

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her Child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male Child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her Child was caught up to God and to His throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days. (Revelation 12:1-6)

We've been studying the book of Revelation in our Sunday morning Bible class for the last several weeks. Even though we have yet to study chapter twelve, this chapter comes to mind because of the upcoming Christmas holy day.

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Important Dates:

- December 3: First Sunday in Advent
- December 5: Advent by Candlelight
- December 6: Midweek of Advent Service 1
- December 10: Voters' Assembly
- December 13: Midweek of Advent Service 2
- December 17: MLS Christmas Program
- December 20: Staff Lunch
Midweek of Advent Service 3
- December 24: 2 Services on Christmas Eve – morning and evening
- December 25: 10:00 AM Christmas Day Service



Almost everyone loves Christmas. (The rare individual who does not like Christmas is often called a “Scrooge” or a “Grinch.”) And there are many good reasons to love Christmas. Christmas is a time of great joy and celebration. And while the traditions of family gatherings and gift exchanges are good, our focus in the church is on the birth of the Christ Child, recalling how He was born as a weak and helpless baby to poor parents in a lowly stable and laid in an animal’s feeding trough. This humble Child, whose birth would have gone unnoticed by anyone except His own family had He been an ordinary Child, was heralded by angels, welcomed by shepherds, and worshiped by Magi. When we celebrate His birth on Christmas, we sing the refrain of angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!” (Luke 2:14). The familiar Scriptural accounts of Jesus’ Nativity from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke clearly reveal to us that there is far more to Jesus’ birth than meets the eye.

At the same time, the less familiar account of Jesus’ birth from Revelation likewise shows that there is much more going on with Jesus’ birth than the eye of man can behold. Whereas the Gospel accounts reveal to us that Jesus’ birth is good news of great joy *for us*, *that God has sent His peace on earth to us*, it was not a peaceful event *for Jesus*.

In Revelation 12, the woman who was giving birth is, on the one hand, a picture of God’s church. But on the other hand, she is more specifically Mary. (The highly symbolic nature of Revelation often necessitates a multivalent interpretation of the imagery.) As she is giving birth, the red dragon is ready to devour the Child, and Revelation identifies the dragon as Satan. From the moment of Jesus’ birth, Satan attempts to destroy Him. We see this happen many times throughout Jesus’ life, from Herod’s paranoia that led to the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem, all the way to the devil entering Judas and enticing him to betray Jesus into the hands of sinful men who would crucify Him. Yet He was “caught up to God” in His glorious resurrection and ascension, where Satan can no longer assault Him.

One may wonder why Satan raged so hard against Jesus, especially as an infant. But we must remember that, to the devil, Jesus’ birth was the furthest thing from good news. The Bible describes Satan as “the prince of this world,” and when the Son of God took on human flesh, He made an incursion into enemy territory. He entered into a world of darkness in order to snatch us out of the domain of the devil and bring us into the kingdom of light. Jesus came in order to “bind the strong man” (Satan) and plunder his house. Jesus came, born of a woman, so that He would be the Seed of the Woman who would crush the head of the ancient serpent, just as God had foretold in the Garden (Genesis 3:15). Jesus came to depose the devil and be your Lord.

This is why, as I mentioned the other day at the Bible class, that I had added a figure to our household’s Nativity set. While our Nativity set has all the traditional figures of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the angel, shepherds, and Magi, I place the figure of a red dragon lurking behind the stable. It’s a reminder of the cosmic battle that was occurring during this seemingly peaceful night.

But what was bad news for the devil and his minions is indeed good news for us! Jesus declared war on him and declared peace on us. The author of sin is destroyed, the tyrant of death is deposed, and the prisoners have been set free! We are no longer under the domain of the devil, but rather are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Peace has come to mankind! Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave

Peace



Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

*“Built on Christ, we join together as God’s house of prayer
for all nations.”*

Advent is here! It seems to me that every year it comes more quickly. Almost like it was unexpected. It seems almost reminiscent of the way our Lord Jesus will come again except we actually do know this blessed season is coming each year.

And so, as the busyness of the season sets in, so we will be brief and share the

Top 10 Reasons to pray!

- 10** God cares about what is on our hearts and wants us to spend time with Him.
- 9** We can ask for and receive the freedom of God’s forgiveness.
- 8** There are many lost people in our midst, and in our community, state, nation and world who need our intercessory prayers
- 7** We can “put on” the spiritual protection we need to face the world each day.
- 6** Our desire to spend time with our Heavenly Father honors and glorifies Him.
- 5** Our prayers open the way for the Holy Spirit to draw us nearer to our Lord and Savior.
- 4** He wants us to pray! Throughout His life on earth, Jesus modeled a life of prayer for us. From spending time in the temple with His Father as a child to His escapes to the mountain to be alone in prayer and from His presentation of the Lord’s Prayer to His pleadings from the Garden of Gethsemane, He left behind His perfect example of a prayer-filled life for us to follow.
- 3** Time in prayer is time we can be molded to become more like Him.
- 2** He—the One who loved us to His death—continues to pursue us to spend time with Him. As we do, we experience His joy, His peace...
- 1** *Heaven and earth come into agreement when we pray, as the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, and places God’s perfect will in our hearts.*

Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

LIFE IS SHORT



PRAY HARD!

“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 Measure of Our Generosity

If you open up the Small Catechism, you'll find a shortened version of the Third Commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy." But if you look up the list of the Ten Commandments in Exodus, you'll find the full version:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:8-11)

Why did Luther shorten this commandment for the Small Catechism? Was it so that the kids wouldn't have so much to memorize? No, it was because Luther knew that all the details of the Third Commandment were part of the "shadow" of the Old Testament (Col. 2:16). Or as St. Paul puts it, there is "letter" in the Old Testament law and "spirit" (2 Cor. 3:6). The details of not working on Saturday were fulfilled by Christ. That part of the Sabbath regulation no longer applies. But the spirit of the law does remain: We need to dedicate sufficient time each week to hearing God's Word and giving it honor and respect. Or as Luther sums it up in the Small Catechism's explanation to the Third Commandment: "We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it."

The same sort of analysis applies to our giving. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to give a tenth of their income to the Levites so that those men could dedicate their lives to serving in God's house, teaching the people, conducting worship, etc. In the New Testament, there is a rigid requirement listed about handing in your tax forms to church to make sure you've given enough. But the mandate to have a full-time ministry, which is the spirit of that law concerning tithing to the Levites, is right there in 1 Corinthians 9:14: "The Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel."

The New Testament church's job is significantly larger than the job of Old Testament Israel. We are commanded to preach the Gospel to all nations. There was only the temple to maintain in the Old Testament, but we have churches, schools, universities and seminaries, plus missionaries everywhere. So you tell me: Can we really undertake the work of the ministry if our giving doesn't even measure up to Old Testament levels of generosity?

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



JULIETs

The JULIETs will be gathering for lunch again in December. All women in the church are invited. And bring a friend!

Thursday, December 14 — Bubba's 33
510 S. Telshor Blvd. (at the North end of Mesilla Valley Mall)

We meet at 11:30 am.

So that the restaurant can be prepared, please notify either Debra Echtenkamp or Olga Turk at least 2 days in advance if you plan to attend.

Call or text Debra at (901) 830-7216

Call or text Olga at (575) 571-6251





Birthdays of the Month

December Birthdays

		Date
Don	Hallem	1
Olga	Turk	1
Bradley	Springer Jr.	7
Doug	Lorenz	8
Jeri	Spicka	14
Phyllis	Turquette	26
Robert	Scaling	28
Paul	Vakselis	29
Sam	Grothman	31

*Happy
Anniversary*

December Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Chuck & Jeri	Spicka	10	47
Jace & Susana	Melton	17	7
Paul & Sheila	Vakselis	20	38
John & Joanie	Eisenbraun	31	63

Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in December.

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.

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Council Meeting

October 17, 2023

President Brad Springer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Attending were Brad Springer, Wade Ecktenkamp, Brad Mueller, Jacki McCurley, Carol Moore, Pastor Cave, Eric Gunderson, Shirley Miller, Brad Springer Sr. and guest Doug Lorenz.

Pastor Cave led us in opening prayer.

The minutes of the September council meeting were approved.

President (Brad Springer): Brad reminded us the next voter's meeting is December 10th at 11:30 am. The agenda is the council slate of officers. He wants to table any decisions about changes to the by-laws. We may not have a council meeting in December unless it deems necessary.

Pastor's Report: Pastor's report is attached. The Sunday Bible study is focusing on Revelations. He wants to thank Pastor Graff for covering the services last Sunday.

Vice President Report (Wade Echtenkamp): Wade said he is not getting overwhelming response for officers and boards. Pastor said he would talk about officers and boards at future services. Several suggestions were made to try and get the message out—use the technology and make a short two minute video of what the officers/boards/committees do and play it before church or even approaching members on a one to one basis to help find volunteers.

Secretary Report: No report

Treasurer's Report (Brad Mueller): The treasurer's report is attached. He opened two general fund CD's labeled as CD#1 and CD#2 on his report. They are one year CD's. He plans to open another CD in December for \$50,000 so that they are getting a better interest rate and come up for renewal at different times of the year.

Financial Secretary (Carol Moore): Carol said that she may need to find a counter to replace Tom Willett but it is not critical at this time.

Elder's Report (Eric Gunderson): The elder report is attached. Eric has received some sign-up sheets for bread breakers and has started to assemble new groups to start next year.

Trustees (Brad Springer Sr.): The trustees report is attached. Doug Lorenz was present to address the alarm and phone system at the church/school. The alarm install went great. It is suggested that we change the passcode. Members that have a key need to talk with Carol so she can keep them informed on the change to the passcode. A note will be put by the keypad for the change date. Doug addressed questions on the change in the phone system. After much discussion, it was suggested that he talk to the teachers and others who use the phones often on their request, wants and desires in a phone system and will bring those to the November council meeting.

School Board (Shirley Miller): The report is attached. Mission Lutheran School Sunday is October 29th. Bring lots of food for the potluck after church.

Our next council meeting is scheduled for November 21st at 6 pm.

Pastor Cave led us in a closing prayer.

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The meeting was adjourned at 7:14 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 Nov '23 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: Nov 1, 2023

Budget Status:	<u>Month of Oct '23</u>	<u>FY23 thru Oct '23</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income:			
MLC General	\$31,961	\$100,899	\$103,770
MLS Total	\$17,777	\$120,378	\$101,760
Designated / Other	\$23	\$723	\$1,333
	\$49,761	\$222,000	\$206,863
Expenses:			
MLC Total	\$16,356	\$52,916	\$69,193
MLS Total	\$28,285	\$129,784	\$147,993
	\$44,641	\$182,700	\$217,186
Net Difference	\$5,120	\$39,300	-\$10,323

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY23 (Thru Oct 31, 2023)

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,765
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	\$5,943
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$106,970
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$103,770
Surplus/Shortfall Year-to-Date:	\$3,200

Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	E*trade Endowment (as of Jun 30, '23)	\$107,033
	Strasser Endowment (as of Sep 30, '23)	\$68,830
	Thrivent (as of Oct 31, '23)	\$383,582
	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	\$672,392
<u>Current Assets:</u>	BMO Checking (as of Oct 31, '23)	\$54,656
	LCEF Checking (as of Oct 31, '23)	\$98,044
	(minus designated funds)	
	Angel Prog/TA Holding	\$1,984
	Registration/Tuition Holding	\$0
	Youth Activity Funds	\$3,766
	Staffeldt Scholarship	\$4,425
	COVID Grant	\$43,738
	School Security Grant	\$10,962
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	Apple Tree Funds	\$1,130
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$3,700
	Other	\$370
	Total LCEF Checking Available	\$15,469
<u>Liabilities:</u>	None	
<u>Comments:</u>		



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Elder on Call: Michael Kaiser (915) 525-6794

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

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2023

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