

# The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

## LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship) Newsletter Article – November 2023

### What Makes for a Cheerful Giver?

St. Paul wrote to Church of Christ in Corinth: “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). God loves a cheerful giver. But who is a cheerful giver?

Abel was. By faith, he gave the firstborn of his flock, and it was acceptable in God’s sight. Abraham was. By faith, he prepared cakes and a tender choice calf for God and entertained angels unaware. So also were David and Solomon. By faith, David would not make a sacrifice to God that cost him nothing, so he paid Araunah his due. By faith, Solomon built a house for God, where his name would dwell and thereby where He would dwell to be Israel’s God and they His people.

What more shall we say? For time would fail us to tell of all those who gave not simply for the joy of giving but for the joy of knowing the One to whom they gave.

So also our Lord, who for the joy set before Him, gave everything – yes, even His life – enduring the cross and scorning its shame. He gave to the shedding of His blood, willingly and resolutely setting His face toward Jerusalem to die for the life of the world. Though He was rich in every way, He became poor, so that by His poverty, we might be rich beyond measure.

So then, let us like Abel and Abraham, like David and Solomon, and even like our Lord Jesus Christ, give cheerfully to God for the work of His kingdom in our midst. Like them, let us decide in our heart for the joy set before us. It’s the joy of knowing the One to whom we give is the One who gives us all good things.

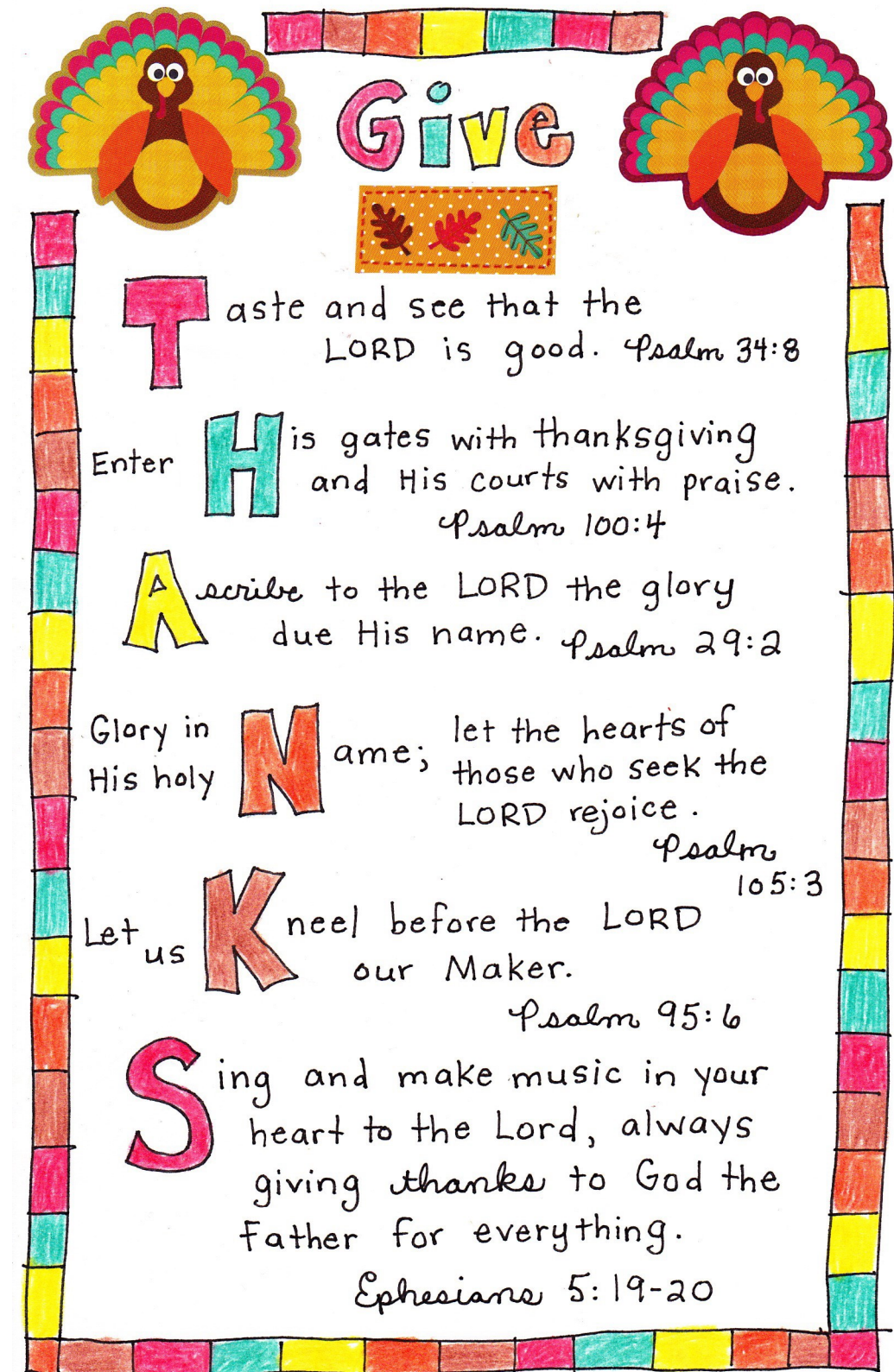
⇒LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)

Your Vote Matters

### CHURCH VOTERS’ MEETING



The Fall quarter voters meeting will take place during education hour on November 5. We will consider the 2024 budget and hear reports from our leadership boards. Plan to join us as we consider priorities for ministry at Shepherd of the Valley.



# Happy Birthday!

November	
Joy D	11/1
Carol M	11/3
Daniel D	11/5
Marlinda B	11/8
Lester W	11/8
Lana R	11/10
Lee R	11/11
Darlene K	11/14
Gloria D	11/16
Denise W	11/16
Bryce O	11/18
Danny H	11/20
Ann Marie C	11/21
Jim L	11/21
Sydney I	11/25
Arlan K	11/25
Rod T	11/26
Ella C	11/29
Max N	11/30



Nov. 5	Abby Z.
Nov. 12	Olivia D.
Nov. 19	David A.
Nov. 26	Sam N.

## Baptism BIRTHDAYS

November	
Sara N	11/7
Brandy P	11/12
Grace W	11/13
Mark P	11/15
Jensen H	11/16
Molly F	11/18
Joy D	11/21
Kim R	11/23
Jeremy G	11/30

## November ANNIVERSARIES

Doug & Deb B	11/6
Brad & Ronda N	11/19
Jim & Sherry H	11/24

## Lay Leaders

### November 2023

**1-15 Kevin Olson**

**16-31 Craig Helm**



**A month ago**, I wrote about the Twin Towers in New York City destroyed by terrorist 22 years ago. And now today, as I prepare this newsletter for November, I am watching the news reporting on **the war between Israel and Hamas!** We read in Matthew 24: *“Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you ... You will hear of wars and rumors of wars but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains ... Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, **but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.** And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”* Our MSL Media Ministry is a part of the preaching of the gospel to the world! By the power of God’s Word and the working of the Holy Spirit through it, **stand firm!**

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](http://www.mainstreetliving.com) – then click on the link 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 November 2023:

**November 5<sup>th</sup>:** **Rev. Karl Weber**, St. John Lutheran Church, Ottertail, MN, and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Richville, MN, presents the message: **“The Blessed”** based on St. Mark 5:1-12. *“This Is the Life”* program: **“The Deadly Pen”** - A businessman struggles with the guilt of another man’s death.

**November 12<sup>th</sup>:** **Rev. Kent Borglum**, St. John Lutheran Church, Montevideo, MN, presents the message: **“God’s Word For All Who Grieve”** based on I Thessalonians 4:13-18. *“This Is the Life”* program: **“Transition”** A young boy reacts to the divorce of his parents and the new reality he now faces.

**November 19<sup>th</sup>:** **Rev. Christopher Neuendorf**, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Bottineau, ND, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Rugby, ND, and Immanuel Lutheran Church, Willow City, ND, presents the message: **“Using Our Talents Well”** based on Matthew 25:14-30. *“This Is the Life”* program: **“Senior Citizen”** - A man struggles with purpose and a place in life after retirement.

**November 26<sup>th</sup>:** **Rev. Brian Doel**, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Minot, ND, presents the message: **“The Abundant Position of Christ”** based on Matthew 14:13-21. *“This Is the Life”* program: **“The Gift”** - A daughter struggles with what to do with birthday gift money.

# FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

SAVE THE DATE: February 10, 2024

Zion Lutheran Church

Bismarck



**DR. GREGORY SELTZ**

**Executive Director  
of Lutheran Center for  
Religious Liberty  
& Speaker Emeritus  
for Lutheran Hour  
Ministries**

Dr. Seltz will discuss the importance of being dual Kingdom citizens and explore why creating a network of believers and churches is crucial "for such a

- ◆ **Learn why Christians should engage with culture.**
- ◆ **Learn the principles of religious liberty.**
- ◆ **Discover how we can interact with culture for its benefit and the church's mission.**



**Rev. Dr. Adam Filipek  
will share insights on  
his book, "Life In Christ:  
Rooted, Woven, and Graft-  
ed Into God's Story."**



A special Thanksgiving Divine Service will take place on Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, November 22nd at 6:00 pm. Please join us for this special service.

Pastor Wolfgram and Pastor Woodside, along with their families, thank you for your love, support, and encouragement as they proclaim Christ and serve you as God's dearly loved people at Shepherd of the Valley.

*Thank You!*



Dream Center Bismarck is dedicated to serving the low income and marginalized of our community. Based out of Bismarck, ND, Dream Center Bismarck is currently focused on free grocery distribution providing assistance 6 days a week to those in need.

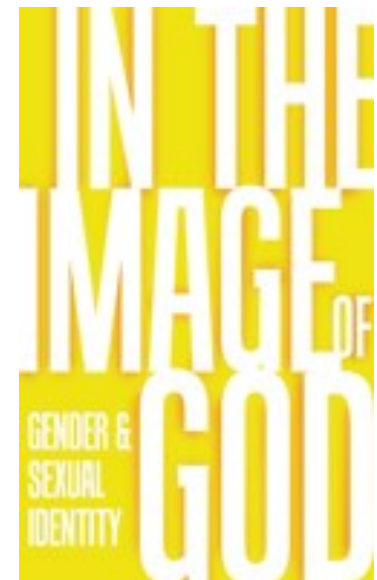
The money low income families save on groceries can be applied towards rent, utilities, medical bills, education expenses and other essential needs!

In just a little over 2-1/2 years, Adopt-a-Block Food Distribution has impacted over **5000 households** containing more than **12,500** children, adults, and seniors.

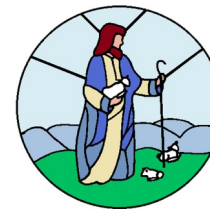
Jim Barnhardt, founder of Dream Center Bismarck and Adopt-a-Block, feels very strongly about the Dream Center concept offering both physical and spiritual assistance to those in need. As we move forward into our new facility in early 2022 we will be adding more free programs to help fill unmet needs in our community.

[#WEGETTOSERVE](#) The Dream Center is The Human Care Committee's 4th Quarter focus.

November Men's Network will meet at Holy Cross Lutheran Church on Saturday, November 19, from 8:00-10:00 am. Join us for breakfast, fellowship, and a study of Paul's letter to the Romans.



Check out this new title in the brochure rack near the main entrance to the church. What does God's Word have to say about gender and sexual identity?



**Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church**  
*“A church family that shares, nurtures, and lives our faith in Christ”*  
 November 2023, Newsletter

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

**Israel, Hamas and the Church**

*Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” Matt 24:1-2*

**Background**

In 33 AD Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. In 70 AD it was fulfilled with the attack on Jerusalem by the Roman Empire. Over the next 1878 years, the Jewish people were scattered around the world, with no homeland. In 1948, after the Holocaust under the Nazis and the murder of about 6,000,000 Jews, the modern nation of Israel was formed. Of course, there were already Palestinians living there, many of which were removed and displaced by the mass migration of Israelis to the region. This is, at least, part of the history behind the recent atrocities committed in Israel by the Hamas terrorists. Now we have increasing division regarding whether Hamas is the villain, or whether it is Israel that is the true aggressor. How are we, as Christians, supposed to deal with this?

**Are we expected to support national Israel at all costs?**

If you listen to Christian radio you will no doubt hear the claim that we are obligated to support Israel at all costs, or else fall under a curse. This idea likely comes from Genesis 12:13 and Numbers 24:9. In Numbers we read this regarding Israel: **“Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you.”** So what are we to make of this? Are we Biblically required to support anything and everything that modern day Israel does?

The answer to this is “No.” This is not to say that we should not support Israel in the current war in Palestine, it is simply to say that scripture does not *require* us to support the Nation of Israel as it stands today.

But what about the passage in Numbers above that says that we will be cursed if we don't? To answer this I want to consider a few things.

**#1 God Himself, at times, sent enemies to attack and destroy national Israel.**

Reading Jeremiah 7, we see that the people in his day had fallen into grave idolatry and sin. God asked them **“Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?”** (Jer 7: 9-10, ESV) We also read that they had **“built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire.”** (Jer 7: 31a, ESV) As a result of this rampant infanticide and adulterous, sexually depraved Baal worship, God had declared that destruction was coming at the hands of the Babylonians.

But there is one more interesting observation. God gives Jeremiah the following instructions. **“As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you.”** (Jer 7: 16, ESV) Taking this into consideration, it is clear that people are not required to support every little thing that national Israel does simply because they are descended from Abraham! So what does Numbers 24:9 mean? This brings me to my second point.

**#2 The command to bless and not curse Israel is NOT talking about national Israel, the country!**

We are to bless and not curse Israel, but who is Israel? Israel is not a genetic or biological entity. It is not about bloodline. Israel is, and always has been, those who believe in and trust the true God. Was Ruth, the great-grandmother of King David, a genetic Israelite? No. She was a Moabite. Rahab, who also became a distant grandmother of David, was also a Canaanite. These became Israelites by faith.

As the scripture says **“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify<sup>(a)</sup> the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”** (Gal 3: 7-9, ESV)

Elsewhere we read **“For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.”** (Rom 9:6b-8, ESV)

Israel is, and always has been, those who are Israel by faith. That would include all of the saints of the Old Testament (the Gentiles Rahab and Ruth, along with David, Elijah, and the prophets) as well as the saints of the New Testament, that is, the Church.

So what about God's promise to Abraham **“<sup>(3)</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed?”** (Gen 12:3, ESV) This is about US. This is in reference to all the saints, not the modern day country of Israel. This month we observe All Saints day. And who are the saints? They come from every tribe and nation! This is the spiritual Israel that we are obliged to support!

**Final Thoughts**

So what about the current situation in the Middle East? It seems that, once again, our country is divided. Some support Israel's retaliation against Hamas, others do not. This is a political issue, and it is not my calling to tell you what you ought to think or who you ought to support. My calling is to tell you what scripture teaches, and scripture does NOT teach that we are required to support “national Israel” at all costs. National Israel rejected Christ a long time ago, and as such, we consider them, politically, as we would any other country. We may support, or not support them based on a range of political and ethical reasons, but not because the country formed in 1948 is somehow God's special people! The church, on the other hand, is, and always will be His special people in Christ.