

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp in Gilgal, saying, "Do not relax your hand from your servants. Come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the hill country are gathered against us." So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands. Not a man of them shall stand before you." So Joshua came upon them suddenly, having marched up all night from Gilgal. And the LORD threw them into a panic before Israel, who struck them with a great blow at Gibeon and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And as they fled before Israel, while they were going down the ascent of Beth-horon, the LORD threw down large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died because of the hailstones than the sons of Israel killed with the sword. At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel. So Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal. (Joshua 10:6-15)

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Important Dates:

February 2: Groundhog Day
 February 10: MLS Gala
 February 11: Super Bowl Mighty Mites
 February 14: Ash Wednesday
 Valentine's Day
 February 18: First Sunday in Lent
 February 19: Presidents' Day
 February 21: Midweek of Advent 1 service
 February 28: Midweek of Advent 2 service



I don't know about you, but there are certainly many instances where I wish that I had a bit more time. I sometimes wish I had more time in the morning before heading out the door. I sometimes wish I had more time during the week to get more tasks done. I sometimes wish I had more time on Saturday mornings to sleep in before the dog, the cat, and the chickens are all protesting that it's feeding time! I would imagine that, once and a while, you feel the same way. Maybe your alarm clock didn't go off and you wish you could get that time back. Or maybe it's something more positive. You are spending time with a close friend or with family, and you know you need to get going, but you wish you had more time.

One might say that we get more time this month. The year 2024 is a leap year, so we have twenty-nine days in February instead of the customary twenty-eight. We have a whole extra day! What kind of great and awesome things will we do with that time?

But then again, we know that it's not really an extra day. Our planet's orbit around the sun is not a precise 365 days, and thus a periodic correction is needed. This is not a unique feature of the Gregorian calendar we use today; many different calendrical systems have utilized different methods to account for the earth's orbital irregularities. So we're not actually gaining any extra time.

And yet, there are a couple accounts in the Scriptures that do describe events where God granted extra time to His people. One instance is when God caused the sun to go backwards ten steps in order to confirm to King Hezekiah that he would be healed of his illness (see Isaiah 38). The other instance is recorded in the text above from the book of Joshua.

Joshua had led the people of Israel across the Jordan River. By the power of the Lord, they had conquered the mighty city of Jericho. Shortly afterward, they conquered the city of Ai. A group of people called the Gibeonites became afraid, and so they deceived the Israelites into believing that they were not native to Canaan but rather had come to the Israelites on a long journey. The Gibeonites made a peace treaty with Israel, and it was only afterwards that Israel learned of their deception. Nevertheless, the Israelites had given their word and would not destroy the Gibeonites.

In response to the news of this peace treaty, five kings of the Amorites formed an alliance to strike down the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites could not stand before them, and they cried out to the Israelites to come to their aid. The Lord commanded Joshua to not be afraid, but to go and strike down the five kings and their armies.

The Lord fought for Israel, killing more of the Amorites with hailstones than those who fell to the Israelites themselves. As the battle raged, Joshua called out to the Lord, and the Lord caused the sun to stand still for a full day until Israel had defeated their enemies. In this unique instance, the Lord granted extra time so that He could work this mighty act of salvation through His people.

The account of the sun standing still is more than an interesting bit of Old Testament trivia. In many of these Biblical accounts, Joshua serves as a type, as a picture, of the new Joshua, Jesus Christ. (In the original Hebrew and Aramaic, it becomes evident that Joshua and Jesus are the same name, just with different translations. Both mean, "Yahweh is salvation.") In the Old Testament account, the Lord marked a mighty act of salvation with an extraordinary astronomical event. We see this picture fulfilled—but in the opposite—in the New Testament.

The new Joshua, Jesus, was not bringing salvation to one deceptive people group. Rather, He was bringing salvation to an entire world of recalcitrant sinners. He wasn't doing battle against five Amorite kings, but against the forces of sin, death, and the devil.

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He wasn't going to war armed with a sword, but rather by being nailed to a cross. And this mighty act of salvation was not marked by the day becoming longer. Rather, it was marked by the sun refusing to shine. Beginning at noon, the sky was darkened for three hours until Jesus declared, "It is finished," bowed His head, and gave us His spirit.

But we know that this is not where the story of the new Joshua ends! He rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming again to take us to Himself. On that Day, astronomical signs from the sun will pass away. Indeed, the sun itself will pass away! "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there" (Revelation 21:22-25).

It is true that February 29th is not actually extra time. It will likely feel like a normal day to most of us. But even so, we do know that our Savior is the God who created time, who has complete control over sun, moon, and stars, and who has used these as signs of His great salvation. And even more, we know that there will come a Day when He will take us to a new heaven and new earth where time will be no more. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave



There shall be no more death,
neither sorrow, nor crying,
neither shall there be
any more pain:
for the former things
are passed away.

Revelation 21:4, KJV



Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

Praying for those we love

Does it ever happen that you want to pray for one you care about, but don't know what to pray? We want those we care about to grow in and rely on their faith, but how can we pray specifically for them? I receive a "verse of the day" regularly and a few days ago, I was pondering how to pray for someone when the following scripture was sent to me for that day:

I pray, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places," – Ephesians 1:17-20

Hmmm...that the eyes of our hearts be enlightened...that we can know the hope to which He has called us...know the greatness of His power toward us...! That was a prayer that would be meaningful for the one for whom I was praying and, of course for me, too! As I ponder and read from my physical Bible, I find the first several chapters of Ephesians are rich with promises we want for those we care about, as well as for our own spiritual growth. Many of the nuggets I found were already underlined or highlighted. I found encouragement and inspiration like:

- ◆ The Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places [1:1-4]
- ◆ We have redemption, forgiveness through His blood... [1:7]
- ◆ We are saved by grace through faith (not works!) as God's gift. [2:8]
- ◆ Christ is our peace. [2:14]
- ◆ We are His workmanship and we were prepared for good works. [2:10]
- ◆ Through Christ, we have access in one Spirit to the Father. [2:18]

There is so much promise contained in these few chapters! I wanted to include them in their entirety, but you may wish to spend time re-reading them and letting God's Word marinate in you as you pray for one you care about!

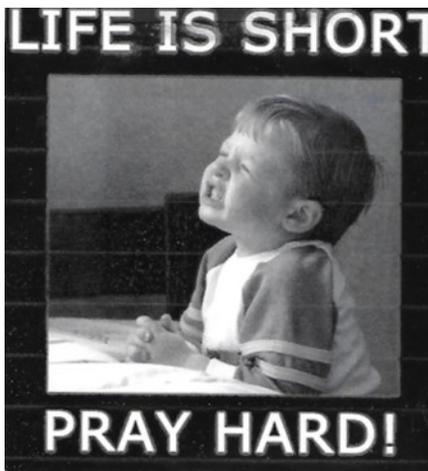
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I pray that you will be refreshed in your own faith as you pray for another.

I will finish with one more inserted passage, the final verses of Chapter 3 of Ephesians, headed in my **Lutheran Study Bible** as “Prayer for Spiritual Strength:”

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. 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

Caring for My Neighbor

If any of the Ten Commandments might tempt us to think that keeping the Law is easy, it would be the Fifth Commandment. After all, how hard is it to get through life without murdering somebody? The vast majority of people can handle that!

But Jesus famously blows up this notion by pointing out that the command, “you shall not murder,” goes much deeper – down to the heart.

You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.” But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, “You fool!” will be liable to the hell of fire. (Matt. 5:21-22)

Hatred and disdain come from the same sort of crookedness of heart as murder. With both murder and hatred, you look down on another person and think them of little worth.

In the Small Catechism, Luther also points out that every “do not” in the commandments also includes a “do this:” “We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body but *help and support him in every physical need*” (SC, Fifth Commandment, emphasis added).

We are not called merely to avoid evil; we must also do positive good.

So when Jesus drew near to us and became our neighbor by taking up our humanity, He came not only to avoid harming us, but He came to positively help us, bless us and serve us.

We are now called to show the love to our neighbors that Christ showed to us. Your neighbor is yet another gift that God has given you that requires your stewardship. We are called to show mercy, to be kind, to love and serve our neighbor. One aspect of this stewardship is financial: our neighbors need us to support the church’s work so that they can hear the Gospel and come to faith. Our neighbors need the church’s alms and mercy work. Our neighbors need our faithful service in all we do in the name of Christ.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship





Birthdays of the Month

February Birthdays

		Date
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	22
Walt & Toni	Roof	13	42

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.

Mark your calendars!

Bake Sale

Proceeds to support our seminary student



Sunday, March 17

**Plan to bring something to sell; plan to
purchase something; or both!**

The next gathering of WINGS/LWML will be on Monday, February 12th, at 6:30 PM in Luther Hall. All ladies are invited to join us for fellowship and Bible study.

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Council Meeting
November 21, 2023

President Brad Springer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Attending were Brad Springer, Wade Echtenkamp, Brad Mueller, Jacki McCurley, Carol Moore, Pastor Cave, Shirley Miller, and Brad Springer Sr.

Pastor Cave led us in opening prayer.

The minutes of the October council meeting were approved.

President (Brad Springer): Brad mentioned the next voter's meeting is December 10th at 11:30 am. The agenda is the council slate of officers.

Pastor's Report: Pastor had no written report. Advent will be starting soon and he has ordered the materials for Lent.

Vice President Report (Wade Echtenkamp): Wade was working on the slate of officers. Nathan Graff and Jace Melton will both be running for Elders. Doug Lorenz said he would be willing to run as President or Vice-President. The school board will have Megan Wood, Jan White, Karen Springer, Brad Mueller and Jennifer Diaz.

Secretary Report: No report

Treasurer's Report (Brad Mueller): The treasurer's report is attached.

Financial Secretary (Carol Moore): No report at this time.

Elder's Report (Eric Gunderson): Eric was absent so Pastor presented in his absence. The elders have decided to table the Tele coil loop for the church.

Trustees (Brad Springer Sr.): The Christmas decorations will be put up after Sunday service. The banners have a hanging rack in the left closet. The right closet needs some refurbishment and some improvements so he will meet with the altar guild to discuss. They will be changing two doors that go into the playground.

School Board (Shirley Miller): The board is recruiting and looking to the community for a teacher and an administrator.

Our next council meeting will be in January. We will meet in December if needed.

Pastor Cave led us in a closing prayer.

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jacki McCurley, 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 and SCHOOL

Treasurer's Report for the Jan '24 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: Jan 1, 2024

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of Dec '23</u>	<u>FY24 thru Dec '23</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>			
MLC General	\$31,908	\$150,961	\$155,655
MLS Total	\$19,366	\$155,742	\$160,300
Designated / Other	\$971	\$1,727	\$2,000
	\$52,245	\$308,430	\$317,955
<u>Expenses:</u>			
MLC Total	\$14,556	\$103,036	\$108,184
MLS Total	\$28,916	\$192,139	\$211,549
	\$43,472	\$295,175	\$319,733
Net Difference	\$8,773	\$13,255	-\$1,778

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY24 (Thru Dec 31, 2023)

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,765
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	<u>\$5,914</u>
Average Weekly Surplus/Shortfall:	\$149
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$159,682
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	<u>\$155,655</u>
Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/Shortfall:	\$4,027

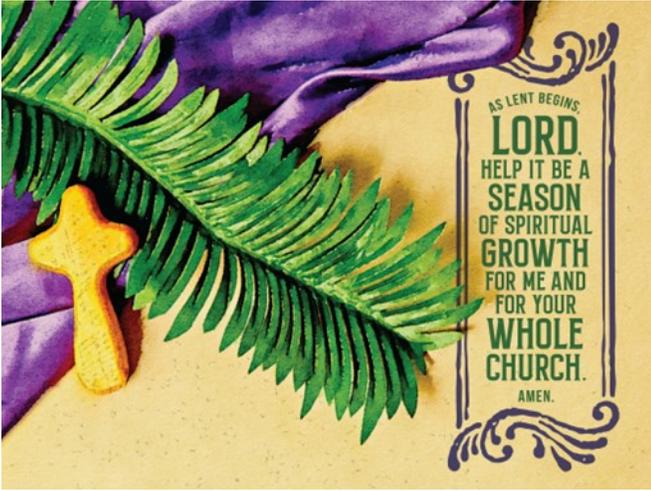
Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	E*trade Endowment (as of Dec 31, '23)	\$111,709
	Strasser Endowment (as of Sep 30, '23)	\$68,830
	Thrivent (as of Dec 31, '23)	\$423,836
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account	\$12,732
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #1	\$50,929
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #2	\$50,475
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #3	\$50,000
	TOTAL	\$768,511

<u>Current Assets:</u>	BMO Checking (as of Dec 31, '23)	\$43,795
	LCEF Checking (as of Dec 31, '23)	\$48,123
	(minus designated funds)	
	Angel Prog/TA Holding	\$3,355
	Registration/Tuition Holding	\$0
	Youth Activity Funds	\$3,766
	Staffeldt Scholarship	\$7,425
	COVID Grant	\$43,543
	School Security Grant	\$10,864
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	Apple Tree Funds	\$1,089
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$3,013
	Total LCEF Checking Available	\$6,363

Liabilities: None

Comments:



*Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on
February 14*

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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	Megan Wood