



Our Saviour Lutheran Church
 725 Gastonia Technology Parkway
 Post Office Box 457
 Dallas, North Carolina 28034
 Phone: 705-922-4648 Email: oslcdallas@aol.com



Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XVIII, Issue X

October 2023

MISSION STATEMENT

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

Inside this issue:

• Martin Luther	3
• Calendar & Events	4
• Halloween	5
• <i>Walk for Life Report</i>	
• Life Chain	6
• <i>Operation Christmas Child</i>	
• <i>Lutheran Camps</i>	
• Church NEWS	7
• <i>Worship Ass't Needed</i>	
• <i>Prayer Concerns</i>	
• 23rd LCMC Gathering	8
• Mission for October	9
• Martin Luther's Seal	10
• Heritage and Harvest Days	11
• <i>Trunk or Treat</i>	
• <i>Early Voting</i>	
• NC Bans Transgender Treatment for Minors	12
• Male and Female He Created Them	13
• Stewardship Minutes	14
• <i>Communion Sunday</i>	
• NC Voter ID Required	15
• Stewardship Letter	18

Our Political Calling

by Pr. Brett Jenkins

A Missouri Synod professor once opined, "I'd love to say that the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith was what revolutionized Europe, but really, it was Luther's doctrine of vocation."

One of the key insights of the Lutheran Reformation was that we all have a vocation or calling from God. When Luther was born, vocation was a word reserved for those whose daily labor was professionally religious. Luther, however, recognized that all Christians have a calling from God to serve others; some do this in the Church, most do it outside in the common work of sustaining earthly life.

This realm, often called the kingdom of God's left hand in Lutheran theology, is commonly referred to as "the city of man," following Augustine's lead in his classic work *The City of God*. In His providence, God sustains both cities in a symbiotic relationship: The city of man so that human life can be sustained, the city of God (functionally, the Church) so that through the proclamation of the Gospel some members of the city of man may be saved for eternal life.

Notice how both are crucial for God's plan to be fulfilled: The Church for salvation, the earthly realm so people can live long enough to be saved. This is why St. Paul could affirm in Romans 13 the providential goodness of even the Roman Empire that had crucified Jesus and would proceed to persecute His followers.

While some people are involved in eternal matters and others in the temporal (and so temporary), people who labor in both realms are equally important in God's plan. Recognizing and affirming both was the crux of Luther's doctrine of vocation. It conferred upon the butcher, baker and candlestick maker the dignity once reserved for the cleric alone.

While the different ends of their labors (one ultimate, one penultimate) must never be confused with one another, both can and should be affirmed.

The problem of late is that it is the clerics who tend to confuse the two, and once their preaching and teaching gets muddled (to state it more strongly, as they engage in pastoral malpractice), all Christians get confused about their roles. The calling of the Church and those who labor within Her is to proclaim the mysteries of God and administer the Sacraments so that people may be saved. As pastors conceive of their own work as primarily about improving people's earthly lot through Christian service, they actually usurp the good and God-ordained vocation of the laity.

This error comes in both its liberal and conservative varieties.

Politically conservative pastors believe (contra Romans 13) that the political order must be Christian or at least have Christian roots if it is to be good, and so they direct much energy to seeing that politicians with the correct religious bona fides are in positions of influence and exhort their flocks to do the same, necessarily robbing time, energy, and effort from the care of souls.

Since contemporary Liberal Protestantism is effectively Universalist, many pastors don't believe people really need saving through the preaching of the gospel, which is their formally defined labor. Such church professionals naturally shift their energies to something that will

(Political cont'd on page 2)



(

(Political cont'd from page 1)

justify their daily labor to themselves and others. At best, this leads to a misplaced emphasis in the Christian life upon transformation of the world God loves through the pursuit of “social justice” rather than its redemption through the preaching of salvation through Christ alone. At worst, it leads to a loss of the gospel itself, as God’s saving work in the world is reduced to our efforts on God’s behalf to improve it.

Both variants leave the Church and the world in crisis, as confused clerics always do. Conversely, clerics who confine their efforts to the proper sphere, fulfilling the Great Commission through the preaching of Christ in Word and Sacrament, empower those disciples (the laity) whose vocation is legitimately to what is going on beyond the Church’s walls. That is where they fulfill the Great Commandment, loving their neighbors as themselves because they have learned from the clerics how to truly love God.

Lutheran CORE exists to encourage the sort of orthodox Lutheran practice wherein clerics of all political persuasions would not abuse their office by directing laity in political matters either by implication or direct exhortation. It is the calling of the garbage collector, bioethicist, road worker, and politician to apply the teachings of Christ in their daily work, their labor for the common welfare. They are to do this in accord with their own best use of reason and prudential judgment, not the supposed insights of their religious betters. Indeed, the preacher who presumes to direct those entrusted to their care in the application of Christian teaching within their own proper sphere of influence is doomed to failure, for they not only act outside the purview of their competency, but outside of their calling from God. (Luther himself fell into this error when he tragically advised the forceful suppression of the peasant uprising of 1524-25.)

In variants of democracy like the representative republic of the United States, what this means is that each Christian has a responsibility to apply Christian teaching to the task of determining who the best candidate for public office is. The question is not “which candidate is the better Christian?” or “which candidate will establish a more Christian order?” but rather, “knowing what I know about human nature from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, which candidate will make choices most conducive to the common welfare?” Christian citizens of different political perspectives will answer this question differently, both out of loyalty to Christ and “the upward call of God” through Him, considering themselves both faithful citizens of the nations they inhabit and “sojourners and exiles” therein, citizens whose foremost loyalty is to God in Jesus Christ. We can only love our neighbors properly when we love God more.

Of course, professional religious people living in such a society have that same responsibility in regards to things political, but when they act as a citizen of the “city of man,” they have a responsibility to take off their collars and put deliberate distance between their role as cleric and their role as earthly citizen, so that no member of the Church mistakes their personal political judgments for the authoritative Christian pronouncement, “thus saith the LORD.”

As we can clearly see, Christians have a calling, a political calling, from God. Their calling is to labor in the polis, the “city of man” for the common good of all people. Their pastor’s calling is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ diligently and without mixing it with their own political ideologies, leading people to faith in Christ alone, teaching them the whole counsel of God, then leaving them to apply Christian teaching faithfully within their own realms of expertise, within their own God-given vocations. This is God’s plan, which Luther recognized and articulated afresh for the good of Christians and all people. Let us embrace this truth... and vive la révolution!

Pastor Jenkins is a mission developer for the North American Lutheran Church.





Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483-1546) stands in history as one of those unique forces, an individual who by force of will and by his ideas changed the world fundamentally. There are several ironies incumbent on Luther's pivotal role in history: 1) he doesn't really represent a break with the past, but rather a flash point where ideas and trends which had been smoldering in Europe for several centuries suddenly blazed aflame; 2) Luther initially saw himself as a great reformer of the Catholic church, a simple monk who thought the force of his ideas would single-handedly redirect the Leviathan of the church; in the end, however, he divided Christianity into two separate churches and that second division, Protestantism, would divide over the next four centuries into a near infinity of separate churches; 3) finally, Luther (and all the other reformers) saw themselves as returning Christianity to its roots, they believed that they were setting the clock back; in reality, their ideas irreparably changed the world and pushed it kicking and screaming, not into some ideal past, but into the modern era.

Luther was not a person you would want to have dinner with; he was temperamental, peevish, egomaniacal, and argumentative. But this single-mindedness, this enormous self-confidence and strident belief in the rightness of his arguments, allowed him to stand against opposition, indeed, to harden his position in the face of death by fire, the usual punishment for heretics. Luther became an Augustinian monk in 1505, disappointing his equally strong-willed father, who wished him to become a lawyer. He earned a doctorate in theology from the University of Wittenberg, but instead of settling down to a placid and scholarly monkish life or an uneventful university career teaching theology, he began to develop his own personal theology, which erupted into outright blasphemy when he protested the use of indulgences in his **95 Theses**.

Indulgences, which were granted by the pope, forgave individual sinners not their sins, but the temporal punishment applied to those sins. These indulgences had become big business in much the same way pledge drives have become big business for public television in modern America. Luther's Theses, which outlined his theological argument against the use of indulgences, were based on the notion that Christianity is fundamentally a phenomenon of the inner world of human beings and had little or nothing to do with the outer world, such as temporal punishments. It is this fundamental argument, not the controversy of the indulgences themselves, that most people in the church disapproved of and that led to Luther's being hauled into court in 1518 to defend his arguments against the cardinal Cajetan. When the interview focused on the spiritual value of "good works," that is, the actions that people do in this world to benefit others and to pay off the debts they've incurred against God by sinning, Cajetan lost his temper and demanded that Luther recant. Luther ran, and his steady scission from the church was set in motion. The Northern Humanists, however, embraced Luther and his ideas.

Luther's first writing was **The Sermon on Good Works**, in which he argued that good works do not benefit the soul; only faith could do that. Things took a turn for the worse: Pope Leo declared 41 articles of Luther's teachings as heretical teachings, and Luther's books were publicly burned in Rome. Luther became more passionate in his effort to reform the church. His treatise, "Address to the Christian Nobility of Germany," pressed for the German nation to use military means to force the church to discuss grievances and reform; "A Prelude concerning the Babylonish Captivity of the Church" literally called for clergy in the church to openly revolt against Rome.

In 1521, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, demanded that Luther appear before the diet of the Holy Roman Empire at Worms. Luther was asked to explain his views and Charles ordered him to recant. Luther refused and he was placed under an imperial ban as an outlaw. He managed to escape, however, and he was hidden away in a castle in Wartburg where he continued to develop his new church.

In a more conciliatory effort, Luther wrote a letter to Pope Leo explaining the substance of his ideas, *Von der Freiheit des Christenmenschen*, "On the Freedom of the Christian," from which your readings have been selected. This conciliation didn't work (the treatise is not, in fact, very conciliatory, but somewhat arrogant), and Luther was excommunicated from the church in 1521. What had started as a furious attempt to reform the church overnight turned into a project of building a new church independent of the Catholic church. Nevertheless, this small work, "The Freedom of the Christian," is the theological and ideological core of Luther's thinking; the fundamental term of value, that center around which every other aspect of his thought rotates, is the concept of **Freiheit**, "freedom," or "liberty." This is not our concept of freedom, but in the eventual turn of time it will give rise to the notion of "individual freedom," and later "political freedom," and later "economic freedom." Most of the European Enlightenment revolves around freedom and the project of "liberating" people: liberating them from false beliefs, from false religion, from arbitrary authority, etc.--that is, what we will be calling "liberation discourse." Westerners still participate in this Enlightenment project today. This idea of "liberating" people, so common to the international politics of our own period, comes out of Luther's idea of "freedom."



Reformation Day

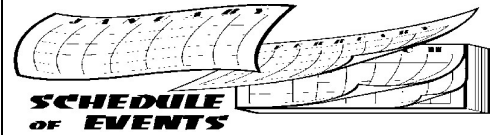
OCTOBER 2023



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

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

World Communion Sunday October 1						
1 18 th Sun Pentecost	2 LCMC Gathering	3	4	5	6	7
8 19 th Sun Pentecost	9	10 Prayer Group	11	12	13 Cotton Ginning Day Thur the 15th	14 CLW Convocation
15 20 th Sun Pentecost	16	17	18	19 Early Voting begins	20	21
22 21 st Sun Pentecost	23	24 CLW Group	25	26	27	28
29 REFORMATION SUNDAY	30	31 Reformation Day				



- **October 1**— 18th Sunday after Pentecost
World Holy Communion Day
Life Chain of Gaston (see p.6)
Pastor Appreciation Day
Pro-Life "Prayer and Witness"
- **October 6-8**—Heritage & Harvest Days
- **October 8**—19th Sunday after Pentecost
- **October 10**— Columbus Day
Prayer Group will meet at Home of Shirlee Marazza at 2:00 pm
- **October 13-15**—Cotton Ginning Days
- **October 14**— **CLW Convocation**
- **October 15**—20th Sunday after Pentecost
- **October 19**—Early Voting begins
- **October 22**— 21st Sunday after Pentecost
- **October 24**— CLW Group
- **October 29**—**Reformation Sunday**
- **October 31**—Reformation Day



Trunk or Treat— page 11

Holy Communion Schedule:



ALL SUNDAYS

Worship Service Assistance:

- Acolyte: OSLC Member
- Communion Asst: OSLC Member
- Lay Reader:
- Worship Asst:
- Greeters: OSLC Members
- Ushers: OSLC Members

Devotions: Alice Vlaservich
Collection: Teri Trudnak



Food Collection

FOOD FOR THE MONTH:

Soup, Mac & Chesse, Lima Beans



CHOIR PRATICE
Wednesday at 4:00 pm



Birthdays



APTISMAL ANNIVERSARY

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 3 Denise Traveria | Nation Finger |
| 4 Chase Messick | Alice Vlaservich |
| Allie Trudnak | Nora Cole |
| 5 Christian Clemmer | Bryten Cole |
| 18 Amelia Rea Schmideler | |
| 20 Jean Huffstetler | |
| 21 Jeff Lineberger | |

Amelia Rae Schmideler



15th**Tony & Kathy Trudnak**

FLOWERS

Flower Schedule:

- October 1 Nick Vlaservich
- October 8 Open
- October 15 Open
- October 22 Maria Robinson
- October 29 Open



History of Halloween



The Word on Hallows Eve

The word Halloween comes from the phrase 'All Hallows Eve.' It is the evening before the Catholic Church holiday on November 1st known as, All Hallows Day, All Saint's Day, All Souls Day, or All Hallowmas Day. In Old English, Hallow means sanctify. In the past on November 1st, Catholics honored all saints while Romans prayed for the dead *and* honored saints. Halloween, the night before this, has many different customs and origins attached to its history.

Perhaps the oldest recordings of a celebration on Halloween are that of a druidic fire festival called Samhain. This was celebrated by the Celts (people who now live in Great Britain and Northern France), in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. It meant the closing of a harvest and the beginning of winter. After the Romans conquered most of that territory, they combined two of their own festivals with the traditional Celtic ritual of Samhain. The first Roman festival was called Feralia. This was a day in late October set aside to commemorate the passing of the dead. The second Roman festival was to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of the harvest or fruit and trees. Her symbol was the apple, which could be the reason we bob for apples on Halloween.

Trick or Treat for Prayers?

As with the history of Halloween, there are many different ways the act of trick or treating came about. One is from the 19th century custom called souling. This means Christians would walk from town to town on Halloween night, begging for soul cakes. The soul cakes were actually square pieces of bread made with currants. The more soul cakes people received, the more prayers they had to say for the dead family members of the donors. During this time, people believed the dead remained in limbo for a while after death. They also thought that prayer, even by strangers, could speed up a soul's passage to heaven.

There was another recording of the handing out of souls cakes, this time to *poor* citizens. It was also in exchange for prayers for the family's dead relatives. The church encouraged this as a way to replace the practice of leaving food and wine on doorsteps for roaming spirits.

Europeans and Celts believed that to avoid the spirits, they should wear masks when they left their homes. The Celts also believed that on Halloween, the disembodied spirits of everyone who had died that past year, would come back to search for bodies to possess. So the people put out all their fires and disguised themselves with masks and costumes and marched around town trying to ward off the spirits.

Today, families can avoid having tricks played on them if they give the kids who wander door-to-door, Halloween treats.

Party Time

Eventually, the customs of European immigrants combined with American and American Indian customs. Although annual autumnal festivals were common, the very first American Halloween celebrations were called 'play parties.' At these public events people celebrated the harvest, shared stories of the

dead, told each other's fortunes, danced, sang, and told ghost stories. During the second half of the 19th century, a new flood of millions of immigrants fleeing the Ireland potato famine of 1846 came to America. This created the meshing of Irish and English Halloween traditions, and people began dressing up in costumes and going house to house for visits. In the 1800's there was a push to make Halloween more of a community-based event, and anything scary and gross was forbidden. In the 20th century, because of the 1950's baby boom, there were a lot of children. Vandalism increased during the celebration of Halloween.

Traditions or Trade-Offs?

As told before, the idea of bobbing for apples could have come from the Roman goddess of the harvest and her scared fruit of apples.

The name 'witch' comes from the Saxon Wicca meaning 'wise one.' A sacred ointment was rubbed on the skin of the which, to give them a feeling of flying.

The use of Jack-O-Lanterns perhaps comes from when children used to carve out potatoes or turnips and light them for Halloween gatherings. The name Jack most likely comes from a story of 'Jack the Irish Villain.' It was about a man rejected by good and evil, who wandered the world forever looking for a place to rest. His only warmth came from a small candle in a rotten potato. With the Irish potato famine from 1845-50, almost 700,000 people immigrated to the Americas. They brought with them the Jack-O-Lantern tradition but turnips were scarce. The pumpkin became a good replacement because there were a lot of them around.

Masks were worn to scare off demons and evil spirits and to keep people from being recognized.

WALK FOR LIFE report

The Walk for Life was sponsored by Crisis Pregnancy Center of Gaston County, Inc. on September 8, 2023 Our church raised **\$839.00**. Several members contributed time, money, and prayer. Thanks to all who gave. From all over Gaston County, church members joined in this Walk for Life and have exceeded their goal of \$54,000 and funds are still coming in to reach our goal.

The mission statement of Crisis Pregnancy Center is:

The Crisis Pregnancy Center of Gaston County, Inc. affirms the value of life by compassionately sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ and providing the following services: Pregnancy Counseling, Abstinence Education, Limited Ultrasounds and various other Medical Services, Adolescent Parenting Programs, Post Abortion Counseling to women, men, and families affected by crisis pregnancy situations, with the hope of changing lives. Phone number 704-868-4636. Address: 800 Robinson Road Gastonia, NC, 28056,

website:www.cpcgaston.org

Thank you Marie Robinson for working with Walk4Life



725 Gastonia Technology Parkway
Post Office Box 457
Dallas, North Carolina 28034
Phone: 705-922-4648 Email: oslcdallas@aol.com

EVENTS for:

Agrape/Kure Beach

Contact Camp Agapé:

Telephone: 919-552-9421

e-mail: agape@agapekurebeach.org

Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:

Telephone 910-458-0783

e-mail: kurebreach@agapekurebeach.org

Web site: 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



Where Will You Stand?

Life Chain, a one-hour, pro-life prayer and witness event, has been held annually since 1987, in thousands of cities and towns across the United States and Canada. The 2023 National Life Chain will be held on **Sunday, October 1, 2023 from 2:00 – 3:30 PM**. We are thrilled to have three locations in Gaston County: Belmont, Gastonia and Mount Holly! See **Event Details** for more information about the sites.

How it Works: Participants arrive early to park and pick up a sign and then space themselves 10- 15 feet apart on the sidewalk. At 2:00 PM we join the rest of the Life Chains across the United States and Canada and, for just one hour, pray quietly for the unborn and for a conversion of our nation on the issue of abortion. The reverse side of the signs are printed with prayers and hymns to aid your prayer but feel free to bring or say your own prayers. **Everyone is welcome and no RSVP is necessary. Just show up at your preferred location on the day of the event! Signs will be provided.**

Gastonia

Location: Sidewalks of E. Garrison Blvd from Union Rd to New Hope Rd

Parking: Parkwood Baptist Church, Grier Middle School, East Garrison Baptist Church, Public Library or Lineberger Park

Sign Pick Up: Along the sidewalks of the route
Strollers, walkers, chairs, etc., are welcome
Arrive early

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD (SHOE BOX) IS COMING!

What is Operation Christmas Child?

This annual project enables caring individuals, families, schools, churches, businesses, and other organizations to fill ordinary shoe boxes with small toys, school supplies, sweets, and other gifts for needy children around the world.

Operation Christmas Child sends a message of hope to children in need around the world through gift-filled shoe boxes.



Operation Christmas Child is the world's largest children's Christmas project. Since 1990 the project has brought the joy of Christmas to more than 47 million boys and girls throughout the world. Last year we sent 1.24 million shoe boxes from the UK to children in hospitals, orphanages, Internally Displaced Persons camps, homeless shelters and impoverished neighborhoods. With your help we want to reach even more children in the poorest parts of the world in 2018.

Your gift is powerful!

Your shoe box will make a child feel special and valued, and let them know that you care about them. Choosing gifts and then wrapping and filling a shoe box is a fun and rewarding activity for all the family – especially when you know these gifts are going to be used and treasured.

From you to a child in need.

Your shoe box will be hand delivered to a child in need, asking nothing from them in return. All boxes are given to the neediest children regardless of nationality, political background or religious beliefs. Operation Christmas Child empowers local overseas partners to ensure that your shoe boxes are delivered with the highest levels of integrity and respect. Where appropriate and in culturally sensitive ways, our local overseas partners will make available a booklet of Bible stories, which gives a message of hope and includes an explanation of the true meaning of Christmas – God's gift of His Son, Jesus

Church News



OUTREACH MISSION
SHUT-INS
NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Please remember our church members who are shut-ins or reside in a nursing home/Living Center* and visit them.

If you know of anyone,
please let the church office know

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS



NEEDED

FOR

OCTOBER

Be a servant of the Lord

Sign Up

If you need a Pastor,
please contact Pastor Pete Feige at 704-516-2805
or our office at 704-922-4648.



CLW GROUP

WILL BE MEETING AT THE HOME OF ALICE VLASERVICH
ON OCTOBER 24 AT 2:00 PM,



PRAYER GROUP

WILL MEET AT THE HOME OF SHIRLEE MARAZZA
ON OCTOBER 10 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 5:13-15)

PRAYER CONCERNS: MARGARET Addington, SETH Alexander, AMANDA (friend of the Penley's), MARVIS Anderson, WHITNEY Auten (breast cancer), LEAH Bradley (Marsha Patton; sister-Pituitary tumor and upcoming surgery), KELLY Ballard (friend of Shana Dease), NORMAN Bever (Brother-in-law of Brady Ratchford-stroke), ADDISON Blanton (friend of Dease's), KATHY Bohanan (cancer), RHONDA Bradley (Marsha Patton's mom, surgery for foot fusion), KAREN Brady, MIKE Coffey (Robbie Wooten's uncle), STEVE Cloninger (friend of Brady Ratchford-cancer), ROB Curley (cancer), STEVE Digh (cancer), JULIE Digh (Thyroid) HARDY Feige (Pete's dad - chronic back pain), GLEEN Fraizer (friend of Steve & Julie Digh -cancer), DON Gardner (John Patton's uncle- lung cancer metastasized to brain-possible final days), BECKY Goodwin (friend of Brady's - cancer), JASON Hames (friend of the White's), GRACE Harbin (friend of Robbie Wooten-cancer), 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), CARL Martin (friend of Pattons-multiple myeloma plus chemo) 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), ANDY Peeden (cancer), SONDRRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White), BRADY Ratchford, JAN Splawn (friend of Robbie Wooten- cancer) TERI Trudnak, TONY Trudnak (cancer reoccurring), GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), KENT Wilborn (friend of Robbie Wooten-heart surgery) NANCY Wilson, MARY BETH Wright (cousin of Nick Vlaservich -cancer).





OCTOBER 1-4, 2023 | ST. CHARLES CONVENTION | ST. CHARLES, MO

<https://www.lcmc.net/annual-gathering>

Prepare for a gathering like never before as LCMC 3.0 takes us into new waters...

We're about to set forth on a new adventure, and we would love for you to come along!

It's no secret that we've grown quite a bit since we held our first Annual Gathering & Convention in 2001, but with that growth comes many new challenges, questions, and opportunities. Consequently, it is time for us to join together and intentionally take a look at who we are and where we need to go from here. Our nickname for this new season of doing life and ministry together? LCMC 3.0.

As an association of congregations, LCMC is focused on four main principles:

- We're free in Christ
- We're accountable to one another
- We're rooted in the scriptures and in the Lutheran Confessions
- We're all working together to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to go and make disciples of all nations

Working together is essential if we're going to keep moving forward. Every congregation, leader, and member of our association is important and has something to offer in order to fulfill the call that God has given us. That's why we chose "All Hands on Deck" as the theme of our 23rd Annual Gathering & Convention.

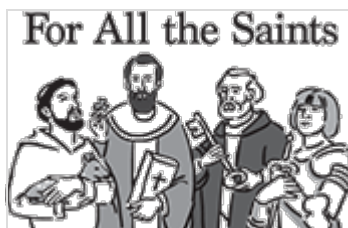
If there's one thing we know about ships, it's that they are not made for the harbor. In order for us to be able to take on the challenge of navigating new waters, we need a strong and functioning crew. That's where YOU come in!

We hope you will consider joining us October 1-4, 2023 at the Saint Charles Convention Center in St. Charles, MO for our upcoming Annual Gathering & Convention. You'll have a chance to connect with other people in LCMC, explore what God is doing in us and through us as we enter this new season of LCMC 3.0, and weigh in on some ways in which we can all work together to make that happen!

Livestream Information:

Unable to make it this year? We will be livestreaming the event for those who are unable to attend in person. More information on how to access the livestream will be available on this page in October.

All times listed on the event schedule are in local time for Lakeville, MN. If you are making plans to tune in via livestream, be sure to adjust for any time zone differences



2023 Mission Emphasis for October :

SAMARITAN'S PURSE

ABOUT US

After sharing the story of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said "Go and do likewise." That is the mission of Samaritan's Purse—to follow the example of Christ by helping those in need and proclaiming the hope of the Gospel.

Mission Statement

Samaritan's Purse is a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world. Since 1970, Samaritan's Purse has helped meet needs of people who are victims of war, poverty, natural disasters, disease, and famine with the purpose of sharing God's love through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The organization serves the Church worldwide to promote the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

SHOE BOX STORY

Yuliya received a shoebox at age 9 in a Central Asian country.

When I lifted the lid on my purple plastic shoebox, the first thing I saw was a stuffed dog. I was filled with exuberant joy! I just remember hugging it.

Even though I had toys growing up, the dog was an item you couldn't find in my country. It was really soft and had puppy eyes. *"It was my new best friend, my newfound treasure."*

My second favorite item was bubble gum-flavored toothpaste that came in a pink tube. We didn't know such a thing existed. We would squeeze out a bit the size of the tip of a match so we could get a little bit of flavor and make it last as long as possible.

Word traveled fast. My friends would line up in our bathroom and my sister and I would squeeze out a tiny amount on their toothbrushes. I think we made it last about two years.

My third favorite item was an Etch A Sketch. At first we had no idea what it was. We kept pushing down on the buttons and asking, "Why is it not working?"

After having it displayed on a shelf for a couple of months, my sister was dusting and she turned the knobs. When she saw the line going up and down on the screen she was so excited. The item we thought was broken was drawing!

The toys were the most important things. "Here was someone I'd never met ... to me as a 9-year-old it also stood

out that the letter in the box said, *"I am praying for you."* As time went on, I realized why she was still praying for me."

We became pen pals and she would always close her letters, "I am praying for you." I always wondered, "Why is she praying for me?" The impact hit me more than seven years later after I became a Christian. She was showing me the love of Christ all along, starting with the shoebox and continuing in her prayers. "She specifically chose that dog for me and wanted to use it to communicate God's love."

The shoebox was a seed. That's how the Lord works. He patiently knocks on the door of our heart and waits until we open the door. Sometimes you see fruit right away and other times it takes years for the seed to grow.

I still have my stuffed dog 15 years later. That's a glimpse of how much the shoebox meant to me because it was packed with love and prayer. It wasn't just any dog. I could tell she specifically chose that dog for me and wanted to use it to communicate God's love.

Shoebox stories is a 13-week series by shoebox recipients telling about the eternal impact of a simple gift.

Check back each Monday from www.samaritanspurse.org for the next installment

Operation Christmas Child delivers great joy to millions of children around the world through shoeboxes lovingly and prayerfully packed with gifts that will bring delight to a child. In the hands of local churches, every gift-filled shoebox is a powerful tool for evangelism and discipleship—transforming the lives of children and their families around the world through the Good News of Jesus Christ!

After receiving shoebox gifts, boys and girls are invited to enroll in The Greatest Journey, our 12-lesson discipleship program, where children learn what it means to faithfully follow Christ and share their faith with others.

The story of the Good Samaritan (Mark 10:30-37) gives a clear picture of God's desire for us to help those in desperate need wherever we find them.

After describing how the Samaritan rescued a hurting man whom others had passed by, Jesus told His hearers, "Go and do likewise."

For over 40 years, Samaritan's Purse has done our utmost to follow Christ's command by going to the aid of the world's poor, sick, and suffering. We are an effective means of reaching hurting people in countries around the world with food, medicine, and other assistance in the Name of Jesus Christ. This, in turn, earns us a hearing for the Gospel, the Good News of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

(Purse cont'd from p 9)

As our teams work in crisis areas of the world, people often ask, "Why did you come?" The answer is always the same: "We have come to help you in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

In addition to Operation Christmas Child, they have many other expressions of God's Love. Very visible in the USA as well as overseas is International Crisis Response, helping those in emergency

As the Apostle Paul said, "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5, NIV).

HOW TO PACK A SHOEBOX**Find a cardboard or plastic shoebox.**

Decide who would receive it:

Boy or girl:

Ages: 2-4
5-9
10-14

Fill with gifts:

Select a "wow" toy, such as:

Soccer ball and pump, doll,
Stuffed animal, musical instrument, as harmonica,
Clothes, shoes

Other suggestions:

Yo-yo, jump rope, ball, toys that light up (with extra batteries,)

School supplies: pen pencils, sharpeners, markers, crayons, picture and coloring books, playing cards, scissors, stamps

Accessories: t-shirt, socks, hats, sunglasses, hair clips, jewelry, watches, flashlight (extra batteries)

Crafts that you make, such as:

Finger puppets, friendship bracelet

Hygiene items: toothbrush, and toothpaste, bar soap (in plastic bag), comb, brush

Things not to include:

Guns, knives, military figures,

Chocolate—hard candy

Liquids,

Medication or vitamins

Anything breakable such as:

Snow globes

Aerosol cans

****You can pick up a card Shoebox in the hallway of the Ed Bldg. on October 4 or use a plastic box.

Martin Luther's Seal

"From the wilderness of Koburg Castle" 8 July 1530

Honorable, kind, dear Sir and Friend!

Grace and Peace in Christ!

Since you ask whether my seal has come out correctly, I shall answer most amiably and tell you of those thoughts which now come to my mind about my seal as a symbol of my theology. There is first to be a cross, black, and placed in a heart, which should be of its natural color (red), to put me in mind that faith in Christ crucified saved us. For if one believes from the heart, he will be justified. ["For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved." --Romans 10:10] Even though it is a black cross, which mortifies and which also should hurt us, yet it leaves the heart in its natural color and does not ruin nature...that is, the cross does not kill, but keeps man alive. For the just shall live by faith, by faith in the Savior. ["This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, 'It is through faith that a righteous person has life.'" --Romans 1:17]

Such a heart is to be in the midst of a white rose, to symbolize that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. In a word, it places the believer into a white joyful rose, for this faith does not give peace and joy as the world gives. ["I am leaving you with a gift--peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid." --John 14:27] Therefore, the rose is to be white, not red, for white is the color of the spirits and of all angels. ["..an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled aside the stone and sat on it. His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow." --Matthew 28:2b-3 and "She saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying." --John 20:12]

This rose, moreover, is fixed in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that such joy in the Spirit and in faith is a beginning of the future heavenly joy. It is already a part of faith, and is grasped through hope, even though not yet manifest.

And around this field is a golden ring, to signify that such bliss in heaven is endless, and more precious than all joys and goods, just as gold is the most valuable and precious metal.

"May Christ, our dear Lord, be with your spirit until the life to come. Amen."





The Heritage and Harvest Days Festival will be held at the Dallas Park (date not set yet).

Not familiar with that name?

It's brand new, replacing the Cotton Ginning Days.

Exhibitors from all over the southeast will convene in Dallas, North Carolina (date not set yet) for the annual 'crank-up' of antique steam and gasoline engines and tractors. In addition to the engine show, many activities are planned including a Kids **County** Fair, Heritage Arts Area, Handmade Craft vendors and Music. As always, the food is good and admission and parking are free.

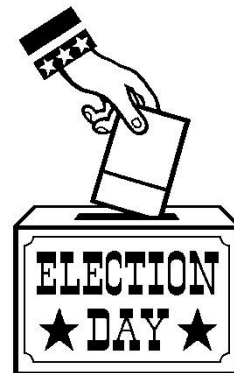
The festival will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday. The festival will be held rain or shine, and there is no charge for either admission or parking.

Dallas Park is located at 1303 Dallas Cherryville Highway in Dallas.



TRUNK OR TREAT
Oct. 31 from 5-7 pm
Dallas Court Square

Sponsored by the Town of Dallas
 Local Businesses
 And Local Churches



2023 GENERAL ELECTION
EARLY VOTING BEGINS OCTOBER 19
AND ENDS NOVEMBER 4

ELECTION DAY—NOVEMBER 7

VOTER ID REQUIRED-PAGES 15-17

N.C. Legislature Bans Transgender Treatment for Minors.

North Carolina became the 22nd state to ban transgender treatments for minors following the state legislature's override of its Democratic governor's veto.

The North Carolina General Assembly on Aug. 16 overrode Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of House Bill 808, one of three veto overrides of bills impacting transgender youth.

Gender transition medical procedures, puberty-blocking drugs and hormone treatments for those under age 18 are now illegal in the state, and medical professionals violating the law will face revocation of their medical license.

The veto override for HB 808 passed the House 74-45 (with two votes to spare) and the Senate 27-18 (zero votes to spare). A veto override in North Carolina requires a three-fifths majority. Notably, two House Democrats, State Reps. Michael Wray and Garland Pierce, voted against the bill's original passage in June but voted for the veto override—and against the governor from their own party.

A federal judge struck down a similar law in Arkansas, and courts have blocked the enforcement of such laws in Alabama, Florida, Indiana and Kentucky, according to the tracking site of the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ lobbying group.

But increasingly, federal appeals courts are overruling activist judges and upholding parental rights and protections of children from unnecessary and irreversible medical procedures that often leave patients with severe emotional and physical scars.

In early July, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit upheld Tennessee's law banning "gender-affirming" care for minors in the state. And earlier this month, the 11th Circuit followed suit and upheld Alabama's law prohibiting the same.

In addition to the states named above, similar laws banning such procedures have been passed in Arizona, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and West Virginia.

North Carolina legislators also overrode Cooper's vetoes of two additional bills impacting transgender youth.

SB 49 establishes a "parent's bill of rights" and requires "public school units and all public school unit personnel" to "fully support and cooperate in implementing a well-planned, inclusive, and comprehensive program to assist parents and families in effectively participating in their child's education." It requires "age-appropriate instruction" for K-4th grade curriculum, which excludes "instruction on gender identity, sexual activity, or sexuality."

The veto override for SB 49 passed the House 72-47 and the Senate 27-18, the slimmest possible margin for the required three-fifths majority.

HB 574 requires "athletic teams designated for females, women, or girls shall not be open to students of the male sex," and it recognizes sex "based solely on a person's reproductive biology and genetics at birth."

"Girls should not have to worry about having to compete against biological males in sports," said State Rep. Jennifer Balkcom (R), who sponsored the bill, "and this legislation will protect female athletes from such unfair and unsafe competition."

The veto override for HB 574 passed the House 74-45 and the Senate 27-18, earning the votes of two House Democrats, Wray and Pierce. Pierce flipped from voting against the bill in June to voting for it in August.

Pro-family advocates in North Carolina praised the Republican-led legislature's reversals of Gov. Cooper's vetoes. "Bodies play sports, not identities, and this bill ensures North Carolina girls and women won't be benched in their own sports and can train confidently knowing they have a safe and level playing field," said N.C. Values Executive Director Tami Fitzgerald regarding HB 574. With regard to SB 49, she added, "Parents already have the fundamental right to oversee the education and upbringing of their own children, but public schools have slowly been usurping those rights by hiding information and slipping radical ideologies into their lessons."

North Carolina Family Policy Council President John Rustin relished the legislative victories. "NC Family is extremely grateful for all the lawmakers and citizens who championed the passage of these extremely important bills that are designed to protect the health and safety of children and families in North Carolina," he told The Washington Stand. "The fact that veto override votes were necessary to enact these commonsense laws is tragic, but we praise God for providing the ultimate victory!"

The North Carolina legislative majority has also leveraged its slim veto-override margin for pro-life gains as well. In May, state Republicans passed a significant test of their coalition by enacting legislation protecting the unborn after 12 weeks' gestation (up from 20 weeks).

Male and Female He Created Them

By Michael Brown
(from Decision Magazine)

Back in 2004, when God first burdened me about the impact homosexual activism was having on our society, I was deeply concerned about the issues. But that concern quickly deepened, as I felt the Lord's heart of compassion for the *people*.

In the months that followed, this mandate filled my heart: "Reach out and resist," meaning, "Reach out to the people with compassion; resist the agenda with courage."

As for the *people*, we are confronted with their stories every day.

A distraught woman emails our ministry, not knowing what to do after her husband, who is the father of their four children, announces he is leaving her and moving in with another man.

A pastor's wife calls my radio show, facing a difficult, first-time situation. A faithful brother in the congregation just shared with the pastor that he was actually born a woman and had sex-change surgery years ago, supplemented since then by hormones.

The church only knew this person as Richard, but now "Richard" was feeling convicted, realizing that he was really she. What counsel should the church give? Did the Bible have anything to say?

In the days ahead, we will be facing more and more situations just like this, right in our congregations and homes. And in each situation, we will be meeting real people, all of them created in the image of God and loved by Him, people for whom Jesus died.

It is essential that we have hearts of compassion, listening, seeking to understand, demonstrating genuine love and concern—along with backbones of steel, refusing to water down God's holy standards, knowing that His ways are the ways of life.

When it comes to the *issues*, these confront us every day as well.

- The BLM movement was founded by radical feminists who identify as queer. One of their goals was to disrupt what they termed the "Western, nuclear family."
- The Democratic National Platform for 2020 mentioned the words *God* and *Christian* once each, while *transgender* occurred 15 times and *LGBTQ* 32 times. How will this translate into school policies that will impact our children? How will this translate into court cases that will infringe on our liberties?

A recent participant in an LGBTQ panel discussion for the Democratic National Convention identifies as a "Black-Vietnamese, transgender nonbinary/gender transcendent mermaid Queen-King currently living out their ever-evolving truths in Winston-Salem, NC."

This is what happens when we forget that, in the beginning, God made us male and female (Genesis 1:26-27), a truth reiterated by Jesus in the New Testament (see Matthew 19:4-6). This is what happens when we lose sight of the fact that we are uniquely created in the image of God. This is why we have lost our way.

Conversely, only a return to these foundational, Biblical truths can get us back on the path to truth and reality—the path to wholeness, both spiritually and emotionally. And that's why the church must lead the way in declaring that God's ways are best, that there can be freedom and new life for everyone, including those all across the LGBTQ spectrum.

In my 2015 book *Outlasting the Gay Revolution*, I wrote, "As fundamental as marriage is to every society, there is something even more fundamental, namely, male-female distinctions. These distinctions go back to the beginning of our existence as human beings, as stated in the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible: 'So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female' (Genesis 1:27). That is why, regardless of the culture, nationality, ethnicity, or skin color, every society has men and women, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, boys and girls. This is another reason why the gay revolution stands on very tenuous ground: It is rendering gender meaningless."

That is one major reason why there is so much pushback in our society today against the genital mutilation and chemical sterilization of children. That's why so many parents are pushing back against radical trans activism in their children's schools, where their daughters are forced to share locker rooms and bathrooms with boys who identify as girls. That's why major companies like Target and Anheuser-Busch have lost billions of dollars because of their aggressive, pro-trans positions.

People are saying enough is enough.

Gender distinctions do matter. Boys are not girls and girls are not boys. God made us male and female for a reason.

(Male/Female cont'd on page 18)

A Stewardship Minute

“Money is deeply and significantly symbolic. It isn’t just a silver coin or a piece of engraved paper; it represents our time and our talents as well. It is symbolic because when we give of our money, we are giving of ourselves. And the contrary is also true; when we withhold our money, we are withholding of ourselves.”

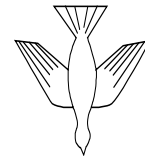
Real stewardship means more than giving money for God’s work on earth. It involves offering all that we are and all that we have to serve our Creator who is the Giver of all in the

first place: body, mind, spirit, talent and energy. Stewardship is fulfilling God’s plan for us as we live, serve, and give our all for the one who made us and keeps us here on earth.

There is a story about a man who understood the requirements of being a faithful steward. Another man observed his seemingly tireless work on behalf of his church and the community asked the man why he did so much to serve God and needy people in the town where he lived. The worthy steward replied by saying that he believed God was Lord and King over all the earth. He believed it was a privilege to serve as a servant and use his life to work on behalf of the kingdom of God. He might also have said that we Christians often pray for God’s

Kingdom to come and for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven. If that is so, why shouldn’t we try to help make the prayer come true by being worthy servants of the Lord here and now?

Prayer: Lord of us all, make us restless until we find rest by loving and serving you. Help us to remember daily that Jesus lived on earth as one who served. Guide us so that we may do the same. In his name. **Amen**



(Male/Female cont’d on page 18)

That’s why, in the Bible, every single reference to marriage, to family, to parenting; every law, every custom, every teaching, every illustration, every parable, presupposes male-female relationships—*every single one*.

This ranges from “Honor your father and mother” to specific teachings for husbands and wives. Male-female distinctions lay at the very foundation of human existence and the proper ordering of this world. Tamper with these, and you tamper with everything.

Which way will America go? We stand at the crossroads today. ©2023 Michael Brown

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holman Christian Standard Bible®, ©1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2009 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Holman Christian Standard Bible®, Holman CSB®, and HCSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Michael Brown, Ph.D., is a national and international speaker, and the author of more than 40 books.

++++
++++

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY



Why is World Communion important to the church? On this day churches around the world will come to the Table of the Lord as an expression of their oneness in Jesus Christ. The liturgy, sermon, and celebration of the Lord's Supper are all designed to highlight the unity of the Church of Christ world-wide.

The official day of World Communion Sunday is **October 1, 2023**. All are encouraged to celebrate this Sunday on any Sunday throughout the year.



NORTH CAROLINA

Voter Photo ID Requirement

Beginning with the 2023 municipal elections, North Carolina voters will be asked to show photo ID when they check in to vote. Voters who vote by mail will be asked to include a photocopy of an acceptable ID when returning their ballot by mail.

For detailed information about the photo ID requirement, go to ncsbe.gov/voter-ID.



WHAT PHOTO ID CAN I USE?

Any of the following that is, **unexpired or expired for one year or less:**

- North Carolina Driver's License
- U.S. Passport/U.S. Passport Card
- State ID ("non-operator ID"), from the NCDMV
- NC Voter Photo ID card, issued by a county board of elections (*available soon*)
- College/university student ID approved by NCSBE
- Charter school employee ID approved by NCSBE
- State/local government employee ID approved by NCSBE
- Driver's license/non-driver ID from another state, D.C. or U.S. territory (*only if voter registered in NC within 90 days of election*)

Any of the following, **regardless of whether the ID contains an expiration or issuance date:**

- Military or veteran ID card issued by the U.S. government
- Tribal enrollment card issued by a State or federally recognized tribe
- ID card issued by a U.S. government agency or the State of NC for a public assistance program

Note: Voters ages 65+ may use an expired ID if it was unexpired on their 65th birthday.

To see the complete list of acceptable photo ID's and details on how to request State Board approval for student and employee ID's, visit ncsbe.gov/voter-ID.



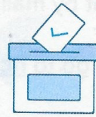


WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE A PHOTO ID?


All voters **will be allowed to vote with or without a photo ID**. If any voter is unable to show a photo ID when voting, they may:

FREE PHOTO ID CARDS


Any North Carolina resident can get a free non-driver's ID from the NCDMV. All county boards of elections will soon be able to issue free voter photo IDs to registered voters in their county. County board contact information can be found at vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEinfo.



Vote with a **Provisional Ballot**, and...



Complete an **ID Exception Form**



Return to the elections office with ID by the day before county canvass.

On the form, the voter will **choose from the following permitted exceptions:**

- Voter has a "reasonable impediment" preventing them from showing ID.
- Voter has a religious objection to being photographed.
- Voter was a victim of a natural disaster within 100 days before Election Day.

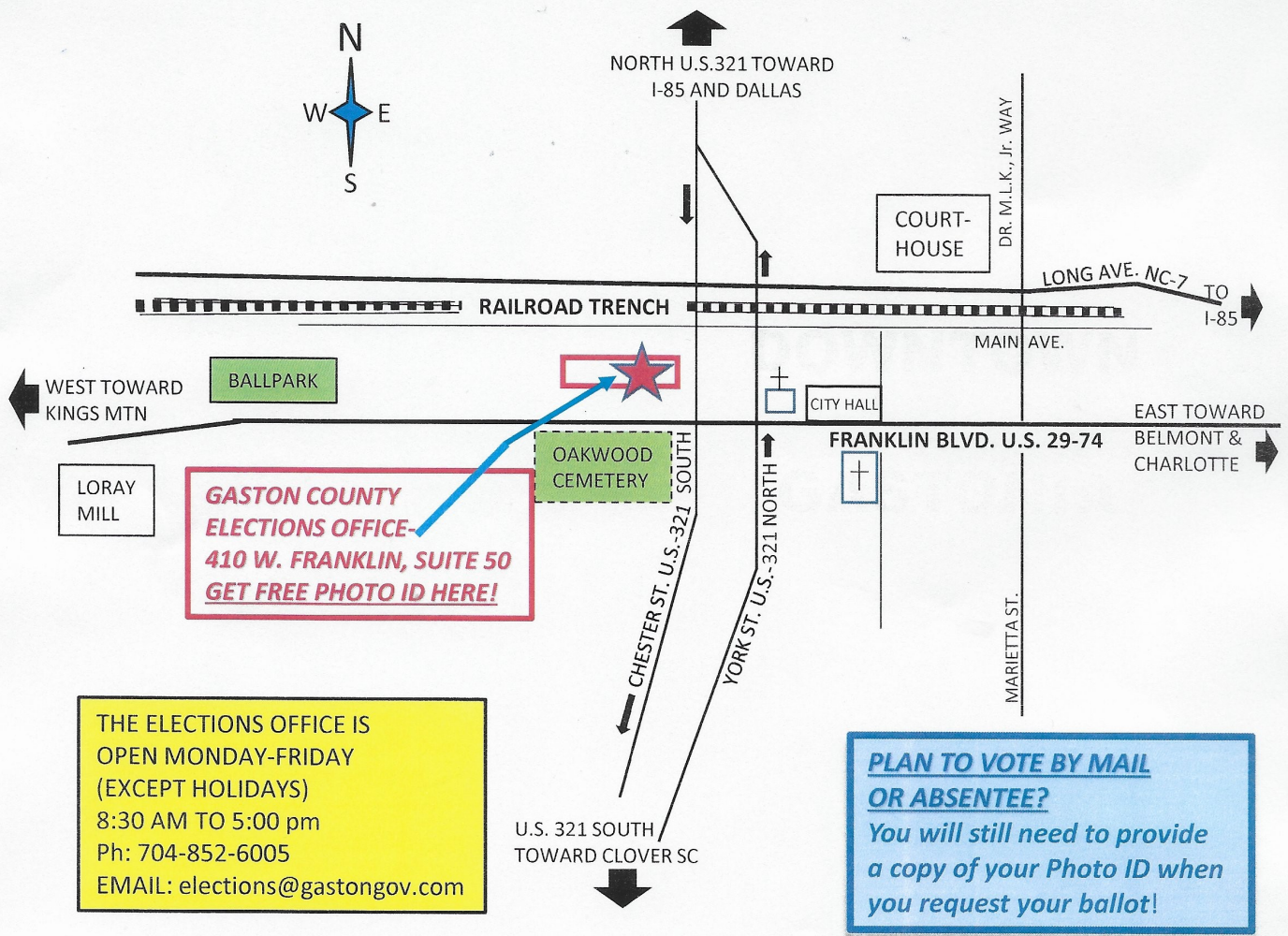
Information regarding North Carolina's voter ID requirement is updated frequently; for the latest guidance on this law, acceptable types of photo ID, voting procedures, exceptions and more, visit ncsbe.gov/voter-ID.

This resource was last updated: July 1st, 2023.



NOTICE

ALL VOTERS WILL NOW BE ASKED TO SHOW AN OFFICIAL PHOTO IDENTIFICATION (ID) TO VOTE. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE AN ACCEPTABLE ID FOR VOTING, AN EASY WAY TO GET ONE FOR FREE IS AT THE GASTON COUNTY ELECTIONS OFFICE, LOCATED AT 410 W. FRANKLIN BLVD., SUITE 50 IN DOWNTOWN GASTONIA. SEE MAP BELOW:



IF YOU NEED FURTHER HELP OR ADVICE IN OBTAINING AN ACCEPTABLE PHOTO ID TO VOTE, CALL: 704-852-6005

Stewardship

Inspiring a deeper understanding of true giving

October 2023

There is a story about a prosperous farmer who was a very poor financial supporter of his church, his pastor went to visit him in hopes of getting him to increase his giving. The pastor pointed out to him that the Lord had given him a fertile piece of land and had blessed him with sunshine and rain so that his crops would grow.

The preacher added, "You know, this farm and everything you have is really on loan to you from God. You should be more grateful." The farmer replied, "I don't mean to complain, Reverend, but you should have seen what a mess this place was when the Lord was running it by himself!"

Most of us can sympathize quite well with that farmer. On one level, we would probably agree that the preacher was right in saying that everything we have comes from God, but on another level we may well feel that whatever worthwhile has been made of what we have been given is our own doing.

From God's hand

There is a natural sense of pride we feel when we have accomplished something and that makes us reluctant to share the credit, even with God. But to say that all things come to us from God's hand is to acknowledge that behind everything is God. Without God's grace, blessings, and mercy, we literally could not exist. God is, in the ultimate sense, the King of our world.

There have always been people who felt as this farmer did, however. Many of the kings we read about in the Bible

were very concerned to have the record of their accomplishments widely known and revered. Some even wanted to be treated as gods themselves and have their subjects worship them.

But common people in the Bible were infected with this "look at what I've

"It is God's power to provide you richly with every good gift; thus you will have ample means in yourselves to meet each and every situation, with enough to spare for every good cause."

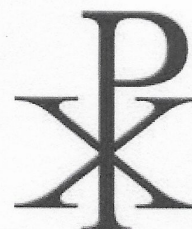
II Corinthians 9:8



done" attitude as well. Thus, many people sought such status symbols as large land holdings, abundant flocks, several wives, and large numbers of children, especially sons.

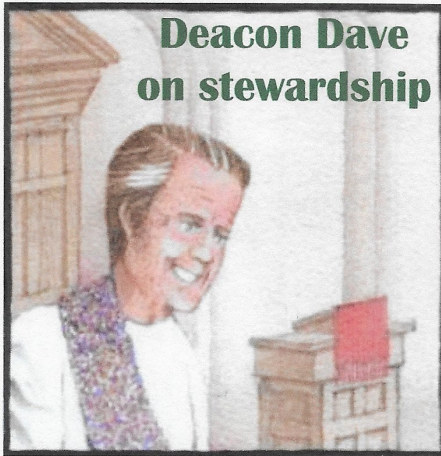
Against this prevalent feeling, King David's attitude about his own status before God stands out in stark contrast. In his final days, as he prepared to turn the

(Continued on page 4)



Money is deeply and significantly symbolic. It isn't just a silver coin or a piece of engraved paper; it represents our time and our talents as well. It is symbolic, because when we give of our money, we are giving of ourselves. And the contrary is also true: when we withhold our money, we are withholding of ourselves.

Deacon Dave on stewardship




The dictionary defines "time" as a period during which something exists or can be accomplished. We live in twenty four hour increments. We live one day at a time, one hour at a time.

We make time for work, recreation and rest. If you are like me, all of our time is accounted for. Most of us run through our days like that character in Alice in Wonderland, crying "I'm late, I'm late." I challenge you to get still for a moment and take a good long look at your typical day and count how much time you allot to the giver of life.

If you're really serious about this challenge, we agree that time is a gift given freely from our creator. It is life itself. Yet, sadly we misuse this gift. Typically, we foster the attitude of self-service, rather than other service, including service to our church.

If we are honest, we can see areas in which we can improve our response to God, for God's astonishing gift of time. You might say "I do give." I invite you to take a closer look at your giving habits. When you give, in what spirit do you give? Is it to give loudly so all those within striking range know of your gift? When you show some kindness or use your talent, are you pompous and pumped up? Then the reward


is superficial. The gift is given in the spirit of self-service. As the words of scripture remind us to be "doers of the Word, not hearers only." 

Abundant Life!

Did you ever notice how much bigger a check for \$100 looks in the offering plate than in the envelope to the electric company, or at the supermarket checkout counter? Most of us would not consider sending the power company only what we have left over. And, canned beans and white bread would be a large portion of our weekly fare if we only bought groceries with what is left over. Yet, many are willing to return to God only what is left over after we satisfy our other desires. I have actually heard church officials categorize their giving to the church with "other discretionary spending"!

Giving to the church isn't the same as giving to the poor; churches have fixed expenses too! Only a portion of what churches receive is actually used to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the imprisoned, etc. Yet, experience shows that members who are not generous with the church are not generous with other organizations and causes either.

Live more joyfully

It's all a matter of "an attitude of gratitude." People who acknowledge God as the source of whatever wealth they have, generally share it with pleasure and wish they could give more. People who are convinced that whatever they have is solely the fruit of their own efforts, generally are more comfortable with an "I'll take mine first" attitude. Each dollar given away looms large as self-denial. Is there any doubt about who lives more joyfully? Christ promised not wealth, but abundant life! 



Dear Editor:

They looked like a small parade coming down the street from the cul-de-sac. Five little boys and girls on their very first two-wheel bikes were obviously on a mission. They pulled a red wagon loaded with a blanket holding precious cargo ... dolls? Stuffed animals? Free kittens?

But what made this entourage stand out was the method they had devised for pulling the wagon. Two ropes, both probably ten feet long, were tied to the wagon handle. Each rope led to a different bicycle, onto which it was securely knotted. Clever! Two bikes pulled the wagon. By riding side by side, a few feet apart, the "pullers" kept the wagon from veering unsteadily or tipping over. The other three bikers seemed equally intent on this mission, with communication at 100%. Because the children were good "stewards" of their "treasure," the wagon rolled smoothly down the street toward the goal.

We Christians use stewardship in similar ways: Start with the Gospel, and the need to "take it into all the world." Use material and spiritual gifts from God to accomplish this. Trusting God's leadership, we'll know where we're going and how to get there. Keep moving, without veering off course. Pull together and share the load, remembering that the Bible says we are, "working together with him..." (2 Corinthians 6:1) God leads and loves each of us more than we can possibly understand! Enjoy the stewardship journey!

Cathy

The Good Steward

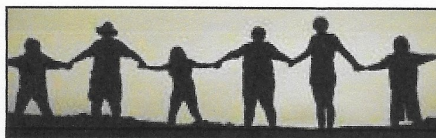
In laboring to grow more faithful Christians whose giving reflects and in-forms their faith, we are doing more than just raising money. We seek to help believers understand that gifts to the church are qualitatively different from those sought by United Way or our alma mater.

The grateful response of a Christian to the love and grace of God is not primarily motivated by emotional reactions to pictures of starving children, battered women, or derelict men, although these will surely touch a Christian's heart. Rather, we give because we recognize that without God's gifts of our time and our talents ... our very lives ... we would have nothing.

We give because through our giving we witness to our understanding of Christ's priorities for our world and we know that without our gifts, these priorities will not be realized. We give because it gives us joy. We give because Jesus told us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," and we know that Christ was telling us that it is in our own best interest to give.

We are created in God's image. In our Baptism, we become, in St. Paul's words, "new persons in Christ Jesus." We bear the giving nature of our creator. Giving to the church, to the many agencies of God's reconciling love in the world, is part and parcel of our very being.

Christians cannot not give, it's just not in them. ☩



There is a difference between ownership and possession. We may claim to own things, but as between man and God, we own nothing. God owns all things. We simply use them or possess them temporarily.

As stewards or trustees, we must administer God's property in a way pleasing to him, and acknowledge God's ownership by setting apart a portion of time and income for the extension of his kingdom.

Continued from page 1...

There is a story about ...

throne of Israel over to his son, Solomon. David also laid the groundwork so that Solomon could build the Temple in Jerusalem. He had all of the materials needed to do the job gathered.

He contracted with skilled craftsmen to serve his son. And he donated not only income from the royal treasury, but also huge sums from his personal fortunes toward the project.

Finally, he challenged the people themselves to offer not only from their own possessions, but also to offer their skills and talents to the task that lay ahead. The people responded generously in both ways. David then prayed a prayer that has to be considered remarkable for a king in that age. The whole prayer is recorded in I Chronicles 29:10–19, but consider the implications of just two verses.

First of all, David ascribed to God the attributes that were normally used to speak of a king. He said, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou are exalted as head above all." (v.11) There were not many kings who would say that their kingdom really belonged to someone else.


The second remarkable thing was that David acknowledged that ultimately, the people had God and not the king to thank for everything they had. He said, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee" (v.14).

Everything is on loan

That admission is an appropriate text for us today. As we think about things that we label as our own, it is always

helpful to recognize that whatever we have is really on loan to us from God. That is the real meaning of stewardship.

It is vitally important that each of us view stewardship as the Christian way of life and not just a plea for our money. We agree with Clarence Stoughton's definition that "Stewardship is what I do after I have said I believe." That includes what we do with our wallets, but also a lot more. Stewardship is our attitude toward everything that God has placed at our disposal during our stay on this earth. It is a lifelong struggle on our part to overcome our tendency to get and to keep and to develop our God-given potential to care and share.

But even more, it is our humble acknowledgment that all good things come from God. With David we pray, "But who are we that we should be able to offer willingly? For all things come from thee, and of thy own have we given thee. 

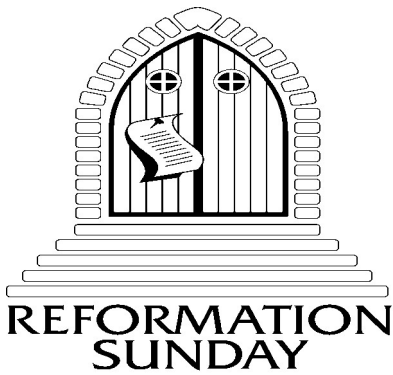




Our Saviour Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 457
725 Gastonia Technology Parkway
Dallas, NC 28034



October 2023



**REFORMATION
SUNDAY**

OCTOBER 29