

**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry – lcms.org/stewardship Newsletter Article – August 2024
Mercy and Grace Lead to Generosity**

Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift” (2 Cor. 9:15)! This is St. Paul’s exclamation upon hearing the Corinthian church’s response to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his request for support for the church in Jerusalem. The Christians in Corinth heard and received God’s mercy in Christ, and they responded to St. Paul’s call to support Christians in Jerusalem with a collection. The Corinthians’ joy filled Jerusalem’s need.

This is the reality of stewardship. Because of God’s generosity in the giving of His Son to die on the cross for us, we are to be generous with all that we receive from Him. What do we receive? Everything. All that we are and all that we have is the Lord’s. He is the creator and the giver. We are His creatures and those who receive what He gives.

It sounds easy. And it is. But then again it isn’t. Stewardship is easy because it is God’s work. Through what God gives, we give to others. Through what God gives, we support the work of the church for the life of the world. He gives; we receive. And like our generous Father in Heaven, we, as His children, use what He gives to us to love and serve others.

But stewardship is also difficult. That is because it goes against our natural inclination to think that what I have is mine to do what I want with. This is our sinful nature. It is our selfishness and our greed. How can we who have been given everything — life, food, clothing, house, home, forgiveness, divine sonship, an eternal inheritance — be so stingy with what we give to the church, the place where we hear about and receive all that God gives us and does for us? We are all guilty of this kind of thinking. And the only godly response is to repent and trust in the Gos-pel.

For if God has given you His own Son, will He not give you all things? Yes. He will. This is His sure and certain promise. God provides for His people. He provides everything we need for this body and life and for the life that is to come.

The church is a mercy place. It’s a place where God’s mercy in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, is given and received. For us who believe it means forgiveness, life and salva-tion in the face of sin, death and the power of the devil. Here in the church, we inhale God’s mercy in Word and Sacrament, and exhale this same mercy in love and service to our neighbor. And that is an enduring, joyful thing to do. Our joy fills our neighbor’s need because His joy filled ours (Heb. 12:2). Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!

Joy & Wayne Doll	08/04
Pat & Doug Hintz	08/07
Michelle & Justin Dever	08/10
Laura & Bill Prokopyk	08/13
Vicki & Lee Roath	8/15
Lanna & Jamie Roaldson	8/19
Sara & Mike Nelson	08/30
Julie & Roger Lawyer	08/31
Jean & Jim Leuwer	08/31



Dear members of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church,

Greetings from Martin Luther School!

Our theme for the 24-25 school year is “Endure,” based on Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

I cannot help but think of you as part of that “great cloud of witnesses,” partnering with us in the mission at MLS. Your support helps us continue to “run the race,” and reach more families with the love of Christ.

School may be out for the summer, but our teachers have continued their journey in learning more about classical Lutheran education. They have already taken part in two workshop days to learn more about our curriculum. We are so thankful for our dedicated staff!

We will be celebrating our 30th anniversary! We’ll have an open house celebration event on Saturday, September 28th at MLS so mark your calendars! We have other events planned throughout the year to remember this milestone anniversary.

We are growing and once again able to offer the 6th-8th grades back to our program! We have hired Brenna Quirk to serve as 6th grade teacher. Joy Mehlhoff has been added to the staff as a classical education advisor and assistant to Mrs. Wolfgram with the 7th and 8th grades classes. We are running out of space in our current location, but that is a good problem to have! Some how we will make it work.

Our enrollment for the up coming year is currently at 87 for K-8, our full day preschool is full at 30, and ½ day Monday- Friday preschool has two spots left. We still have inquiries through the summer about enrollment, so if you know of anyone interested in learning more about Martin Luther School, please feel free to send them our way.

Continue to keep MLS in your prayers. It is our joy and privilege to partner with you in the Gospel as we enrich lives and share Christ through quality Lutheran education.



Women’s Bible Study Coming In September

Ladies of the congregation are invited to participate in a twice-a-month Bible study on the second and fourth Monday of the month starting September 9th. Each session will begin at 6:00 pm. The first session will focus on the account of Joseph and his brothers from the book of Genesis entitled, “Meant For Good, A Study of Joseph.”

Happy Birthday!

Lily D	8/2
Heather Z	8/2
Ray S	8/2
Kurt H	8/5
Lyn K	8/7
Leslie W	8/17
Brandy P	8/21
Shelia K	8/24
Eldon U	8/25
Don B	8/26
Carla U	8/27
Seth H	8-28
Doris L	8/28
Bernice R	8/28
Sophie B	8/29
Sherry H	8/29
Wayne D	8/31
Max G	8/31

Baptism BIRTHDAYS

Don B	8/1
Mark N	8/2
Daisy A	8/10
Patrick W	8/10
Jacob F Jr.	8/11
Jerry L	8/11
Gage R	8/11
Reese D	8/17
Marilyn S	8/17
Lily D	8/18
Colleen B	8/20
Gabriel L	8/21
Carrie H	8/23
Audrey H	8/24
Vicki R	8/27
Curt K	8/28
Samantha H	8/29



“Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction” 2 Timothy 4:2.

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 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 blessings in Christ!

-Ken Koehler / MSL North Volunteer Coordinator

“MSL North” Programs for August 2024:

August 4: Vicar Dylan Meyer, Zion Lutheran Church, Bismarck, ND, presents the message: “**Christ, Our True Manna**” based on John 6:22-25. “*This Is the Life*” program: “**The Sound of Doors Closing**” - A man's mid-life crisis and the effect it has on his family.

August 11: Rev. Jonathan Walla, Bethel Lutheran Church, Bismarck, ND, presents the message: “**Jesus Comes Down to Give Eternal Life**” based on John 6:35-51. “*This Is the Life*” program: “**Tina**” - Two lonely people, a woman and a child, come together through Jesus.

August 18: Rev. Thomas Marcis, Zion Lutheran Church, Bismarck, ND, presents the message: “**To Whom Shall We Go?**” based on John 6:51-69. *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.

August 25: Rev. Justin Woodside, Bethel and Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Churches, Bismarck, ND, presents the message: “**Why Do What We Do?**” based on Mark 7:1-13. *This is the Life*: program: “**Home Free**” - A family learns the real meaning of love, and that it comes free.

“**MAIN STREET LIVING**” is a locally-produced TV program that includes a 30-minute worship service led by participating pastors of the Minnesota North and North Dakota Districts of our LCMS, along with a 30-minute Lutheran Hour program (normally “*This Is the Life*,” along with occasional church-season specials).

Programs are broadcast starting at 10:00 am Central Time 9:00 am Mountain time on the following WDAY XTRA Channels: Bismarck/Dickinson: KBMY Xtra Channel 17.3



August 2024

Aug. 4	Abby Z.
Aug. 11	Sylvia D.
Aug. 18	Sam N.
Aug. 25	Madison G.

1-15 Rob Burkhardtsmeier

16-31 Martin Bjergaard

2024 Summer Midweek Preaching Schedule

Wednesday, 6:00 pm
Shepherd of the Valley

August 7	Otto
August 14	Woodside
August 21	Marcis
August 28	Wolfgram



Dear Future Wisdom Warrior Mentors and Families,

As a church family, our mission is to share, nurture, and live out our faith in Christ. The Wisdom Warriors program aligns perfectly with this mission. Before we launch our program in 2025, first and foremost... We need you! Rally Day is soon; sign up for the program, for both interested mentors and families of mentees, will be on September 8, 2024 during Education Hour. We will have information for you to take home and review after Rally Day. After sign up is complete we encourage both families and mentors to attend the following Training Sessions:

- Wednesday September 18, 2024 @ 7:00 p.m. -AND- Saturday October 5, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.

These sessions, led by the Wisdom Warriors committee, will take families and mentors through the details of the program as well as completing paperwork and fulfilling all requirements as we work towards our January 2025 kickoff. We encourage you to reach out to any member of the committee with your questions.

Yours in Christ,

Korri Lang, Samantha Henke, Carrie Harling, Michelle Dever

Wisdom Warrior Committee"



"The Board of Education would like the congregation to join in their excitement at our financial ability to support SOTV students who attend Martin Luther School. We have seven (7!!) students enrolled in MLS 2024-2025. As a congregation, we send tuition assistance of \$1500 per student to these families to ease the financial side of attending a God-glorifying school. Let us lift our students of SOTV up in prayer as we head into another school year!

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Students in grades 6-8 are urged to attend the Confirmation Orientation at Bethel Lutheran Church at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, August 14. The Confirmation Retreat will occur on August 23-24 at Bethel and General Sibley Park, where we will be camping overnight.



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. Sessions will take place on six Sunday evenings at Shepherd of the Valley from 6:30-8:00 PM beginning October 6. Take Heart In Your Grief will give you the opportunity to connect with others who share your experience even as you are given hope in Christ. Pastor Marcis and Pastor Wolfgram will lead the discussion based on the booklet, Take Heart In Your Grief, authored by Dr. Oswald Hoffmann.



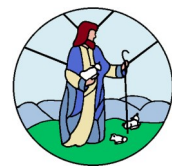
Contact Pastor Wolfgram if you have questions or would like to attend.



Colonel's Award For Excellence

On July 11, Pastor Wolfgram was presented the Colonel's Award for Excellence from Colonel Brandon Solberg, Superintendent of the North Dakota Highway Patrol. The award recognized 17 years of service as a chaplain with the NDHP. Pastor Wolfgram was also recognized for his service as an emergency services chaplain with Crisis Care Chaplaincy for 25 years as a volunteer chaplain in the community. Thanks to the members of Shepherd of the Valley for the opportunity to serve the greater Bismarck/Mandan community!

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			31 <u>6:00pm</u> Worship (Otto)	1	2	3
4 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u>	5	6 <u>10:00am</u> Bible Study <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	7 <u>6:00pm</u> Worship (Wolfgram)	8	9	10 <u>2:00pm</u> Emter/Woodside Wedding @ Bethel
11 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Education Hour	12	13 <u>10:00am</u> Bible Study <u>2:30pm</u> Stewardship <u>4:30pm</u> Evangelism <u>5:00pm</u> Human Care <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	14 <u>6:00pm</u> Worship (Wolfgram) <u>6:30pm</u> Confirmation Orientation	15 <u>6:30pm</u> Elders	16	17 <u>10:00am</u> Trustees <u>4:30pm</u> Hangout
18 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Education Hour <u>1:00pm</u> Middle School Youth	19	20 <u>10:00am</u> Bible Study <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	21 <u>6:00pm</u> Worship (Marcis)	22	23	24
25 <u>9:00am</u> Divine Service <u>10:30am</u> Education Hour <u>1:00pm</u> Senior High Youth <u>7:00pm</u>	26	27 <u>10:00am</u> Bible Study <u>6:00pm</u> Bible Study	28 <u>6:00pm</u> Worship (Wolfgram)	29	30	31



Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
"A church family that shares, nurtures, and lives our faith in Christ"
 August 2024, Newsletter

**"God" Words Part 2:
 The Word "God"**

Back in the 1990s there was an ad campaign for milk in which every commercial would end with a person who just ate a bunch of cookies (or something) and then suddenly realizes that something is missing. The commercial would then end with the ominous question: "Got Milk?" At the time I was aware of a sort of evangelistic parody of these ads in which a billboard posed the question: "Got God?"

A Pew research poll in 2018 asked Americans whether or not they believe in God. It turns out that 80% of those polled answered "Yes."^[1] Despite the fact that over the last few decades belief in God has slowly decreased in Western Countries, 80% is still a large percentage. Eighty percent! The U.S. Census estimates that the current population of our country is somewhere in the neighborhood of 336 million.^[2] Eighty percent of that is about 269,000,000 people.

Apparently 269 million Americans would have answered that question with a resounding "Yes! I do have God!"

So why do I include the word "God" as the first of the "God" words in this series of articles? Everyone knows what "God" means, right? Eighty percent of American believe in God, and certainly they know who or what it is that they are believing in. This, unfortunately, is the problem. They don't.

When people talk about God, although they may be using the same 3 letter word, they are not always referring to the same being. Even in ancient times, if you were to ask a stranger "Do you believe in god?" The answer would almost always be "Yes." But which god? Zeus? Apollo? Oden? Quetzlcoatl? The question itself does not rule out the existence of multiple gods, nor does it specify which god one worships. People had tribal gods, but still believed in the existence of others.

In the Pew research poll mentioned above, of the 80% who believe in God, only 56% of those believe in God as described in the Bible, while 23% of them believe in "some other power or force."^[3] This is troubling because what this means is that, although many claim to believe in God, the numbers are deceptive. A power or force is a very different thing than the Biblical description of God.

This problem exists even among professed Christians, in which only 75% believe that God is all loving, omnipotent (can do anything) and omniscient (knows everything).^[4] But if these numbers are true, then the questions "Got God?" and "Do you believe in God?" are meaningless. If a person says he believes in God, this tells you nothing of any substance. It is this very vagueness that is the reason why I have included the very word "God" as the first "God" word. The devil has stripped the word "God" of any coherent meaning. We must define our words.

How would people answer this question: What is God like?

I think that the most common conception of God in people's minds comes from media. It goes something like this:

God is like a friendly grandfather; the "Big Guy Upstairs." He is powerful. He wants me to be good, but He also accepts me as I am. He is not judgmental. We are all children of God, and ultimately He wants me to be a happy and successful good person. If I am, He will bring me to heaven when I die.

There is a name for this kind of thinking about God. It is called Moral Therapeutic Deism. Moral, in that he wants us to be "good people"; Therapeutic because he wants us to be "happy", and Deism, because he is a God that basically stays out of our business unless we need help.

Now perhaps you read that description and thought something along the line of "That's not so wrong." In a way you are right. There is some truth in it. But that is the way the devil works. If he just blurted out an obvious, offensive and ridiculous description of God, nobody would fall for it. Instead, he offers up a false "god" that is palatable and generic enough to get some traction. It has been a slow bait and switch that has successfully sabotaged our cultural definition of God, making it very difficult to communicate about this all-important subject.

Media shapes our thinking in so many ways, but unfortunately it is very biased. The subject of God is so controversial that oftentimes the media paints a very non-descript, unoffensive version of God. Unfortunately, it is largely incorrect. You will notice that media never mentions Jesus in relation to the question: Who is God? Why? Because that is offensive.

Do you want to know who God is? Martin Luther used to say that if you want to see the face of God; if you want to know what He is like, then look no further than Jesus and the cross. That is where you will find God. He is powerful. He does judge sin. He is loving. He died for you. In the next article we will look more at a proper Biblical understanding of the word "God".

In Christ,

Pastor Woodside