



# Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

## LCMS Stewardship Ministry - Newsletter article – July 2020

“Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” asked the rich young ruler. Jesus said, “You know the commandments.” And the ruler replied, “All these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” (Luke 18:18–22)

As we listen to this, one question is raised in our minds: Is Jesus speaking to us also or only to the rich young ruler? In other words, is Jesus telling us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor? As good Lutherans, we answer: No! But why? Why should we not sell all that we have and distribute it to the poor?

The simplest explanation is this: If we sold everything we have, our wife and our children would be neglected. In other words, to sell everything we have and give it to the poor would ignore, even abandon, those whom God has placed in our care. Our money, everything we have, is not to be used solely for the church. But that doesn't mean it isn't to be used for the purpose God intends.

Everyone has three stations in life, three spheres in which we live and are to be of service to our neighbors. These stations are the church, the family, and society. We are members of all three of these by birth.

- We are born into the church by water and the Word of God, and our duties to others in the church arise from either our birth into the church or the birth of others by Baptism into it.
- We are born into a family, and our duties to others stem from either our birth into that family or the birth of others into our family.
- Finally, we are born into society, which is simply a further extension of our birth into our family. The duties we have toward other members of society come from either our birth or the birth of others into the same society.

All that we have and all that we are is to be pressed into service for the church, the family, and society. If we were to sell all we have and give only to one, the other two would be neglected, and our duties toward them would falter.

So consider your life and all that you have in light of these three stations. You pay taxes to support and help those in society. You provide food, clothing, and shelter for the members of your family. You save for college for your children.

But the one station that is usually thought of last is the church. Since the needs of the family and society are more immediate, the church is often given what is left over. This is not how it should be. Rather, we are to give of our first fruits – the best from off the top – even as Abel gave the best of his flock.

This requires forethought and intent. It means that you sit down and make a plan for what you will give from the beginning. It means sticking to it even when it seems there are other more immediate and pressing things.

This is all the more necessary now as we enter into periods of time while giving is low due to high unemployment or restrictions on meeting in church to give. If we love God, his gifts of forgiveness given through the means of grace we receive at church and only at church, then we will support the church just as we love our country and our family.

For all that we have and all that we are is given to us by our gracious and giving God. He spared no expense for us and our salvation. He gave up His Son into death so that our sins are forgiven, and we will live. What is more, He provides for all that we need for this body and life. And our lives in this world, among these three spheres of the church, the family, and society, are to mirror the generosity of the one who gave us life in all three by birth.

Don't let the church, your divine family, be ignored or even an afterthought. The church is nurturing you, bringing you up in salvation by Word and Sacrament for eternal life.

## The “Wow!” Factor

After the final notes concluded at a recent symphony performance in Boston, the conductor hadn't yet lowered his baton when a child exclaimed, “Wow!” The break in protocol, magnified by excellent acoustics, didn't upset the participants or audience, however. Instead, several later said it brought them great joy. One even called the moment life-changing.

The incident was especially meaningful because the child, a 9-year-old named Ronan, has autism and is generally nonverbal. Music, his family says, tends to attract his interest and make him happy. When symphony officials learned Ronan's identity, they arranged a private performance so he could meet some musicians.

How often do you shout “Wow!” — in a good way — at what you see and hear? You may tend to do so on vacation or while observing God's natural wonders, but what about during your day-to-day life? Think about the people you encounter and their talents — and your own. When have these sparked a “Wow!” of thanks to God?

Every blessing, large or small, is a wow-moment — a gift from God that warrants our praise.  
—adapted from HomeTouch Ministry

## Treasure the Present

Patience asks us to live the moment to the fullest ... to taste the here and now, to be where we are. When we are impatient, we try to get away from where we are. We behave as if the real thing will happen tomorrow, later, and somewhere else. Let's be patient and trust that the treasure we look for is hidden in the ground on which we stand. —Henri Nouwen

## How Will We Use Our Freedom?

In 2000, Cornealious Anderson was sentenced to 13 years for robbery. The 23-year-old was released on bail and told to await orders to show up to prison. But due to a clerical error, those orders never came. Some people might have taken advantage of such freedom and committed more crimes. But Anderson started a business, coached youth football and volunteered at church, earning respect in his community.

Thirteen years later, when Missouri officials discovered the error and put Anderson behind bars, an online petition called for his release. A judge agreed that Anderson was a changed man and, again, he was freed.

What would *you* do with such undeserved freedom? What *do* we do with the unmerited freedom God grants us despite our sin, and with the freedoms we celebrate on July 4? May we follow Anderson's example and use our freedoms — social *and* spiritual — to serve others.

—adapted from *Homiletics*

## Taking Measure of Prayer

Fluency [in prayer] is a questionable endowment, especially when it is not accompanied with the weight of thought and depth of feeling. Some [people] pray by the yard, but true prayer is measured by weight, not by length. A single groan before God may have more fullness of prayer in it than a fine oration of great length. — Charles Spurgeon

## The Desert Shall Blossom

Where there is need, God is always bringing new life, often working through the church but sometimes using Christians and others in the secular realm.

At England's University of Sheffield, scientists have learned to grow gardens from discarded mattresses in refugee camps. In Jordan and other dry regions, the foam “soil” soaked with a nutrient solution lets vegetables, fruits and herbs grow with far less water than usual. Syrian refugees who were already farmers “have made the project their own, growing things we never thought ... possible in the desert,” says professor Tony Ryan.

But more than plants are flourishing! The greenery amid a barren landscape boosts mental health. The work experience will help people land jobs. Families learn new skills and eat more healthfully. And the gains go both ways, as scientists learn to apply research in the real world.

As God promises, “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert ... shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing” (Isaiah 35:1-2, ESV).



## Remember the Sabbath

O day of all the days the best,  
When — laid aside each earthly care —  
We meet with God's dear saints so blest,  
And in their praise and worship share.  
Not by a rigid code we're bound  
With death to all who disobey;  
But through God's love within us found,  
We keep this precious worship day.  
—Charles W. Naylor

## Fleeting and Forever

After conversing and eating with two followers heading to Emmaus (Luke 24), Jesus disappears from their midst. According to theologian Ronald Goetz, that vanishing has special meaning for followers of the resurrected Lord. "Human love ... is spontaneous, fragile and fleeting," he writes in *The Christian Century*. "Like the heavenly manna of the Exodus, love cannot be preserved and stored. We cannot manage it. We can only hope that it will be there for us when we most need it." Those aren't "melancholy thoughts," though, "any more than the two disciples should have lamented the vanishing of the risen Christ."

Goetz continues, "We know that Christ's vanishing and the vanishing of every human moment ... serve to underscore the utter preciousness of life." This, in turn, makes it a glorious mystery that the life we experience as fragile is, in fact, eternal.

## Bible Quiz

What seemingly small act did Jesus specifically say would be rewarded?

- A. Giving a child a toy
- B. Giving a lost traveler directions
- C. Giving someone a cup of cold water
- D. Giving a sad person a hug



Answer: C (See Matthew 10:42.)

## Mixed Messages

For their summer offering, Sunday school students donated money to a missionary family. Before teachers sent a care package overseas, they asked students to write short notes, letting the recipients know they were in children's prayers.

"The family is pretty busy," one teacher mentioned, in case the kids hoped to become pen pals. "You might not get a response, but it's kind of you to write."

When teachers collected the messages, they chuckled at what one brutally honest child had written: "We're praying for you, but we don't expect an answer."

## The Weight of Hate

Word lovers, delight! The lexicon has tongue-twisting terms that describe hatred for just about anything.

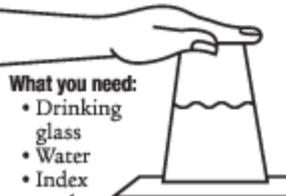
According to *Mental Floss*, if you're a misodotakleidist, for example, you hate practicing the piano. Misogelasts hate laughter, while misopogonists hate beards and misophonists hate certain irritating sounds. There's even a word for someone who hates hatred (in the form of war or strife): a misopolemist.

Some of these words may make us smile, yet hate is deadly serious. No matter the target, hatred weighs us down and distracts us from Godly living.

That's why Paul instructs followers of Jesus to "put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31, NRSV). Once that hateful weight is gone, we'll be freed up to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you" (verse 32).

# UNSEEN BUT *active*

This experiment illustrates that although God is invisible, we can see his work all around us.



### What you need:

- Drinking glass
- Water
- Index card

### What you do:

1. Practicing over a sink, fill the glass halfway with water. Then press the index card snugly atop the glass with one hand.
2. With the other hand, hold the base of the glass and carefully flip it over.
3. Remove your hand from the card. It should stay on the glass, without spilling the water! The invisible air in the glass creates a suction with the card, preventing the water from spilling out. Research air pressure to learn more.
4. After perfecting the trick, amaze others with it. Then talk about how God, like the air in the glass, is unseen but active.

# PATRIOTIC PINWHEEL

Create this colorful July 4<sup>th</sup> craft.

### What you need:

- Decorated card stock square (5" x 5")
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- 2 one-inch circles of card stock
- Glue
- Pipe cleaner (3 inches)
- Drinking straw



### What you do:

1. Fold the square corner to corner to form an X. Unfold.
2. To make spokes, cut the four creases until an inch from the center.
3. Punch a hole in the middle of the square, near the tips of each spoke, and in the middle of each circle.
4. Fold each spoke toward the center, lining up the holes. Glue in place.
5. Wrap one end of the pipe cleaner around the top of the straw. Thread a circle, the pinwheel, and the remaining circle onto the pipe cleaner.
6. Roll the pipe cleaner end into a ball. Then spin!

# PUZZLE

## WATER WORKS!

The gospels record Jesus' miracles, many of which involve water.

*Directions: Using the illustrated equations, fill in the blanks to describe each miracle. Use the Bible references for help.*



+ e

Water changes to

\_\_\_\_\_

JOHN 2:1-11



- k + d

Heals a man born

\_\_\_\_\_

JOHN 9



- op +



- w

Calms a

\_\_\_\_\_

MATTHEW 8:23-27

f +



- d

Catch of

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LUKE 5:1-11



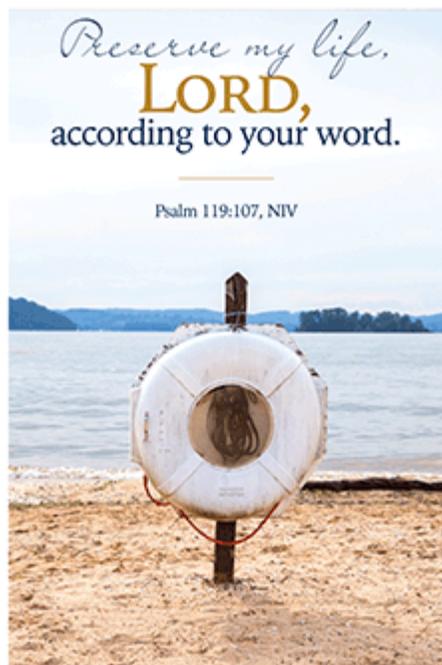
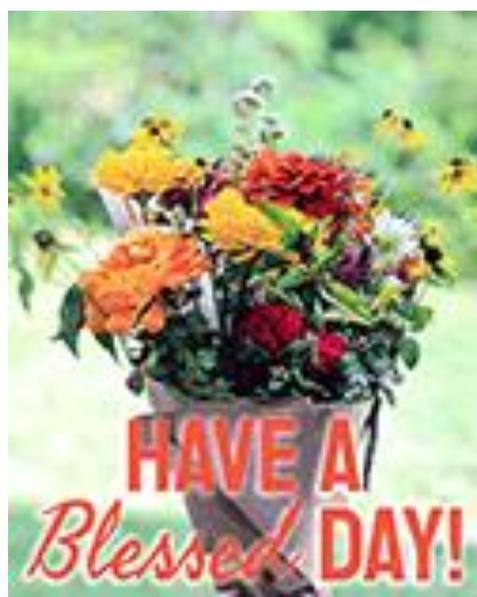
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Walks on

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MATTHEW 14:22-33

Answers: wine, blind, storm, fish, water





## JUNE Anniversaries

- 1- Ed & Diana Brandmeyer
- 2 – Mark & Christi Poteet
- 2—Marv & Connie Schatz
- 2—Chris & Martha Michael
- 4—Ben & Sara Lesire
- 6—Pastor Vern & Marty Lintvedt
- 8—Marc & Tammy Ellington
- 8—Dave & Theresa Longhorn
- 10—Craig & Michele Hollenbeck
- 10—Curtis & Patti Kuppler
- 12– RJ & Jill Kinsella
- 14—Kirk & Janet Satrom
- 14 -Keith & Diana Szolga
- 17—Bob & Mary Bruns
- 18—Jonathan & Melodie Heiden
- 20—Pastor Matt & Haley Kusch
- 21—Ed & Leslie Maher
- 23—Bill & Merina Feldmann
- 27—Dan & Tonya Bowman
- 27—Tom & Jody Sotiropoulos



## JUNE Birthdays

- 1-- Jolene Miesner
- 3—Terese Berens, Alma Garcia
- 4—Abigail Sherman
- 7—Kim Kruse, Elena Yoch
- 8—Curtis Kuppler
- 9—Anna Husemann, Paul Anders
- 10—Merina Feldmann, Grayson Gorney
- 11– Shanna Drouin
- 12—Merrick Griffin
- 13—Pastor Vern
- 15—Don Geis
- 16—Jody Sotiropoulos
- 17—Sam Sotiropoulos
- 18—Nicholas Longhorn, Kale Jackson
- 19—Dennis Sullivan
- 20—Ralph Olson
- 21—Quinn Sterling
- 25—Dan Schmidt
- 28—Carol Schutte
- 29—Alison Berens,
- 30—Patti Kuppler



## JULY Birthdays

- 1– Caden Stake
- 2—Mandy Couture
- 3—Marv Schatz,  
Lucas Kinsella
- 5—Hannah Poteet, Polly Ziegler
- 5—Xavier Burden, Tyler Owens
- 8—Brian Lloyd, Colton Brady
- 11– Alan Foster, Bryce Backhus
- 14—Alexander Simkins
- 17—Rigo Sanchez
- 19—Linda Tucker
- 20—Sam Kinsella
- 21—Janice Paulsmeyer
- 22—Chris Couture
- 24—Dirk Husemann, Thomas  
Williams, Aria Davis, Eric Trapp
- 25—John Weaver
- 30—Clayton Paulsmeyer
- 31—Rachel Sotiropoulos



## JULY Anniversaries

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1—Brian &amp; Kim Lloyd</li> <li>5 Mark &amp; Terese Berens</li> <li>14- Gene &amp; Beverly Szolga</li> <li>18—Dean &amp; Cheryl Krantz</li> <li>29 Terry &amp; Diane Colvin</li> <li>31—Eric &amp; Danielle Stake</li> </ul> |
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