

**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship Newsletter Article – September 2023
Stewardship in the First Commandment**

The greatest gift that Martin Luther gave to us was his Small Catechism. The word “enchiridion” is part of the original title of this work. This is the Greek word for “handbook.” The Small Catechism is a handbook of the Bible. All the basic knowledge that a Christian needs to understand the faith and live a godly life has been taken from the Bible and distilled into this beautiful little book of Christian piety.

Luther starts with the Ten Commandments.

The First Commandment:

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things. (SC I)

We have a God above us. He is the Lord God and we are not. He is Almighty and in control. He is righteous and good. And therefore, we should fear Him.

This God is also our heavenly Father. He wants us to be saved. He does not want us to suffer His just wrath. He has provided salvation for us in His Son, Jesus Christ. And therefore, we should love Him.

Our heavenly Father will never leave us nor forsake us. He has promised as much — and the Bible shows us that He always keeps His promises. So, we should trust Him.

In the Large Catechism, Luther explains how money and possessions form one of the greatest temptations against the First Commandment:

This I must unfold somewhat more plainly, that it may be understood and perceived by ordinary examples of the contrary. Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, i.e., money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon. This [care and desire for money] sticks and clings to our nature, even to the grave. (LC I 5–9)

These words of Dr. Luther should call us to repentance; sometimes, we live and act like we don't have a Father in heaven. We seek our comfort and peace outside of His gracious promises. But we do have a Father in heaven. He does love us. All His promises are true. And the Lord will surely provide. If that is our belief, then our outward lives will reflect our belief in our acts of generosity and mercy. We will see money and possessions not as gods but rather as tools for doing God's work.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: lcms.org/stewardship

**YOU MAY ONLY BE ONE PERSON,
BUT YOU CAN BE THE ONE PERSON
WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

Calling individuals and families to become part of

SOTV's GREETING MINISTRY!

All that is required is that you bring your friendliest smile to stand at the front door, open the door and welcome people to our amazing church. After service, thank them and provide words of blessing for a wonderful week as they leave. You will need to come 15 minutes early to service and stay 10 minutes after service. The ministry will resume in August. You will be able to choose the date you prefer on the sign-up sheet in the narthex.



"Rally Day is September 10, 2023 during the Education Hour! The theme for this year is "Live in the Light" which calls children to follow Jesus and walk in His light. In today's world, where so many ideas compete for attention, it can be hard for children to understand the concept of absolute truth. They often hear conflicting philosophies that might confuse them and make their faith wobble. It's important to guide them correctly. Join us for Rally Day for fellowship and registration for the Sunday School year! Our first regular Sunday School session will take place the following Sunday, Sept. 17, 2023."

SOTV has a place for everyone and every age during our Education Hour Sunday mornings. We encourage participation and study for the whole family as we grow and learn to love and serve our neighbors, and deepen our own relationship with Christ and His word. Families are welcome to the following, age appropriate biblical studies and lessons:

Sunday School

Who: PreK-5th graders

Where: Sunday School area (back of the building)

Lead by: Sunday School Staff (Michelle, Sam, Reagan, Becky, Carrie)

Middle School Curriculum

Who: 6th-8th graders

Where: Sanctuary tables

Lead by: Brent Purdy and Adam Dever

High School Curriculum:

Who: 9th-12th graders

Where: Pastor's Office

Lead by: Pastor and Denise Wolfgram, Carrie Harling

Adult Bible Study

Who: Adults and kids at heart!

Where: Fellowship area

Lead by: Pastor Woodside, Pastor Wolfgram, Elders, guest speakers

Happy Birthday!

Steven R	9/2
Emma V	9/2
Kim J	9/3
David A	9/4
Leland M	9/9
Hadley W	9/17
Ann W	9/26
Jeremy G	9/27
Adam V	9/28
James B	9/28
Jensen H	9/30

Baptism BIRTHDAYS

Kurt H	9/1
Wayne D	9/7
Leslie W	9/9
Heather D	9/15
Mikayla Z	9/16
Sheila K	9/20
Sherry H	9/25
Bernice R	9/25

Joe & Sheila K	09/07
Mike & Kari K	09/14
Adam & Sonja D	09/15
Todd & Sharon S	09/20
Walter & Bernice R	09/21
Craig & Cindy H	09/25
Ted & LaRae K	09/28
Michael & Dori N	09/29

Sept. 3	Sam N.
Sept. 10	Keaton H.
Sept. 17	Madison G.
Sept. 24	Mackenzie G.

September 2023

1-15 Dick Dever

16-31 Rob Burkhardsmeier



September brings with it the return to school for another year. Though the fallen world has always brought its dangers to our children, it seems that these are increasing more and more with unbiblical ideologies being allowed and even taught in many of our nation's schools. This calls for not only fervent prayer for our children – and their teachers – but also for vigilance and boldness in speaking up for God's created design and will. *“Do not be conformed to*

this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

Please continue to share information about our LCMS “Main Street Living” media ministry with others. In addition to being broadcast each Sunday morning, you can view archived programs anytime at www.mainstreetliving.com – then click on the link under the picture identified as “Fargo/Bismarck”. Worship services from the five other MSL broadcast areas, as well as the weekly *This Is the Life* programs, are also available for viewing on the website.

Thank you for your needed financial support! Checks may be sent to “Main Street Living NORTH,” 821-5th Ave S, Fargo, ND 58103, or donate by Credit Card or your PayPal account on the website. God's blessing in Christ!

-Ken Koehler / MSL North Volunteer Coordinator

“MSL North” Programs for September 2023:

September 3: Rev. Scott Brown, Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Alexandria, MN, and St. James Lutheran Church, Parkers Prairie, MN, presents the message: **“God's Way”**, based on Matthew 16:21-28. *This Is the Life* program: **“The Sound of Doors Closing”** – A man's mid-life crisis and the effect it has on his family.

September 10: Rev. Sam Pitsch, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Moorhead, MN, presents the message: **“A Hard Pill to Swallow”** based on Romans 13:1-7. *This Is the Life* program: **“Tina”** – Two lonely people, a woman and a child, come together through Jesus.

September 17: Rev. William Aufdenkamp, Christ Lutheran Church, Elbow Lake, MN, and Zion Lutheran Church, Hoffman, MN, presents the message: **“Who Do You Think You Are?”** based on Romans 14:8. *This Is the Life* program: **“Look to the Mountain”** – A hopeless situation becomes more hopeless when a down and out man kidnaps a young girl for ransom money.

September 24: Rev. Guy Roberts, Zion Lutheran Church, Detroit Lakes, MN, presents the message: **“Our Life in Song”** based on Psalm 27:109. *This Is the Life* program: **“Home Free”** – A family learns the real meaning of love, and that it comes free.



Understanding the Grief Process

St. Andrew Lutheran Church, West Fargo

Saturday, October 14, 2023

9:00-12:00

Zion Lutheran Church, Bismarck

Sunday, October 15, 2023

1:00-4:00 pm

Dr. Mark has 30+ years of mental health experience in Thanatology (death and loss). He will share his vast experience in helping individuals, families, and communities in the face of tragedy from accidents, shootings, natural disaster, and suicide.

Free Will Offering



Dr. Mark Vande Braak, Ph.D., FT, MT-BC
Thanatologist/Music Therapist

At Your Service: Counselors Now Available!



Rev. David Gunderson, tLMFT and Lindy Hinckley, tLMFT are both master's trained mental health professionals working under a licensed supervisor to obtain their permanent independent clinical license. In addition to their counseling training and experience, both build their work on a strong foundation of mature LCMS Christian faith.

Dave is an LCMS pastor and has served in a parish and as a military chaplain for over 30 years. Lindy is an LCMS member, married to an LCMS pastor in South Dakota. Both are ready and able to help by providing confidential, professional counseling consistent with your faith and world view. No fees will be charged for sessions with Dave or Lindy, until they complete their independent licensing.



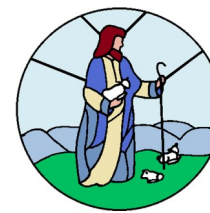
YOU DON'T NEED TO DO THIS ALONE!

• Whether you are mourning the death of a loved one who died several years ago or the more recent loss of a family member, you are invited to

TAKE HEART IN YOUR GRIEF.

- Sunday Evenings Starting October 1st, 2023
- 6:30-8:00 PM
- Zion Lutheran Church
- 413 E. Avenue D
- Led by Rev. Thomas R Marcis Jr and Rev. Les Wolfgram
- Questions or to register please call 701-258-4231

September 2023



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
 "A church family that shares, nurtures, and lives our faith in Christ"
 September 2023, Newsletter

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Education Hour	4	5 <u>2:30pm</u> Stewardship <u>4:00pm</u> Evangelism <u>4:30pm</u> Human Care <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	6 <u>6:00pm</u> Confirmation <u>6:00pm</u> Worship	7 <u>7:30pm</u> Trustees	8	9
10 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Rally Day	11	12 <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	13 <u>6:00pm</u> Confirmation <u>6:00pm</u> Worship	14	15	16 <u>8:00am</u> Men's Network <u>9:00am</u> Board of Ed. <u>4:30pm</u> Hang Out
17 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Education Hour <u>1:00pm</u> Middle school Youth	18	19 <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	20 <u>6:00pm</u> Confirmation <u>6:00pm</u> Worship	21 <u>7:30pm</u> Elders	22	23
24 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Education Hour <u>1:00pm</u> Senior High Youth <u>7:00pm</u> Council	25	26 <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	27 <u>6:00pm</u> Confirmation <u>6:00pm</u> Worship	28	29	30

Tiny Deviations - Part VI: We Should be Seeker Friendly

*These past couple months we have been looking at the topic of tiny deviations from the truth; that even a small error in doctrine can lead to major consequences later on. Two common deviations occur when people attempt to alter the teaching that salvation is through faith in Christ alone (+/- nothing) or that knowledge about God and salvation comes from scripture alone (+/- nothing.) In this month's article we are going to look at the Church Growth and Seeker Friendly movements.

What does it mean to be a seeker-friendly church? It is no secret that churches in America seem to be shrinking. Especially among youth, we have seen a bit of an exodus from church involvement. The seeker-friendly movement began as a way of reaching out to the unchurched world; a sort of evangelistic outreach method. It is closely associated with C. Peter Wagner and the Church Growth Movement. To be seeker friendly is to set up church in such a way as to attract non-Christians to church events so that those who otherwise would not hear the gospel might hear it and be saved.

The immediate question that may come to mind is: Why is this a tiny deviation? Truthfully, what is wrong with being strategic about outreach? What is wrong with being seeker-friendly? "Wait a minute, Pastor! Are you saying we ought to be 'seeker-unfriendly?'" Of course not! Certainly, we want to be welcoming and friendly. There is nothing wrong with having community events or outreach programs like VBS, in which we reach out to the community, but the seeker-friendly methodology goes *beyond* simple outreach. It involves a complete *restructuring* of the Divine Service which ultimately affects *doctrine*.

It is a question of means and ends. The desired ends are honorable: we want to bring people the gospel. This is great! However, in the seeker-friendly church, everything ultimately revolves around the potential non-Christian who is visiting. What would draw a non-Christian to church? Excitement! Upbeat music! An uplifting sermon, preferably with a de-emphasis on sin and judgement (because people don't like that) and a lot of jokes and down to earth applications! What's wrong with this?

1. It emphasizes the non-believer's *entertainment* more than Christ's truth.
2. It often emphasizes the conversion of non-believers at the *expense* of the Christians who are already saved. Feed the lost/ ignore the sheep.
3. It is a *bait-and-switch* tactic.
4. It is an evangelistic approaches that dominates every aspect of the church. It is a revolutionary change.
5. Bringing in Contemporary Worship may seem like no big deal. However, much contemporary worship, especially lyrically, embraces many of the *tiny deviations* discussed in previous articles (charismatic/ Pentecostal theology, decision theology, etc.) thus letting a foot in the door for false doctrine.
6. Some teachings of Scripture are *not* seeker-friendly (closed communion, the sinfulness of cohabitation, pre-marital sex, abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, gender transitioning, etc.) Do we change our doctrine? Do we ignore these things in order to appear more accepting to non-believers? Is there a *difference*?

How does the Church Grow then?

If we reject the seeker-friendly, church-growth model, what is the alternative? In scripture it is very simple. Preach the Word. Consider the Parable of the Sower. Here we read about seed (the word of God) that falls on various types of ground (a path, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil). The Word is preached, but in some cases, it is snatched away by the devil, or burned up, or choked by the thorny worries of the world. In some cases, it takes root and flourishes. Jesus Himself was not a people pleaser. He did not use church growth methods. He was not seeker friendly. He spoke the truth. Some believed Him. Others hated Him. He did not bend just to have more followers (see Matt 8: 18-22; Matt 19:16+). He preached the truth, knowing that it was the truth that would set people free. Finally, using man-made strategies (many borrowed from the corporate world and marketing gurus) puts the emphasis on ourselves when it comes to converting others; as though we are the ones who do the converting. What does Paul say? "What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." (1 Cor 3:5-7, ESV)

When we try and mess with God's intended plan for evangelism, we run the very real risk of going off the deep end. In the next article we will look at some ways in which these methods have done just that.

In Christ,
 Pastor Woodside