

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore” (Psalm 133).

Indeed it is good and pleasant when brothers (and sisters) dwell in unity in the Lord! On the ninth and tenth of June, I was able to experience the unity of my brother pastoral delegates as well as the brothers and sisters who were the lay delegates to the Rocky Mountain District Convention in Denver, CO. Conventions can often be thought of as the business and bureaucracy facet of being a part of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and certainly there was a good amount of formal business which was conducted. However, it was also a time when we gathered together to receive the gifts of God's Word and His Sacrament, to be refreshed through fellowship with one another, and to be encouraged in our Christian life together.

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Important Dates:

July 4: Independence Day

GOD
BLESS
AMERICA



As I reflect on the district convention, I give thanks to God that we had such brotherly unity. In some cases, there was passionate discussion about what we were voting on. But that passion came from a desire to present a clear confession of what we believe, teach, and confess, and not from a desire for personal gain or animosity towards another.

I would like to share with you some highlights from the district convention. First, our former district president, Rev. Roger Schlechte, chose not to allow his name to stand for re-election. The former southern regional president (the region to which we belong), Rev. Gary Piepkorn, likewise chose not to stand for re-election. In a 51% to 49% vote, Rev. James Maxwell from Rock of Ages Lutheran Church in Colorado Springs was elected to be our new district president. Rev. Jason Rust from Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Ruidoso was elected the southern regional president. We give thanks to God for these men, and for all others who were elected to various positions of responsibility throughout our district, and we pray that God would strengthen and guide them and their families in their service to the Church.

There were only a couple of theological resolutions which were discussed, but they were both important. The first was a resolution to memorialize the Synod to affirm a young age of the earth. The reason for this resolution was because at the previous Synod convention, the Synod had voted to affirm that we believe and teach that God created the earth in six literal twenty-four-hour days. But that resolution did not address the age of the earth. Thus, this resolution calls on the Synod to do so. The original wording of the resolution stated that we believe the Bible says that the world is thousands of years old, not millions or billions. This was amended to specify that the world is less than ten thousand years old. The resolution passed as amended.

The second theological resolution concerned the innovative practice of online communion. It memorializes the Synod to reject this practice. During the COVID-19 pandemic when congregations could not meet in-person, pastors and lay people came up with many and varied ways to make sure that we would continue to receive God's Word. But the issue of how one could continue receiving the Sacrament of the Altar was a difficult one. Some pastors and congregations in our Synod developed the practice of inviting people who watched the service online at home of providing their own bread and wine and then the pastor would say the words of institution from a remote location. (In some cases, the pastor would invite the people at home to repeat the words of institution after him.) There are many concerns and reasons to avoid this practice. *The Commission on Theology and Church Relations* published a couple responses to this practice, which can be viewed at: <https://reporter.lcms.org/2020/ctcr-releases-addendum-to-communion-and-covid-19-opinion/>. There were some amendments adopted for clarity, and the resolution passed as amended.

Finally, I wish to share that the district voted to support Lutheran Theological Seminary in Siberia during the next triennium. (The offering at the opening worship service also went to support them, and the offering totaled in excess of \$18,000.) The Lutheran Church in Russia suffered much after the communist revolution in 1917; virtually all pastors were either killed or imprisoned. But after the Iron Curtain fell, the Lutherans began to make a comeback. In the 1990's the Siberian Evangelical Lutheran Church partnered with Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, ID, to train pastors and other church workers. Over the years, they have been blessed by God to be able to have their own facilities and faculty in Siberia. These are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and these dedicated pastors and church workers are serving in an area of great need.

So even though this was a convention filled with business, bureaucracy, and "Robert's Rules of Order," this was God at work to further the growth and unity of His Church. We give thanks to God for creating and sustaining His Church through the Gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the work of His Holy Spirit to call, gather, and enlighten us to this Gospel. Truly it is good and pleasant when brothers dwell in unity! Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave

Meet Our New Preschool Family – A Letter from Darci Grothman

Friends in Christ,

I'd like to introduce you to our MLS Preschool mission family for the 2022-23 school year! Here's the backstory. In January I received a phone call at school from Karen who is a volunteer working with Lutheran Family Services to resettle Afghan refugees in the Las Cruces area. She was working with the Selab family who have 2 boys that are preschool age and wanted to know more about MLS' Preschool.

We went back and forth for several months discussing options and what it would look like to have these 2 boys join our Preschool. They came for a visit in the spring and loved our Preschool. However, when the dad, Shah Mahmood, heard that we teach Bible stories, he was very much against it. Because the Selabs are devout Muslim, he went to his mosque and talked with one of the leaders there and he assured him that the culture is different here in America and the boys learning about the Bible would be okay. This was in April and after that reassurance the family wanted to move forward with enrolling the boys at Mission Lutheran School for the last 6 weeks of class. One of the main goals of getting the boys into preschool even so late in the year was to expose them to as much English as possible. Because the Selab family is from Afghanistan they all speak Pashto, an official language of Afghanistan.

As soon as the boys, Atal and Sohail, started coming to Preschool they fit right in! Within the first week they were learning the routine, sitting in the circle on the carpet, and interacting with the other kids. Play truly is a universal language! Our Preschool teacher, Miss Cathy, had a big job to do, but she rose to the challenge and loved those boys and taught them as much as she could in the few weeks she had with them. The Selabs live right around the corner from school, so they'd walk over in the mornings with their dad or eventually their mom when she was more comfortable going out in public by herself. Sometimes one of the older sisters would walk over with the boys before going off to school herself.

What an interesting family God has brought to our school! Let me tell you more about them. During the time the US military was working in Afghanistan, Shah Mahmood helped us by being a driver and mechanic. Because he was working with the US, he received death threats. He was so hated that the Taliban once lit the family's house on fire. When the US pulled out of Afghanistan, the entire Selab family needed to flee. If they'd stayed their lives would most certainly be in danger. When they landed here in the US they were in New Jersey for a couple months before settling in Las Cruces. Shah Mahmood and his wife, Zahida, have 10 children, with the tenth having been born in Las Cruces earlier this year. The oldest child is 17 years old and I believe she goes to Organ Mountain High School. This is her first time in school. The family regularly makes the most delicious flatbread and has a beautiful culture.

Shah Mahmood has jobs lined up, but is unable to work yet because of a paperwork issue. The family finally received their social security cards, but there is one paper yet to come through until Shah Mahmood can legally be employed. Someone from another church has recently gifted them a car. Can you imagine being a mechanic in your home country and when you get here you only have a bike to get around on? With this car their world will be opening up! The dad and sometimes the mom (when she can get a break from the kids!) goes to English class and their English is definitely improving.

When the school year came to a close, I asked about the family's plans for next year. Mr. Selab would very much like his boys, Atal and Sohail, to be enrolled in Mission Lutheran's Preschool class for next year. There's something about a Muslim family wanting their kids to go to a Lutheran school that just makes me smile. God is giving us an opportunity to truly fulfill our mission - to tell others about Jesus. However, tuition is the barrier here. With Mr. Selab still unable to work, the family can't afford to pay anything toward the cost of their kids' education. And yet, I think there's a reason they are here rather than being enrolled in any of the free Preschools around town. Lutheran school teachers are like gardeners, they plant seeds every day. Miss Cathy plants a seed of faith when she starts the Preschool day with a Bible story and prayer. Another seed planted when they wait to eat snack until after they've prayed. Another seed planted when they need a band aid in the office and I tell them "It looks like Jesus is already healing your knee." More seeds planted when we worship together in chapel on Fridays. And a very special seed of faith is planted when that scribbled-on picture about today's Bible story goes home and a Muslim father asks his son about Jesus. We as Christians can only pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to work and soften the hearts of those who don't yet know Him.

Continued on next page →

Can you help the Selab family?

If you feel led to make a financial contribution toward Atal and Sohail's tuition, please contact the school office (575) 532-5489, or office@mlschool.net, or catch me after church on Sunday.

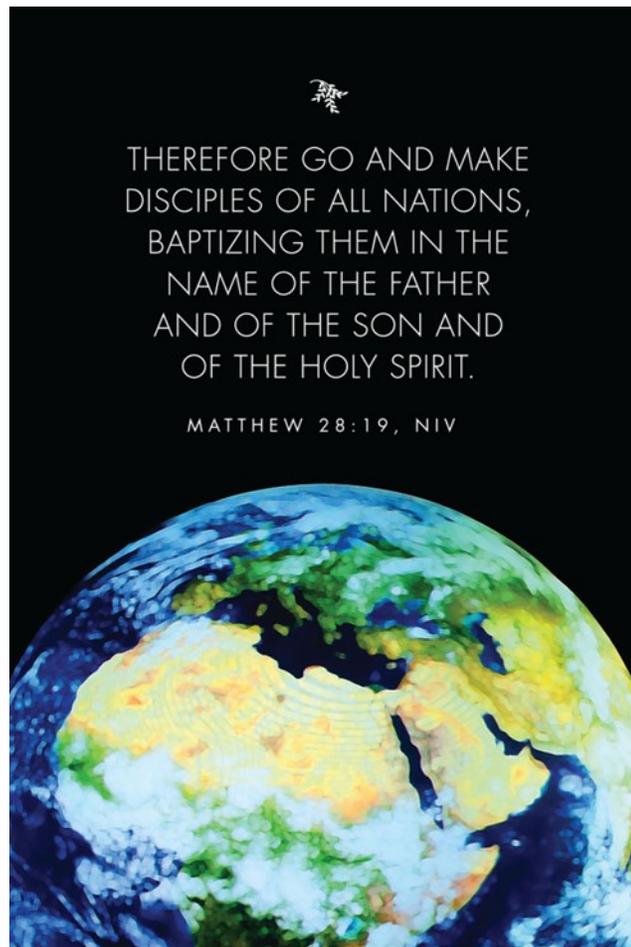
"Go therefore and make disciples of ALL NATIONS..."

Serving the Master Teacher,

Darci Grothman, Administrator

Mission Lutheran School

Learning, Living, and Growing in Christ!



Stewardship

New Testament Standard Giving

Whenever the topic of stewardship and giving comes up, the conversation inevitably turns to the question: “How much should I give?” Answers will vary because the motive behind such questions vary also.

Sometimes the motive behind asking this question is for self-justification. Even though as Lutherans, we know that we are not saved by our works but by grace through faith because of Jesus’ substitutionary atonement. Yet the natural religion of fallen man is to earn God’s favor by what we do.

Take for example the response of our Lord to the rich young ruler who asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus first tells him to keep the commandments. The rich young ruler responds by indicating that all this he has kept from his youth. But Jesus tells him that he lacks one thing: He must sell all that he has and give it to the poor and then follow him. This rich, young ruler went away sad because he was quite wealthy and could not part with his possessions.

Here we see that those who seek to justify themselves by their giving will hear a response that intensifies the duty that God places upon them. Indeed, they will hear a response that makes it impossible to win God’s favor by their works.

But to those who genuinely desire to know what their duty is, as Christians, in the arena of giving, we look to the Bible for our answer. We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. And we know that the Word of God has been “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

So, we begin to answer the question, “What should I give?” with the question, “What does the Bible say about how much we should give and to whom?”

The Old Testament is explicit. The expectation is that the people of God would give a tithe, that is 10 percent, of the first fruits of their labor to support the full-time ministry of the Levites. This is what the Lord gave Moses to teach the people:

“You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire—oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves. And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

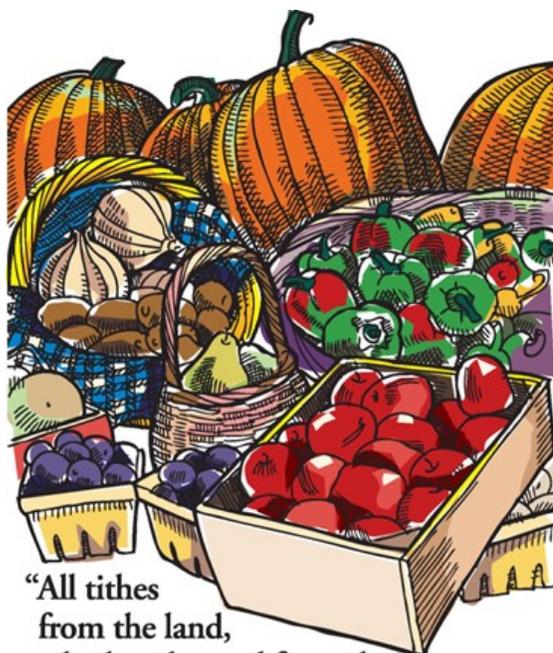
“At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.” (Deuteronomy 14:22-29)

This principle of tithing is carried over into the New Testament, though not explicitly by calling it a tithe. St. Paul teaches the Church at Corinth this: We are to give to the church regularly (1 Cor. 16:1-2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (1 Cor. 16:1-2; Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23). And all of this is because the “Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living by the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14), just as the Levites did.

This our New Testament standard. Since Christ became poor for us in order to make us rich in Him - blessing us with the riches of heaven - so we also have been so blessed to follow the example of our Lord and Savior and give of ourselves and the work of our hands to bless others with the same.

If we have been lax in this, let us - like our Lord, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross and scorned its shame - likewise begin to work toward this goal of regular giving of a generous proportion of the first fruits of God’s giving to us. And let us do so not begrudgingly, but for the joy set before us—with a spirit of eagerness, cheerfulness, and love—to share the blessings of God with those placed into our care.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



**“All tithes
from the land,
whether the seed from the
ground or the fruit from the tree,
are the LORD’s; they are holy
to the LORD.”** Leviticus 27:30, NRSV

Vision 2033

During the month of July, we will be supporting Vision 2033, which incorporates the Military Biblestick Outreach that we have supported in years past. With Vision 2033, Faith Comes By Hearing has come alongside the worldwide translation community in a movement to ensure that everyone on Earth has access to Jesus Christ's Gospel in a format they can understand. The goal of Vision 2033 is to work in partnership with others to see that the Word of God is recorded and freely provided in every language in the world by the year 2033.



In Matthew 24:14, Jesus says that His Gospel "will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." With this promise and goal in mind, Faith Comes By Hearing has adopted Vision 2033: To partner with like-minded ministries to record Scripture in every language of the world that needs it by the year 2033 and make these recordings freely available by every means possible.

THE CORE OF WHAT WE DO:

PARTNER

Everything we do is through partnership with ministries who share our vision.

RECORD

We will record God's pure Word in every language that needs it.

PROVIDE

Thanks to generous donors, we provide our recordings for free in a variety of formats.

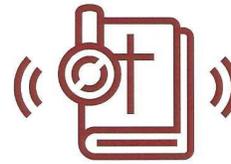
VISION 2033 WILL RESULT IN:

A **New Testament** recording in the heart language of 99% of the people in the world.

A Scripture portion recorded for the **remaining 1%** of people in their heart language.

A **Gospel Film** in the heart language of everyone in the world.

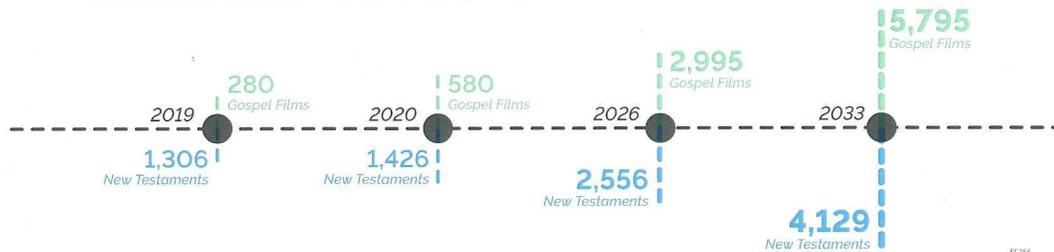
Free access to Audio and Video Scriptures for **every person on Earth.**



An estimated 70% of the world's population live in oral communities while 50% cannot read at a functional level. This means that Audio Bibles are the best format to engage Scripture.

"Audio is the end game."
– Greg Pruett, President, Pioneer Bible Translators

TOTAL RECORDINGS PROJECTED BY YEAR:



Make checks payable to Mission Lutheran Church and write Vision 2033 on the memo line.

Angel Scholarship Awards for 2022-23!

Applications were submitted by Mission Lutheran School families earlier this month for the upcoming 2022-23 school year. The committee met, reviewed all applications and had the delightful task of awarding Angel Scholarship Funds to students and their families! This year, 17 students from 11 families applied and were awarded a total of \$10,150!

Congratulations to the following students and families!

- Jonas Mabry
- Rowan Mabry
- Asher Lopez
- Gabriela Lopez
- Nickolas Cooper
- Paisley Craine
- Peyton Craine
- Adalyn Carrillo
- Alayna Carrillo
- Grayson Vigil
- Scarlett Vigil
- Keegan Maddox
- Kaitlyn Poppy
- Alex Fuentes
- Abraham Fuentes
- Adelyah Hernandez
- Savana Trejo



Your donations to the Angel Scholarship Program made these awards possible. The Angel Scholarship Program is funded completely by donation. Funds received now through June 1, 2023 will be distributed next year to more Mission Lutheran School students. Are you interested in making a donation to this fund? Please contact the school office at (575) 532-5489 or office@milschool.net.

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Luke 18:15-17)

Thank you for your continued support of Mission Lutheran School!



Birthdays of the Month

July Birthdays

		Date
Guericke	Le	1
Vandiver	Verline	1
Martin	Mary	9
Staffeldt	Ruth	11
Weber	Susan	11
Moore	Carol	15
Roof	Toni	15
Wood	Ben	15
Scott	Peggy	23
Springer	Karen	24

Happy Anniversary

July Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Martin	Ken & Mary	5	36
Halle	Don & Janis	17	18
Scaling	Robert & Beverly	17	51
White	Harvey & Jan	19	54
Krohn	Mark & Amy	25	41
Grothman	Ray & Darci	29	5

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.

"Leaning on Jesus"

John 17:20-26 - [Jesus said] "I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. The glory that You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one even as We are One, I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them even as You loved Me. Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know You, I know You, and these know that You have sent Me. I made known to them Your Name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

What do you do with a fellow Christian you absolutely can't stand?

I know that I am supposed to show love to them, but it's so difficult! How in the world can I love *that* person? They do this or that terrible thing—they hold such awful opinions—their voice grates on me; their behavior is obnoxious. Christian or not, I can't stand them. How can I be "one" with somebody who makes me want to run away the minute I lay eyes on them?

When this situation happens to me, I think back to Jesus' prayer here when He is asking the Father to help us. Jesus knows perfectly well that living together in love is not our natural state. It doesn't come easily to us. In fact, the only way it's possible at all is if the Holy Spirit is living in us, living the life of Jesus *through* us. On our own power, we will get nowhere. We will have to lean on Him.

So when this happens to me, I ask the Holy Spirit to help me. And then I remember that—hard as it is to imagine—Jesus loves this person just as much as He loves me. This person is someone for whom He suffered and died—yes, and rose again. Jesus wants me to treat this person with love. It makes Him happy. And I love Jesus. I would do worse things than this for someone that I love!

It is really not an easy thing to do. But when Jesus Himself lives inside us, we can hand the steering wheel over to Him. We can say, "Lord, I can't do it. Please love this person through me." And He will.

Continued on next page →

If He could handle suffering and dying and rising again, all to save the lot of us—every human being, obnoxious as we are—He can certainly help us learn to care for one another. He still does miracles!

WE PRAY: Dear Lord, You have loved me. Now please love others through me, including the ones that are so hard for me. Amen.

by Dr. Kari Vo.



WINGS (Women IN God's Service) Summer Happenings

The LWML will be meeting throughout the summer for Bible study and fellowship.

We will begin at 12:00 pm in Luther Hall.

Bring a sack lunch and join us as we dive into the Bible study. Drinks and dessert will be provided.

Monday, July 11th “Living in the Days of Noah – Today”.

Monday, August 8th “Lonely for Others”.

(School will be in session in August, but we can set up a table outside the church, in the shade, for lunch and Bible study.)

All ladies are invited to join us.

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Voters' Assembly
April 3, 2022

President Brad Springer called the meeting to order at 11:40 a.m. There were 33 of 53 members in attendance.

Pastor Cave led us in opening prayer.

Carol Moore moved that we accept Robert Smits and Michael Kaiser as voting members. Bobby Jakcsy seconded. It was moved and passed.

Debra Echtenkamp moved and Bobby Jakcsy seconded, that the minutes of the December Voters' Assembly be approved. The motion passed.

Eric Gunderson mentioned that two elders needed to step down for health reasons. They are consolidating the duties of these two into one elder. According to the by-laws, the elders elect a replacement and then council approves. It was approved by council on March 15th. The voters need to ratify this selection. The elders would like to select Nathan Graff to fill the two year term for elder. Doug Lorenz moved to select Nathan as new elder. Debra Echtenkamp seconded. Motion passed.

Michael Kaiser has volunteered to be our lay delegate to the convention in June. Eric Gunderson moved that we accept Michael as the delegate. Don Hallem seconded. The motion was amended to add Jerry Stickles as alternate. Debra Echtenkamp moved that we accept the motion with the amendment. Doug Lorenz seconded. Motion passed.

Eric Gunderson presented the Elder's report. Bread breaker groups will be revisited. A new signup sheet will be available after Easter. Thank you to Alma and Doug Lorenz for their help in redoing the sign up papers.

Doug Lorenz reported that the trustees have been getting things ready in the school when students return from spring break. The boy scouts did some landscaping around the school area.

Darci Grothman presented the school board report which is attached.

The next meeting will be June 5th to approve the budget.

Pastor Cave led us in the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 am.

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.



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 School: (575) 532-5489
 Emails: pastor@missionlutheran.net
 secretary@missionlutheran.net
 office@mlschool.net*

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

Elder on Call: Eric Gunderson (575) 382-8236

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2022

President	Brad Springer	Elders, Chairman	Eric Gunderson
Vice President	Wade Echtenkamp	Elders, Vice-chairman	Richard Turk
Treasurer	Brad Mueller	Trustees	Doug Lorenz
Secretary	Jacki McCurley	Outreach	Sonya Perry
Financial Secretary	Carol Moore	Day School Education	Shirley Miller