

# MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

## Pastor's Pen

“Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I called my son.’”

“Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.’” (Matthew 2:13-18)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we hear in the classic Christmas song about “*The Twelve Days of Christmas*,” it’s not the twelve days leading up until Christmas. Rather, the Christmas season begins on December 25<sup>th</sup> and goes until the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, with January 6<sup>th</sup> marking the beginning of the season of Epiphany. That means that, after all the preparation of Advent, we get to have unrestrained celebration for twelve whole days!

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## Important Dates:

- January 4: Pastors’ Winkel meeting in El Paso
- January 6: Epiphany
- January 17: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

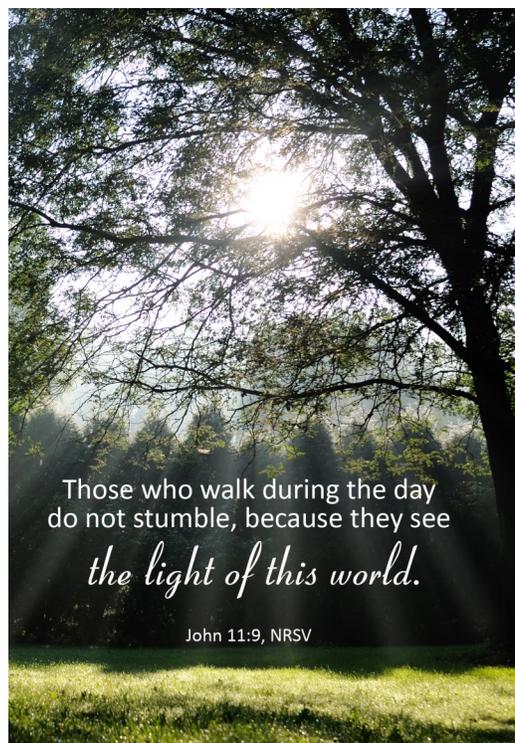


And yet, I write this on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, which is the day that the Church remembers the Festival of the Holy Innocents. The Holy Innocents were those little boys in Bethlehem who suffered the wrath of King Herod the Great in his effort to kill the Christ-child. History records for us that Herod was a very paranoid and tyrannical ruler, one who would not suffer even a hint of a threat to his reign. Killing all the little boys in Bethlehem was of no consequence to him so long as he could kill “he who has been born king of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2).

The story of the Holy Innocents is dark, tragic, and horrifying. It’s certainly not something that we would think of as part of a Christmas celebration! And yet, the Christmas season seems to be full of such things. The day after Christmas, December 26<sup>th</sup>, is dedicated to remembering St. Stephen, the deacon who was stoned to death for his testimony that Jesus is the Christ. Whereas the Holy Innocents are considered the first martyrs of the New Testament, St. Stephen is counted as the first martyr of the Church. In addition to these days, on December 27<sup>th</sup> the Church remembers the Apostle John. And while one may think that that day wouldn’t be quite so somber since the Apostle John was the only one of the Apostles who was not killed for the faith, still John suffered much. He was exiled for his faith on the island of Patmos, which is where he received the visions he recorded in the book of Revelation. And church tradition states that the Romans did try to execute him by boiling him in oil, but he was saved miraculously.

On the one hand, these days can threaten to darken our celebration of the Christmas season. These days are full of evil, malice, and death. And yet, while these days do add somberness to this season, they do not take away the joy. The Holy Innocents bear witness to the significance of the child born to Mary, that He is indeed One who is born to be King. St. Stephen, just before his death, was granted a vision of Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father, and in great humility and love he prayed that God would forgive those who were stoning him. The Apostle John, though he saw much suffering in his own life and also in the visions he received, also was granted to see the vision of the triumphant Christ returning to claim His bride, the Church. In all of this, what we see is that the darkness of these days cannot overcome Christ, who is the Light of the World.

So, as we continue in our Christmas celebrations, we do not hide our eyes from the darkness that is in the world. Rather, we celebrate with the sure and certain hope that this Christ-child is the Light that no darkness can overcome. Amen.



# Stewardship

## 'Tis More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

**“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” (Acts 20:35)**

And indeed, it is. Does this not strike a chord that resonates in us all? Which of us can't recall the look of surprise and thanks for the Christmas gifts that we labored to give to those whom we love? And the joy written on their face when that gift is received with thanksgiving means more than all the gifts we have received. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our Lord knew this because He practiced it. He gave of Himself - sparing not even His life in death - in order to give us back to our Father in heaven. He knew that in giving you get more because joy is multiplied in giving. The one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. And, what is more, the one who receives only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously in thanksgiving.

So it is with our tithes and offerings in church. We want to give because we have received from God all that we are and all that we have. Our giving does not originate in what we must do to earn God's favor. We have God's favor because of His gift of His Son, given through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving so that our tithes and offering are freely given in thanksgiving for what God has so generously given to us.

Why then does the church struggle to make budgets? Why does the church always seem stretched so thin when it is the place where God continually gives us His forgiveness of sins? Why does the church struggle when God, out of love for us, generously pours out His grace and mercy?

It is because we are sinners. Our fallen nature makes us selfish and miserly. It leads us to believe that we can have our cake and eat it, too. Because of sin, we want God's grace and mercy; we want His blessings of body and soul. But we don't want to share it with those around us. We want to remain comfortable in our own self-contained, neat, and tidy lives - without the headaches of loving those around us by helping them in their time of need.

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ” Remember that God has placed you in a church, not only to receive His grace and mercy, but to press His eternal and temporal blessings into service to your neighbor.

Your tithes and offerings ensure that those around you have a pastor to preach the life-saving and life-giving Word of God. They ensure that the lights, heat, and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism as well as bread and wine for Holy Communion. They even ensure that your pastor has food and clothing and presents for his own family. The gifts of God are immeasurable. They multiply and redound to everyone's good as the fish and loaves in the feeding of the five thousand.

So, remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And remember the joy that attended the gifts you gave at Christmas. This same joy attends your gifts to the church.

LCMS Free Stewardship Resources





## LWML - WINGS January Happenings:

Annual Epiphany Party  
Thursday, January 6, 2022,  
7:00 pm in Luther Hall  
*(Adults only, please)*



Each year on January 6 the LWML sponsors an Epiphany party in Luther Hall. **All** men and women (no children, please) of the congregation are invited to share in the fun and laughter as we feast on finger-foods, “steal” each other’s wrapped white elephant gifts (think unusual or funny - something that people will want to “steal!”), and support our Wee Care program with items for newborn babies at Memorial Hospital.

There will be a brief program reminding us what Epiphany is all about.

Bring a gift (wrapped but anonymous) and finger food to share.

The following items are needed for the wee care packages:

- Newborn diapers
- Receiving blankets
- Newborn onesies

Questions? Call Jacki McCurley at (575) 202-5955 or call Carol Moore at the church office [(575) 522-0465].

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Ladies are also invited to join in our Bible study on Monday, January 10, at 1:00 PM in the church nursery. Our study this month is titled “Fools of the Bible.”



# Birthdays of the Month

## January Birthdays

		Date
<b>Nicholson</b>	Erin	<b>4</b>
<b>Wood</b>	Emma	<b>5</b>
<b>McCurley</b>	Dan	<b>8</b>
<b>Lujan</b>	Al	<b>12</b>
<b>Nicholson</b>	Carolyn	<b>14</b>
<b>Bonse</b>	Sonja	<b>22</b>
<b>White</b>	Kaaren	<b>25</b>
<b>Amati</b>	Loretta	<b>26</b>
<b>Lorenz</b>	Alma	<b>30</b>

*Happy Anniversary*

## January Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
<b>Willett</b>	<b>Tom &amp; Roberta</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Bartels</b>	<b>Arlyn &amp; Jean</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Vance</b>	<b>Jim &amp; Chari</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>53</b>

*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 Carol Moore  
in the church office.

## TREASURER REPORT – DECEMBER VOTERS MEETING

### Mission Lutheran Church and School

**Report Preparation Date: December 11, 2021**

<b><u>Budget Status:</u></b>	<b><u>Month of November 2021</u></b>		<b><u>FY Thru Nov 30, 2021</u></b>	
	<b><u>Budgeted</u></b>	<b><u>Actual*</u></b>	<b><u>Budgeted</u></b>	<b><u>Actual*</u></b>
<b><u>Income:</u></b>				
MLC General	\$19,600.00	\$20,994.65	\$107,800.00	\$92,217.49
MLS Total	\$19,975.00	\$23,929.74	\$104,140.00	\$87,020.64
Designated / Other	\$196.67	\$2,829.05	\$983.33	\$7,922.04
	<b>\$39,771.67</b>	<b>\$47,753.44</b>	<b>\$212,923.33</b>	<b>\$187,160.17</b>
<b><u>Expenses:</u></b>				
MLC Total	\$21,311.40	\$35,923.66	\$87,226.52	\$80,278.55
MLS Total	\$30,585.17	\$27,145.82	\$144,503.15	\$117,469.89
	<b>\$51,896.57</b>	<b>\$63,069.48</b>	<b>\$231,729.67</b>	<b>\$197,748.44</b>
Net Difference	-\$12,124.90	-\$15,316.04	-\$18,806.34	-\$10,588.27

\*Note: Actual figures also include income and expenses not originally budgeted for the fiscal year.

### **MLC General Fund Contributions – FY 2021 (Thru December 5, 2021)**

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$4,900.00
Average Weekly Contributions Received:	\$4,246.21
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$97,662.72
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$112,700.00
Surplus/Shortfall Year-to-Date:	<b>-\$15,037.28</b>

### **Assets / Liabilities**

<b><u>Fund Assets:</u></b>	Endowment (as of Dec 9, 2021)	\$117,285.52
	Strasser (as of Sep 30, 2021)	\$76,464.48
	Thrivent (as of Sep 30, 2021)	\$405,478.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$599,228.00</b>
<b><u>Current Assets:</u></b>	Checking (as of Dec 11, 2021)	<b>\$21,222.87</b>
	LCEF Savings (as of Dec 1, 2021)	\$146,698.62
	(minus designated funds)	
	School Funds	9578.08
	Youth Activity Funds	\$3,765.57
	Staffeldt Scholarship	\$9,000.00
	Other	
	<b>Total LCEF Savings Available</b>	<b>\$124,354.97</b>
<b><u>Liabilities:</u></b>	None	<b>\$0.00</b>

### **Comments:**

1. Revenues lower due to low MLC general contributions and MLS enrollment being about 75% of needed tuition receipts.

2. With staffing additions, our expenses are now in line with what was originally budgeted. With reduced revenue however, the deficits will continue to grow and possibly exceed the originally projected annual budget deficit of about \$50,000.



*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: Eric Gunderson (575) 382-8236*

We're on the web!

<http://missionlutheran.net>

<http://mlschool.net>

## 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