

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Many of us are familiar with the Christmas hymn *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (#384 in *Lutheran Service Book*). The third stanza of that hymn goes:

This is He whom seers in old time
 Chanted of with one accord,
 Whom the voices of the prophets
 Promised in their faithful word.
 Now He shines the long-expected;
 Let creation praise its Lord
 Evermore and ever more.

Just recently, Emily pointed out to me that the *Lutheran Service Book* attributes this hymn to a man named Aurelius Prudentius Clemens, and that he lived from 348—c. 413. And that got her to thinking about how “old” the words of the “seers in old time” were to that hymn’s author, especially when we think about our own chronological distance from the events of Jesus’ earthly life.

If we use rough numbers, Aurelius Prudentius Clemens would have written that hymn about eight hundred years after Malachi’s prophecy: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes” (Malachi 4:5), a prophecy which was fulfilled in John the Baptist. Clemens was about eleven hundred years after the prophecy from Micah: “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth

Continued on next page →

In this issue:

- Prayer Ministry
- Stewardship
- Birthdays and Anniversaries
- JULIETs and WINGS/LWML
- Voters’ Meeting Minutes
- Treasurer’s Report

Important Dates:

- January 1: New Year’s Day holiday
- January 6: Epiphany party
- January 9: JULIETs lunch
- January 13: WINGS/LWML fellowship and Bible study



for me one who is to be ruler in Israel” (Micah 5:2a). Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah who recorded many prophecies of the coming Messiah, including: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14b), and, “For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Clemens would have been about fourteen hundred years after the prophet Nathan brought the word of the Lord to King David, saying, “I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:12b-13).

Thus, the author of this hymn that we regularly sing was nearer chronologically to King David than we are to him! And when we consider that our chronological distance from the earthly life of Jesus is two thousand years, if we were to go back two thousand years from Clemens, we would be even further back in history than the prophet Moses, who said to the people of Israel, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to Him you shall listen” (Deuteronomy 18:15).

When we consider these timelines, we might be struck by how the prophecies of the coming Messiah were much closer to Jesus’ earthly life than we are, and yet these prophecies were considered “ancient” in Jesus’ day. And this is important for us to consider because of the nature of God’s Word. It’s a common thing that Christians will look back on the days of the Old Testament and think that in some ways the people of old had an advantage over us because they had prophets who could receive a direct revelation from the Lord and deliver that word to His people.

But was that really an advantage? When we think about the time period of the Old Testament, we ought to note that a faithful prophet who delivered the true Word of the Lord was not always present. There were large portions of time in which no prophet received a message from the Lord. And even in the days when there were faithful prophets, relatively few people in Israel would have been able to have one on one interactions with them.

And to complicate matters further, just because someone claimed to be a prophet didn’t mean that they were receiving the true messages from the Lord. More than once, the faithful prophets lamented that the people were content to follow the false prophets. After all, when someone heard a favorable message from dozens of men who called themselves prophets, but one man was proclaiming a message of judgment, which message was more likely to be believed?

And another challenge of living in the days of the prophets is that one of the tests of whether or not a prophetic message was truly from the Lord was to see if the prophecy came true. In some cases, like when a prophet foretold the outcome of a battle, it didn’t take very long to confirm. But in other cases, especially with regard to the coming Messiah, confirmation did not come quickly. These prophecies took hundreds, or in some cases, thousands of years to be fulfilled. From a human perspective, it’s no wonder that the people of Jesus’ day considered all of the Messianic prophecies to be ancient. The faithful had been patiently waiting, and they had to wait a very long time.

And so, while prophecy has ceased and the Lord no longer reveals His Word directly to individuals, the believers of the New Testament have a gift that the people of old did not. We have the Word of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We’re not waiting for the Messianic prophecies to be fulfilled. We have both the records of the Old Testament which point toward the Messiah, and we have the records of the New Testament that show how Jesus has fulfilled these prophecies.

Because we have these things recorded for us, we no longer have to wait and see if the words of a prophet are true. The words of Scripture have been self-authenticated throughout the millennia, and continued discoveries of manuscript evidence consistently testify to their reliability. We can be sure that we have the true Word of God.

This is a great blessing for us, because even though we are two thousand years from the events of Jesus’ earthly life, we can have complete confidence in the Word that is for us. Even if we must wait another thousand years or more for Jesus to return, the Word He has given to us will sustain God’s people. For the Word of the Lord endures forever. Amen.



Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

We celebrate at this time of year. And then—perhaps all too quickly—we put those symbols of the season’s celebration away...the nativity is carefully wrapped and placed back in its protective box, the lights are gathered and the ornaments stored away.

NO! Not yet!

Let’s not blow out those Christmas candles yet. Those candles symbolize Christ, who told us He is the light of the world. [John 8:12] Let’s think about this and pray for ourselves and for others who need Him. We have been lifted from the gloom and darkness of our sin into the radiant light of our Savior’s coming and the knowledge that our Salvation is here. In Chapter 60, Isaiah tells us, “*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*” Ponder with me for a moment the true magnificence of this Light, the Light in which He dwells that is “unapproachable.”

Here are passages about our Light that may guide our prayers for ourselves and others:

John 3:19:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

Isaiah 9:2:

*The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.*

John 8:12:

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Romans 13:12:

The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Ephesians 5:8:

for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Continued on next page →

2 Timothy 5:12-16

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

1 Peter 2:9-10:

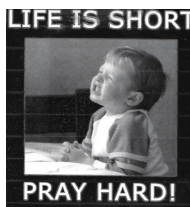
But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Revelation 22:5:

And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Psalm 72:18-19

*Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory!
Amen and Amen!*



***“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

Repenting of “Feasts that Know No Fast”

Fresh off the Christmas season and the retail frenzy that accompanies it, January brings a shot of frigid air into the lives of the people we know and love. This is not a meteorological statement either. While it is true that January is one of the colder months for those in North America, the cold front blast that hits us is the full force of credit card spending that fueled the retail frenzy. The bills for the gifts, the parties, the food and the travel have now come due. The credit card makes things convenient, but it also requires more discipline than many can muster. When the bills come in January for December’s celebration, it really puts a damper on things.

Congregations often make the same mistake in stewardship. We often charge forward in doing what we always do or starting new endeavors without counting the cost. But at the end of the month, or the end of year, when the bill comes due, the red ink on the congregational balance sheet smacks the people in the face like a stiff north wind in January. We hunkered down. We circle the wagons. We start to panic. The work of the Gospel suffers.

The fifth verse of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) addresses this January situation. The words penned by William Watkins Reid are very needful for us to hear as we start a new year, while dealing with the bills of past efforts and expense.

“Forgive us, Lord for feast that knows not fast ...” This hits us hard, doesn’t it? We love when the money is flowing, the parties are going, and things are getting bigger and better. But there is a time in life, and most especially in our spiritual disciplines, that we need to fast. The purpose of a fast is to step back, lay something aside for a time, and replace it with meditation on Scripture and prayer. This is designed to keep us from turning something that may well be good into an idol that separates us from the God who loves us in Christ.

“For joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul ...” In “The Parable of the Sower,” we hear Jesus talk about how the worries and cares of life choke out the growth of the seed of the Word that was planted. We know how this happens in our lives. Professional and youth sports do this. Materialism does this. Travel and leisure and do this. There is a list of things that we enjoy that starve the soul.

But it also happens in our congregations. When corporate stewardship is not managed in a responsible way, it can and does destroy individual stewardship. Is it good individual stewardship to support a ministry that doesn’t take its corporate responsibility seriously?

“For walls and wars that hide your mercies vast and blur our vision of the Kingdom goal.” This is the ultimate end of the idolatry of failed stewardship. We build walls between believers within the church and hamper those who are outside from coming to the Light of Life that is Jesus. The wars we fight over money and its impact on ministry do the same. It eventually blurs our vision of what we are here to do: share the Good News of Jesus. When the wintry blast of January hits us in this fashion, we are called to repent.

When the Holy Spirit uses the cold front of the call to repentance, we meet the God who forgives and restores. That is what He does for individual and corporate stewards. When the bills hit, they call us back to Jesus. He is the One who indeed forgives us our shallow thankfulness and leads us into the bounty of His mercy yet again.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



Birthdays of the Month

January Birthdays

		<u>Date</u>
Erin	Nicholson	4
Emma	Wood	5
Dan	McCurley	8
Al	Lujan	12
Carolyn	Nicholson	14
Sonja	Bonse	22
Kaaren	White	25
Alma	Lorenz	30

*Happy
Anniversary*

January Anniversaries

		<u>Date</u>	<u># of years</u>
Bradley & Karen	Springer Sr.	19	45
Arlyn & Jean	Bartels	25	64
Jim & Chari	Vance	26	56

Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in January.

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

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

Thursday, January 9 — Outback
940 N. 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, January 13, 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

JUNE 9, 2024

Pastor Cave opened the Mission Lutheran Church Voters' Assembly with prayer. Carol Moore reported that a quorum of voting members was present including three new voting members, Emma Wood, Ben Wood, and Steven Kaiser. The meeting was called to order at 10:48 AM by President Doug Lorenz.

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: The 24-25 Budget was discussed in "New Business".

Financial Secretary: No report from Carol Moore

Board of Elders: Richard Turk's report is attached. He explained that 1) the new processional cross is a "crucifix", and 2) the new cross will be a gift from a parishioner.

A vote was taken, and all voters were in favor of accepting the crucifix.

Board of Trustees: Brad Springer, Sr.'s report is attached.

Outreach Committee: Brad Springer, Jr. reported that:

Volunteers are needed for the Hoodie Project.

Slogans for Signs and Bible Box-Bible Verse suggestions are welcome.

3) Brad noted in his comments that he gets good ideas for outreach (such as "Pizza on Tuesday") from The Lutheran Hour

4) Carol Moore reminded us that Debra Echtenkamp reaches out through cards.

School Board: Karen Springer reported that since Megan Wood will be serving as MLS administrator, she will be reporting to the Voters. She reported:

1) We need to get the shed done.

2) We need to spread the word about 7th & 8th grade and 1st & 2nd grade availability that is safe and affordable.

3) Karen said "We need a volunteer to serve on the MLS Board." Roberta Willett said she would volunteer to serve on the school board.

Carol Moore made a motion to accept Roberta Willett to serve on the MLS Board; Karen Springer seconded Carol Moore's motion. All voters were in favor of accepting Roberta Willett to serve on the MLS Board.

President: Doug Lorenz called attention to the Church Council meeting and retreat held April 14, 2024 and the focus of that meeting, which was to encourage all church members to work together like families work together. He asked the Voters to examine "2024 Ministries, Programs and Boards of Mission Lutheran Church and School of Las Cruces, New Mexico", a handout which describes the "Ministries and Programs", "Outside Ministries supported by Mission", "Boards and Officers", various "Committees", the work of the Church Council and the Voters' Assembly and "other opportunities for serving in the Lord's Work"...to consider where and how "we can help our family out."

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Unfinished business:

Approve changes to By-Law Sections 7.2.2, 7.4.2, 7.5.2; all voters were in favor of approving the By-Law changes as submitted 3/10/2024.

Accept the Findings of the Audit Committee comprised of Frank Brennen, Karen Springer, and Austin Nathaniel. Auditors made one recommendation: "Compare bank deposits to offering reports." Alma Lorenz moved to accept the auditors' findings, and Frank Brennen seconded the motion. All voters were in favor of accepting the auditors' findings.

New Business:

Treasurer Brad Mueller has made the FY23-24 financial statements and the FY24-25 Budget available. ML School budget accounts for the increase in the FY24-25 budget. Most of the budget increase for the school is due to increase in salaries; for example, full time 7th and 8th grade teachers and full-time administrator. Karen Springer observed that "school grows the congregation." Pastor Cave observed that "Sowing Seeds" may need to cover short-falls...and "We have a significant buffer to accommodate the growing pains of increasing the school; over the past year, people are looking for us to have a school."

Frank Brennen made the motion to approve the FY 24-25 Budget, and Carol Moore seconded the motion. President Doug Lorenz requested we pray before we vote. The motion had no opposition; all voted in favor of the FY 24-25 Budget.

Debra Echtenkamp made a motion to give peaceful release to Darci Grothman effective June 1, 2024; Karen Springer seconded the motion. All voters were in favor of the motion.

President Doug Lorenz announced that the next Voters' Assembly will be in September. The meeting was adjourned at ----11:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper, Secretary

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
VOTERS' ASSEMBLY MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

The Mission Lutheran Church Voters' Assembly was called to order at 11:48AM by President Doug Lorenz. Jaimee Trujillo, Cindy Brown, Megan Wood, and Tracy Krause were approved as voting members. A quorum (consisting of 35 voting members) was present.

Pastor Cave opened the meeting with prayer.

President Lorenz called for the following reports:

Pastor Cave's report is attached. Pastor Cave especially noted that the assembly will need to appoint at its December meeting a representative to the Circuit Forum meeting tentatively scheduled in January, 2025. Nomination forms will be sent out November 29th.

Vice President: Wade Echtenkamp had no report.

Secretary: Carol Cooper had no report. [Approval of the June 9, 2024 Voters' Assembly Minutes was on the September 22nd agenda but neither the president nor the secretary noticed we skipped over that agenda item. Approval of the June 9 Assembly minutes will be on the December, 2024 Voters' Assembly Agenda.]

Treasurer: Brad Mueller's Financial Report is attached. He noted that actual contributions received have been less than budgeted contributions and contributions needed for increase in salaries and improvements needed and completed in our school facility.

Financial Secretary: Carol Moore had no report.

Elders: Richard Turk advised that the Elders' board needs to be a member of Lutheran Liturgy.org. Pastor Cave said he will accomplish that before the next Voters' Assembly in December.

Trustees: Brad Springer, Sr. report is attached. Brad reported that buildings and grounds projects discussed in June have been completed. We are planning a church "work day" which will be November 2 from 8AM until 12 Noon. We will have a breakfast snack. He asked us to bring tools if we have them; materials will be provided, and ALSO, please share ideas with Brad which we have for improvements needed in and around our church, eg Shilo Smith suggested some replanting of shrubs is needed. Parents of students are also welcome to join in our "work day". Speaking for the assembly, Bobby Jakcsy and Jan White expressed "great thanks" for all the improvements Brad has brought to completion.

Outreach/Fellowship/Stewardship: Brad Springer, Jr. explained the Martin Luther "Hoody" project, ie wearing a hoody which has the Martin Luther "rose" seal and be prepared to answer questions posed by folks who notice the seal. Brad encouraged us to email him when we do have positive interactions with folks who have noticed the seal.

Brad also announced that Mission Lutheran will be having an October Fest on October 19. A "Church and School" flyer will make it possible for folks to RSVP. Volunteers welcome!

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH VOTERS' ASSEMBLY SEPTEMBER 22, 2024 MINUTES (CONCLUDED, PG 2)

School Board: Karen Springer's report is attached. Megan Wood and Pastor Cave elaborated on their perspectives, citing their own interactions with parents and students that make it clear that families (parents and students) are learning at Mission Lutheran School...and hearts are opening to our Lord.

President-Doug Lorenz report is attached. In "old business" Doug Lorenz reported that we still need to gather more information regarding the phone system. Digital phones require a license for each phone, total cost about \$400, about the same as what we are spending.

Under "new business", Doug asked us to be praying about how we can serve God in 2025. We always need new/different Council members, Board chairmen, and Volunteers. (Carol Moore has updated a document available in the church office which describes many of the ways we can serve.)

The last agenda item was to set the date for the Voters' Assembly in December. The next Voters' Assembly will be December 8, 2024 at 11:30 AM; a sandwich lunch will be served between Adult Bible Study/Sunday School and the beginning of the meeting. Again, child supervision will be provided. There was discussion about the Christmas Program which, as noted below, begins at 3PM. The consensus was that we will have enough time for our meeting and a sufficient window of time to prepare to enjoy the Christmas program.

The Christmas Program will be December 8, 2024 at 3 PM.

Before adjourning, Pastor Cave led the Assembly in the Lord's Prayer.

Carol Moore made the motion to adjourn and Bob Jakcsy seconded the motion. The Voters' Assembly was adjourned at 12:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper, Secretary

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH and SCHOOL
Treasurer's Report for the Dec '24 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: December 1, 2024

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of Nov '24</u>	<u>FY25 thru Nov '24</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>			
MLC General	\$19,233	\$126,474	\$165,207
MLS Total	\$21,623	\$136,834	\$136,960
Designated / Other	\$1,060	\$2,612	\$875
	\$41,916 *	\$265,920 *	\$303,042 *
<u>Expenses:</u>			
MLC Total	\$32,275 *	\$94,276 *	\$95,304 *
MLS Total	\$59,393	\$237,438	\$228,435
	\$91,668	\$331,714	\$323,739
Net Difference	-\$49,752 *	-\$65,794 *	-\$20,697 *

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY25 (Thru Nov 30, 2024)

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$7,867
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	\$6,077
Average Weekly Surplus/ Shortfall:	-\$1,790 *
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$127,606
General Fund Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$165,207
Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/ Shortfall:	-\$37,601 *

Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	Morgan Stanley/E*Trade (as of Nov 30, '24)	\$123,286
	Mission Lutheran Endowment Fund (as of Sep 30, '24)	\$85,354
	Thrivent (as of Nov 30, '24)	\$479,314
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account	\$13,165
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #1	\$52,662
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #3	\$51,782
	TOTAL	\$805,563 *

<u>Current Assets:</u>	Shepherd's Staff Checking (as of Nov 30, '24)	\$45,319
	LCEF All Access (as of Nov 30, '24)	\$15,822
	Youth Activity Fund	\$3,766
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	minus MLS Reg/Tuition Holding	\$0
	Angel Scholarship Program	\$574
	Dedicated COVID Grant	\$27,628
	Funds Apple Tree Donations	\$882
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$5,850
	School Security Grant	\$8,774
	Staffeldt Scholarship Fund	\$7,877
	Total Checking Available After Dedicated Funds	-\$6,710

Liabilities: None



Epiphany is January 6.

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

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2025

President	Doug Lorenz	Elders, Chairman	
Vice President	Eric Gunderson	Elders, Vice-chairman	
Treasurer	Brad Mueller	Trustees	Brad Springer, Sr.
Secretary	Carol Cooper	Outreach	Brad Springer
Financial Secretary	Carol Moore	Day School Education	Karen Springer