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# Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XVIII, Issue VII

July 2023

## MISSION STATEMENT

*Our Saviour Lutheran Church welcomes all people to a safe place to grow in faith and serve the Lord Jesus Christ*

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*As Americans I think we need to read some of our history to understand who we are and how we started our beginning to become one of the greatest, if not the greatest nation in the world. If you have a chance read our Constitution. (editorial)*

## The Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies

In CONGRESS, July 4, 1776

### The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America,

*When* in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

*We* hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

*Prudence*, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

*But* when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present **King of Great Britain [George III]** is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

*He* has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

(Independence cont'd on page 2)

**(Independence continued from page 1)**

*He* has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained, and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

*He* has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

*He* has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

*He* has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

*He* has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

*He* has endeavored to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

*He* has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

**Independence cont'd from page 12**

*He* has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

*He* has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

*He* has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the consent of our legislatures.

*He* has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

*He* has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

- For protecting them by a mock Trial from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:
- For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
- For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
- For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by Jury:
- For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:
- For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:
- For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:
- For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

*He* has abdicated Government here by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

*He* has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

*He* is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

**(Independence continued on page 3)**

**(Independence cont'd from page 2)**

*H*e has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

*H*e has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

*I*n every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

*N*or have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren.

- We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us.
- We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here.
- We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence.

*T*hey too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

*W*e, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare.

*T*hat these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown,

*a*nd that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved;

*a*nd that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce,

*a*nd to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do.

*A*nd for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

**The signers of the Declaration represented the new States as follows:****New Hampshire:**

Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple,  
Matthew Thornton

**Massachusetts:**

John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert  
Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

**Rhode Island:**

Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

**Connecticut:**

Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams,  
Oliver Wolcott

**New York:**

William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis  
Morris

**New Jersey:**

Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkin-  
son, John Hart, Abraham Clark

**Pennsylvania:**

Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin,  
John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Tay-  
lor, James Wilson, George Ross

**Delaware:**

Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

**Maryland:**

Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles  
Carroll of Carrollton

**Virginia:**

George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson,  
Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Light-  
foot Lee, Carter Braxton

**North Carolina:**

William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn

**South Carolina:**

Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas  
Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

**Georgia:**

Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

## The Story of Independence Day and America's Birthday



Independence Day is the national holiday of the United States of America commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

At the time of the signing the US consisted of 13 colonies under the rule of England's King George III. There was growing unrest in the colonies concerning the taxes that had to be paid to England. This was commonly referred to as "Taxation without Representation" as the colonists did not have any representation in the English Parliament and had no say in what went on. As the unrest grew in the colonies, King George sent extra troops to help control any rebellion. In 1774 the 13 colonies sent delegates to Philadelphia Pennsylvania to form the First Continental Congress. The delegates were unhappy with England, but were not yet ready to declare war.

In April 1775 as the King's troops advanced on Concord Massachusetts Paul Revere would sound the alarm that "The British are coming, the British are coming" as he rode his horse through the late night streets.

The battle of Concord and its "shot heard around the world" would mark the unofficial beginning of the colonies war for Independence.

The following May the colonies again sent delegates to the Second Continental Congress. For almost a year the congress tried to work out its differences with England, again without formally declaring war.

By June 1776 their efforts had become hopeless and a committee was formed to compose a formal declaration of independence. Headed by Thomas Jefferson, the committee included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston and Roger Sherman. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the first draft which was presented to the congress on June 28. After various changes a vote was taken late in the afternoon of July 4th. Of the 13 colonies, 9 voted in favor of the Declaration, 2 - Pennsylvania and South Carolina voted No, Delaware undecided and New York abstained.

To make it official John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence. It is

said that John Hancock signed his name "with a great flourish" so "King George can read that without spectacles!."

The following day copies of the Declaration were distributed. The first newspaper to print the Declaration was the Pennsylvania Evening Post on July 6, 1776. On July 8th the Declaration had its first public reading in Philadelphia's Independence Square. Twice that day the Declaration was read to cheering crowds and pealing church bells. Even the bell in Independence Hall was rung. The "Province Bell" would later be renamed "Liberty Bell" after its inscription -

***Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants Thereof***

And although the signing of the Declaration was not completed until August, the 4th of July has been accepted as the official anniversary of United States independence. The first Independence Day celebration took place the following year - July 4 1777. By the early 1800s the traditions of parades, picnics, and fireworks were established as the way to celebrate America's birthday. And although fireworks have been banned in most places because of their danger, most towns and cities usually have big firework displays for all to see and enjoy.

### Quotes

*Be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.'*

- A sharp tongue can cut my own throat.
- If I want my dreams to come true, I mustn't oversleep.
- The best vitamin for making friends.... B1.
- The happiness of my life depends on the quality of my thoughts.
- The heaviest thing I can carry is a grudge.
- One thing I can give and still keep...is my word.
- I lie the loudest when I lie to myself.
- If I lack the courage to start, I have already finished.
- One thing I can't recycle is wasted time.
- Ideas won't work unless 'I' do.
- My mind is like a parachute...it functions only when open. .
- The pursuit of happiness is the chase of a lifetime! It is never too late to become what I might have been.

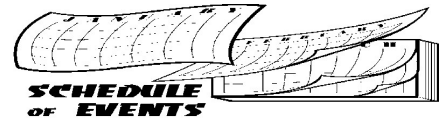
Life is too short to wake up with regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Forget about the one's who don't. Believe everything happens for a reason. If you get a second chance, grab it with both hands. If it changes your life, let it. Nobody said life would be easy, they just promise; it would be worth it.






# July 2023



Sunday School: 9:45 pm  
Church Service: 11:00 pm



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 5th Sunday after Pentecost	3	 Independence Day	5	6	7	8
9 6th Sun. after Pentecost	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 7th Sun after Pentecost	17 Council Mtg.	18  Prayer Group	19	20	21	22
23 8th Sun after Pentecost	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 9th Sun after Pentecost	31	August 1: <u>National Night Out</u> Cloninger Park				 Food Collection

- July 3— 5th Sunday after Pentecost— Communion
- July 4—INDEPENDENCE DAY  
Firework Display & Concert (see page 7)
- July 9— 6th Sunday after Pentecost
- July 16— 7th Sunday after Pentecost
- July 17—Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- July 18—Prayer Group at home of Shirlee Marazza at 1:00 pm
- July 23—8th Sunday after Pentecost
- July 30—9th Sunday after Pentecost



FOOD FOR THE MONTH:

**Pinto Beans, Canned Meat,**  
**Pork-n-Beans**



## Birthdays

10	Marsellus Sanchez	Anna D. Cole
16	Stephen Digh	Chas Messick
18	Joe Finger	Bo Messick
19	Henry Clemmer	Chris Messick
21	Nation Finger	Yvonne Finger
22	Jason Spurrier	Garrett Lowery



22<sup>nd</sup> .....Bo & Raygan Messick

### Holy Communion Schedule:

All Sundays



### Worship Service Assistance:

Acolyte: Nora Cole  
Communion  
Asst: Nora Cole  
Lay Reader: Yvonne Finger  
Worship Asst: Yvonne Finger  
Greeters: OSLC Members  
Ushers: OSLC Members

Board Devotions July 17:  
Alice Vlaservich

Stewardship Collector:  
Teri Trudnak



NO Choir practice in July

## FLOWERS

### Flower Schedule:

July 2 Nick Vlaservich  
July 9 OPEN  
July 16 OPEN  
July 23 OPEN  
July 30 OPEN

Please sign up to place flowers on the altar in the glory of God and in honor or memory of your love ones.

### MANY OPENINGS

Cost: \$35.<sup>00</sup>



## *Playbook for Life*

Tony Dungy and James Brown  
weekly Bible study partners for 13 years.

**The National Football League (NFL) generated \$18 billion in revenue during the 2022 season. As the most profitable professional sports league on the planet, the NFL averages nearly 17 million viewers for a regular season televised game.**

And amid the league's unprecedented popularity, two of its most acclaimed commentators—NFL Hall of Fame Coach Tony Dungy and three-time Emmy Award-winning network television broadcaster James Brown—say the Bible is their playbook for life.

Dungy and Brown co-anchored the “Uncommon Influence Men’s Retreat” in April at The Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville. Both men have been involved together in a weekly Bible study for more than a decade with several dozen others via phone and video calls.

*I just want to underscore the absolute veracity of the Word of God. It is truly the inerrant, infallible Word of God.”*  
—James Brown

“I just want to underscore the absolute veracity of the Word of God,” Brown told the more than 400 attendees at the weekend men’s retreat. “It is truly the inerrant, infallible Word of God. And it is worth basing our lives on. It is the difference between life and eternal death.”

Brown, 72, who is the host of “The NFL Today” on CBS and a special correspondent for the network’s news division, is also an ordained minister. Preaching from the Old Testament Book of Daniel, he encouraged the retreat attendees, ages 14 to 85, that the same God who was with Daniel in the lion’s den and his three Jewish friends in a fiery furnace in Babylon is ever present with those who remain steadfast in their obedience to His Word. More than a dozen attendees gave their lives to Christ. “A dead end for man is an opportunity for God,” Brown said. “The Bible says the God we serve is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.”

Dungy, 67, who played defensive back for the 1979 Super Bowl Champion Pittsburgh Steelers and became the first black head coach in the NFL to win a Super Bowl in 2007 with the Indianapolis Colts, is now an NFL analyst and commentator for NBC Sunday Night Football. *The New York Times* bestselling author said that when a person recognizes and submits to the authority of God’s Word, then most decisions in life, although often not easy, really aren’t that complicated.

For example, Dungy said, he will not be silenced by the vitriolic criticism aimed at him earlier this year for speaking at the annual March for Life rally in Washington, D.C.

*“To those who hate the truth, it will sound like hate. But if you love the truth, the truth will sound loving.”*  
—Tony Dungy

“I’m speaking for the Lord,” Dungy told *Decision*. “I see so many examples in the Bible where God spoke about people in the womb. And God said in Psalm 139, He’s watching over us while we grow there. So, that tells me that’s a life that He values. So, I don’t care what anybody else says, because they don’t trump God’s Word.”

Throughout his nearly 30-year career as an assistant and head coach in the NFL, Dungy’s poised and Christlike demeanor brought the best out of his teams. He regularly used Biblical illustrations to motivate and inspire his players to excellence and a record 10 consecutive playoff appearances. And when his Colts won Super Bowl XLI, Dungy proclaimed that being the first black head coach to win the Lombardi Trophy paled in comparison to “showing the world that you could win doing it the Lord’s way, and we can be excellent and still honor the Lord.” Fittingly, Dungy’s team knelt in the locker room and prayerfully thanked God for their world championship while a gaggle of reporters looked on.

Having lived through the Civil Rights Movement, these brothers in Christ say that the racial divisions in America today are the result of spiritual warfare being provoked and stoked by the father of lies, Satan, whose sole mission is to rob, kill, steal and destroy.

And once again, they point to Scripture for the answers.

“Race relations are still deeply problematic, and have been since the beginning,” Brown said. “The last time I checked the Bible, in essence it says it is faith in God for whosoever will, that’s all of us. So, anybody who would dare try to play the game of racism is sinning. The Word is so simple with it: ‘How can two walk together unless they be agreed?’ ‘A house divided cannot stand.’ So, I pray that as the Body of Christ, we’ll take that and model it the way we are supposed to.”

Dungy said that people of God of all nationalities must remember that they are Christians first and foremost.

*(Playbook cont’d on page 8)*



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## ***LOCK BOX PROGRAM***

The Dallas Fire Department offers a lock box program to the Town of Dallas residents in the event of a medical emergency and the resident cannot open the door emergency responders, The lock box will be installed by the Fire Department.

**Program is free of charge.**

Call 704-922-7736 or 980-745-5192

## **EVENTS for Agrape/Kure Beach**

**Contact Camp Agapé:**

Telephone: 919-552-9421

e-mail: [agape@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:agape@agapekurebeach.org)

**Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:**

Telephone 910-458-0783

e-mail: [kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org](mailto:kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org)

**Web site:** [www.agapekurebeach.org](http://www.agapekurebeach.org)

**Directions to Camp Agapé are on the web site.**

Please see calendars and other information on the bulletin board or go on-line

## **Events For Lutheridge - Lutherock- Lutherspring- Lutheranch**

**Web site:** [www.NovusWay.com](http://www.NovusWay.com)



## **Food Collection**

Help fill the pantry  
at the  
Dallas-High Shoals Christian Ministry.

Food items they need for the month are **crackers, instant potatoes and soup.** Let us over fill the basket in the hallway. This is a great outreach program.

God will bless you for your generosity



## **GO OUT ON A LIMB GET INVOLVED**

BE A WORSHIP ASSISTANT

Positions are still open.

Participate in the service of the Lord and sign-up  
Sign up sheets

for the 2023 calendar year are on the wall in the Education wing.  
THANK YOU!



## A Stewardship Minute

An article in the July issue *Stewardship* seems to leap out at alert readers. It begins: "God's desire for cheerful givers is not to help God, but to help us." In giving our heart, mind, soul, talents, and resources to God, we find meaning and joy and fulfillment. Giving our all helps us to live life victoriously. Giving to God helps us to be the authentic, spiritual, and unique person God intends for us to be. Nothing can be more satisfying than knowing one is doing the will of God. Giving ourselves to God helps us to find the special mission God wants us to

fulfill, enabling us to have the greatest satisfaction a human can have.

A pastor tells of visiting a 90-year-old man named Frank who had given his all to God. Frank was so joyful and so God-oriented that he had a ministry to others going without leaving home. Little children would knock on his door to receive a joyful reception, a story or two, and sometimes a piece of candy. Men and women who had lost a mate visited him often because he comforted them. Frank's pastor visited him often because he felt that Frank was the most Christ-like person he knew. Invariably, Frank would hand a monetary

gift for the church to the pastor before he left. Knowing that Frank was not well-to-do, he would say, "Frank, you keep that gift. Our church is doing well financially right now. We can get by without your offering." And old Frank would say cheerily to the pastor, "I'm not giving to the church because the church needs it, I'm giving because I need to give it for my spirit's sake."

**Prayer:** Almighty and loving God, grant us the wisdom to be faithful servants on behalf of you and your Kingdom. **Amen**



## 2023 Court Square Summer Concert

(presented by the Town of Dallas)

Held on the Dallas Historic Court Square, from 7:00—9:00 pm, FREE concert will feature amazing talent (rain or shine). Enjoy the concert.

- ◆ **Tuesday, July 4—Concert at Cloninger Park with *Image* (7pm-9pm)**  
*Fireworks Show at Cloninger Park begins at dark. Bring your lawn chair.*



- ◆ **Saturday, August 13th— Concert**  
**Gary Lowder and Smoking**
- ◆ **Saturday, September 10— Concert**  
**Daniel Jeffers**

*(Playbook cont'd from page 7)*

"Christ is the example; that's what we want to get across to people, and that's what I think our country is missing," Dungy said. "Yes, I'm proud to be African American. Yes, I'm proud of a lot of things. But it's got to be Christian first. And the Bible has to take precedence."

Dungy and Brown both recognize that God has given them a platform on the media's biggest stage for His glory and not their own.

"Simply put, the Word of God prevails," Brown said. "It rules."

And Dungy agrees. "To those who hate the truth, it will sound like hate," he said. "But if you love the truth, the truth will sound loving. And, so, I think we have to really embrace that and do what Jesus did, and talk to everybody, see their point of view, hear it, and then speak Biblical truth in a loving way. If we know that if they die that way, they are going to be banished from God's presence forever, is it loving not to say anything to that person?"

Article comes from *Decision* June's magazine



# Church News



## SANCTUARY ROOF

Because of the material (texrum) of the roof, it is not an attachable roof for new shingles. We are looking at possible ways to put new shingles on and are working with our roofing representative, county building inspector, insurance adjuster and insurance company. We will have to have an structural engineer to look at ways to have an attachable roof, either we can use the texrum (representative from texrun company will be here also) or place total new plywood roof. In the mean time we will be working on the other buildings.

## Carolinas Mission Region 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Men's Retreat September 22-24, 2023

Theme: **LIVING FAITH**

Laurel Ridge Camp and Conference Center  
Laurel Springs. NC

Cost: \$125.00

Interested in going.....SEE ENCLOSED FORM



NORTH AMERICAN  
LUTHERAN  
SEMINARY

God gives many gifts to his people on earth, but none are quite so precious as the gifts of His Word and the Sacraments. Through the reading, hearing, preaching, and receiving of His Word, we find forgiveness, grace, and eternal life. Through the sacramental gifts of the Lord's Supper and Holy Baptism, the Word is given in tangible form and our faith is given a physical reality.

Word and Sacrament is a new magazine published by NALS/ You can subscribe to the digital version of *Word and Sacrament* at [www.thenals.org](http://www.thenals.org)

Please see two articles in Newsletter-pages 10 & 11

**IF YOU NEED A PASTOR:** Until OSLC can find a pastor, Pastor George Rhyne as agreed to assist us. If you need to reach him, please call his cell number 704-813-5007

## WELCA/RACHEL GROUP

*The CLW Group will not meet again  
until September. Have a safe summer!*



## PRAYER GROUP

Will meet at the home of Shirlee Marazza

on

July 18 at 2:00 pm



**LET US PRAY...** "Are any among you suffering? They should pray...The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up." (James 5:

**PRAYER CONCERNS:** MARGARET Addington, SETH Alexander, AMANDA (friend of the Penley's), MARVIS Anderson, WHITNEY Auten (breast cancer), KELLY Ballard (friend of Shana Dease), ADDISON Blanton (friend of Dease's), KATHY Bohanan (cancer), RONDA Bradley (Marsha Patton's mom, surgery for neck fusion), KAREN Brady, MIKE Coffey (Robbie Wooten's uncle), MAGGIE Cloninger (niece of Alice Vlaservich- installing pulmonary valve on 4/18), STEVE Cloninger (friend of Brady Ratchford-cancer), ROB Curley (cancer), STEVE Digh (cancer), HARDY Feige (Pete's dad - chronic back pain), GLEEN Fraizer (friend of Steve & Julie Digh -cancer), DON Gardner (John Patton's uncle -cancer in lung, liver, stomach & pancreas going into remission and improving), BECKY Goodwin (friend of Brady's - cancer), JASON Hames (friend of the White's), GRACE Harbin (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), ANDERSON Jones (friend of Penny Wilson-paralyzed by fall), JEFF Lineberger (stroke), DANA Kirshman (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), JACK Lonon (Kasey Digh's step-father-cancer), MARINA Marazza (Shirlee Marazza's granddaughter-Long Haul Covid19), BO Messick (foot), FRANCIS McAllister (broken hip), CHRIS Messick (recovering back surgery), JASON, ALLISON & LEX Murray, ELIZABETH Mustin (rare breast cancer), GARY Neal, (friend of Caleb Dease), JOHN & MARSHA Patton (the in vitro procedure produces healthy baby(ies)), SONDRRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White), BRADY Ratchford, TERI Trudnak, RONNIE Shiles (friend of Brady Ratchford-declining health), TONY Trudnak (cancer reoccurring), GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), NANCY Wilson, MARY BETH Wright (cousin of Nick Vlaservich -cancer).



## THE VOCATION OF A CHRISTIAN

(A Theological Account)

Dr Alexander H. Pierce

Assistant Professor of Historical Theology

In late medieval Europe, the religious vocations of clergy from priesthood to monasticism towered above the work of laypersons in moral and theological significance. As is well known, Martin Luther leveled the playing field in his advocacy of the priesthood of all believers and his corresponding assertion of the common vocation (*vocatio, Beruf*) of all Christian believers.<sup>1</sup> Luther's reimagining of the landscape of vocation and the Christian life came downstream of his renewal of the central importance and practical implications of the Gospel. God calls individuals who inhabit distinct forms and rhythms within this life. But a "calling" can be received only by those who have already received the love of God in faith. Vocation is a curriculum for how to live as a member of Christ in a world still marred by sin, death, and the devil. Believers' common priesthood means not only that all share direct access to God in Christ, then, but also that we all minister to one another, making Christ's love present to each other.

The vocation of the Christian amounts to the faith-filled Christian passing on the love of Christ to neighbors in need within the context of the three orders (*Stände*), of "the household, the government, and the church."<sup>2</sup> Luther agreed with much of the earlier Christian tradition that the orders of the household (marriage and family life) and the church were orders of God's good creation. But the order of government or the state was a form of divine accommodation to the fallen state of humanity. The entrance of sin into human life also corrupted both of the created orders. These three orders — four if we divide that of the household into family *and* work<sup>3</sup> — are the avenues in which Christians can fulfill their earthly duties out of love for their spouses and children, superiors and subordinates, pastors and political representatives.

The Christian vocation requires that we respond to the promises of God by sharing God's love in all things and with all persons. At one level, the vocation of the Christian is particular to each individual believer. Every person's vocation will look a little different. In the case of every believing Christian, however, the vocation of faith active in love involves sharing a gift already received rather than seeking to be worthy of a gift yet to be given.

The vocation of the Christian is also corporate. God told the Israelites in the Mosaic Covenant, "You shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:6). What, we may ask, does the Lord require of His people? In recalling the words of Micah 6:8, the refrain of "We are Called" (the modern hymn by David Haas) reminds us,

*We are called to act with justice,  
we are called to love tenderly,  
we are called to serve one another,  
to walk humbly with God!*orenzo Monaco (Piero di Giovanni), Moses (1408-10)

But in the New Testament, 1 Peter tells baptized Christians: "you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, *in order that* you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9; emphasis added). The vocation common to all members of Christ's Body is to live as those who have been welcomed into the people of God by the waters of baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We must, as Luther teaches in the *Brief Instruction*, receive Christ both as gift (in the righteousness of faith) and as the example we are to follow.<sup>5</sup> But we must also proclaim the Good News of the Gospel, sharing in word and deed our trust that in Jesus' Person and works God has provided forgiveness of sins, victory over death, liberation from the devil, and the promise of eternal life.

The gift of Christ, that is, His grace in the form of the Holy Spirit, enables the Christian to respond to God's call with a life conformed to Christ's example. The Christian vocation of struggling to forge ahead in this already-but-not-yet life is the unpredictable arc of sanctification, a set of forward and backward steps that forms a growth curve as we cultivate proper virtue that flows out of Christ's alien virtue imputed to us as the righteousness of faith. Yet, we must keep in mind that perfectionism is not possible this side of heaven. Enduring faith in God's love enables the Christian to love others without placing hope in these works of love. Rather, the baptized continue in the struggle of this earthly vocation against sin, death, and the devil in the hope that God's promises given and made known in Christ will continue to come true, to the point of Christ's return in glory to subject all of creation to Himself

1. For essential reading on Martin Luther's understanding of vocation, see Gustaf Wingén, *Luther on Vocation*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia, PA: Mulhensberg Press, 1957).
2. Martin Luther, "No. 5533: Three Rules Used for Translating the Bible, Winter of 1542–1543," in *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., eds. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1955ff.) [hereafter cited as LW], 54:446.
3. See Robert Benne, "Martin Luther on the Vocation of the Christian," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, Religion* (2016).
4. David Haas, "We Are Called," GIA Publications, Inc., 1988.
5. Martin Luther, "A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels" (1521), trans. Theodore Bachmann, in LW 35:117–124, esp. 119-120.

## *Listen, God is Calling*

The Rev. Jeff Morlock

### **The Bible is overflowing with stories about God's call.**

God called Noah to build an ark. God called an elderly Abraham and Sarah to leave their home and begin a nation. God called young Samuel out of a deep sleep and Esther "for such a time as this." God called a reluctant prophet named Jonah to save a nation and a teenager named Mary to give birth to the Savior of the nations. God called Peter to be a rock upon which the Church could be built and Paul, the persecutor, to be an emissary of grace.

Martin Luther taught us that God claims each of us in Holy Baptism and gives us a life mission that will bless others and contribute to human flourishing. **To recognize our baptismal calling is what we mean by vocational discernment. It's a process of listening to the Spirit of God through the Word of Scripture and the community of the church.** Specifically, God calls some people as ordained ministers, and it is this vocation that is in urgent demand right now in the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).

In this regard, I look forward to Thursday, April 18, 2030. This day will mark a full decade from the establishment of a goal to raise up 300 new pastors in the next 10 years as part of the NALC's 2020 Vision. It will be a great day of celebration and gratitude to the Lord for His faithfulness in making the goal a reality! But how will this happen?

Somewhere in our congregations right now an infant was just baptized who has a call from God to ordained ministry.

Somewhere in our congregations right now there's a fourth grader who has a call from God to ordained ministry, and they are the troublemaker in Mrs. So-And-So's Sunday school class.

Somewhere in our congregations right now, an eighth grader has just been confirmed who has a call to ordained ministry, and they complain to their parents that, "church is boring."

Somewhere in our congregations right now there is a high schooler who is preparing to go on a weekend retreat that will change their life forever, as faith will come alive and God's call to ordained ministry will be affirmed.

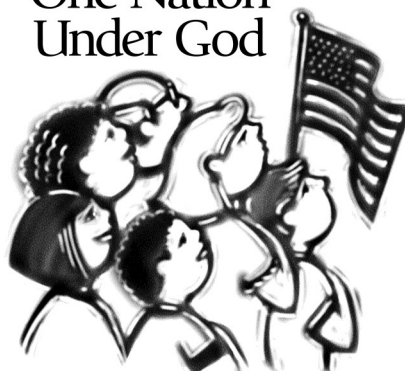
Somewhere in our congregations right now there is a college student or career person who has a call to ordained ministry, but is questioning it, or running from it to pursue a different path.

### **I know that these people exist, because each of them was me at different times in my life.**

When you read the above statements, did they resonate with you personally? If so, you may have a call from God to Word and Sacrament ministry. Did it make you think of someone you know who is discerning, or should be discerning a call to ordained ministry?

We will reach our goal of 300 new pastors by 2030 as you, along with every disciple in our congregations becomes an NALS prayer partner, asking the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest (Matthew 9:38). We will reach our goal as you and others answer the call to become student recruitment ambassadors, asking the Lord to give you eyes to see whom He may be raising up for such a time as this.

One Nation  
Under God



“AMERICA IS A SICK NATION”

Sermon at independent Baptist Tabernacle church.  
Pastor Drew Lynch,  
May the 7th 2023  
Submitted by Brady Ratchford

Did you know the average age of the straight civilizations in history has been 200 years? That being true, that means that America is living on borrowed time, and that I do believe to be true.

America is a sick nation.

Since 1960 there has been:

- ◆ A 560% increase in violent crime.
- ◆ More than four a 400% increase in illegitimate births.
- ◆ A quadrupling and divorces.
- ◆ A tripling of the percentage of children living in single parent homes.
- ◆ More than a 200% increase and the teenage suicide rate.
- ◆ A drop of 75 points and the average SAT scores have high school students.

⇒ Today, 30% of all births and 68% of all black births are illegitimate.

⇒ Even though the United states has only 6% of the world's population, we have 80% have the divorces.

⇒ We lead in industrialized world in murder, rape, and violent crime.

⇒ 80% of all the whiskey consumed in the world is consumed by Americans.

We have become a nation where the criminal is deified, and the victim is vilified come and where evil is called good, and good is called evil.

We have become a nation where they live of the snail darter has become more valued than the baby in the womb.

We have said, loudly and clearly, by the people we have placed in the highest offices of nation, “Our character doesn't matter, why should yours?”

We are a nation that is marked by moral regression, sexual revolution, in spiritual rebellion.

I predict that America is conquered from without, she is going to be corrode from within. America will not die from homicide, she is going to die by suicide.

We will not ultimately be destroyed by what someone else will do to us, but what we do to ourselves.

Hear me, hear me well.

America's greatest problem is not inflation, interest rates, budget deficits, or even crime.

Her biggest problem is sin.

America's greatest enemy is not Iraq, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, nor Russia. America's greatest enemy is herself.

America's biggest threat is not nuclear proliferation, terrorism, communism, or humanism.

America's biggest threat is God.

America's only hope is not in better government, new political leadership, balance budgets, nuclear missiles, or dollar bills.

America's only hope is revival.

## *America the Beautiful*

(encore)

"**America the Beautiful**" is an American patriotic song. The lyrics were written by Katharine Lee Bates and the music composed by church organist and choirmaster Samuel A. Ward. Bates originally wrote the words as a poem, *Pikes Peak*, first published in the July 4th edition of the church periodical *The Congregationalist* in 1895. The poem was titled *America* for publication. Ward had originally written the music, *Materna*, for the 1600s hymn *O Mother dear, Jerusalem* in 1882. Ward's music combined with the Bates poem was first published in 1910 and titled *America the Beautiful*. The song is one of the most beloved and popular of the many American patriotic songs. From time to time it has been proposed as a replacement for *The Star-Spangled Banner* as the National Anthem.

Popularity of the song increased greatly following the September 11, 2001 attacks; at some sporting events it was sung in addition to the traditional singing of the national anthem. During the first taping of the *Late Show with David Letterman* following the attacks, CBS newsman Dan Rather cried briefly as he quoted the fourth verse.

When Richard Nixon visited the People's Republic of China in 1972, this song was played by Chinese as the welcome music. Interestingly, the Chinese characters for United States literally mean "Beautiful Country."

O beautiful for spacious skies,  
For amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties  
Above the fruited plain!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet  
Whose stern impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare of freedom beat  
Across the wilderness!  
America! America!  
God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control,  
Thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved  
In liberating strife.  
Who more than self their country loved  
And mercy more than life!  
America! America!  
May God thy gold refine  
Till all success be nobleness  
And every gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream  
That sees beyond the years  
Thine alabaster cities gleam  
Undimmed by human tears!  
America! America!  
God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood  
From sea to shining sea!



## What is the Gospel?

When we're hoping to understand what a word means, a dictionary is often a great place to start. But certain words require us to do more than simply read and memorize a definition. We shouldn't be surprised, then, that when we read the dictionary definition of the word *Gospel*—"the message concerning Christ, the Kingdom of God, and salvation"—we're left with more questions. Who is this Christ? Where is His Kingdom? What is salvation? A quick search on the internet tells us *Gospel* comes from a Greek word that means "good news"—but what exactly is this good news?

Seeing a word used in context can often help us put the pieces together. To understand what the Gospel is (and is *not*), we first need to turn to the opening pages of the Bible.

### The Good

"In the beginning, God created ..." (See Genesis 1–2.) He created light and darkness, earth and sky, fish and birds, man and woman. He created *everything*, and He did so out of nothing. God looked at all of these things and saw that they were good. There was beauty, peace, and what seemed like perfection for Adam and Eve. But then they made a choice that brought about a great divide.

### The Bad

In Genesis 3, something called sin entered the world. Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent and chose to disobey God's command. This act began a cycle that continues to this day. Adam's fallen, sinful nature has been passed along from one generation to the next. The good has been tainted. Sin abounds. And the Bible tells us that there is a great cost for our disobedience: death (Romans 6:23).

So what can be done to bridge this divide, to fix what's clearly broken?

### The New

When we look around, we certainly see many great things in the world. Day after day, though, we are left yearning for something *more*. Good news seems to be outweighed by the bad. The joy of life is often drowned out by the guarantee of death. But when we look closer at Romans 6:23, we see that sin and death do not have the final say: "The wages of sin is death, *but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" We have a hope, and His Name is Jesus. Even though death entered the world because of Adam's sin, we can find everlasting comfort because of the work that was accomplished by Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

God came to Earth in the person of His Son, Jesus (John 1:14), who did what we could never do by living a life of perfect obedience to God the Father (Philippians. 2:8; Romans 5:19). And although He was crucified on a cross for our sins and was buried, He rose from the grave and ascended to Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Acts 1:9–11).

God paid the price to rescue us from our sin. He graciously made a way for us to have new life, *eternal life*. John 3:16–17 says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

When we read these truths in the Bible, we can't stop at intellectual assent, for the belief we read of in John 3:16 involves a choice. Saving faith requires trusting God and committing one's life to Him alone. Has that struck you? Are you ready to make that choice? If so, there are a few simple steps you can take in response.

We first have to acknowledge that there's something to *admit*—that you and I have sinned against God and could never make up for our wrongdoing. Second, we must *believe* that Jesus has taken on the penalty for our sins and conquered death once and for all. Finally, having placed our faith in God and committed our lives to Him, we should then *consider* the implications of that decision. The rest of our days will then be spent turning toward God and away from sin by the help of His Spirit. This is a transformation that touches every facet of life.

The good that was once known is gone. The bad now lingers and toils in vain. The new has come, offering us redemption. Yet, still we await something better than we can fathom ...

### The Perfect

Imagine a world with no more tears, death, pain or mourning. That's exactly what God has promised. It will be nothing less than perfection. Adam and Eve once experienced the goodness of life in God's presence. So, too, will all who place their faith in the Lord Jesus, for the dwelling place of God once again will be with man (Revelation 21:1–4). For now, though, we wait patiently, eagerly anticipating eternal life with Christ as we joyfully obey His commands.

So, what is the Gospel? It's the good news that even though mankind rebelled against a holy, loving God, He still chose to send His only Son to bear our sins on the cross so that by trusting in Him, we might turn from our sinful ways and enjoy eternal life in His presence. It's God's free gift to us, offered out of His abundant love. Have you accepted it?

Alistair Begg is the senior pastor at Parkside Church near Cleveland, Ohio.

## SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army began in 1865 when William Booth, a London minister, gave up the comfort of his pulpit and decided to take his message into the streets where it would reach the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

His original aim was to send converts to established churches of the day, but soon he realized that the poor did not feel comfortable or welcome in the pews of most of the churches and chapels of Victorian England. Regular churchgoers were appalled when these shabbily dressed, unwashed people came to join them in worship. Booth decided to found a church especially for them - the East London Christian Mission. The mission grew slowly, but Booth's faith in God remained undiminished.

In May 1878, Booth summoned his son, Bramwell, and his good friend George Railton to read a proof of the Christian Mission's annual report. At the top it read: THE CHRISTIAN MISSION is A VOLUNTEER ARMY. Bramwell strongly objected to this wording. He was not a volunteer: he was compelled to do God's work. So, in a flash of inspiration, Booth crossed out 'Volunteer' and wrote 'Salvation'. The Salvation Army was born.

**ONE ARMY:** We see a God-raised, Spirit-filled Army for the 21st century - convinced of our calling, moving forward together: We will...deepen our spiritual life, unite in prayer, identify and develop leaders, increase self-support and self-denial

**ONE MISSION:** Into the world of the hurting, broken, lonely, dispossessed and lost, reaching them in love by all means : We will...emphasize our integrated ministry, reach and involve youth and children, stand for and serve the marginalized, encourage innovation in mission

**ONE MESSAGE:** With the transforming message of Jesus, bringing freedom, hope and life

We will... communicate Christ unashamedly, reaffirm our belief in transformation, evangelize and disciple effectively, provide quality teaching resources.

**The local chapter of Salvation Army is located:** 107 South Broad Street, Gastonia, NC 28052-4101. Their motto: Doing the most good.

**Open letter from: Mark Hunter, Corps Officer, Salvation Army, Gastonia, NC**

One of my favorite songs as a youngster was *Jesus Loves Me*. Those three simple words assured me that if I was frightened, He would look out for me. If I was lonely, He would be by my side. If I was confused, He would guide me. If I made a mistake, He would forgive.

Though I've kept that song in my heart all my life, it was especially important to me as I struggled through the challenges and frustrations of adolescence. Today, the number of boys and girls I meet who are lonely, frightened and confused because they don't know about God's Love saddens me. They don't believe anyone cares for them. That is why Salvation Army in the Gastonia area does everything possible to demonstrate God's Love, protection, and direction to disadvantaged children. Through the year, we open our doors to young people of all ages.

*During the summer, we offer camp activities at Camp Walter Mattson that help 25 youngsters develop their talents and self-confidence, as well as strengthen their relationship with Christ. And during the year, The Salvation Army's Boys and Girls Club provides 100 kids every day with supervised alternatives to going home to an empty house while their parents are still at work. Our Club has educational programs in areas such as literacy (through our R.E.A.C.H. program – reading, education, attendance, conduct, honors), health, the arts, careers, leadership development and athletics. We also make sure children are receiving the food, clothing and care they need to be healthy and strong.*

Like all of our services for the poor, our children's programs are possible only because others care. Little ones are searching for something to believe in and cling to. Together, we can help them grow in the knowledge that Jesus Loves them, and will instill a lasting song of hope in their hearts. Hundreds of boys and girls will participate in our programs this year alone. We believe that the camp experience makes a difference in the lives of underprivileged boys and girls who need a safe place to explore and learn while strengthening their faith in God. Your support is very important.

**OUR SAVIOUR'S MISSION EMPHASIS FOR JULY is Salvation Army of Gaston County.** This is an opportunity for us to pray for them, to volunteer, and give to a mission in our own area. They are helping the poor and disadvantaged in many ways. Their emphasis for this summer is to help children get to their summer camps. For those who would like to give through Our Saviour Lutheran Church, you can put a check in the offering any Sunday during July.

2022 is half way done. Have you participated in some of the Mission Emphasis opportunities? Some of us have. Some of the opportunities are in our own area and other opportunities are for ministries around the world. Be encouraged to seek the Lord as to how you can participate this month and each month.

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

July 2023

# Stewardship

There are certain checks that I dislike writing. In truth, I mean I really detest writing them! They are the ones that are a one way drain on our finances. For example, whatever I expend for repairs on my automobile is truly money I will never see again.

It is little more than a necessary evil because I must have transportation. Last month the starter went out and I had to write a check for over \$375 for a new one. "Nuts," I said to myself. It is a one way drain on our resources. It is sheer and simple subtraction. And that bugs me!

When the weather got very cold last February, I had to pay for the extra energy we consumed. When I wrote a check to the Public Service Company, I said "Nuts!" It is a one way drain on our resources and I will never see that money again. It is sheer and simple subtraction. And that bugs me!

For many folks, giving (i.e. contributing) is in that same category. It is sheer and simple subtraction. The more you give, the less you have. Some even call it "paying my church dues." For those folks, it is a one way drain on their resources. They will never see that money again, and that bugs them!

## Just like a sowing seed

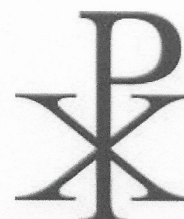
Obviously we have not done a very good job of teaching God's children what God has to say about giving in the Bible. God says you cannot out-give God. Jesus said that what you return to God, the Giver, is just like sowing seed. He said that God will guarantee the growth and a



fruitful harvest. I don't know of any gardener who reasons, "I cannot afford to sow too much seed; what if it all grows?" When we give and consider it money down the drain, apparently we have not heard ... or else do not believe ... God's promise that "...I will supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity" (II Corinthians 9:11).

It is sheer and simple multiplication! That much given becomes that much more. Yes, when we learn, by God's grace, to trust his promise to supply our needs and to bless our harvest, giving becomes a matter of multiplication. You see, God has his loving hand on the calculator!!

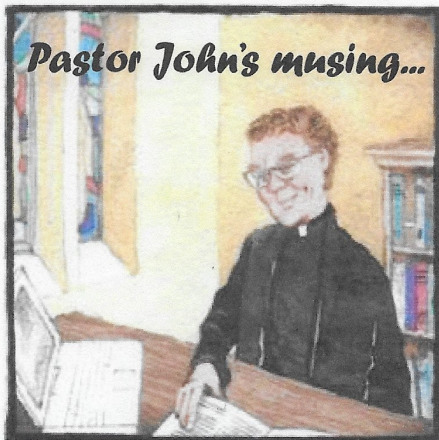
*The second commandment tells us to love our neighbor; surely we can best express that love by preserving the good environment.*



Continued on page 3



### Pastor John's musing...




*Ultimately, good stewardship is an attitude of faith, trusting that everything tangible and intangible belongs to God and eventually will return to God. Certainly, the concept of stewardship ought to govern the way we financially support our church.*

*Stewardship also means that we take what we need to live and share part of our income, as well as our time, to serve the kingdom of God.*

St. Paul asked the Christians in the Church of Thessalonica to pray that the Word of the Lord might be triumphant as it had among them. Surely, this can be our prayer also. They were being asked not only to keep the Faith, but to give it away in love. As paradoxical as this may seem, we know that it can be done and is being done wherever it flourishes. It is of the very nature of giving and loving. We also know that the Word of the Lord was triumphant in the entire Greek and Roman world and that it was due not only to the prayers of the faithful, but also to their diligent performance of good works. Faith, works and prayerful giving go together.

The Word of the Lord can be sped on its way and be triumphant in our day also, provided we follow the same process. It is a matter of caring and sharing; reaching out to others in love because we really care about them and their place in God's plan. We dare not keep the Good News to ourselves. It must be told!

Our concern involves evangelism, stewardship and education. The three are inextricably tied together. We may compartmentalize them in our minds, but they are really one. When we take these to heart, we find, as St. Paul suggests, that the Lord is faithful and will strengthen us in our resolve. 

## Spiritual Benefits of Giving

God's desire for cheerful givers is not to help him, but to help us. Even if your church didn't need financial resources to fund ministry, we still need to grow in the understanding and practice of whole-life stewardship.

We should understand the scriptural benefits we can expect when we give. Here are three:


### Giving helps us know God

God invented giving. Giving is God's nature, and he built his nature into us. God so loved that he gave ... and we meet the God of the universe in our own giving!

### Giving helps us know ourselves

We were created to imitate God by giving and to experience God's joy in giving. Giving helps us offset our tendencies to trust our abilities rather than God. As we resist those inclinations, we become the people God intends us to be.

### Giving helps us to know our mission

Giving is God's only plan for redeeming a lost world. That giving started with Jesus, and it is to continue with his disciples ... us. Only as the world sees our faith extend to include the sacrificial giving of our energies and possessions does the power of our invisible Savior become visible to the people Christ calls us to save. 



## Our Environment


In the second chapter of Genesis, after God had created the earth for man's sake, he created man to till the soil. It was an explicit command to mix labor with God's creation to make more of that which appears in a pure state of nature. God's covenant with Adam required him to exercise dominion over the earth, to be a steward of creation on God's behalf.

No doubt there are good and bad ways to till and keep the earth. There are ways that are more pleasing to God, and that have a regard for the essential telos for which the material world was made. If we take seriously our responsibility to be good stewards, we must ask what is the best institutional arrangement to allow people to exercise

this mandate.

### The role of free markets

The Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in eastern Pennsylvania provided an ideal location for hunters to shoot thousands of hawks. Conservationist Rosalie Edge decided that those birds ought to be protected. In 1934 she purchased the property and prevented the hunting of the birds. It is now considered one of the best bird-watching locations in the world.

God has given us the responsibility for the stewardship of creation, a responsibility to which he will hold us accountable. We do well, then, to consider the role free markets can play in this task. 

Continued from page 1

### There are certain checks...


Of the many miracles recorded in the four Gospels of the New Testament, there is only one miracle that Jesus performed that is included in all four accounts. Do you know which one it is? It is the one when a young lad happens along carrying five loaves of bread and two fish. Andrew, one of Jesus' disciples, immediately plays the subtraction game and says, "But what is that among so many?" When our Lord comes on the scene, however, the youth gave him his five loaves and two fish, and Jesus began to multiply the gift! He took the gift and blesses it into enough to feed five thousand people. It is not something down the drain that they will never see again. It is something given that Jesus multiplies.

### Making Ends Meet

At our house we cannot afford to

miss sales and use coupons to make ends meet. We keep the thermostat set low in the house in winter, purchase used cars that have already been greatly depreciated, and we buy clothing for the children at Goodwill.

However, I suspect we could make ends meet without doing any of this. But there is one thing my spouse and I have decided we cannot afford not to do: we cannot afford not to give the first fruits of our income back to God. We cannot deny God or ourselves the opportunity for God to multiply our generosity. For God promised that "He will always make us rich enough to be generous at all times."

There is one check I do not detest writing out. It is not a one way drain on the family finances. It is the one that trusts that God is the great multiplier. Besides our love for the Lord, we simply cannot afford not to be generous!! Not when God, the Giver, is at the calculator! 

*Have this mindset among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross ... Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Philippians 2:5-8 and 4

## Steward of the Month

### Their Many Contributions

Submitted by: Nan, Strong, ME


**I**f I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet ... For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. John 13: 14-15.

Len and Elaine Allen live out this example as they minister in our church, a small congregation in a country setting. They work together to enhance each other's talents in all that they do, serving God and the church, always radiating God's love and Christianity at its best.

Elaine is our Lay Leader, president of the UMW, VBS song leader and member of the pastor-parish committee. Among her many contributions are serving as liturgist, chatting with many folks to make them feel welcome and included, providing a welcoming gift to newcomers, writing newsletter items, sewing intricate squares for our quilted wall hangings, decorating beautiful cakes for special events, and cooking endlessly for fundraisers and community benefits.

Len is Chairman of the Board of Trustees and does hours of repairs on the church, parish house and rectory, including plumbing, carpentry and electrical projects. He quietly and skillfully attends to those tasks that make the church buildings comfortable for worship and fellowship, always with a vision toward future needs and solutions.

Together they sing in the choir, visit and call on sick members, serve on the church board, help with the church community calendar, direct and work endless hours on fundraisers, which include rummage sales and our Christmas fair. They arise early every Easter morning to cook breakfast for the church family and can always be found arranging post-funeral gatherings for families who have lost loved ones. When there are holiday goodie boxes to be filled and delivered to shut-ins, Len and Elaine will be involved. They combine compassion with a delightful sense of humor, adding fun to fellowship evenings.

As they serve and provide in the spirit of stewardship, they also actively nurture their own spiritual journeys with Bible study and prayer. They display teamwork and the joyful expression of Christ's love in every aspect of their lives. 

**"Steward of the Month"** is an exciting way to recognize exemplary stewards. If you are aware of someone who has exemplified Christian stewardship, please tell us about it at [stewardofthemonth.com](http://stewardofthemonth.com). Once a month, one submission will be chosen to be published in *Stewardship*. In addition, if your story is chosen, \$100 will be given to the church or organization of your choice.





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