. Vegetarian options available.

Who: Bring your Valentine, Galentine or family!

*Tickets will go on sale in the
Narthex each Sunday*

from 1/26 - 2/9.

Individual - \$25, Pair - \$40,

Child under 12: \$10

Kids under three eat for free!



JULIETS

All women in the church are invited to our monthly ladies' lunch. And bring a friend!

Thursday, February 13 — Cattle Baron
790 S. Telshor Blvd.

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, **February 10**, 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

NOVEMBER 19, 2024

President Doug Lorenz called the Mission Lutheran Church Council meeting to order at 6:33 PM. Other Council members present were: Wade Echtenkamp-Vice President, Carol Cooper-Secretary, Brad Mueller-Treasurer, Carol Moore-Financial Secretary, Richard Turk-Board of Elders, Karen Springer-ML School Board Chairman, and Brad Springer, Sr-Board of Trustees.

1. Opening Prayer - The Church Council meeting was opened with prayer.
2. Approval of Minutes - The minutes of the October 15 meeting were approved as presented. Carol Moore had taken the minutes for Carol Cooper who was traveling.
3. President Lorenz called for the following reports:
 - a. Vice President-Report is attached
 - b. Secretary-Carol Cooper explained that she and Carol Moore, Financial Secretary, considered changing roles for the coming year. Carol Cooper said she believes the secretary role is getting easier with practice, and she is happy to serve another year as Council Secretary if elected in December.
 - c. Treasurer-Brad Mueller-report is attached. Brad observed that while we have enough cash to meet our obligations easily now, we need to improve our giving to maintain our financial well-being. Brad also explained that he would like the Council to consider "out-sourcing" payroll.
 - d. Financial Secretary-No report.
 - e. Elders-Richard Turk-Report is attached.
 - f. Trustees-Brad Springer-Report is attached.
 - g. Outreach/Fellowship/Stewardship-No report
 - h. ML School Board-Karen Springer-Report is attached.
 - i. President-Old Business: Report regarding phones is attached. Other items discussed:
 - 1) Doug would like to discuss during Voters' Assembly in December the financial shortfall explained by Brad Mueller at this meeting and discuss further at our January council meeting.
 - 2) After the Council members had studied the telephone options offered by Comcast and Telstar, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Telstar option.

New Business:

- 1) Carol Moore has suggested we study and make appropriate changes to our By-Laws in the New Year.
- 2) Concordia Technology has a payroll service called PayCor. The cost for our Church and School to use "Preferred Payroll Service" will be \$1,200 per year. Carol Moore made the motion and Karen Springer seconded the motion to accept PayCor payroll service. All Council members present voted to accept the payroll service. A retirement savings plan will also be available to employees through the payroll service.
- 3) Voters' Assembly will be December 8, 2024 at 11:30, with lunch provided; the next Church Council meeting will be January 21, 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper, Secretary



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**Valentine's Day is
February 14**

We're on the web!
<http://missionlutheran.net>
<http://mlschool.net>

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2025

President	Doug Lorenz	Elders, Chairman	Richard Turk
Vice President	Eric Gunderson	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