

ST. PETER COMMUNICATOR

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January 2025

Newsletter for January 2025

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. As I typed the title for this newsletter, I was somewhat stunned that I had to type 2025. That is the way of time. Time never stops and the clock is always ticking away. Minutes, hours, days and months fly by. I am reminded of how fast time flies and how it applies to us as the body of Christ. Jesus tells His disciples in Luke, chapter 21, verses 25-28: **²⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶ Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. ²⁷ And then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.**

In other words, we are to always be vigilant, or to check our “spiritual watches and clocks.” Since 2025 is upon us, we do not know what this next year holds for us. We will face the deaths of family members and friends. We also may experience good times and bad. All new years hold uncertainty, because we just do not know what is in store. Yet, we as Christians know that as this year winds down and each day passes. The day of our redemption draws near. So, be of good cheer, continue to hold fast in Christ by faith.

One of my favorites of all time movies is *Casablanca*. The movie shows the trials, tribulations, and struggles of Nazi occupied France in World War II. The hit song “As Time Goes By” is also one of my favorites as well. “**As Time Goes By**” is a jazz song written by Herman Hupfeld in 1931. It became famous when it featured in the 1942 film *Casablanca*, performed by Dooley Wilson as Sam. The song is about two people who fell in love. In the movie it was *Casablanca* a 1942 American romantic drama film directed by Michael Curtiz and starring Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman. Filmed and set during World War II, it focuses on an American expatriate, Rick who owns a cantina (Bogart) who must choose between his love for a woman Elsa (Bergman) and helping her husband (Henreid), a Czechoslovak resistance leader, escape from the Vichy-controlled city of Casablanca to continue his fight against the Germans.

Now what does this song have to do with my newsletter for January 2025? Well, the answer is indeed time goes by. Time flies as they say. For us as Christians, we do not look forward to the passing of time with dread, instead we have that hope as Jesus tells us in Luke. I can remember looking forward to the new year with anticipation, wondering what is in store for me and my family. Taking this anticipation a step further in regard to what we have to look forward to when Christ comes back, again we look to God’s Word. From the book of Revelation, chapter 21, verses 1-5, and 22-27 **¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place^[a] of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,^[b] and God himself will be with them as their God.^[c] ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and**

its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴ By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, ²⁵ and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶ They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. ²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

So, with optimism for a wonderful future with Jesus, let us look with optimism at the one who perfects our faith, Jesus. In that wonderful new future for us, we will live forever, and time will not go by. So, happy new year everyone, and God Bless. Remember that God really, really, really does love you. Amen



Pastor Peterson



LUTHERAN WOMEN IN MISSION

Christmas Brunch

Our Christmas Brunch was once again an enjoyable time spent together with lots of visiting, eating and celebrating. Many thanks to Bonnie Teinert for using her Thrivent card for needed supplies and for crafting so many Christmas items for our drawings, to Thrivent for continuing to donate to congregational/mission events, to the women who came on Saturday to get everything ready for our time together, and for those who attended, many of whom stayed to help clean up! The efforts of all are so appreciated. We are, indeed, the family of Christ working and celebrating together.

As you already know, the donated nativity set generated \$300 for missions, and we will be choosing that recipient at our January meeting. Subsequently, Ken Plate donated a beautiful

lighted nativity with the request that the proceeds be added to our mission funds. That nativity was on display for such a short time you may not have even seen it! Thanks, Donna Marose, as we now have another \$40 to add to our mission gift(s). Thanks, Ken, for sharing your talents and your love for Jesus.

Fellowship Sundays

Fellowship Sunday has become a nice time for many of us to share a little snack/beverage once a month along with a chance to mingle and socialize with each other. It's been nice to have people sign up to bring treats, and it has been suggested that on the day you bring treats perhaps you can arrive at 8:00 and help with the set-up and stay to help with clean up. This will also help to distribute the workload among more of us, and assure that the fellowship doesn't become a burden for just a few. If you haven't been attending, the New Year would be a great time to start.

Winter Getaway

The Winter Getaway scheduled for January 31/February 1 in Wisconsin Dells has had a change of venue. We will now be meeting at the Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah. Our theme will be "Wonderfully Made" with the Rev. Michael Salemink, Executive Director of Lutherans for Life, as our keynote speaker. As always, this promises to be an inspiring event. We have rooms reserved, so talk to Judy Paulson about joining us. See the bulletin board for more details. Scholarships are available.

Gifts from the Heart – Souper Bowl Sunday

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, we will now be starting our gathering of items for the Bread of Life Food Pantry in Chilton. This is one of our favorite mission projects every year as the need after the holidays is great! Please start thinking about how best you can contribute to those less fortunate in our area. One idea is to add one item to your shopping list each week between now and Super Bowl Sunday and placing it in the

ingathering box in the Narthex. These donations add up quickly and benefit so many. We love it when that box is overflowing onto the floor!! It means that so many are willing to share the blessings each of us has received from our loving God.

A New Idea

Some of us met for a brief time after our last Advent service about a potential joint venture with St. Luke. Those of us there agreed that we would like to co-host a soup luncheon with St. Luke on a Sunday in late February. Proceeds would be used to fund VBS. Plans so far include having this event at St. Peter because of space and accessibility and reaching out to the community as a means of increasing not only our VBS attendance, but also witnessing to the community. We will be making more plans at our January meeting. Perhaps you know people who might benefit from hearing the news of Jesus and finding a church home.

January meeting

We will meet on Tuesday, January 14, at 1:00. One of our planning items for 2025 will be the potential revision of our funeral dinners. If you have ideas or concerns, please join us for this discussion. Our funeral chairladies will be making plans after the meeting to consider the input that is received.

Be sure to bring your Bible and your latest Quarterly for our Bible study. We always benefit from Pastor's challenges and our open discussions. In fact, bring a friend! Or bring two friends. Or just come.

Want to go to Omaha?

Coming up in June is our LWML national convention in Omaha. Check out the LWML website at lwml.org for details. Plans are in the making for LWML-SWD to host a bus to ease travel and hotel arrangements. These plans will be in the next Mission Lamp and will be posted on lwml-swd.org.

Honoring Sinful Parents: Keeping the Fourth Commandment Like Our Lord



By Daniel Grimmer

In just a short time, multitudes of families will be journeying home for Christmas to visit parents, siblings and grandparents. For many, this will be a time of unbounded joy. But for others, that joy will be mingled with anger, fear or shame. Not everyone is able to visit a childhood home that is filled with mirth. Many face the painful reality of returning to homes and families that have been fractured by sin — sometimes their own sin, but many times the sins of their fathers or mothers.

God commands us to honor our fathers and mothers. Yet because mom and dad are sinners, they don't exhibit the perfect love of God toward us even in the best of circumstances. And in the worst circumstances, some parents have caused immeasurable harm to their children through divorce, abuse and neglect. Other parents may discourage their adult children's Christian faith or even display open hostility toward their faithful and godly choices. What does a believer do in these circumstances? Is he still obliged to honor the unfaithful or abusive father and mother?

From the outset, it must be said that the Fourth Commandment does not have an exception clause anywhere in Scripture. St. Paul is aware that fathers might sin in the fulfillment of their duties and provoke their children to anger (Eph. 6:4). Yet

he does not exempt children in such a circumstance from the duty to honor those fathers. In the Large Catechism, Martin Luther has this to say regarding the Fourth Commandment: “We must, therefore, impress this truth upon the young that they should think of their parents as standing in God’s place. They should remember that however lowly, poor, frail, and strange their parents may be, nevertheless, they are the father and the mother given to them by God. Parents are not to be deprived of their honor because of their conduct or their failings. Therefore, we are not to consider who they are or how they may be, but the will of God, who has created and ordained parenthood” (LC I 108).

God commands us to honor our parents even if they are dishonorable. That’s because the honor that they are due is not because of their personal merit, but because of the vocation that God has given to them. God’s Word, not their own worthiness, bestows honor on our parents. God has given fatherhood and motherhood as offices through which He wishes to provide for, protect and bless mankind made in His image. To honor our father and mother is not so much to honor them as individual persons, but rather to honor God who works in and through the authority of our parents.

If you are someone coming from a less-than-ideal home, what has been said so far may be difficult for you. Help and hope are found in Christ. As we seek to love and honor our parents in difficult circumstances, we should look to our Savior in His relationship with His parents as our guide. While Mary and Joseph were good parents to Jesus, they were also not without sin. Furthermore, Jesus is the only person to have ever kept the Fourth Commandment perfectly. He always honored Mary and Joseph. But that doesn’t mean that He was always doing exactly what they expected or wanted. It also doesn’t mean that He didn’t at times correct what they thought or said. When we look at Jesus’ interactions with His parents, we see that we may have some misconceptions about what honoring our parents means.

Honoring is not always obeying

First, honoring our parents does not always mean obeying them. On one occasion, a great crowd was gathered around the home of Jesus, and Jesus’

mother and brothers came to take Him away (Mark 3:31–35). Because of the people gathered there to hear Jesus, they were not able to get into the house, but they sent word to Jesus. Jesus’ mother asked Him to come outside, but Jesus instead pointed to the crowd gathered around Him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother” (Mark 3:34–35). Jesus disobeyed His mother who had come to take Him away. He ignored her request to even speak to Him. Yet in His disobedience, He continued to honor her. His actions stemmed not from malice or selfishness, but from the fact that to obey Mary in that instance would have been to disobey God the Father, who had sent Him to preach the Gospel to the people of Israel.

When it comes to our parents, we can distinguish honor from obedience. If our parents ask or instruct us to act or live in a way that is contrary to God’s Word, we should obey God instead of them. When we visit parents at Christmas, this could bear itself out in a variety of ways. Perhaps our parents will ask us not to attend church so that they can have more time with the family. Perhaps they will suggest that while they’re grateful for grandchildren, we should take measures to prevent God from giving us any more children. Perhaps they will express disappointment or anger at a decision to prepare for church work.

Just as Jesus did not obey Mary when it contradicted God’s will, so we do not conform to the wishes and plans of our parents when they contradict God’s will. But even when we must disobey our parents in the Lord, we can still honor them as Christ did. We can make sure that we explain our decisions with love and kindness, rather than resorting to anger and argument. We can put the best construction on our parents’ words or actions even when they do not align with God’s Word.

Honoring is not always agreeing

Second, honoring our parents does not mean we cannot disagree with them. When Jesus was 12, He traveled with Mary and Joseph to Jerusalem for the Passover (Luke 2:41–52). When they began the journey home, Jesus stayed behind in the temple to listen to the teachers. After three days, His parents

found Him. In her distress, Mary questioned Jesus and even seemed to accuse Him of mistreating her and Joseph. Jesus replied, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49). Mary and Joseph had misunderstood Jesus’ actions and interpreted them like most parents would interpret their 12-year-old running off. Jesus gently corrected their thinking, even though they did not understand His explanation.

At the wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11), Mary recognized that the hosts had run out of wine and told Jesus, expecting Him to help. While He did eventually do what she requested, He first reminded her, “My hour has not yet come” (John 2:4). Jesus didn’t want her to lose sight of what His real destiny was: to bring salvation to the world by fulfilling the hour of suffering on the cross. Jesus was not afraid to correct His parents when they had lost sight of the real purpose for His incarnation. He always did so with gentleness and respect, honoring them by lovingly pointing them to the truth.

We, too, may honor our parents even when we disagree with them. Many times, honoring will mean holding our peace. If mom brings up a political opinion at the Christmas dinner table with which you disagree, honoring her might mean simply changing the subject. Other times, though, honoring our parents might mean correcting them gently and in love like Christ did Mary and Joseph. If dad says that he doesn’t go to church because he doesn’t need the church to worship God, honoring dad might mean kindly reminding him that we go to church to receive Christ’s Word and Sacrament, the means that Jesus uses to bountifully deliver the forgiveness of sins. When we disagree with our parents, we should do it patiently and with concern for their spiritual well-being, just as our Savior has modeled for us.

Honoring is forgiving and forbearing

Finally, we learn from Christ that honoring our parents means forgiving them and bearing with their sins, weaknesses and mistakes. While there is no explicit example in the Gospels of Jesus forgiving His parents, we know that He came to this world precisely to forgive and to bear the sins

of the world to the cross, including those of Mary and Joseph. He humbled Himself to become the servant of sinners (Phil. 2:7).

So also, we should forgive our parents their sins and failures. Even if those sins and failures are very great indeed. Like Christ, we are called to bear with the sins of others. That doesn’t mean it won’t still hurt. Your parents’ divorce may still leave scars and hurts even if you have forgiven them. Your father’s infidelity may have eroded your respect for him. Physical, sexual or emotional abuse might have left wounds that cannot be fully healed until Christ returns in glory. Honoring our sinful parents means giving all our hurts to Jesus, receiving His mercy and extending that mercy to our parents. Where reconciliation is possible, we seek it. Where it is not possible, we trust all things to Christ and ask Him for grace to still honor those who have hurt us.

When you see mom and dad this Christmas, whether they have been great parents or have fallen short in many ways, give thanks to God for giving you parents. Honor them for the sake of Christ, who died to redeem both you and your parents and whose blood covers their sins and yours.



Christ is our foundation': Hurricane recovery continues in North Carolina



The effects of Hurricane Helene were still apparent in Asheville, N.C., on Nov. 21. (LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford)

By *Stacey Eising*

On the morning of Sept. 27, Hurricane Helene passed over the mountains of western North Carolina, dumping over 15 inches of water on ground already saturated with two days of rain. The result was cataclysmic: rivers and creeks overflowed their banks; water tore down mountain slopes, destroying buildings and washing out roads; trees were uprooted and blown over; mudslides took huge houses down the sides of hills and buried everything in their path. In the wake of all this, Lutherans are showing those affected the love and mercy that Christ has for them.

“In tragedy, in crisis — this is where the light of the Gospel tends to shine the brightest,” said the Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Skopak, pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Asheville, N.C.

And the people of North Carolina have certainly faced tragedy and crisis. “This is Katrina come to the mountains,” said Skopak. One Emmanuel couple fled their home through knee-deep water, to learn later that a co-worker who lived next door had drowned, swept from his second-story roof. Another member’s house was hit with a 4-foot-deep mudslide. Another couple sat in their home

praying, listening to trees crash down around them for hours. A preschool teacher at the school had an art studio in Asheville’s River Arts District — which was completely destroyed when the French Broad River rose 30 feet above its banks. A piece of her art was found 15 or 20 miles downstream in a tree. Another family watched the river flow through their yard — and faced trauma from the horrors they saw float past their windows as the river washed homes and people away.

In addition to destruction and death, the storm left other struggles in its wake. Running water did not return to Asheville until late October, and potable water was not restored until Nov. 18. Further, the storm came at the beginning of western North Carolina’s tourist season — a critical source of income and employment. Few people in the mountains have flood insurance. As winter sets in, many face poverty, devastation and uncertainty about what to do next.

The affected area spans miles and miles of the North Carolina mountains, including many remote communities that are difficult to access, especially now. So many roads were washed out or blocked by mudslides or trees that some towns were cut off completely.

“It is so widespread. That’s what makes it hard to comprehend,” said Sally Hiller, LCMS Southeastern District disaster response coordinator (DDRC). “There are still places they haven’t gotten into yet to do the search and rescue [as of late November].” Hiller says that this is the worst storm she has dealt with in her 37 years as a DDRC.

As of late November, many roads were still out, and Helene’s death toll had risen to 105 in North Carolina alone.

Saving a church, one bucket at a time

Fifty miles south of Asheville, in Tryon, N.C., Trinity Lutheran Church — a beautiful little church on the banks of the Pacolet River — suffered foundation damage as the river raged above its banks, running around and under the church. The water was so ferocious that it carved the bank out 10 feet closer to the church. Two Trinity members were displaced from flooded homes.

Thankfully, the water stopped at the sanctuary door, only coming in through a few floor vents. But the river mud and mire that was trapped below the church in the large crawl space posed an immediate threat. It needed to be removed as quickly as possible to prevent mold and further damage.

“It was a lot of upheaval when we first got here, not knowing if we could save the structure,” said Dana Threlfall, who has been a member of the congregation since 1997 and has been very involved in the recovery work. “That Christ is our foundation is really going through all of our hearts right now.”

Several Marines from Calvary Lutheran Church, Jacksonville, N.C., built stabilizing pillars to support the building. Then Trinity’s pastor, the Rev. Thomas Olson, along with members of the congregation and other volunteers, began hauling out mud. The Rev. Jonathan Christensen from Mount Pisgah Lutheran Church in Hendersonville, N.C., came twice to help. Other area pastors also pitched in. But after two weeks of great effort, little had been accomplished.

Then, the wife of an elder at Mount Pisgah found a company that brought a utility pump truck for two days. Three weeks after beginning the work, the floor of the crawl space became visible. “That day, we realized that we made it,” said Olson.

In the weeks since, multiple Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) have visited Trinity. A team from Minnesota finished carrying out the last buckets of mud, and a team from Indiana finished cleaning the crawl space and removed trees and debris — such as a refrigerator tangled around a tree. LERT volunteers also assisted a Trinity member down the river whose home took on 41 inches of water.

“The mission field can be right here in our neighborhoods,” said Robin Nipper, a LERT volunteer from Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Tell City, Ind. “A lot of times people will say, ‘I’ll send money, because I can’t go to the mission field.’ Well, yes we can — it’s right here at our back door.”

Trinity’s congregation is currently worshipping in a rented space. Next steps include securing the building’s foundations and restoring the eroded riverbank to protect the building. Grant funds from LCMS Disaster Response are helping support this work.

Rebuilding a camp, church and community

About 85 miles north of Tryon, Camp Linn Haven, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization, and Mountainside Lutheran Church, an LCMS congregation on Linn Haven’s campus, faced a torrent of water from its surrounding mountains.

Tiersa Lane, the camp’s manager and director, was sitting with her daughter in the camp’s dining hall when she saw “what looked like a tidal wave coming through the parking lot.” Then water began coming through the wall and the door.

From higher ground, the Lanes watched water pour through the camp: A propane tank floated by. Then a dumpster. Then a bunkbed and a mattress. Soon they could see only the roofs of the camp’s cabins.

The damage to Camp Linn Haven, and to Mountainside Lutheran, was severe. Water came up around 5 feet in the cabins, and around 3 feet in the church. Mountainside — the only LCMS congregation in eight counties, with members who live up to an hour and a half away — worships in the original camp chapel built by the Lutheran Laymen’s League in 1951. Its chairs, hymnals, piano and organ were all lost. The pastor’s office and all of the church’s records and papers were destroyed. The cabins, left with 5 to 6 inches of mud on the floor, had to be mucked out and gutted down to the foundations, studs and roof.

Then, the weather cleared. “God gave us a dry, good time to work, so we’ve had a lot of volunteers,” said the Rev. Bryan Chestnutt, pastor of Mountainside. Much work has already been done at the camp and church, with the support of grants from LCMS Disaster Response. Camp Linn Haven plans to reopen this summer. As of late November, Mountainside planned to reopen its fellowship hall as a makeshift sanctuary in time for Christmas Eve.

In November, Camp Linn Haven was turning its efforts toward the surrounding community. With few public systems in the mountains, many rely on wood and kerosene for heat during the winter — and the storm took out a major kerosene reservoir in the area. Some residents still do not have road access. In the coming months, the camp plans to offer its retreat center as housing for LERT volunteers to come chop firewood and carry out local service projects.

Serving others

“At the beginning, [Helene] had such an impact on [LCMS] congregations and members that people were focused there,” said Hiller. “But now, they’re past that first stage, and they’re able to turn to the community.”

Emmanuel, Asheville, is also serving its community. As donations and supplies have poured in, including multiple semi-trucks from Orphan Grain Train, Emmanuel has distributed these through local partners to people in need. One donation of generators and portable heaters was carried up a mountain by mules to a community still cut off from the road system.

For several weeks, Emmanuel handed out food and supplies from its parking lot. The church also hosted LCMS RSO Forged by Fire, which served thousands of hot meals. “People would get out of their cars and just talk,” said Skopak. “Then we got to begin to address some of those spiritual aches and hurts and needs that the people had. ... It’s in these moments of loss and despair you have the opportunity to share the hope, the light, the love, the forgiveness, the joy that we have in Jesus.”

Mount Pisgah has housed LERT volunteers — sometimes upwards of 20 at a time — from across the country, supported by a grant from LCMS Disaster Response. In late November, LERT volunteers from Michigan, North Carolina and Illinois cleared fallen trees from the property of Doug Moon, outside of Hendersonville.

The Moons were in their house when the storm blew through, uprooting many trees, including one that hit their home. They were without power and water for two weeks.

“[The LERT volunteers] have done a wonderful job helping us,” said Moon. “They’ve got [the trees] gone, and that’s a big blessing to us.”

At the end of the Moons’ driveway, in the stump of a fallen tree that a LERT chainsaw team worked to clear, is carved a cross, visible to passersby.

The devastation of Hurricane Helene will be felt in the mountains of western North Carolina for years. Yet, amid this devastation, God is providing opportunities for Lutherans to care for their neighbors in the name of Christ, reminding them that, even as ground shifts and roads sink, Christ is our foundation.



January

- 7 Ron Ott Jr.
- 8 Dan Bergelin
- 10 Chad Roehrig
- 21 Elliana Mueller
- 22 Jenny Peters
- 25 Mark Menge
- 26 Amanda Pompa
- 29 Ellen Niemann
- 31 Cindy Koffarnus



**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
Newsletter article – January 2025**

Repenting of “Feasts that Know No Fast”

Fresh off the Christmas season and the retail frenzy that accompanies it, January brings a shot of frigid air into the lives of the people we know and love. This is not a meteorological statement either. While it is true that January is one of the colder months for those in North America, the cold front blast that hits us is the full force of credit card spending that fueled the retail frenzy. The bills for the gifts, the parties, the food and the travel have now come due. The credit card makes things convenient, but it also requires more discipline than many can muster. When the bills come in January for December’s celebration, it really puts a damper on things.

Congregations often make the same mistake in stewardship. We often charge forward in doing what we always do or starting new endeavors without counting the cost. But at the end of the month, or the end of year, when the bill comes due, the red ink on the congregational balance sheet smacks the people in the face like a stiff north wind in January. We hunkered down. We circle the wagons. We start to panic. The work of the Gospel suffers.

The fifth verse of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) addresses this January situation. The words penned by William Watkins Reid are very needful for us to hear as we start a new year, while dealing with the bills of past efforts and expense.

“Forgive us, Lord for feast that knows not fast ...” This hits us hard, doesn’t it? We love when the money is flowing, the parties are going, and things are getting bigger and better. But there is a time in life, and most especially in our spiritual disciplines,

that we need to fast. The purpose of a fast is to step back, lay something aside for a time, and replace it with meditation on Scripture and prayer. This is designed to keep us from turning something that may well be good into an idol that separates us from the God who loves us in Christ.

“For joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul ...” In “The Parable of the Sower,” we hear Jesus talk about how the worries and cares of life choke out the growth of the seed of the Word that was planted. We know how this happens in our lives. Professional and youth sports do this. Materialism does this. Travel and leisure and do this. There is a list of things that we enjoy that starve the soul.

But it also happens in our congregations. When corporate stewardship is not managed in a responsible way, it can and does destroy individual stewardship. Is it good individual stewardship to support a ministry that doesn’t take its corporate responsibility seriously?

“For walls and wars that hide your mercies vast and blur our vision of the Kingdom goal.” This is the ultimate end of the idolatry of failed stewardship. We build walls between believers within the church and hamper those who are outside from coming to the Light of Life that is Jesus. The wars we fight over money and its impact on ministry do the same. It eventually blurs our vision of what we are here to do: share the Good News of Jesus. When the wintry blast of January hits us in this fashion, we are called to repent.

When the Holy Spirit uses the cold front of the call to repentance, we meet the God who forgives and restores. That is what He does for individual and corporate stewards. When the bills hit, they call us back to Jesus. He is the One who indeed forgives us our shallow thankfulness and leads us into the bounty of His mercy yet again.

Our Response to His Love

	12-08-24	12-01-24	11-24-24	11-17-24	11-03-24	10-27-24
General Fund	\$1646	\$3723	\$2014	\$1517	\$3495	\$1728
Missions					\$100	\$25
Aluminum Cans	\$112					
Totals	\$1758	\$3723	\$2014	\$1517	\$3595	\$1753

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Altar Guild: Jan. 5 - Dean & Jan Jan. 12 - Dan & Cindy Jan. 19 - Bonnie & Cheri Jan. 23 - Donna & DeAnn			1	2	3	4
			Pastor Away -----		<i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	
			New Year's Day			
5 Second Sunday after Christmas <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	6 Epiphany	7 6:30p Bible Study	8 <i>4:15p Catechesis @ St. Luke</i>	9	10 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	11
12 The Baptism of Our Lord <i>White</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Sunday School	13	14 1:00p W.I.M. Meeting & Bible Study 6:30p Bible Study	15 <i>4:15p Catechesis @ St. Luke</i>	16	17 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	18
19 Second Sunday after the Epiphany <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service 9:30 Sunday School	20 Annual Reports due Newsletter articles due MLK Jr. Day	21 6:30p Bible Study	22 <i>4:15p Catechesis @ St. Luke</i>	23	24 <i>10:00 Bible Study @ Terra Verde, Chilton</i>	25
26 Third Sunday after the Epiphany <i>Green</i> 8:30 Divine Service (NC) 9:30 Sunday School Voters' Meeting	27	28 6:30p Bible Study	29 <i>4:15p Catechesis @ St. Luke</i>	30	31	

Divine Services marked (NC) will not have Holy Communion