

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about Him and were taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:17-22)

There are two phrases that one often hears this time of year. One is some variation on the idea that we need to “keep the spirit of Christmas all the year.” The other is the familiar, “new year, new me!” Both of these phrases reflect popular sentiments, and they can be low-hanging fruit for criticism. After all, do we really want to keep Christmas all year? Aren’t we beginning to think about taking the lights down, getting the tree out of the house, and getting our lives back to normal? And as far as the new year is concerned, how many times have we heard that the gyms are packed in January and then back to normal in February?

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Important Dates:

In this issue:

- Prayer Ministry
- Stewardship
- Time, Talents and Treasure
- Birthdays and Anniversaries
- JULIETs and WINGS/LWML
- Church Council Meeting minutes
- Treasurer’s Report

January 1: Happy New Year
 January 6: Epiphany Party
 January 8: Kantorei Choir



But as easy as it might be to criticize the phrases “keeping Christmas all year” and “new year, new me,” I might contend that these types of phrases reflect a desire for something that is good. Christmas is a time when we often gather as family and friends. We also gather together for extra worship services during Advent in anticipation of the special Christmas Eve candlelight service and the Christmas Day Divine Service. Of course, Christmas is a time for giving gifts to one another. But there is also a notable increase in giving to charity and being concerned for those who have fewer earthly blessings. So there are certainly good things that we experience around Christmas time!

And when we think about “new year, new me,” it makes sense to many of us that we would like a fresh start. All of us can think about areas in our lives where we feel deficient, areas where we’re not living up to the standards we would like to have for ourselves. So why not pick a day that seems like a natural time to start over, to begin again with a clean slate?

Christmas and New Year’s Day present the idea of good things to us. But “making the spirit of Christmas last all year” doesn’t often happen. Family gatherings don’t happen with the same frequency all year, nor does charitable giving. And New Year’s resolutions are not always kept. But I would offer another way to think about the on-going benefits of Christmas and New Year’s Day, a way to see how the Lord uses such things to bless us all year.

The New Year’s “new year, new me” resolution reflects a knowledge that our lives are not perfect and a desire to start over. At a much deeper and more important level, the Word of God teaches us that we are sinful creatures, thoroughly corrupted by the curse of sin. To say that our lives aren’t perfect is a massive understatement! And when our consciences are pricked by God’s Law, we wish we could have a fresh start, a clean slate.

And praise be to God that He gives us just that! He gives to us the gift of Holy Baptism, where the salvific work of Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection is applied to you. By the means of the Word joined to the water, your guilt is washed away and your sin is atoned for. Holy Baptism is the means by which the Holy Spirit dwells within you, making you to be a new creation. Holy Baptism is the ultimate “new you!”

And it’s important to note your baptism, while a one-time event, is a present reality. In other words, it’s less proper to say, “I was baptized,” and more proper to say, “I am baptized.” So when your conscience is burdened by the Law’s accusation of your sins, you can say, “Nevertheless, I am baptized.” You can always return to the promises of baptism. Martin Luther famously said, “Every time you wash your face, remember your baptism.”

But is calling to mind the fact that you are baptized the only way of returning to the promises of your baptism? No. Rather, there are much more tangible ways to remember your baptism and make use of its promises. And one of the best ways is to receive the Holy Absolution.

Now, to be fair, in some places in the Lutheran Confessions, Holy Absolution is considered to be a third sacrament along with Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. That’s not wrong, but it’s also not the only way to think about it. In other places within the Lutheran Confessions, and particularly in Luther’s writings, absolution is considered to be an ongoing return to baptism. The absolution is rooted in the promises of baptism and declares to you again and again what God gave you in baptism, namely, the forgiveness of sins, salvation, and newness of life.

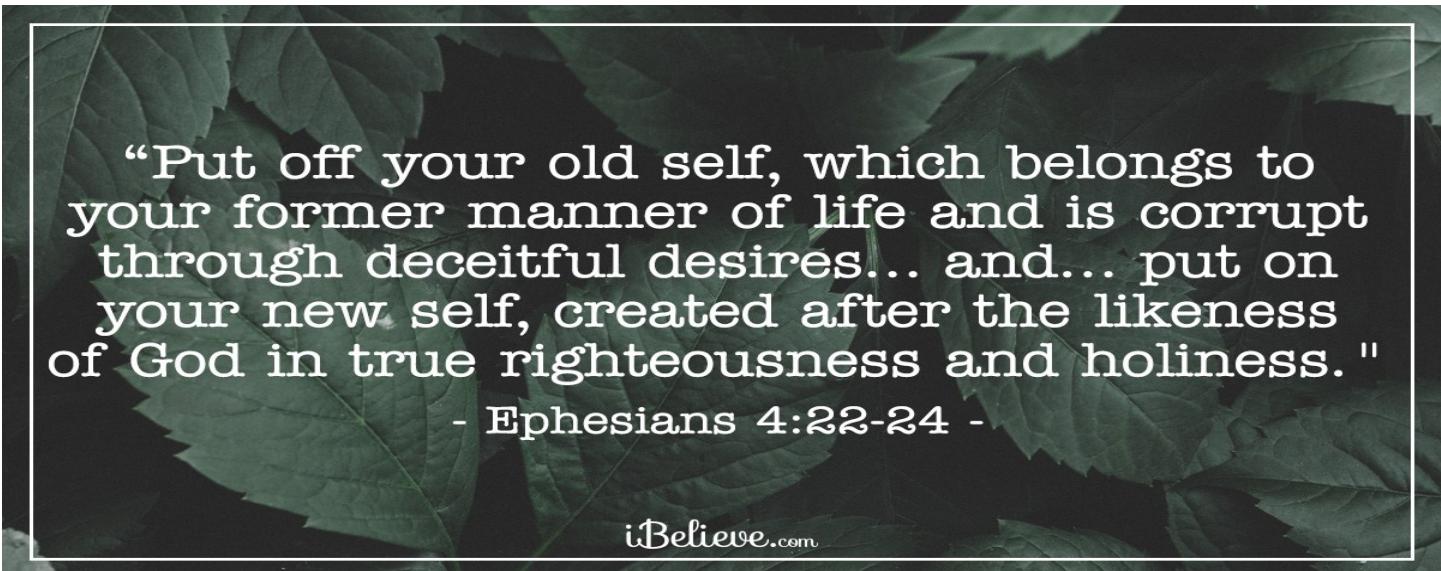
Holy Absolution is not an annual “new year, new me” resolution. We receive this weekly in the Divine Service, and it is available as desired in private Confession and Absolution. So while absolution is not a New Year’s resolution, it is a much more significant new beginning.

And the blessings of Holy Baptism and Holy Absolution then lead us to think about the ongoing blessings of Holy Communion. And I would propose that the faithful reception of Holy Communion is the best way to “keep the spirit of Christmas all year.” For what is it that we celebrate at Christmas if not that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14a)! Jesus becoming one of us, becoming one *with* us, truly is the greatest gift that the Lord has ever given. God became man in Christ so that He could live, suffer, die, and rise again for our salvation. In the incarnation, Jesus became fully human.

But Jesus has not ceased to be fully human! He became flesh and blood for us, and He continues to give His flesh and blood to us. While we can’t explain how it is that the body and blood of Christ is in, with, and under the bread and wine in Holy Communion, Christ’s Word has made it so. And because Christ has promised to be there for us, by faith we gratefully receive this precious gift for the forgiveness of our sins, the strengthening of our faith, and the strengthening of the bonds of fellowship with one another. The family gatherings of Christmas time may have slowed down, but the gathering of the body of Christ around the fellowship of receiving His body and blood continues all throughout the year!

So rather than criticizing the supposed low-hanging fruit of the sentimental phrases “keeping the spirit of Christmas all year” and “new year, new me,” we can recognize that those phrases reflect a desire for something good. And we can find the best gifts that fulfill those desires in the gifts God freely gives in His Word and in His sacraments. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave



“Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires... and... put on your new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

- Ephesians 4:22-24 -

iBelieve.com

Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry

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



We celebrate at this time of year. And then—perhaps all too quickly—we put those symbols of the season’s celebration away...the nativity is carefully wrapped and placed back in its protective box, the lights are gathered and the ornaments stored away.

NO! Not yet!

Let’s not blow out those Christmas candles yet. Those candles symbolize Christ, who told us He is the light of the world. [John 8:12] Let’s think about this and pray for ourselves and for others who need Him. We have been lifted from the gloom and darkness of our sin into the radiant light of our Savior’s coming and the knowledge that our Salvation is here. In Chapter 60, Isaiah tells us, “*Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.*” Ponder with me for a moment the true magnificence of this Light, the Light in which He dwells that is “unapproachable.”

Here are passages about our Light that may guide our prayers for ourselves and others:

John 3:19:

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

Isaiah 9:2:

*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.*

John 8:12:

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Romans 13:12:

The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Ephesians 5:8:

for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Continued on next page



2 Timothy 5:12-16

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

1 Peter 2:9-10:

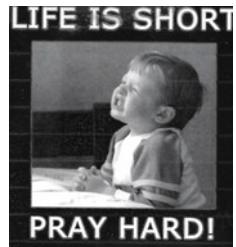
But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Revelation 22:5:

And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Psalm 72:18-19

*Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory!
Amen and 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

**Give thanks to the Lord,
call upon His name,
make known his deeds among the peoples,
proclaim that His name is exalted.**

(Isaiah 12:4 quoting David's song of thanks from 1st Chronicles 16)

Stewardship

“And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new. Also, He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true’” (Revelation 21:5).

In January there is a great deal of “new” talk. Parties are held to ring in the “new” year. “New” year’s resolutions are made to set a “new” course of life in the “new” year. There is date forgetfulness as checks and other forms are filled out without using the “new” year on the dateline.

We use all this “new” talk because there is very often so much wrong with the old in us. We think back to the “new” resolutions from the previous year that only lasted a few weeks. That “new” person did not shed any pounds and instead, picked up a few. The “new” habits of going to the gym were soon replaced by even more time on the couch binging on Netflix. The “new” person who does not lose their temper, use sarcasm as a lethal weapon and spend more money than necessary, but who worships, prays and serves the Lord and the neighbor, never seemed to stick around. We need “new” talk because the Old Adam is alive and well within every one of us.

But this promise of “new” is a matter of stewardship. It is the Lord Himself who makes the promise of all things being new. These words recorded by St. John are not pious wishes or hopeless promises. They do what they say. YOU, that one baptized into Jesus’ death and resurrection, are NEW! These words are indeed trustworthy and true. This “new” comes to you in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It comes free of charge, even without our prayer.

This stewardship of “new” is not a vague, someday kind of stewardship either. You are NEW now! Forgiven. Reborn from above. The old is gone, nailed to Calvary’s cross and buried and rotting in a tomb that was only borrowed by Jesus for His resurrection rest. The Gospel is what makes us NEW every morning. Remembering your baptism, you are new. Confessing your sins and receiving absolution makes you new. Hearing the Gospel filling your ears makes you new. Feasting on Christ’s body and blood in the Holy Supper makes you new.

These mercies, totally undeserved as they are, are entrusted to us to steward TODAY even as we long for the Last Day. But we know how often we fail in this stewardship. We hoard God’s creation as if it belongs to us. We belittle and devalue our neighbor because they look or sound or act in a way that we do not like. We seek to make the Holy Word of God softer and more palatable for those, or even ourselves, who refuse to confess sin as sin and repent. We value our comfort over truth, our reputation over faithfulness and our treasure over making sure that people get to hear of the Jesus who has done so much for the world and us.

We, as stewards of the Gospel, need to be made new every day. This is exactly what the Lord does. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel last year, so He gives us a new year. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel yesterday, and He gives us a new day. We failed in stewardship of the Gospel in the last few minutes, and yet in mercy our newness comes with each tick of the clock! Because that is how the Lord works.

As we see this working of all new things in us, it then calls us to be stewards of this newness to the world. This starts right in our own homes. It radiates out to our neighbors. It beams out from our congregations. This newness is teamed at the circuit, district and Synod levels all to shine the newness of the Gospel to those who need it.

Your new talk starts in the newness of the Gospel. Steward this treasure in this new year and this new day. It starts with a new you in Jesus. This is indeed trustworthy and true.

Time, Talents and Treasure



Stewardship is many things. Our congregation has always been more than generous with their church contributions. But stewardship also requires that we give of the talents God has given each of us. That means using some of our time to further the mission of our church. Here are just some of the ways that you can contribute.

Prayer Ministry: We strive to cover all areas of the Church's life in prayer. We currently meet every Tuesday at 12:30 pm in the church library for a short time of prayer. We also meet every Wednesday morning at 7:35 am to pray with the teachers before the start of the school day. Those who aren't part of the school staff then meet for breakfast. And we meet via Zoom every Thursday morning at 6:45 am when we follow Responsive Prayer 2 in the hymnal. This includes singing at least 3 hymns! A wonderful way to start the day. We could use more leaders for this prayer time. Everyone is welcome to join in any of these prayer opportunities.

Sunday School: Instruction in the Bible and in the faith and worship life is currently provided only to young children. We would love to be able to offer classes to older children. Ideally, we would have someone to coordinate this effort with a team of people to lead classes so that each person would lead once or twice each month rather than every Sunday.

Altar Guild: The volunteers of the altar guild prepare the bread and wine for Communion, prepare the altar for the appropriate time in the church year, and prepare the baptismal font for baptisms. Training is provided to ensure that all volunteers are well equipped and supported in their work of the Lord's house.

Choir: Come and make a joyful noise! The choir meets to rehearse on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm from September through May. While you do need to be able to read and carry a tune, no other particular skills are required - just a love of sacred music.

Ushering: Ushers hand out bulletins before the church service, advise those taking communion when it's time to approach the communion rail, and take up the offering by passing the offering trays. They may also direct late arrivals as needed to show them where there is open seating. In the event of a medical emergency, they may also be tasked with calling 911.

Greeting: Greeters arrive a bit early in order to greet members and guests as they arrive. If someone is attending our church for the first time, greeters are to make sure they sign the guest book.

Church Council Officers are all elected by the voting members of the congregation.

President: The president oversees the corporate/business concerns of the congregation and presides over the monthly Council and quarterly Voters' Assembly meetings of the congregation.

Vice President: The vice-president assists the president in his tasks and is responsible for the recruitment of officers and leaders for election to the positions and boards of the congregation.

Council Secretary: The secretary records the minutes of the Council and Voters' Assembly meetings and forwards all minutes and board reports to the Church Secretary for posting and filing.

Financial Secretary: The financial secretary records and keeps confidential records of each member's giving for tax purposes and makes the bank deposits of weekly offerings.

Treasurer: The treasurer is responsible for the payment of bills and the recording and publishing to the congregation its progress in offerings toward, and expenses within, the congregation's yearly budget. Prepares the budget every year for voter approval.

Board of Elders: The men of this Board assist the pastor in the spiritual care of the members, the leading of worship and the oversight of the adult Bible studies, provide communication to the pastor of the needs of the members, and make visits to the members of the congregation.

Board of Trustees: The members of this board oversee the repair and maintenance of the buildings and grounds of the Mission Lutheran Church and School campus and administrate the volunteers of the congregation in that ongoing maintenance work.

Board of Day School Education (School Board): The School Board is responsible for the ministry of Mission Lutheran School; it provides counsel and direction to the school ministry, including interviewing candidates for open positions and providing input to documents required for maintaining the school's accreditation.

Board of Outreach: This board of members initiates and manages outreach activities with the purpose of bringing the Gospel to unchurched people. Activities include: maintaining a Bible box which provides a free Bible to anyone who wants one; changing the verse on the church sign (facing Roadrunner Parkway); sending a note to someone who visits the church for the first time; offering to visit first-time visitors to answer questions about the church; assist members of the community who are in need of financial assistance; or other activities as deemed helpful to reach unchurched people in our community.

Committees. The following are volunteer opportunities and the members are not elected by the voting members of the congregation.

Stewardship Committee: This committee is for the purpose of equipping the all of the boards with the human and information resources needed to carry out their work. This committee also encourages church members to share their time, talent and treasure as needed to support Mission Lutheran Church.

Fellowship Committee: The Fellowship Committee is responsible for strengthening the fellowship between congregational members spiritually and socially, supporting the integration of new members into the life of the congregation, planning and implementing outreach events in which the larger community's participation is invited, and in general building mutual cooperation, trust, and enjoyment among the members of the congregation.

None of these opportunities require great amounts of time (with perhaps the exception of the Treasurer!). Please prayerfully consider where you might best put your God-given talents to work for the good of our church family.



Birthdays of the Month

January Birthdays

Erin	Nicholson	4
Emma	Wood	5
Dan	McCurley	8
Alfonso	Lujan	12
Carolyn	Nicholson	14
Richard	Ojinaga	16
Jaimee	Kell-Trujillo	19
Alexa	Diaz	21
Sonja	Bonse	22
Kaaren	White	25
Alma	Lorenz	30
Jennifer	Diaz	31



Happy Anniversary

January Anniversaries

	Date	Years
Bradley & Karen Springer	19	46
Arlyn & Jean Bartels	25	65
Jim & Chari Vance	26	57

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 Jennifer Diaz
in the church office.

JULIETs

All women in the church are invited to our monthly ladies' lunch. And bring a friend!

Thursday, January 8th — 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, January 12th, 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
NOVEMBER 18, 2025

President Doug Lorenz called the Mission Lutheran Church Council meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

Council Members present: Pastor Cave, Treasurer: Brad Mueller, Board of Elders: Richard Turk, Church Secretary: Jennifer Diaz, Board of Trustees: Brad Springer, Sr., Financial Secretary: Carol Moore, and School Board: Karen Springer. Carol Cooper, Council Secretary and Eric Gunderson, Vice President were 15 minutes late for the meeting.

Pastor Cave opened the meeting with prayer.

The minutes of the October 21 meeting were approved as corrected for a spelling error and a punctuation error.

The following reports were given:

Pastor Cave: Pastor Cave's report is attached. Pastor Cave asked for additional input from the Council with regard to Mission hosting the Concordia Theological Seminary Choir Thursday, January 8, 2026. The Choir will arrive at 3PM. 19 MLC families are needed to accommodate choir members overnight. (Concordia is prepared to obtain motel accommodations if needed.) Dinner will be served in Luther Hall at 5:30PM, and the Church Service will begin at 7PM.

Vice President: Eric Gunderson's report is attached.

Secretary: Carol Cooper-No report.

Treasurer: Brad Mueller's report is attached.

Financial Secretary: Carol Moore-No report.

Elders: Richard Turk reported he met with Bobby Jakcsy to discuss the responsibilities of the ushers to get perspective regarding emergency situations; he has yet to meet with Walt Roof, MLC member and retired law enforcement officer to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses regarding emergency preparedness, and ultimately put in place an effective "instant command system."

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Trustees: Brad Springer, Sr.-report is attached. Brad was not present, but Doug Lorenz mentioned that the water heater is not working.

School Board: Karen Springer-report is attached.

President: Doug Lorenz

Unfinished business: Doug stated that we are still in need of a Youth Councilor/Coordinator.

New business: Doug reported that "since 2018 Mission Lutheran Church has been paying for school deficit out of the LCEF bank account instead of the Thrivent account that was established specifically to receive donations for the benefit of Mission Lutheran School. We need to transfer that money from the Thrivent account back to the LCEF account." Doug also asked what we are doing to change our

President: Doug Lorenz (report concluded)

economic situation for the school. Brad Mueller, Karen Springer, Pastor Cave, Doug Lorenz, and Megan Wood agreed to work as a committee to consider ways to make the school no longer financially dependent on diminishing savings.

The Voters' Assembly will meet December 14, 2025. Lunch will again be available.

Pastor Cave led us in the Lord's Prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20PM

Respectfully submitted,

Carol L. Cooper, Secretary



MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH and SCHOOL

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

Report Preparation Date: Sep 1, 2025

<u>Budget Status:</u>		<u>Month of Aug '25</u>	<u>FY26 thru Aug '25</u>	
		<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>				
MLC General		\$22,487	\$52,417	\$79,425
MLS Total		\$57,416	\$89,080	\$44,769
Designated / Other		\$149	\$300	\$350
		<u>\$80,052</u> *	<u>\$141,797</u> *	<u>\$124,544</u> *
<u>Expenses:</u>				
MLC Total		\$16,316 *	\$31,803 *	\$35,627 *
MLS Total		\$45,711	\$89,939	\$91,055
Total Expenses		\$62,027	\$121,742	\$126,682
Net Difference		<u>\$18,025</u> *	<u>\$20,055</u> *	<u>-\$2,138</u> *

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY26 as of Aug 31, 2025

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$8,825
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	<u>\$6,291</u>
Average Weekly Surplus/ <u>Shortfall</u> :	-\$2,534 *
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$56,616
General Fund Budgeted Year-to-Date:	<u>\$79,425</u>
Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/ <u>Shortfall</u> :	-\$22,809 *

Investments & Assets / Liabilities as of Aug 31, '25

<u>Investments:</u>	Morgan Stanley/E*Trade	\$129,589
	Mission Lutheran Endowment Fund (American Century)	\$84,989
	Thrivent	\$501,250
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD	\$13,639
	TOTAL	\$729,467 *
<u>Current Assets:</u>	Shepherd's Staff Checking	\$40,181
	LCEF All Access	\$70,478
	minus Dedicated Funds	
	Youth Activity Fund	\$3,766
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	MLS Reg/Tuition Holding	\$0
	Angel Scholarship Program	\$1,695
	COVID Grant	\$25,733
	Apple Tree Donations	\$1,213
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$5,850
	School Security Grant	\$8,774
	Musical Donations	\$60
	Coats for Kids	\$500
	Staffeldt Scholarship Fund	\$377
	Total Checking Available After Dedicated Funds	\$50,191 *
<u>Liabilities:</u>	None	

*Generated via spreadsheet



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

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