

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the LORD. (Isaiah 60:1-6)

January 6th marks the end of the twelve days of Christmas with the celebration of the day of Epiphany. The Epiphany of Our Lord is an ancient festival; only Easter and its season have an older tradition of being celebrated in the Church. Epiphany is a unique day in that it does not celebrate one particular event, but rather it celebrates the good news that Jesus Christ is the true Light who has come into the world for all people. Thus, the day and the season of Epiphany include the observance of several events in the life of Christ which give evidence to the fact that He is the Light of the world.

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Important Dates:

- January 1: Happy New Year!
- January 6: Epiphany party
- January 7: Installation of officers
- January 11: JULIETs lunch
- January 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
WINGS/LWML fellowship and Bible study



In many eastern Christian traditions, Epiphany is the celebration of the birth and baptism of our Lord. (Eastern traditions use a different calendar reckoning than our western traditions.) In our own western tradition, the first event that we celebrate is the visit of the Magi. The Gospel reading for January 6th is the familiar narrative from the Gospel of Matthew which records how these Magi from the east came to the infant Jesus, worshiped Him, and offered Him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These Magi were foreigners, they were not Israelites. And yet, at least in the Gospel of Matthew, they are the first people to worship Jesus as the Son of God. This is a revelation from the earliest moments of Jesus' earthly life that He has come for all people.

The first Sunday after the Epiphany is the day that we set aside to celebrate the Baptism of Our Lord. This is the inaugural act of His earthly ministry, the moment in which the Holy Spirit descends and remains upon Him, and the voice of the Father from heaven declared: "You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11b). It was at this moment that Jesus manifested to the world that He is the Son of God who has come to stand in the place of sinners.

Historically, the Sunday after the Baptism of Our Lord focused on Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine. (This is the Gospel reading for the old one-year lectionary, though it is used only in Year C of the three-year lectionary.) The interpretation of what this sign means has long been a matter of serious study among theologians. It's a miracle of multi-faceted meaning. At least one meaning is that it reflects the teaching of Jesus that He came in order to fulfill what the old Law was unable to do. This miracle is also a foreshadowing of the great marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. But even if it's impossible to fully exhaust the meaning of Jesus turning water into wine, the main purpose of the miracle is given by John himself: "This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested His glory. And His disciples believed in Him" (John 1:11).

Following this, the season of Epiphany takes a few weeks to focus on the teachings of Jesus. This portion of the season varies in length depending on how early or late the season of Lent begins on that particular year.

The final Sunday in Epiphany (in the three-year lectionary) is the celebration of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, a feast day that was introduced to the Church Year by the Lutherans, though observed by many others now. It was at the Transfiguration that Jesus most clearly manifested His divine nature. His clothes became dazzling white, and His face shone like the sun. Moses and Elijah appeared talking to Him, showing that He is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. And when Peter made the well-intentioned but misguided offer to build three tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, the voice of the Father spoke from heaven: "This is My beloved Son; listen to Him" (Mark 9:7b). The feast day of the Transfiguration of Our Lord is a fitting way to end the season of Epiphany because, on the one hand, it's the fullest manifestation of Jesus' divinity during His earthly ministry. On the other hand, Jesus descended from that mountain and began His journey toward Jerusalem and His cross. And we transition from the season of Epiphany to the season of Lent with our observance of Ash Wednesday following the Transfiguration.

Thus, the season of Epiphany is a season well worth celebrating! It's a season that reminds us that "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" (Isaiah 9:2). It's a season that reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the world, and that He has come to bring salvation to all nations. It's a season that reminds us that Jesus is the true Son of God and Son of Man, and that only He is capable of achieving the Father's plan for our salvation. It's a season to celebrate who Jesus is and what He has done for us. Amen.



Pastor Andrew Cave



Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

We begin a new calendar year, with the hope and gladness of the recently begun new church year. With the knowledge of the love of our Savior and the awe of His humble beginning freshly renewed during this holy season, let's ponder together how it will grow and change each of us during 2024. Will we grow in our prayer lives as we know our Savior better through His Word? I hope to!

Here are some simple prayer ideas and scriptures that may be a beginning guide:

Heavenly Father:

- **We praise you for all you are, have done and will do.**

Psalm 146:1-2 Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God while I have my being..

Ezra 3:11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel. "And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

- **Thank you for sending your Son to be our light. May we reflect that light brightly into the world that others may know you as their Savior.**

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.

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- **Thank You for the star that forever changed our lives. May we be guided to You in every circumstance of our lives.**

Matthew 2:1-2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose^[a] and have come to worship him."

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- **Please Transform our hearts and minds to that of our Lord Jesus Christ, guiding our decisions and behaviors.**

Philippians 2:5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus

Romans 12:2 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

- **Thank You for the ability to worship you, to come to you with anything in our lives, confident in your grace and mercy. Please afford us with opportunities to share what we know, WHO we know with others in their times of need.**

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- **May we at Mission grow? As you answered the plea in the prayer of Jabez, will You grow our numbers, keep us in Your Will and protect us as we do Your Work?**

1 Chronicles 4:10 Jabez called upon the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from harm so that it might not bring me pain!" And God granted what he asked.

In Your holy name we pray, 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

The Chief Stewards of Humanity: Mom and Dad

St. Paul tells the Ephesians that the first commandment with a specific promise attached to it is, “Honor your father and mother so that it may go well with you, and you may live long in the land” (Eph. 6:2). This promise is one indication of the importance of this commandment. The other thing that highlights the special nature of this commandment is its placement within the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments are clearly organized in two big categories. The first three commandments deal with our relationship with God. This category is called the First Table of the Law. The last seven commandments, the Second Table of the Law, tell us how we should relate to other people. These two tables correspond to what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” and “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37-39).

The order of the Second Table of the Law is also important. Murder is a greater sin than adultery, which is a greater sin than stealing, or lying, or coveting. But why is the Fourth Commandment first in the Second Table, ahead of “you shall not murder”? Is disobeying your parents really worse than murder? Or maybe we should give up on thinking these commandments are ordered?

The overall effect of this order is to get us to see our parents as a connection point between our neighbors and our God. Throughout our upbringing our father and mother stand between us and God and deliver His gifts to us: God clothes us, feeds us, protects us and teaches His Word to us through our parents.

So, parents have a very high calling from God. They are called to be stewards of the greatest gift: the gift of life.

Parenting thus gives us a keen insight into all our stewardship. Parents know that they have been given a great treasure in their children, a treasure that does not belong to them, yet for which they feel a great deal of responsibility. Truth be told, every gift we have been given is like this, because everything we have – whether our own personal skills and powers or our wealth and time – is all from God. He entrusts it all to us so that we can use it all and take care of it all for His great purposes.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship





Birthdays of the Month

January Birthdays

		Date
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

		Date	# of years
Bradley & Karen	Springer Sr.	19	44
Arlyn & Jean	Bartels	25	63
Jim & Chari	Vance	26	55

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.

JANUARY

Use this prayer guide for the month of January. Each day as you pray, please feed your Mite Box in support of district and LWML Mission Grants. What a joy it is to lift these needs to our Father's listening ears!



1. For God's direction in your life during this new year.
2. For LWML Mission Grant #1.
3. For Afghanistan, one of the 83 countries where LWML has supported a grant.
4. For your pastor.
5. For your LWML District Board of Directors.
6. Epiphany! Thank God that Jesus came to save us!
7. For the country of Angola.
8. For the LWML Texas District.
9. For young people to follow Jesus.
10. For all church workers.
11. For the country of Argentina.
12. For your community and the opportunity to share the Gospel with other people groups.
13. For LWML Mission Grant #2.
14. For our Lutheran Women in Mission President.
15. For the country of Austria.
16. For the LWML Oklahoma District.
17. For all Lutheran Braille Workers and volunteers.
18. For all law enforcement officers.
19. For the Bahamas.
20. For your vocation.
21. For LWML Mission Grant #3.
22. For those who receive needed staples from food pantries.
23. For the country of Bangladesh.
24. Recite the Lord's Prayer today.
25. For the editors of the *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly*.
26. For the homebound in your congregation.
27. For your dear friends.
28. For countries that have not yet heard the Gospel.
29. For the homeless in your area.
30. For the country of Belize.
31. For Sunday school teachers.

The next gathering of WINGS/LWML will be on Monday, January 15th, at 6:30 PM in Luther Hall. All ladies are invited to join us for fellowship and Bible study.

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Voters' Assembly
September 10, 2023

President Brad Springer called the meeting to order at 11:42 a.m. There were 39 of 60 members in attendance.

Pastor Cave led us in opening prayer.

Debra Ecktenkamp moved to accept the minutes from the June Voters' Assembly. Brad Springer Sr. seconded. The minutes were approved.

Pastor: Pastor Cave brought up two things that needed to be discussed: 1) 5th Sundays and 2) MLS Sunday. After the elders talked to their care groups, most members felt they either liked or were acceptable to keep Matins service and thought it was a good practice to have communion on the 5th Sunday. A motion was made by Carol Moore for Matins to be used on the 5th Sundays followed by Divine Service, Setting 5 for the Service of the Sacrament. It was seconded by Debra Ecktenkamp. The motion passed. A motion was made by Doug Lorenz to have no communion on MLS Sunday. It was seconded by Bobby Jakcsy. After discussion, the motion was called. The motion passed with three opposed.

Trustees:

- Darci Grothman talked about the \$18500 security school grant. The security cameras were installed, they are hard wired in, powered over the Ethernet and the data is stored locally at the church but can be accessed remotely. She showed the assembly how the cameras work. They are all paid for with no monthly fees and it resets after 28 days.
- Doug Lorenz said the keypad is no longer working on the service board. We are charged after three false alarms. He distributed information on the alarm system replacement. Questions were addressed. Brad Springer Sr. made a motion to accept company B for the alarm system replacement. Don Hallem seconded. Motion passed.
- Thank you to Don Hallem for helping move some items for a lady in the community.

President:

- Brad Springer mentioned that we have a \$2500 expense limit for council. Any item needing to be purchased that is over that amount must go before the voter's. In order to change that limit, we will need to make changes to the by-laws. This is just something to keep in mind for a later discussion.
- There are about six open positions for next year's council. President, Secretary, Elders (2), Outreach Board (2), and School Board (2). Think about whether you would like to serve on the council.

School Board: Shirley Miller thanked Amie for subbing while Cathy Stegeman was recovering.

Financial Secretary: Carol Moore mentioned that she is in need of another counter.

Elders: Bread breakers will be going by the calendar year with new groups starting in January.

The meeting was closed by everyone standing and citing the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 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 Dec '23 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: Dec 1, 2023

Budget Status:	<u>Month of Nov '23</u>		<u>FY23 thru Nov '23</u>	
		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income:				
MLC General		\$18,104	\$119,003	\$126,830
MLS Total		\$15,648	\$136,426	\$132,030
Designated / Other		\$33	\$756	\$1,667
		<u>\$33,785</u>	<u>\$256,185</u>	<u>\$260,527</u>
Expenses:				
MLC Total		\$23,071	\$88,479	\$92,089
MLS Total		\$33,432	\$163,224	\$181,398
		<u>\$56,503</u>	<u>\$251,703</u>	<u>\$273,487</u>
Net Difference		-\$22,718	\$4,482	-\$12,960

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY23 (Thru Nov 30, 2023)

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,765
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	\$5,724
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$125,919
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$126,830
Surplus/Shortfall Year-to-Date:	-\$911

Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	E*trade Endowment (as of Nov 30, '23)	\$107,913
	Strasser Endowment (as of Sep 30, '23)	\$68,830
	Thrivent (as of Nov 30, '23)	\$405,685
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account	\$12,589
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #1	\$50,358
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #2	\$50,000
	TOTAL	\$695,375
<u>Current Assets:</u>	BMO Checking (as of Nov 30, '23)	\$41,638
	LCEF Checking (as of Nov 30, '23)	\$98,095
	(minus designated funds)	
	Angel Prog/TA Holding	\$2,180
	Registration/Tuition Holding	\$0
	Youth Activity Funds	\$3,766
	Staffeldt Scholarship	\$4,425
	COVID Grant	\$43,738
	School Security Grant	\$10,864
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	Apple Tree Funds	\$1,130
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$3,700
	Coats For Kids	\$920
	Total LCEF Checking Available	\$14,872
<u>Liabilities:</u>	None	

Comments:



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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	
Vice President	Wade Echtenkamp	Elders, Vice-chairman	
Treasurer	Brad Mueller	Trustees	Brad Springer, Sr.
Secretary	Carol Cooper	Outreach	Brad Springer
Financial Secretary	Carol Moore	Day School Education	Megan Wood