

MISSION FRONTIERS

Mission Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, NM

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Pastor's Pen

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this message to you is twofold. The first is to thank all of you for your love and support to us, the Carabotta family, through these few months of medical recovery for Lourdes. The second is to turn our attention onto the blessings and burdens of any member who is a shut-in, that is, a member of the church who, for issues of physical health, is unable to come to the gathering of the saints in Sunday Bible study and Divine Service. He/she is for the most part confined to his/her home. The experience of being at home or in doctors' offices for some months has made us appreciate more the life of a shut-in.

First of all, thank you. As most of you know, my wife, Lourdes, had contracted both pneumonia, which is now long gone, and what is called valley fever, an infection that can happen to the lungs of people in this southwestern part of the country. The treatment for valley fever can last from three to twelve months. For Lourdes, the valley fever has decreased but still remains to a degree, and so the treatment continues. During these four months of family medical leave for the purpose of helping Lourdes get through the toughest stages of physical recovery, Lourdes and I have conversed with each other in awe over your support, help, and decision to have me take enough time from ministry to care for Lourdes. I am reminded of statements from the apostle Paul that apply well to your help to us in this time of need:

Continued on next page →

Upcoming Events:

- ◇ **August 14: Back to School Night**
- ◇ **August 16: Kindergarten begins**
- ◇ **August 17: 1st thru 5th grades begin**
- ◇ **August 19: Prayer ministry gathering**
- ◇ **August 21: Preschool begins**



Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3-7).

I believe that if it was not for your gracious help and support Lourdes would not have been able to recover to the extent that she has. All this is God's doing, for it is He who is at work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.

Furthermore, I am aware that some, but more likely many, of you have been concerned that I would worry over the state of the ministry and the good of the congregation during this extended leave of absence. I assure you that I have lost no sleep over such thoughts as these. I knew from the start that the congregation was in God's hands and that you would care for one another very well. I have not been disappointed in your care for one another or in your labor as God's flock. We have such wonderful elders, leaders, retired but working Pastors Weber and Buttke, and their wives Susan and Ruth, the prayer intercessors and dedicated staff, Sunday school teachers and youth leaders Karen Jensen of Mission and Vicar Andy Perry of Faith Lutheran Church, and so many other volunteers. From me, Lourdes, and our children, Robert and Eva, thank you so very much!

The elders and I are working on a plan for me to move back into ministerial duties gradually, which you will hear more about in subsequent announcements. I look forward to working among you as we grow in Christ.

Second, let us consider the life of shut-ins, those of our fellowship who are mostly confined to their homes, except for medical appointments, whose hearts are with us as we gather for Bible study and in the Lord's Divine Services. I have always delighted in visiting our shut-in members, but having for this season in life experienced the lifestyle of a shut-in from day to day has given me, and with this writing I hope you as well, a deeper meditation on life and love, of ministry and fellowship, of what it means to be the church and to bear one another's burdens and to share in each other's blessings. The following burdens and blessings characterize the lives of our shut-in members, and the lives of shut-in members of any Christian congregation. Let us keep in mind that the type of illness or weakness that a shut-in has will influence the degree of burden and blessing that he might experience:

Grief. Grief is the feeling or response of sadness over a loss. For both the shut-in himself and for his family caregiver, each experience some grief over a loss of health, a loss of the visible company of other people, a loss of conversation, a loss of independence, a loss of one's favorite activities, and other losses.

With the loss of health comes the labor of learning to depend on others and learning to do familiar things but in a different way. Perhaps getting up from bed or cooking a meal, brushing one's teeth or getting dressed, walking, changing directions in walking, which rooms of the residence are now no-go zones for their too narrow or too wide of spaces, other familiar actions, these things that we the strong take for granted our shut-in brother or sister has to learn a different way to accomplish. Physical pain is a burden that deserves an entire book to understand sufficiently both its physical losses and its spiritual returns, but the ones worth mentioning here are

the emotion of frustration that it interrupts too often one's activities or plans, yet God has a way, especially if one places the pain in the heavenly Father's ever-so-close and tender hands, of using that pain to give us a little bit more heart-level understanding of the heart of Jesus, our Lord, the "Man of sorrows" who is "acquainted with suffering" (Isaiah 53:3; also Colossians 1:24; Philippians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18).

The loss of visible company is certainly the second most difficult grief that a shut-in suffers in his life. With it comes a decrease of human conversation. He who is confined to his home turns on the television to see other human beings and hear their voices, a need that goes beyond the desire for entertainment. Sad, it is, from the perspective of the shut-in, to know of people who are in the middle of a crowd but who direct their eyes and ears to the cell phone, away from the people around them. I will say more about that later under the heading of "loneliness."

Battling to understand their purpose in the life in which they now find themselves. We all want to know what our purpose in life is and we usually think that it has something to do with what we do that other people can see us doing. We want to contribute something to the good of others. For those who find themselves in large part removed from the day-to-day dealings, comings and goings of other people due to sickness or physical limitations, uncomfortable questions arise might arise in their minds like, "What good is this loss, this confinement, this seclusion, doing for me, for my family, for my friends? Why does God allow this to happen to me? What good am I to those who love me? I can't drive, I can't walk for long distances, I can't work, I can't see or hear as well as I used to, so how can I help anybody else?" Questions like these are questions about one's purpose in life as one who cannot do things that are noticed by a lot of people. We must encourage them that the good that they do does not have to be seen by other people. God sees it. It takes those whose eyes of their hearts are enlightened by the Word of God to give this brother (or sister) insight into the power that he can exert in people's lives and in the world through his prayers. Jesus said, "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (Matthew 6:6).

How reassuring it has been to me many times in ministry, when either I was overburdened with matters that I felt unable to handle or the church was struggling to understand God's will for us as a church, when we experienced difficulties that we wished we hadn't, to hear a shut-in member say to me during our visit, "I'm praying for you, Pastor. I pray for the church every day. I pray for him, for her, for them every day." I have to think at this point, and I believe these words are making you think the same, what would have become of us if these intercessors had not been praying for us? These are warriors in prayer on secret missions, and we must enlist them in our prayer ministry, for the heavenly Father, the Ruler over all the earth, hears and sees them in secret and He rewards them openly. Let us take the time to call them, write them and text or email them such encouragement.

Loneliness. Lourdes and I did have visitors come to our home over these few months. Plus, we have the blessing of our children's company during this time. But for many, many, shut-ins, the burden of loneliness is real. Of them I will speak. We know that we all have phones to use to converse, not text, with each other to overcome this loneliness, and while we can say that calling someone is a two-way street, for many a shut-in, he feels that to call other members in order to talk is an imposition. After all, he doesn't know their schedule. He just knows that they are busy. And to ask other members to visit, well, that really is an imposition, and who wants such a request turned down, however nicely it is done. There is a lot of time in a day, a week, a month, a year that stretches out longer when it is void of human company. Strangely, the increase of electronic text-communication devices within a society of people is inversely proportional to loneliness experienced within that society. In other words, social scientists, and non-social scientists, are finding that the more electronic text-communication devices that we use is creating a distance between hearts, a decrease in the number of relationships and in-person conversations among people, even within

families under the same roof. This practice is also disabling many people from being able to carry on an in-person conversation with others.

We can alleviate this burden of those church members who are confined for the most part to their home by taking a time each month to visit or call them. A blessing that such visits to these members gives to us is to hear their real-life stories to soak up through our listening to them the lessons from life that they have learned. A tragic loss it is to us of stronger frame who take not the time to get to know these saints, because the wisdom that they have gained about the Lord and His Word, about life and many other things we are not there to receive.

Over the centuries the Christian Church has birthed and reared those who are called contemplative saints, those believers in Jesus who often fled from the maddening crowd and noise of the world, or who were taken away from society against their will, into quiet meditation on the Word of God, listening to the deeper mysteries of the Word of God, and into lengthy prayer. Some of these contemplative saints have written books that we can read even today. But most of those contemplative saints did not write books about what they had learned. The shut-in members of a Christian congregation are those contemplative saints within our area, within our fellowship. They are living libraries ready to pass onto us what they have received from the Lord. How sad it is for us to not receive from them because we did not invest time with them.

Two of the petitions that I am praying for all of us as a church is that God would “work in us the unity of the Spirit in the bond of the peace that Christ has won for us by His shed blood” and that He would “make us a community of believers in Jesus in which all ages actively care for one another in each other’s needs.” I rejoice to see this happening more so among us as a congregation. When a member of the church cannot gather with the rest of the members in worship or at events, then we as the church go to them. We are “members one of another,” as the apostle Paul says.

All of this is said in order to sharpen our ears to hear the strong echo of our Lord’s words to us of the Church:

Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” Then the righteous will answer him, saying, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?” And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:34-40).

A blessing that the shut-in saints of our fellowship offer to us is for us to minister to the Lord Jesus in them whenever we minister to them.

I entrust this meditation to your hearts.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Robert Carabotta

Stewardship

Winston Churchill reportedly said that “we make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” According to Churchill then, our lives are defined less by what we have gotten, and more by what we give away.

Our Lord’s life is defined in this way. He gave completely of Himself for us. He became man for us. He taught the truth of God’s Word. He healed those with many and various diseases. He died the death that we deserve because of sin. He gave of Himself in order to save us from sin, death, and hell. And so, it is that by giving completely of Himself, He got for Himself us, making us citizens of His eternal kingdom by grace.

As it was for Jesus, so it is also for us. We get more from giving than we do from simply getting. For giving softens our hearts and frees us from the grip which the worries of this world and making a living has on us. For when we are singularly focused on making a living, we are singularly focused on what we get. That mindset begins to bleed into all areas of our lives—our relationships with friends and family, with neighbors and coworkers, and with the Lord. It shifts our focus from asking the question—How can I be a friend, family member, neighbor, and servant to others—to asking the question—what have they done for me lately. We become more selfish instead of selfless.

But when we give, we do not have less, we have more because when we give we join in the bond of friendship and family, the bond of service to those around us out of love for them. And love is the fulfillment of the Law. It is the nature of God Himself, for God is Love. Thus we are reflecting the divine nature. As Jesus said “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

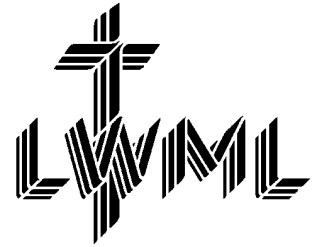
LCMS Free Stewardship Resources



LWML

The WINGS (Women IN God's Service) chapter of the LWML (Lutheran Women in Mission) meets once each month from September through May on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm in Luther Hall. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 12. All women who are communicant members of an LCMS congregation are automatically members of the LWML. We keep our meetings brief but meaningful, and we have many activities planned throughout the year.

Questions? See Carol Moore in the church office, or call Jacki McCurley at 526-9182.



Time and Talent

The year is now more than half over and it's time to commit to ways in which each of us can share our time and talents with Mission Lutheran Church, not only now but for next year.

Soon we will be electing new officers and board members. Jim Vance, as Vice President of the Congregation, has already begun looking to fill the many positions available.

There is a document available in the church office that describes the various elected positions, including the different Boards.

In addition to the elected positions, there is a need for people to sign up as greeters and ushers. And there is a great need for someone to volunteer to lead the Altar Guild. Ruth Staffeldt and Ruth Jakcsy have led the altar guild for many, many years and both have health issues that prevent them from carrying on those tasks.

As you can see, there are many, many ways in which you can contribute to the health and well-being of our church. Please prayerfully consider how best to use your time and talents. And yes, we all have talents that are important to our congregation.

If you have any questions, please contact Jim Vance, your elder, or the church office.



Anniversaries and Birthdays

August Birthdays

Honda	Barbara	7
Hauenstein	Meribeth	8
Fant	Greg	9
Spaman	Lila	9
Brennan	Jeannine	11
Eisenbraun	John	16
Bartels	Arlyn	20
Aguilera	Athena	24
Carabotta	Robert II	26
Gunderson	Eric	29
Spicka	Chuck	31

August Anniversaries

		Date	# of years
Patterson	Andy & Michelle	14	10
Vandiver	Donald & Verline	14	6
Lorenz	Doug & Alma	24	49
Duever	Doug & Pat	28	52

*Happy Anniversary to all those couples married in
August.*

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.

Angel Scholarship Awards for 2017-18!

Applications were submitted by Mission Lutheran School families in May for the upcoming 2017-18 school year. The committee met, reviewed all applications and had the delightful task of awarding Angel Scholarship Funds to students and their families! This year, 17 students from 10 families applied and were awarded a total of \$11,280! Students and families received notice of their awards at our Closing Chapel on May 26th.

Congratulations to the following students and families!:

- Samantha Baker
- Cameron Busch
- Dana Busch
- Erin Busch
- Benjamen Micklevitz
- Matthiew Monica
- Maxeene Monica
- Emmalee Patterson
- Kaitlyn Poppy
- Liam Poppy
- Aiden Poppy
- Joshua Rodriguez
- Angelique Terrazas
- Audrianna Terrazas
- Beau Wallis
- Benjamin Wallis



Your donations to the Angel Scholarship Program made these awards possible. Thank you so much for your gracious generosity!

The Angel Scholarship Program is funded completely by donation. Funds received now through May 1, 2018 will be distributed next year to more Mission Lutheran School students. Are you interested in making a donation to this fund? Do you know someone who may be interested in making a donation? Please see the _____ or contact the school: (575) 532-5489, mlschool@qwestoffice.net.

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Luke 18:15-17)

House of Hope

Pregnancy Resource Medical Center

GUIDINGSTAR

el paso

Lighting the way to a Culture of Life!

For the past 15 years, House of Hope has served the women and families of El Paso as a Pregnancy Help Center. This year, they have a major announcement which is going to be an absolute game-changer for our community. You are invited to a special Gala dinner and event which will be unlike anything they have ever done before, featuring former Planned Parenthood director Abby Johnson sharing her incredible journey in El Paso for the very first time. Best of all, thanks to a few generous underwriters, this phenomenal dinner and event is being offered to you at absolutely no charge! See the announcements in the church bulletin on August 13, 20, and 27, and visit GuidingStarElPaso.org to get your free General Admission ticket.



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A LIFE OF STEWARDSHIP

When we think about stewardship we typically think about giving financially to the church. We view stewardship as how we manage our finances and our faithfulness in giving to God's people and to God's church.

What if we begin to think about stewardship in a different way? Not about what we are called to give, but how we are called to be and to live.

In the most basic sense, stewardship is managing what belongs to someone else. Psalm 24 tells us: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it ...". The concept of stewardship refers to how we manage the life God has given us: How we use our time, what we do with our gifts, talents and possessions, and how we care for ourselves and the physical environment around us.

The following principles help us to better understand the idea of stewardship:

- **Caretaking** – God owns it, we care for it.
- **Responsibility** – God trusts us by placing things into our hands.
- **Accountability** – We strive to ensure that our use of what has been entrusted to us reflects the heart of God.
- **Blessed** – It's rewarding to use our gifts for a greater purpose. And sometimes we find ourselves entrusted to care for even more.

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Stewardship is a privilege calling us to wisely manage all that we have been given. Do our work with excellence. Care for our bodies. Seek opportunities to serve.

Stewardship motivates the follower of Christ to move into action, living in ways that manifest our belief in God. Begin today by reflecting on the principles of stewardship: Caretaking, responsibility, accountability and blessed.

This article provided compliments of Thrivent Financial and Joann Rodriguez, FIC, 575-523-1879, joann.rodriguez@thrivent.com.

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TREASURER'S REPORT – FINAL FY 2016-17 STATUS
Mission Lutheran Church and School

Report Preparation Date: June 30, 2017

<u>Budget Status:</u>	<u>Month of June 2017</u>		<u>FY Thru June 30, 2017</u>	
	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual*</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual*</u>
<u>Income:</u>				
MLC General	\$22,200.00	\$21,390.00	\$288,600.00	\$262,562.64
MLS Total	\$1,100.00	\$1,877.14	\$210,850.00	\$183,456.93
Designated / Other	\$476.66	\$1,924.75	\$5,720.00	\$80,270.02
	<u>\$23,776.66</u>	<u>\$25,191.89</u>	<u>\$505,170.00</u>	<u>\$526,289.59</u>
<u>Expenses:</u>				
MLC Total	\$14,520.53	\$14,570.71	\$188,638.93	\$252,849.85
MLS Total	\$22,974.98	\$20,654.95	\$321,522.23	\$285,960.64
	<u>\$37,495.51</u>	<u>\$35,225.66</u>	<u>\$510,161.16</u>	<u>\$538,810.49</u>
Net Difference	-\$13,718.85	-\$10,033.77	-\$4,991.16	-\$12,520.90

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

Church General Fund Contributions – FY 2016/17 (Through June 30, 2017):

Average Weekly Contributions Needed:	\$5,550.00
Average Weekly Contributions Received:	\$5,049.28
General Fund Contributions Year-to-Date:	\$262,562.64
General Funds Budgeted Year-to-Date:	\$288,600.00
Surplus/Shortfall Year-to-Date:	<u>-\$26,037.36</u>

Assets / Liabilities (As of June 30, 2017):

Current Assets:	<u>Checking:</u>	\$15,840.54
	<u>LCEF Savings:</u>	\$116,150.23
	(- Calls)	
	Hispanic Ministry	\$40,031.06
	MLS	\$20,617.78
	Sabbatical Acct.	\$7,352.65
	Other	\$952.81
	Savings Available	<u>\$47,153.93</u>
Liabilities:	<u>Mortgage Loan:</u>	\$60,033.12

Notes:

1. Actual figures reflect \$67,708.81 for non-budgeted capital expenses funded from LCEF savings. Overall impact on operational budget figures is zero.
2. Actual figures also reflects \$4,147.35 for guest pastors to cover Pastor Carabotta's leave of absence, Funded from sabbatical designated fund. Overall impact on approved operational budget figures is zero.
3. MLS expenses less than budgeted due to hiring a classroom assistant versus hiring a new full-time teacher as originally budgeted.

Mission Lutheran Church and School
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 School: (575) 532-5489
 Emails: mlpastor@qwestoffice.net
 mlsecretary@qwestoffice.net
 mlschool@qwestoffice.net

Elder on call: Paul Vakselis (575) 522-2242

We're on the web!

<http://missionlutheran.net>

<http://mlschool.net>



That All May Know Him

The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose, but weeds in the garden and mosquitoes come close.

“Touching Hearts through God’s unchanging Word in an ever-changing world.”

Officers and Board Chairpersons for 2017

President	Greg Fant	Christian Education	Dianne Wensel
Vice President	Jim Vance	Sunday School Supervisor	Toni Roof
Secretary	Jan Peyton	Evangelism	Carol Cooper
Treasurer	John Guenther	Christian Service & Missions	Ruth Staffeldt
Financial Secretary	Beth Fant	Stewardship	Jerry Stickles
Elders, chairman	Doug Lorenz	Day School Education	Megan Wood
Elders, vice-chairman	Paul Vakselis	Fellowship	Robert Scaling
Trustees	Frank Brennan		