

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:10-11)

It's a self-evident fact that we need water. Not only do human bodies need water, the earth upon which we live needs water. And having water stored in oceans and lakes, or flowing through streams and rivers, is not enough. The ground needs water. The ground needs precipitation in the form of rain or snow. Ask any farmer or rancher and they'll tell you about the importance of water!

But can you get too much of a good thing? Out here in the desert, it's a rare time when we might say that we've had too much rain. But I've had conversations with more than one farmer in other parts of this country who have had years when there's been too much rain. If the fields are too wet, it can cause a significant delay in either planting or harvest time. The worst is when flooding damages the crops. Too much rain at the wrong time has been known to cause a total loss of the harvest.

And all of us have seen the devastating effects of too much rain when it causes catastrophic floods. Homes are destroyed. Lives are lost. Heavy rains in Texas just a few weeks ago caused one of the worst flooding events in our time. And many of us are aware of other recent flooding events nearer to home. So even if it's rare to get too much rain in Las Cruces, we are all aware of the fact that we can indeed get too much rain.

Continued on next page →

In this issue:

- Prayer Ministry
- Stewardship
- Birthdays and Anniversaries
- JULIETs and WINGS/LWML
- Council meeting minutes
- Treasurer's Report

Important Dates:

August 11: WINGS/LWML Fellowship and Bible study
 August 14: JULIETs lunch
 August 19: Church Council meeting



But we're all likewise aware of the fact that we can get too little rain. I'm very thankful for the rain we have had during the recent monsoon, but our region and the southwest in general are very much behind in rain. And this is not a recent phenomenon. The drought in the southwest has been going on for over two decades now. Many reservoirs are not nearly at the levels they ought to be, and wildfires burn more and more acreage every year. My wife, who grew up in Arizona, remembers when rainfall was more abundant and wishes I could see what things looked like in the past.

So we need water. But we need water in the right way. In the Scriptures, the lack of rain was often a judgment from God. One prominent example is in the days of the prophet, Elijah, when the Lord did not permit it to rain upon Israel for three and a half years, causing an extreme famine. Conversely, we all know of the great flood in the days of Noah, when God sent so much water upon the earth that all people and animals perished except for Noah, his family, and those animals that God brought to the ark.

When we see the ways in which God uses water throughout the Scriptures, we can then understand why God would compare His Word to water in the above passage from Isaiah. Because, like water, the Word of the Lord brings both death and life. The difference is in how the Lord uses His Word.

God's Word comes to us in two ways: Law and Gospel. Both are good; both are right. But they serve very different functions and must always be distinguished. God's Law is His will. God's Law proclaims what God desires for His creation, and especially what He desires of His human creatures. Before the fall into sin, God's Law was a delight to mankind and not a burden.

But ever since mankind fell into sin, sinful man chafes at God's Law. We can no longer do the Law. Indeed, we actively resist and we resent the Law. And so, the primary function of the Law for mankind now is to show us our sin and our need for a Savior. The Law always accuses. And the Word of the God's Law puts sinful humanity to death.

But the Word of the Gospel raises to life! While the Law proclaims what God requires of us, the Gospel declares what God in Christ has done for us. The Law is necessary; we never outgrow our need of learning God's Law. But the Law will never give us life. True life, eternal life, can come to us only through the Word of the Gospel. Not a shred of the Law can be mingled with the Gospel, or it would cease to be the Gospel. The Gospel is the free forgiveness of sins we have in Christ, gifted by grace and received by faith.

Thus, the Word of God is very much like rain. A complete lack of rain certainly does not bring life, just as no one can be saved apart from hearing the Word. But rain can and does come in ways that bring devastation and destruction, much like the Law brings death—spiritual death—to the sinner. Yet when the sinner has been crushed by the Law and utterly despairs of saving themselves by their own efforts, the Word of the Gospel brings life. Similar to how a parched land soaks up a timely and gentle rain, the crushed sinner who hears the Gospel is brought to new life—spiritual life—in Christ.

As we continue through the summer monsoon, whenever it rains upon our dry land, consider the promises of the Lord. Whenever you thank God for giving us rain, thank God that He has also given us His Word. Thank God that through His Law you not only know what He desires from you, but more importantly, you know your need for your Savior. And give thanks to God that through His Gospel, you have received new and eternal life. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave





Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

Back to School!

Mission Lutheran Church has taken on the joy and responsibility of pre-schoolers through 8th graders learning on our campus. While our students study, learn and experience the subjects taught in public schools, they also gain knowledge of scripture, are able to experience how to live a Christian life and above all, our students are able to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. For some, this may be brand new for them! What a privilege it is to have this joy! It is also a privilege to know we are given this responsibility!

We support our school by giving, by supporting its activities, and importantly, by our prayers. Perhaps it's hard to know how to handle that responsibility. Here are opportunities to pray for our school with one another and individually:

1. Pray along with others at the Tuesday 12:30 pm. Mission Prayer Sheild. Along with prayers for the school, we also pray for the activities of the church and other prayer needs as they come before us. Join this group Tuesdays at 12:30 pm in the church library—across from Pastor Cave's office. Some pray aloud, while others silently agree in prayer.
2. Pray with the school staff for the school and individual children during their birthday week every Wednesday at 7:35am in Luther Hall.
3. Join in prayer during the Thursday morning Zoom Praise and Prayer Hour. It is a morning prayer service from the Lutheran Service Book, a few songs (muted!) and open prayer. Some pray aloud, while others silently agree in prayer. Contact Doug or Alma Lorenz, Shirley Miller or Carol Moore if you are interested and the Zoom link will be sent to you each week.
4. Individual and/or family prayer for our school is one of the most important things we can do to support our school. Below is a prayer guide that includes suggested targets for each day of the week. Please use it in your prayer and devotion time if it seems useful for you or pray as the Spirit leads, but please pray for our school regularly!

Following are prayer targets that have been slightly updated but used since the beginning of the prayer ministry at Mission in 2014. They are broken into seven different sections—one for each day of the week. You may wish to pray for one section each day in your personal prayer time. Please consider printing and saving these targets to use as you pray for our school throughout the school year!

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Sunday—pray that God will:

- Use Mission Lutheran School (MLS) to attract children and their families to Jesus.
- Draw the congregation and school together to reach out to others with the message of Jesus as their Savior.
- Provide protection and security throughout our campus.
- Bless and increase the numbers of our students and those who support our school through time, talent and treasure .
- Provide opportunities to congregation members, staff and school families to share the exciting education available at Mission.
- Work among congregation, staff, parents and students that all reflect Christ's love.

Monday—Pray for the Christian Education taught at MLS, that:

- Children are nurtured to maintain a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- The number of students continue to grow and that more families would have a deep desire for their children to receive the knowledge of Christ as part of their education.
- Our students will be fully prepared to transition to other education, whether Christian or secular, when the time comes for them to leave MLS.
- Children will be strengthened as they study God's Word as part of their education.

Tuesday—pray for the students at MLS, that:

- Each student will know Christ as their Savior who cherishes them.
- They will be protected from worldly influences
- They will hunger for learning and be persistent and disciplined in study.
- They will develop loving, respectful and compassionate relationships.
- They will exercise the gifts with which God has blessed each one.

Wednesday—pray for teachers and other staff, that:

- God will strengthen them to be powerful witnesses of Jesus to students and parents.
- They will have wisdom and compassion as they teach, encourage and discipline.
- They will model the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- God will protect them from discouragement and bless them in their lives: spiritually, physically, emotionally.
- That the Spirit of unity flourishes among staff.

Thursday—Pray for families of MLS students, that:

- Parents and grandparents will know Jesus Christ as their Savior.
- That they are Christ-like role models in their children's lives.
- That they take an active role in their children's lives and education.
- That they support and encourage the MLS staff.
- That they insure their children are part of regular worship.
- That they are granted wisdom, patience, strength and love as they parent.

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Friday—Pray for the MLS School Board, Administration and Pastor, that:

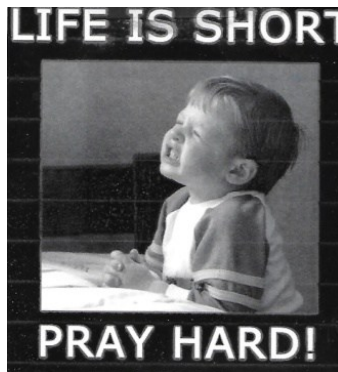
- Each one gathers strength and wisdom from their own personal time with the Lord.
- They provide wise oversight and direction to provide the Bible-centered education God desires, always remaining faithful in doctrine, scripture and LCMS guidelines.
- That all relationships are Christ-like.
- That they are blessed and guided in all decisions.

Saturday—Pray for the Parent-Teacher Organization and school volunteers:

- All would graciously serve the school, students and administration in support of the ministry of MLS.
- All would communicate openly, encouraging and edifying one another.
- God would lead, inspire and bless all PTO and volunteer activities and plans.

***“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

Jesus' transforming presence

“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost’” (Luke 19:8-10 NIV).

Who knew, all those kids sitting in Sunday school were getting a lesson in stewardship! Generations of children have very often heard lessons based on the familiar account of Zacchaeus. The diminutive tax collector's curiosity surrounding the person and ministry of Jesus is what the Holy Spirit used to set him on a collision course for a total stewardship transformation. This transformation, according to the text of Luke 19, is not just about this life. This stewardship transformation is about eternity as well!

Remember the story: Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Do not think of friendly neighborhood IRS agents. This was more like a toll booth operator, but the governing authorities did not set the toll. They would contract men to staff roadside booths and tax the commerce that was passing along the road. This was an enterprise full of greed and graft. The tax collectors would take as much as they could and only pass on a portion to the government. The rest did not go into the community chest either! It went into the pocket of the tax collector.

This is why the people had such disdain for *Jewish* tax collectors. They were seen as both crooks and traitors. They were crooks in that they extorted their compatriots and others in the toll process. But worse, they were seen as traitors because their efforts supported the occupying Roman authorities. That is the real reason that the people would not make way so that short Zacchaeus could see Jesus.

For this reason, he runs ahead and climbs a tree. He had heard all the stories. He wanted to see this Jesus with his own eyes. Mercy is on display. This hated crook and traitor gets a direct audience with Jesus — at Jesus' own request! Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house. This is where the transformation is about to take place!

Notice how Jesus does it. He does not preach a three-week sermon series, nor does He ask Zacchaeus to make a pledge. There is nothing programmatic about Jesus' approach. But Zacchaeus is completely transformed! The transforming force is the very presence of Jesus! Direct time with Jesus takes a crooked, selfish, criminal and makes him the most faithful steward.

This new life of stewardship is marked by the promises made. First, he gives half of his ill-gotten gains to the poor. These are people whom he would not have defrauded at all! Yet, after spending time with Jesus, they are His first concern. Only after this does he double the requirement of the Levitical law on fraud. And what does Jesus say is the result? Salvation!

Doing the acts of stewardship does not save. Rather, the faith in Jesus that is created by the Holy Spirit is what saves! This is critical for us to confess. Failed stewardship can and will cut you off from God. The only antidote for failed stewardship is the presence of Jesus.

We do not need to run ahead and climb a tree for this presence of Jesus. He makes Himself available to us every week in the Divine Service. He speaks His Word of invitation to us in the pages of Holy Scripture. This, and this alone, transforms us from sinner to saint, from owner to steward of all that belongs to the Lord.

Do you want to become a more faithful steward? Spend more time with Jesus. Make the Divine Service a weekly priority. Feast on Christ's body and blood weekly! This is the great gift that brings salvation from God's House to yours!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship





August Birthdays

		Date
Barbara	Honda	7
Greg	Fant	10
Tracy	Krause	10
Bradley	Springer Sr.	10
Jeannine	Brennan	11
Pastor Andrew	Cave	11
Wade	Echtenkamp	11
Krista	Helton	13
Vince	Ryan	15
John	Eisenbraun	16
Arlyn	Bartels	20
Madelyn	Sanchez	20
Cheryl	Ryan	27
Pamela	Kell	28
Matthias	Cave	29
Eric	Gunderson	29
Chuck	Spicka	31

Happy Anniversary

August Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Nick & Codie	Wolf	5	53
Rev. Andrew & Emily	Cave	8	10
Andy & Sonya	Perry	10	40
Vince & Cheryl	Ryan	14	27
Doug & Alma	Lorenz	24	57

Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in August.

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, August 14 — Hacienda de Mesilla
1891 Avenida de Mesilla

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, **August 11**, 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

May 20, 2025

President Doug Lorenz called the Mission Lutheran Church Council meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Other members present: Pastor Cave, Vice President-Eric Gunderson, Secretary-Carol Cooper, Treasurer-Brad Mueller, Elder-Richard Turk, and School Board-Karen Springer.

Pastor Cave opened the meeting with a prayer.

The Minutes of the April 15, 2025 meeting were approved as presented.

President Lorenz called for the following reports:

Pastor Cave-See report attached. Brad Springer, Sr. wondered if we, the congregation members, are as welcoming as we should be. Karen Springer for example, suggested the possibility of serving coffee and doughnuts outside the main entrance to the Church; Doug shared that before Covid, the evangelism board provided greeters who would welcome people they did not recognize as members and hand them a green information packet.

Vice-President-Eric is making a Slate of Church Council Nominees to be presented at the September meeting. He has learned that there are rules about how long Council Members are allowed to remain on the Church Council and that committee members are not voted in.

Secretary-No report.

Treasurer-Brad asked the Council if the Board of Elders have noticed that Church Mutual's property insurance has increased from \$8,000 to \$15,000. Brad is preparing the budget; he asked Brad Springer to learn from Church Mutual why the insurance has increased this much, and he also needs input from the Elders regarding Pastor Cave's salary.

Elders-Richard reported that the Elders have made 6 visits in the last month, and he continues to encourage elders to make contact with members. The "elder on call" has the phone number to reach all the elders, and he said there is a way to program the Church phone to give the name and number of the "Elder on call" if he is needed by a church member. Carol Moore knows about the phone capability. The Elders would also like to consider expanding Doug's "emergency plan" which addresses active shooter, "conceal/carry", people on medication or have illness, how to get hold of emergency help. Currently, the plan addresses emergency events which would occur during Sunday morning Worship. The Elders suggest we also include plans for evening worship services, childrens' events, etc so that we know what to do to protect and get appropriate help for everyone present with as little disruption as possible. Doug said he will bring his emergency plan to the July meeting.

Trustees-Report is attached-Brad Sr. also addressed the following: 1) the piano needs more humidity than we have 2) the parking-lot paving is not bad enough to repair now 3) the irrigation system is working 4) the ladder is back in the shed 5) Brad has requested from the school prepare a worklist of work to be done over the summer 6) laundry facility is no longer needed 7) "forever storage" is a waste of storage space and asked Karen Springer to announce a "clean out day". Brad revealed that he often gets involved when parishioners need help.

Outreach/Fellowship/Stewardship-Brad Springer, Jr.-See report attached. Brad Jr. was not present for this council meeting, but let the minutes recite the Outreach board's successes: '1) "The Pastors' Dinner was a success thanks to all those who volunteered to cook and serve and all the pastors and members who came to the dinner." 2) "An ice cream social summer event is being planned for July or August." 3) "An electric bill was paid for a community member in need" and 4) "Consider Jim Roberts for Outreach or other Board for 2026; "he is an experienced church worker who will have great ideas for spreading the Word." '

School Board-See report attached-Karen Springer reported that Monique Harrison applied and has been hired to fill Mary Martin's position teaching 5th/6th grades. She has Special Ed training and will be helping individual students. The Board continues to work on "Standard Reviews" and will be discussing Standard 3 at the School Board's May meeting.

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Karen advised the Council that remuneration for Pam Kell is being included in the school's FY 2026 budget. Pam has worked for a few years without receiving pay. She is needed for one-on-one teaching situations and puts in a lot of time - "40 hours a week of responsibilities without pay." She will be receiving full pay and benefits after July 1.

President-Doug reported:

- 1) The Youth still need a leader. "We need a volunteer "Youth Coordinator"-someone who has a heart for teenagers."
- 2) The trustees video will be made next month.
- 3) The Voters' Assembly will be June 8, and lunch will be provided. Assuming changes to the By-Laws are accepted, the current Church Council's term of office will not end until June 30, 2026; the new Council's term will begin July 1, 2026, and end June 30, 2027.

Pastor Cave led the Council in the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7: 35PM

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper



MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH and SCHOOL

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

Report Preparation Date: July 1, 2025

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of June '24</u>	<u>FY25 thru June '25</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>		
MLC General	\$28,656	\$323,779 \$409,084
MLS Total	\$507	\$296,804 \$327,775
Designated / Other	\$0	\$13,975 \$2,100
	\$29,163 *	\$634,558 * \$738,959 *
<u>Expenses:</u>		
MLC Total	\$15,024 *	\$203,853 * \$214,935 *
MLS Total	\$42,216	\$550,493 \$528,198
	\$57,240	\$754,346 \$743,133
Net Difference	-\$28,077 *	-\$119,788 * -\$4,174 *

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY25 as of June 30, 2025

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$7,867
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	\$6,714
Average Weekly Surplus/ <u>Shortfall:</u>	-\$1,153 *
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$349,146
General Fund Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$409,084
Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/ <u>Shortfall:</u>	-\$59,938 *

Investments & Assets / Liabilities as of June 30, '25

<u>Investments:</u>	Morgan Stanley/E*Trade	\$126,674
	Mission Lutheran Endowment Fund	\$81,570
	Thrivent	\$486,201
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD	\$13,453
	TOTAL	\$707,898 *
<u>Current Assets:</u>	Shepherd's Staff Checking	\$32,003
	LCEF All Access	\$93,179
	Youth Activity Fund	\$3,766
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
minus	MLS Reg/Tuition Holding	\$15,481
	Angel Scholarship Program	\$11,482
Dedicated	Chaplin PE Equipment Grant	\$119
Funds	COVID Grant	\$27,331
	Apple Tree Donations	\$0
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$5,850
	School Security Grant	\$8,774
	Musical Donations	\$60
	Coats for Kids	\$500
	Staffeldt Scholarship Fund	\$7,877
	Total Checking Available After Dedicated Funds	\$31,441 *
<u>Liabilities:</u>	None	



Mission Lutheran Church and School

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Elder on Call: Richard Turk (575) 621-3497

We're on the web!

<http://missionlutheran.net>

<http://mlschool.net>

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2025-26

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