

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:4-9)

Within the world of systematic Christian theology, there are certain terms that one doesn't hear anywhere else. One of those words is *adiaphora*. *Adiaphora* as defined in our Lutheran confessions are those Christian practices, whether in public worship or private piety, which are neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture. For example, whether or not a church uses water in the Rite of Holy Baptism is most certainly not *adiaphora*; the Scriptures are clear that we baptize with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But whether we sprinkle water or do full immersion, or whether the font is located at the front of the sanctuary or out in the narthex, these are matters which are neither commanded nor forbidden in Scriptures. And thus, we have freedom.

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Important Dates:

- March 3: National Lutheran Schools Week begins
- March 5: Ash Wednesday
- March 9: Daylight Saving Time begins
- March 10: MLS Spring Break begins



However, there can be confusion over *adiaphora*. It can be tempting to think that if we have Christian freedom, then we can do whatever suits our tastes. But we ought to recall the Apostle Paul's admonition to the church in Galatia: "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). In other words, Christian freedom asks, "What is the most loving way to serve my neighbor?"

One matter of *adiaphora* which we often see discussed in the Lutheran church is the use of the historic liturgy in the Divine Service. And to be sure, not every congregation's practices look identical. Nor should they! There are many streams of tradition throughout the centuries, resulting in a variety of valid practices that may be utilized as appropriate in this or that context. And the liturgy of the church is not static. Every old hymn that we sing was once new, and new hymns and new arrangements of the liturgy continue to be written today. So, one might think of our contemporary use of the historic liturgy as a sort of ongoing conversation with the past.

But even though the liturgy is "contemporary" in the sense that it is utilized in our contemporary age, it is nevertheless historical. The church does well to not jettison the things of the past in order to always chase after the new. While Christians will continue to write new hymns and new arrangements of the liturgy, it takes time for those things to demonstrate their enduring quality. But what we have received from Christians of previous ages has already demonstrated its enduring quality. And we are enriched by the works that these faithful Christians have left to us.

The Apostle Paul writes in the fourth chapter of Philippians, "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9). While Paul was talking about the Gospel of Christ and his example of holiness of living, we can readily apply this to our worship practices. As Paul writes elsewhere, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Faithful Christians of the past have gifted to us a rich heritage in the liturgy of the Divine Service. While it might not be the only way in which a Christian can worship the Lord, it is a good, right, and salutary practice that helps to shape our hearts, minds, and bodies to receive the gifts that the Lord desires to give us in the Divine Service, gifts which include but are not limited to: forgiveness of sins, justification, exhortation, and communion with God and one another.

And it is also important to note that not all *adiaphora* are created equal. It is probably not of any great importance exactly how the minister folds his hands while moving about the chancel (though there are guidelines for such things). There is probably greater importance to the vestments worn by those who are serving. There is a history of Lutherans using black robes, whereas these days we usually wear white (except for certain days like Good Friday). There is freedom, but each choice sends a different message. The white robes we use today are a symbol of being clothed in Baptism with Christ's righteousness, and so any change to that should be done with intentionality and care.

And then there are certain practices that are technically *adiaphora* and yet are of such importance that one should not discard them. One such example would be the saying of one of the three Ecumenical Creeds during the service. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds are not found in Scripture. But these ancient confessions of faith have been and are used by the church throughout the ages and throughout the world. Their use is so universal and so beneficial that omitting them would not only be unhelpful to our fellow Christians, it would be harmful.

So, whenever we think of our practices with regard to the liturgy, we ought to think about them as that which we have received from those who went before us, that which they lovingly left for our good. Our Christian freedom grants us to receive what has been given, and then in love for our neighbor continue in the ongoing conversation of the liturgy. Treasure what has been given. Adapt and add as is good for one another. Seek after that which endures. And what we have learned and received and heard and seen—practice these things. Amen.



Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

Rest, Refresh, Renew..

Rest, refresh, renew. Those may seem more like the words we consider when we are ready for a restful vacation away from the hectic pace of our lives. Yet this year, they seem appropriate to me as a prayer theme for Lent. As we add an extra time of devotion and study these 40 days of Lent, we can sandwich in a little extra time for prayer and reflection on the blessings we have because of Jesus' 40-day journey and His Passion.

I've gathered several random scriptures in no particular order to share that you may wish to pray this season of Lent, or perhaps you may have some of your own.. May you find time to rest, refresh and renew the excitement of following our Lord Jesus!

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

1 Peter 5:6-7: Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Philippians 2:8-11 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Isaiah 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

2 Chronicles 30:9: For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him."

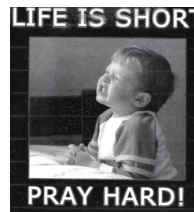
*Joel 2:12-13: "Yet even now," declares the LORD,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
and rend your hearts and not your garments."
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
and he relents over disaster."*

2 Samuel 22:3: *“my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold and my refuge,
my savior; you save me from violence.”*

Psalm 51:12: *“Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.”*

2 Corinthians 13:9: *“For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.”*

Jeremiah 31:25: *“For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish.”*



*“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

God's Instruments, God's Stewards

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

Some pastors refer to these words as “the most forgotten words in the Scriptures.” They are forgotten because they follow the familiar and critical words before it. The preceding two verses that overshadow Ephesians 2:10 are words of justification: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8-9). These are words preached regularly. They are assigned as confirmation verses. They carry with them the very heart of what it means to be a redeemed child of God!

Precisely because the previous verses are so central to salvation, they often overpower our practice of stewardship! We have been saved by grace. This is certain and sure because of Jesus. Works play no role in our salvation. No credit taking for us! Grace is freely given. Faith is miraculously created by the Spirit and joyously received. This truth is so wonderful and so encompassing that we often miss out on WHY we are redeemed.

The grace of God revealed in Jesus calls us to faith. But St. Paul doesn't stop with grace and faith. He continues to the logical conclusion. Just like the creation declares the handiwork of God, the redemption of sinners like you and me declares His greatest handiwork! Redeemed stewards are created to reflect the grace and mercy God showers on us to others.

As Lutherans, we understand that good works flow from faith in Jesus Christ. They are the fruit of the tree of salvation into which we have been grafted by grace. Sanctification and stewardship are both on-going and active confessions of what the Lord has done in us. These works are not always spectacular. Many times, they are simply parents showing Jesus to their children. They are compassionate actions that live out the truth of the Gospel to co-workers and even complete strangers. While they can be grand endeavors, more likely they are simple, beautiful works which highlight what Jesus has done in us.

These works aren't random either. They have been planned by God. God planned to use you as a faithful steward as you walk the road that leads you through your daily life. There are no chance encounters or coincidences. They have been planned by the Lord of the universe for the benefit of His creation. Good works are what point to God's greatest work: Jesus!

He calls you and me to walk in this faith, which flows from this grace, which has been poured out on us in Jesus. But even this is not to our credit. We are simply called to be faithful stewards of God's grace so that we may share it with those who need it as much as we do. God's Spirit carries us along in this. We are just the steward – the instrument in His hand to accomplish His plan and glorify Him!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship





MISSION
LUTHERAN SCHOOL

LOVE AND *Bloom*

MAR
29

5:30pm-8:30pm

Scan To
Buy Tickets



- 4 COURSE PLATED MEAL
- GAMES & PRIZES
- LIVE & SILENT AUCTION

575-532-5489

\$75 PER TICKET

Mission Lutheran School
2752 N. Roadrunner PKWY, Las Cruces, NM



Birthdays of the Month

March Birthdays

| | | <u>Date</u> |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Roger | Guericke | 5 |
| Josephine (Jo Jo) | Monica | 5 |
| Bev | Bachmeier | 7 |
| Jean | Quinlan | 7 |
| Becky | Lujan | 11 |
| Peter | Franz | 16 |
| Nathan | Graff | 16 |
| Shilo | Smith | 18 |
| Darci | Grothman | 21 |
| Elaine | Graff | 25 |
| Rev. Robert | Carabotta | 27 |
| Nick | Wolf | 27 |
| Brad | Mueller | 28 |
| Victor | Babin | 30 |
| Susan | Brown | 31 |

*Happy
Anniversary*

March Anniversaries

| | | <u>Date</u> | <u># of years</u> |
|----------------------|---------|-------------|-------------------|
| Robert & Tiziana | Smits | 11 | 32 |
| Peter & Jan (Peyton) | Persing | 17 | 39 |
| Pastor Glenn & Susan | Weber | 22 | 55 |

Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in March.

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, March 20 — Olive Garden
100 N. Telshor Blvd.

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, March 10, at 6:30 PM in Luther Hall. All women are invited for fellowship and Bible study. Dessert will be provided.

MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 21, 2025

President Doug Lorenz called the Mission Lutheran Church Council meeting to order at 6:32 PM. Other Council members present were: Pastor Cave, Eric Gunderson-Vice President, Carol Cooper-Secretary, Brad Mueller-Treasurer, Carol Moore-Financial Secretary, Richard Turk-Board of Elders, and Brad Springer, Jr.-Outreach.

1. Opening Prayer - The opening prayer was led by Pastor Cave.
2. Approval of Minutes - The minutes of the November 19, 2024 meeting were approved as presented. (Carol Cooper explained that the November minutes emailed to Council members showed November 18, 2024 as the date of the Council meeting, but the minutes presented to the Council for approval show the correct date of November 19, 2024.)
3. President Lorenz called for the following reports:
 - a. Pastor Cave-Report is attached. Most of the discussion with Pastor Cave centered on the “Southern Region Spring Pastors Conference” which will be held in Las Cruces April 30-May 2, 2025. Activities which will occur at Mission Lutheran include: Dinner in Luther Hall Wednesday evening, April 30, to serve 80-100 and Worship Service with Communion in our sanctuary at 7PM. Pastor Cave requested use of our sound system (including use instruction) for meetings to be held at Holiday Inn Express, and a \$50 or \$100 donation to cover conference expenses. The Council authorized Pastor Cave to give a \$100 donation to the Pastors’ Conference.
 - b. Vice-President-Eric Gunderson explained he had received instruction from Doug regarding duties of the Vice President after the December Voters’ Assembly and consented to serve as Vice President. Eric was installed with the Council members elected in December. He will also begin asking congregation members in August to consider serving on the 2026 Church Council.
 - c. Secretary-Carol Cooper asked the Church Council to situate the Council members during Voters’ Assembly so that all Council members can easily identify who is speaking and hear what is being said. The Council concurred that we should be facing the Assembly and using the microphone so whoever is speaking can be heard.
 - d. Treasurer-Report is attached. Brad Mueller reported 1) PayCor is working smoothly 2) Two CDs have been cashed in as there is no penalty if the CD is transferred to Cash accounts. 3) Because of the concern for Congregational giving falling significantly short of what is budgeted for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, Pastor Cave will devote sermons on February 16 and February 23 to the topic of “Stewardship.” It was noted that Turning Point is requesting support for “40 days for Life,” but there was no further discussion.
 - e. Financial Secretary-Carol Moore reported that the 2024 Member Statements of Giving have been sent out.
 - f. Board of Elders-Report is attached. Richard Turk
 - g. Board of Trustees-Report is attached-Brad Springer, Sr.
 - h. Outreach/Fellowship/Stewardship-Brad Springer, Jr.

Brad discussed “short-term” and “long-term” event possibilities, “short-term” events being events that don’t require as much planning and preparation; “long-term” events might engage other groups such as Hispanic Ministry, Campus Ministry, or other places such as a Youth group trip.

Brad invited input for a “Pizza Night” currently being planned for March 21, the night before the Bataan Walk. Doug suggested “Bible Bingo,” “something fun.”

- i. President-Doug reported he has no new business. The new phones are working well, and otherwise, there is no old business to discuss.

The next meeting will be February 18 at 6:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper, Secretary



MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH and SCHOOL

Treasurer's Report for the Feb '25 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: Feb 1, 2025

| <u>Budget Status:</u> | <u>Month of Jan '24</u> | | <u>FY25 thru Jan '25</u> | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------|
| | <u>Actual</u> | | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
| <u>Income:</u> | | | | |
| MLC General | \$32,266 | | \$187,829 | \$236,010 |
| MLS Total | \$24,926 | | \$194,665 | \$200,565 |
| Designated / Other | \$189 | | \$3,994 | \$1,225 |
| | \$57,381 * | | \$386,488 * | \$437,800 * |
| <u>Expenses:</u> | | | | |
| MLC Total | \$13,561 * | | \$122,648 * | \$127,831 * |
| MLS Total | \$42,874 | | \$326,027 | \$309,823 |
| | \$56,435 | | \$448,675 | \$437,654 |
| Net Difference | \$946 * | | -\$62,187 * | \$146 * |

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY25 (Thru Jan 31, 2025)

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Average Weekly Contributions Needed: | \$7,867 |
| Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) : | <u>\$6,655</u> |
| Average Weekly Surplus/ <u>Shortfall</u> : | -\$1,212 * |
| | |
| General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date: | \$199,661 |
| General Fund Budgeted Year-to-Date: | \$236,010 |
| Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/ <u>Shortfall</u> : | -\$36,349 * |

Investments & Assets / Liabilities

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| <u>Investments:</u> | Morgan Stanley/E*Trade (as of Jan 31, '25) | \$122,702 |
| | Mission Lutheran Endowment Fund (as of Sep 30, '24) | \$83,347 |
| | Thrivent (as of Jan 31, '25) | \$471,437 |
| | LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account | \$13,315 |
| | LCEF General Funds CD Account #1 | \$53,259 |
| | TOTAL | \$744,060 * |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|
| <u>Current Assets:</u> | Shepherd's Staff Checking (as of Jan 31, '25) | \$36,814 |
| | LCEF All Access (as of Jan 31, '25) | \$68,411 |
| | Youth Activity Fund | \$3,766 |
| | Youth Christian Development | \$12,500 |
| | minus MLS Reg/Tuition Holding | \$0 |
| | Angel Scholarship Program | \$1,842 |
| | Dedicated Chaplin PE Equipment Grant | \$119 |
| | Funds COVID Grant | \$27,481 |
| | Apple Tree Donations | \$0 |
| | Emergency Tuition Assistance | \$5,850 |
| | School Security Grant | \$8,774 |
| | Staffeldt Scholarship Fund | \$7,877 |
| | Total Checking Available After Dedicated Funds | \$37,016 * |

Liabilities: None



Mission Lutheran Church and School
2752 N. Roadrunner Parkway
Las Cruces, NM 88011-8081
Church Office: (575) 522-0465
School: (575) 532-5489
Emails: pastor@missionlutheran.net
secretary@missionlutheran.net
office@mlschool.net
Elder on Call: Michael Kaiser (915) 525-6794

**The season of Lent begins
 with Ash Wednesday on
 March 5th.**

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



**Set your clocks ahead one
 hour before you go to bed
 on Saturday, March 8th!**

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2025

| | | | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| President | Doug Lorenz | Elders, Chairman | Richard Turk |
| Vice President | Eric Gunderson | 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 | Karen Springer |