

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

Pastor's Pen

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38)

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Important Dates:

- March 9: MLS Rummage Sale
- March 10: Daylight Saving Time begins
- March 11: MLS Spring Break begins
- March 23: Prayer Ministry breakfast
- March 24: Palm Sunday
- March 25: MLS classes resume
- March 26: MLS Chapel
- March 28: Holy Thursday
- March 29: Good Friday
- March 30: Easter Vigil
- March 31: Easter



It may seem odd, as we're in the midst of the season of Lent, to reference the narrative of the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she will conceive and bear a Son. But this is the Gospel reading for a seldom-observed feast day in March which is not often observed in the church. And that feast day is the Annunciation of Our Lord.

The Annunciation is on March 25th, nine months before Christmas Day on December 25th. The early church did not settle on December 25th as the day to celebrate Christmas and then calculate backwards to figure the day of the Annunciation. Rather, the early church figured out when Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, would have been serving in the temple, and then calculated the date of the Annunciation six months from there. (There was a bit more involved as to how the Annunciation was calculated, but it gets complicated.) Add nine months from March 25th, and you arrive at December 25th.

The Annunciation is an important day, and it can be observed if March 25th should fall on a Sunday. Yet it is seldom observed because it will always fall within the season of Lent (unless March 25th is Easter Day itself!). It can seem odd and out of place to change the purple paraments to white for one Sunday, bring back the *Gloria in Excelsis*, and even bring back the *Alleluia* before we reach Easter. And since it is such a joyous day, it is traditionally recommended that it not be observed if March 25th is during Holy Week.

If you look at page xxiii at the front of the *Lutheran Service Book*, you will see the dates for upcoming Easters listed up to the year 2050. If I did my calculations correctly, whenever March 25th falls on a Sunday up to 2050, it will either be Palm Sunday or Easter Sunday. Thus, observing the Annunciation of Our Lord on a Sunday is not likely to happen anytime soon! Even so, we can still remember and contemplate the Annunciation even in the midst of Lent. After all, the story of Christ is a cohesive narrative; no one part can exist without all the others.

During Lent, we focus on our sinful condition and our need for a Savior. All of mankind has been in a sinful and helpless state ever since the Fall in the Garden of Eden. But from the Fall of mankind, God has promised to send One who would rescue mankind from sin and death. He promised that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). He promised that through Abraham would all the families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:3). He promised that there would be a prophet who would speak the Word of God to the people (Deuteronomy 18:18). He promised that He would establish the throne of David forever (2 Samuel 7:16). All of this and more was fulfilled in Jesus. No part of this story can exist without all the others.

It's common during the Christmas season to preach the cross because Jesus was born in this world in order to suffer and die to save the world. It's equally valid to preach the incarnation during Lent and Holy Week because Jesus had to become a man in order to live, suffer, and die for us. His very earthy and fleshly body hungered during the forty days in which He fasted in the wilderness, being tempted by the devil. His strong yet tender hands touched the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, the disease of the leprous, and the decay of the dead—and He healed them. His body sat on the back of donkey as He rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. His head was anointed by Mary of Bethany for burial, and He washed His disciples' feet on the night He was betrayed. His back was flogged. His brow was crowned with thorns. His wrists and ankles were pierced with nails. His side was thrust by a spear.

And three days later His voice called Mary Magdalene as she was in the Garden in distress because His body wasn't in the tomb. He suddenly appeared in the locked upper room with the disciples and bid them to be at peace. He told Thomas to touch His hands and side. He ate with the disciples to show that He is not merely spirit but also flesh and blood.

The birth, life, ministry, miracles, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ is all possible only because He first became incarnate within the womb of the Virgin Mary. So even in the midst of Lent, we can take a moment to contemplate once again the great mystery of the incarnation, which is an indispensable part of the story of Christ's salvation of the world. Amen.

Pastor Andrew Cave

Join your Mission Family for Prayer and Breakfast!

The Mission Lutheran Church and School Prayer Ministry invites **you** to join them for breakfast on “Palm Saturday,” March 23rd, from 9 am to 10:30 am in Luther Hall.

Watch for more details and the sign-up sheet that will soon be posted in the Narthex or call Alma Lorenz at (505) 402-6622 with ques-



Easter Prayer Vigil

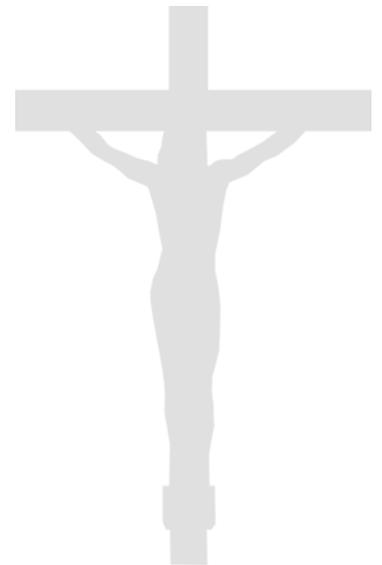
Please be a part of the Easter Prayer Vigil!

When: Saturday, March 30th

Where: Mission Lutheran Church Sanctuary

What will I do? Pray silently during your time slot. Prayer targets are provided as a guide.

How? Sign up for a time slot. The sign-up sheet will soon be posted in the Narthex.



As Jesus was praying in the garden, He came and found the disciples sleeping.

“So could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” - Matthew 26:40-41

Stewardship

Cherish What God Has Given

In the Small Catechism, Luther follows a pattern when explaining the Ten Commandments. With each commandment, there is something prohibited, and something commanded. There is something wrong which must be avoided, and there is something right which must be done.

The one time this pattern is not followed is with the Sixth Commandment.

“You shall not commit adultery. What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other” (SC I).

Here, the catechism focuses solely on the positive: we should live in a chaste and decent manner in both word and deed, and husbands and wives should cherish and honor one another.

Keeping this commandment, and all of the commandments, is a lot easier if you see your chastity and your spouse as a gift from God that is to be protected and cherished. In the same way, you will find keeping the Fourth Commandment easier if you see your parents and other authorities as a gift from God, given to you for your blessing.

This is the key stewardship insight that runs through all of the Christian life: Everything that we have has been given to us by God. We deserve none of it. All of it comes to us by God’s fatherly kindness and open-handed generosity. If I know that everything I have – every possession, every relationship, every ability – is a gift from God, then my perspective changes. All of these things are both gifts to be cherished, and things that I should direct towards God’s purposes. My possessions should be shared generously according to how God has called me in my family, church and community. My spouse should be cherished, loved and encouraged in faith. My children are on loan from my own Heavenly Father, and I have but a brief time to show them the path of righteousness. My neighbor is a gift from God so that I can imitate His kindness toward me.

No matter the gift, everything has been given to me by God so that I may participate in His own goodness and open-handed generosity.



LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship



March Birthdays

		Date
Roger	Guericke	5
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

Happy Anniversary

March Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Robert & Tiziana	Smits	11	31
Jan & Jacky	Ryberg	15	44
Peter & Jan (Peyton)	Persing	17	38
Pastor Glenn & Susan	Weber	22	54

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.

Mark your calendars!

Bake Sale

Proceeds to support our seminary student



Sunday, March 17

**Plan to bring something to sell; plan to
purchase something; or both!**

The next gathering of WINGS/LWML will be on Monday, March 11th, at 6:30 PM in Luther Hall. All ladies are invited to join us for fellowship and Bible study.

JULIETs

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

Thursday, March 14 — Cattle Baron
790 S. Telshor

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



MISSION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Council Meeting

January 16, 2024

President Doug Lorenz called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. Attending were Brad Springer, Wade Echtenkamp, Brad Mueller, Carol Moore, Pastor Cave, and Megan Wood.

Pastor Cave led us in opening prayer.

The minutes of the November 21, 2023, council meeting were approved.

Pastor's Report: Pastor's report is attached. He is preparing for Lent which begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14. He is also attending a training for reconciliation course via Zoom from 4:00 - 6:30 PM every day for 3 weeks, with even longer sessions on Fridays.

Vice President (Wade Echtenkamp): No report

Financial Secretary (Carol Moore): Year-end contribution statements have been printed and distributed/mailed.

Treasurer (Brad Mueller): In response to a question raised by Brad Springer Sr., it costs a little over \$100/month for the recycle bin in the parking lot. He questioned whether it is being used and all agreed that we do indeed use it and need to keep it.

Brad has opened 3 separate CDs in order to earn better interest on our savings. He is still waiting for the newest one to show up online.

Secretary (Carol Cooper): No report

Elders (Richard Turk): Elders' report is attached.

Trustees (Brad Springer Sr.): The trustees report is attached.

Outreach (Brad Springer): Brad relayed a story about how he has been trying to use sporting events (baseball, football, etc.) that consume much of his family's time as an opportunity for outreach by holding a short prayer prior to the start of the game and inviting others to join.

Brad suggested that we consider designing a hoodie that would have Luther's rose printed on the back with perhaps the church name on the front. Church members would be given the option to purchase one of the hoodies with the idea that wearing them might encourage people to question the meaning of Luther's rose. He also suggested that we include Luther's small catechism in the Bible box and also have copies available to hand out to people who might want to learn more about what we believe.

Brad plans to participate in the Bataan Death March, along with Pastor Cave, Austin Nathaniel and the Baker family.

Brad questioned whether we want to participate in Springfest. No decision was made but more information will be provided at the next meeting.

School Board (Megan Wood): The report is attached. Several resources are being used to find candidates for open teaching positions and for the school administrator. Carol Moore suggested that the LCMS churches in El Paso and Alamogordo be notified of these openings. She will provide Darci Grothman with a list of contact emails for those churches.

Megan noted that we will need space for grades 7-8. We can use the remaining classroom in Luther Hall which is currently being used as work space, but storage space will then be needed for much of what is currently in that room. Some discussion ensued regarding putting up another shed as opposed to a portable classroom. Doug Lorenz pointed out that a portable classroom would require a great deal more work and expense. He will ask Brad Springer Sr. to look into buying an additional shed and creating a concrete pad.

Unfinished Business: Pastor Cave had suggested some time ago that we might create short videos explaining the responsibilities and activities of each Board so that congregation members can be better informed of how they might fit in and participate. We need more people for Sunday School and for altar guild among others. Doug Lorenz will identify someone who is good with a camera to begin filming these. They will be shown prior to the church service as they are made available.

Doug Lorenz questioned whether we want to move ahead with ordering a new phone system. It was agreed that we should move forward so he will provide the most current information for the next council meeting.

Doug Lorenz reported that all of the problems with the security system seem to have been worked out and we shouldn't experience any more false alarms. Carol Moore indicated that she will arrange with Telstar to have the codes changed so that everyone who has a key to either building will have their own security code.

Discussions were held last year about potential changes to the bylaws. Doug Lorenz questioned whether we want to move ahead with those changes. Carol Moore agreed to write up proposed rewording of those sections and will present them at the next meeting. Our bylaws require that the treasurer be audited periodically. This hasn't been done for several years. We need to identify someone who can do that audit. Carol Cooper will be asked for her advice.

Our HVAC system in the church sanctuary is aging and needs to be replaced. Doug Lorenz will ask Brad Springer Sr. to get estimates. This is an expense that will need congregational approval.

Doug Lorenz suggested that we have a Council retreat and proposed January 27 as a date for that activity. More information will be provided regarding the time of day.

Megan Wood pointed out that the stoves in the kitchen are not functioning well and should be replaced prior to the MLS Gala on February 10. Carol Moore moved and Brad Mueller seconded that Megan should order 2 new stoves and pay for them using the church credit card. The motion passed. Carol provided Megan with the credit card and Megan will order the stoves on Wednesday.

Our next council meeting is scheduled for February 20th at 6:30 pm in Luther Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm with everyone reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Moore, filling in for Carol Cooper in her absence.

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 Feb '24 Council/Voters Meeting

Report Preparation Date: Feb 1, 2024

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of Jan '24</u>	<u>FY24 thru Jan '24</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Income:</u>			
MLC General	\$30,433	\$181,394	\$178,715
MLS Total	\$18,652	\$174,394	\$188,470
Designated / Other	\$1,243	\$2,969	\$2,333
	\$50,328	\$358,757	\$369,518
<u>Expenses:</u>			
MLC Total	\$16,258	\$119,293	\$124,830
MLS Total	\$31,728	\$223,868	\$241,999
	\$47,986	\$343,161	\$366,829
Net Difference	\$2,342	\$15,596	\$2,689

MLC General Fund Contributions – FY24 (Thru Jan 31, 2024)

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,765
Average Weekly Contributions Received (FYTD) :	\$6,233
Average Weekly Surplus/Shortfall:	\$468
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$193,228
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$178,715
Fiscal Year-to-Date Surplus/Shortfall:	\$14,513

Investments & Assets / Liabilities

<u>Investments:</u>	Morgan Stanley/E*Trade (as of Jan 31, '24)	\$111,830
	Strasser Endowment (as of Dec 31, '23)	\$74,573
	Thrivent (as of Jan 31, '24)	\$426,403
	LCEF MLC Youth Development CD Account	\$12,732
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #1	\$50,929
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #2	\$50,475
	LCEF General Funds CD Account #3	\$50,000
	TOTAL	\$776,942

<u>Current Assets:</u>	BMO Checking (as of Jan 31, '24)	\$44,044
	LCEF Checking (as of Jan 31, '24)	\$48,148
	(minus designated funds)	
	Angel Prog/TA Holding	\$4,218
	Registration/Tuition Holding	\$0
	Youth Activity Funds	\$3,766
	Staffeldt Scholarship	\$7,425
	COVID Grant	\$43,543
	School Security Grant	\$9,305
	Youth Christian Development	\$12,500
	Apple Tree Funds	\$1,089
	Emergency Tuition Assistance	\$3,013
	Total LCEF Checking Available	\$7,333

Liabilities: None

Comments:



Easter Sunday is March 31st

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: Ken Martin (575) 650-3304

We're on the web!

<http://missionlutheran.net>

<http://mlschool.net>

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2024

President	Doug Lorenz	Elders, Chairman	Richard Turk
Vice President	Wade Echtenkamp	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	Megan Wood