



The

Sanctuary

You are God's Temple

...God's Spirit Lives in You. 1 Cor. 3:15

BLESSED SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH + 1205 NORTH LINCOLN AVE. + O'FALLON, IL 62269 + 618-632-0126 + WWW.MYBSLC.ORG

Upcoming Events

May 2026

Sun May 3, 10, 17, 24

Worship 9:30 am
Sunday School/Adult Bible
Study 1045

Sun May 3

VBS Info Meeting and
Luncheon 1145

Mon May 4, 11, 18, 25

DBSA Support Group 7 pm

Tues May 5

Elders Mtg 7 pm

Tues. May 5, 12, 19

Jr High Confirmation 315

Wed. May 6, 13, 20, 27

Ladies Bible Study 10 am

Tues. May 12

Quilting 10 am

Church Council 7 pm

Sun May 17

Miesner's 50th
Anniversary Fellowship
during Fellowship Time
Last Day of Sun School

Tues. May 19

Christian Ed Mtg 7

Sun May 24

Jr Confirmation during
Worship 930

Confirmation Reception
following worship

Mon May 25

Memorial Day

Tues May 26

Stewardship 6 pm

Sun May 31

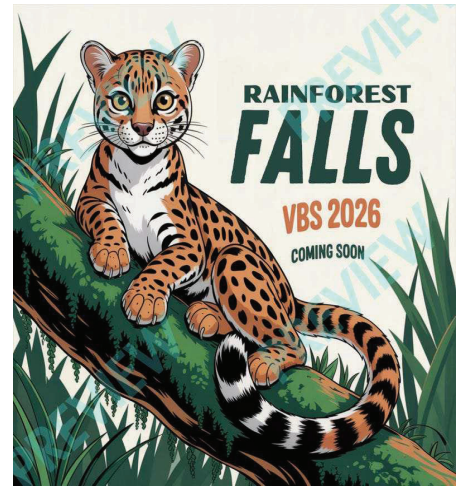
Worship 930



VBS Information Meeting and Luncheon

Sunday, May 3—1145 am
Following Worship and Sunday School

Learn how you can help!
A sign up sheet is located in the
Narthex for VBS volunteers.
Sign up today!



Junior High Confirmation
Sunday, May 24, 2026
During 9:30 am Worship

Reception following worship in
honor of our confirmands in
the Fellowship Hall

VBS 2026
June 1-5
5:30-8:30 p.m.
"Rainforest Falls"
Exploring the Nature of God

Invite your friends and
neighbors.





A few years ago, a unique item was discovered inside a book gifted to the Sacramento Public Library. This particular library does a wonderful job of recycling books for the purpose of recirculating them on their shelves, repairing and giving new life to gently worn materials. Each year thousands of books are given new life.

The mystery began as one such book somehow made its way to the donation center, mixed in with all the rest. It looked like all the others, a bit tattered and worn, but within its pages held a veiled mystery of a unique nature. As the book processed through the restoration journey in preparation for it to be placed on the shelves for circulation, the pages were examined

and 31 signatures were revealed on the inside cover. After some research, it was quickly discovered that what they held in their hands was a signed copy of the Bible with 30 names of players plus the manager of the 1953 Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team! The library knew they had something special when they saw the words "Pirates 1953" at the top of the list. Names like Ralph Kiner, Joe Garagiola, Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson were signed in the book.

The mystery remains as to how this Bible found its way into the hands of the Sacramento Public Library.

The Word, Jesus Christ, is filled with mystery as well, often surprising us by popping up in the most unexpected of places: In a stable, on a cross, outside a tomb. Within our busy schedules this same Word comes close at the most unexpected of moments: In a conversation, on a bus ride, at a meal. As God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — works through these every day, ordinary moments, His constant desire to bring about a growing and thriving faith in our hearts and homes. As the Word made flesh, God has chosen to reveal Himself through Jesus as a compassionate, loving, and missional God who cares deeply about those on the fringe — the lost, the broken. Surprise again! In the biggest surprise of all, this humble Shepherd of grace, justice, and truth, willingly climbs a cross for us, taking upon Himself our sin and shame (1 Peter 2:24-25).

This is good news; no mystery at all! For the believer, God has our name written in the Book of Life, and written at the top of the page would say something like, "Purchased and redeemed!" The truth is, this book still has pages being written, with generations waiting for someone to share with them the grace and truth about faith and life in God.

The question is, "**Where are you GROWING in God's Word?**" Are you in some form of Bible study whether on Sunday morning or during the week? Are you personally being stretched to mature in your faith? God's challenge throughout scripture to keep growing in our faith is clear, not out of some compulsion, but out of a desire for a growing, deepening relationship with Him. Ponder this mindblower for a moment: Our Heavenly Father "wants" to spend time with you through His Word. Now that "is" a surprise, but a wonderful surprise indeed!

Listen to the words of Paul as he mentors a young pastor named Timothy about the importance of being in the Word: "*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*" (2 Tim 3:16-17)

Through these words, Paul is encouraging Timothy and us, to be in the Word. The Bible has the power to not only speak into our lives but to bring about maturity and a life of significance for the expansion of the Kingdom of God. Being in the Word changes us and our perspective in how we live in and view those around us. Through the Spirit's power and presence, immersing ourselves in the Bible brings about maturity and discipleship growth, pointing us not only toward our eternal home but to our missional call to "make disciples" (Mt 28:18-20).

We are about to begin Vacation Bible School Camp 2026 (June 1-5). As we launch this year's theme of Rainforest Falls, I challenge you to join me in prayer and spending time in God's Word as we immerse ourselves in exploring the nature of God. Now is the time to sign up, whether as a participant, a volunteer, to bring items for donation, or some other way. It takes an entire church to pull off something of such magnitude. VBS Camp is a week filled with Jesus and His Gospel. The Gospel changes lives! Period! May we live in this Gospel, allowing its grace to drench our lives so completely that people seeing us want to know about this hope God has gifted us.

May you be filled with the Spirit's earth-shattering power and grace as He grows you in your faith journey. And may the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, splash over every part of your life to draw you more deeply into Himself.

Word of God, speak! Surprised by His daily grace,
Pastor Nathan



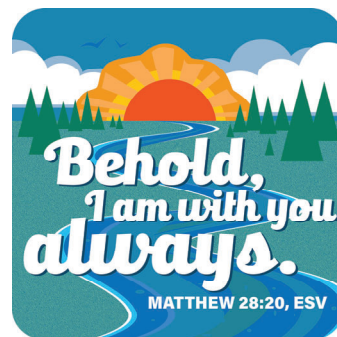
The Blessings of Time and Our Great Commission

Can you believe we are approaching the last day of Sunday School, May 17, for this church year --ALREADY? This calendar year, 2026, is almost half over--ALREADY! Looking back what a blessing our Church events such as Rally Day and Church picnic, Fall Festival, our Christmas Program, making of Care packages, adult and kid's bible classes, Sunday as well as Advent and Lenten activities and church services have been! And after two years we were blessed with a new pastor, Pastor Kuhlman! Yes, blessings—and time—flow here! Well, on Sunday, April 25, in our 4th through 6th grade lesson it just so happened we were reminded about

time. Jesus will return to earth in time to take all his followers to heaven. In Matthew 28:16-20 and Acts 1: 1-11, known as the Great Commission, before he ascended into heaven Jesus gave the disciples the huge job of telling the whole world about him. We learned now it is our job as followers of Jesus today to do the same! But how do we do this? We can start by loving one another, praying for guidance, and inviting others to learn about Jesus. Think about this opportunity as your family walks your neighborhood, visits with neighbors, goes to school, works, plays together, goes on vacation or attends sports events, etc. Let Jesus' light shine through you!

Talking about time; time is getting short for prepping for VBS! Take your first step in your great commission to tell others about Jesus by inviting some of your friends or family members to our Rainforest Falls Vacation Bible School June 1-5. You can learn more about Jesus too by volunteering! Now I know "old dogs can learn" because I have since I began to teaching kids on Sunday mornings! I encourage you to try something new and spread Jesus' love by engaging in VBS! Please come to the VBS informational luncheon on Sunday May 3 to see all the fun we will be having!

Time does march on! We are already planning exciting adventures for next year! You won't want to miss them! You and your family are the first ones we thought of!



Phyllis Miesner, Christian Education

Thank you to all who donated items for the college and military care packages. The Sunday School kids assembled 28 boxes and made homemade cards, with notes of encouragement, for each one. The items will be greatly appreciated by the college students taking final exams and military members who are far from home serving our country.

Also, thank you for the donations of candy for the Easter Egg Hunt and all those who volunteered with the egg stuffing. We stuffed 900+ eggs and had a great turn out at the Egg Hunt event! Karen Anders and her puppet friends shared the story of Jesus' resurrection with everybody. The rain didn't stop us from having fun. We headed downstairs to find the eggs and then made an Easter craft in the Fellowship Hall.

We are in full swing planning for VBS. We have had several members volunteer to help out and Christian Ed thanks you. However, we still need help. We need to fill the following positions.



- ◆ Imagination Station
- ◆ Leaders
- ◆ Games Leader
- ◆ Games Helpers
- ◆ Crew Leaders
- ◆ Photographers
- ◆ Set Designers
- ◆ Decorating Helpers
- ◆ Kitchen Helpers



If you are able and willing to volunteer please contact Ryan Moureau, Phyllis Miesner or Loriann Reynolds. YOUR help will make it a success and remember many hands make for light work!!! We need you!

Council Chairman Report

From the Chairperson

April Council Meeting: The committees reported on the events from March and the Easter egg hunt and Puppet show. Because of the weather, the hunt was held inside the Church. The event was a big turnout from the congregation and the community. On Easter Sunday, the Elders held their annual Pancake breakfast, and the Easter Service was well at-

tended. We also discussed the Voters meeting that was held on April 19th primarily for the election of Council officers and committee members.

April Voters Meeting: Terry Colvin presented goals that were adopted at the February Rolls and Goals meeting. More information will be presented as the committees work on their goals. Curtis Kuppler presented the financial health of the Church for the 1st quarter of the year. The Church finances are in the black. Finally, the election was held. Roger Miesner was elected as the, Council Chairman, Randy Emmons was elected as Vice Chairman, Liezel Evans was elected as Council Secretary, and Curtis Kuppler was reelected as Treasurer. All of the committee members that were up for reelection were reelected.

Keith Szolga, Retiring Council Chairman

From the Chairperson

Hello, and welcome to May!

As a brief introduction, my name is Roger Miesner and as Keith mentioned I was elected to serve as the Church Council chairperson at the last meeting.

I look forward to serving the congregation in this capacity for the next two years in what I think of as BSLC 2.0. Phyllis and I have been members of

BSLC since the beginning when we were worshiping in the rented space on Hy 50. With lots of guidance and help we built a sanctuary, Pastor Vern served as our minister for nearly 30 years, but things change.

As I write this Pastor Nathan is in the process of moving to O'Fallon, as we are facing new and exciting times at BSLC! Life changes, people change, and you will see some changes at our church. (I mean, did you see the altar has moved and we have a large video screen.)

This is a great time to re-commit and help bring the message of Christ to our friends and neighbors!

Respectfully, Roger Miesner, Incoming Council Chairperson



Karen Anders of His Little Lambs Puppet Ministry would like to thank each of you my friends at Blessed Savior Lutheran Church for the help and for all of the prayers for me as I went on my Puppet Ministry Trip to Northeast Nebraska to share the Good News of Jesus with my puppets to preschoolers, and to an afterschool Bible club, at Jesus our Savior Lutheran Outreach to Native American children on the Winnebago Indian Reservation.

I also did a puppet show at St. John's Lutheran Childcare Development Center to young children in Seward, Nebraska.

May the Lord bless each one of you back abundantly as you each blessed me. In His Service, Karen



Join the Lutheran World Relief **QUILTERS on Tuesdays, May 12, June 9 & July 14** from 9:30– 12:00 p.m. to tie quilts. (We don't actually quilt by hand. Instead we secure the layers by hand tying them.) Come and join us for a time of good ole fellowship. Hope to see you there! Mark your calendar for the 2nd Tuesday of each month. If you have any fabric pieces, thin blankets, curtains, drapes, sheets, etc. you no longer need, the quilters would love to recycle them into quilts.



VBS Info from our Christian Ed Team



Only read this if you are a mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, a friend or member of BSLC! How can you share the fun and love through **Rainforest Falls VBS '26!** Come to an informational luncheon on May 3 following our church service to find out! Getting involved with all the kids is a great way to spread the good news of Jesus and maybe make some new friends! Talking about kids, sign up your kids, grandkids, friend's kids and grandkids, etc. now in the Narthex or online at mybslc.org! Also,

look at our list of items needed for this adventure to see if there is something you would like to donate. All items need to be at our church by Sunday May 24 so we can transform the building by June 1! You don't want to miss this! Thanks for all you do for BSLC's family!

Plans are underway for VBS 2026 "Rainforest Falls"

Exploring the Nature of God

June 1 –5
5:30-8:30 p.m.

Sign up your kids now!
Invite your friends and neighbors
Mybslc.org



Informational Meeting for Rainforest Falls VBS 2026 June 1-5

- ◆ Upon request an informational VBS meeting is on **Sunday May3**
- ◆ Includes lunch at 12:00 following Worship and Sunday School.
- ◆ Anyone wanting to help, this meeting is for you!
- ◆ Visit the VBS table in Narthex to see people and items needed
- ◆ Sign up your kids and grandkids now for this fun week!
- ◆ Invites to give to a friend or family by VBS table



Commencing a Lifetime of Learning

What would you tell a young man or woman about to graduate? One of the most common messages commencement speakers share is that graduates are indeed commencing. They are only just beginning to learn.

While they may rightly feel proud of finishing school, a few months in the working world often reveal how much they still do not know.

Christians who love God with their minds understand that truth frees us from ignorance and superstition. They also know that the joy of learning brings deep satisfaction and, in time, wisdom. That wisdom helps us evaluate what we have learned and use it well, so that knowledge becomes a tool for growth and faithful living.





MAY FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Greetings from the Fellowship Committee:

Normally May would be a wind down Month for us, however, we are not entirely sure of Pastor Nathan's wishes on Fellowship for the summer. That being said, we are in a state of "flux". We are just waiting to see how the series of sermons works out, etc.

Mother's Day is right around the corner and we would like to wish all Mothers, a Happy Mother's Day and wish to Thank You for all you do! We will be having something special, just for the Moms.

On May 24th we will honor the confirmands and their families during fellowship following worship.

Have a Great Month,
Your Fellowship Committee



Come to a Superhero Summer Camp Here at BSLC!

Who: 30 BSLC Kids and their friends entering second grade through sixth grade who like creativity, arts and crafts, creative writing, experimenting, games, having fun or making new friends

What: A Superhero Summer Camp to explore our Inner Superhero strengths

When: July 20-24 from 9:00am to 4:00pm

Where: Blessed Savior Lutheran Church, 1205 North Lincoln, O'Fallon

Bring: A new plain white T-shirt on Monday, lunch every day, and a backpack with a change of clothes

Enroll: mybslc.org (Superhero Summer Camp) or pick up a registration at church

** Basic snacks and remaining supplies provided. If they prefer their own snacks they may bring their own.

*** If your child has serious food allergies we recommend he/she bring their special snacks for their safety.

**** While there is no fee for the week a donation for the ministry of the church would be appreciated. Cash or Checks (written out to Blessed Savior Lutheran, memo: Ministry)



Feed My Lambs -Summer Service Opportunity July 6 – 10, 2026



Blessed Savior is once again partnering with other churches in the area to provide lunches to area school children. These children receive free or reduced-cost lunches during the school year, therefore during the summer break they are at risk of being food insecure.

Starting the week of July 6 we will be packing and delivering lunches (3 routes: O'Fallon District 90, Central 104 and Shiloh 85) for one week. We will meet at church at 9:30 and will be done by 12:30.

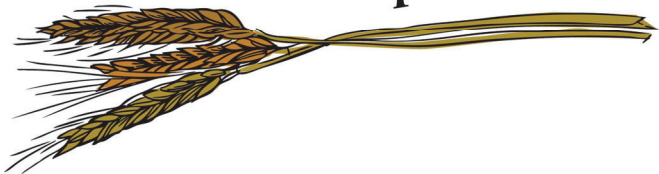
The stops are designated bus stops, the children are aware of the times to be at the stops, so if you are a driver the times are important.

Last year we served almost 1200 lunches on two routes. In 2026 with the additional route and the economy we are anticipating 1300 lunches.

We are asking for monetary donations to help purchase supplies, lunch packaging help and drivers. Let's make the 15th year of this program the best!

Any questions etc. see Charla Morton, Ginger Kieffer or Phyllis Miesner

Stewardship News



LCMS Stewardship

Follow Him in Generosity

Our Savior calls us to follow Him in generosity. “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). We cannot give our lives for the salvation of the world, of course. Praise God, that job is already done! But with hearts full of thanksgiving for what Jesus has given us, we can follow His example of generous giving.

And Jesus’ generosity is not merely an example. Our Lord also commands us to act according to our gifts: “The one who contributes, [let him give] in generosity” (Rom. 12:8).

So, when we bring offerings to the Lord, we should strive to heed His command and follow the pattern He has established for us. Jesus did not give us leftovers. He gave His best. We should not give leftovers, either, but the first and best of what He has given us. Jesus did not give as an afterthought — He gave according to the plan of salvation God established from the foundation of the world. So, when it comes to our own offerings, we should make a thoughtful plan to give generously, in proportion to the way He has blessed us. Like the Macedonian Christians, who gave according to their ability, and even beyond their ability (2 Cor. 8:3), we should honor the Lord by giving a generous portion of the income that God provides us.

We should also give freely, just as Jesus gave freely for us. There is no compulsion involved in our works of love and our offerings to the Lord. We do not give grudgingly, but willingly and cheerfully, each “as he has decided in his heart,” as the Lord says (2 Cor. 9:7). There is no New Testament ceremonial law involved here. Rather, we are free to give as generously as our Savior has given for us!

In the same way, our Lord teaches us to give generously out of our love for Him and for our neighbor. Jesus shows us that genuine love is always love “in deed” (1 John 3:18). It is love that sees our neighbor in need and gives generously to help him. It is love that hears the Word of the Lord and does what it says. If we truly love, we give generously. If we give without love, our giving is not truly following Jesus.

Finally, we follow Jesus in generosity when we support His Gospel ministry and other works of mercy. The people of Israel gave generously to construct and support the operation of the tabernacle, for that was the place where the Lord received the Old Testament sacrifices, through which He bestowed the forgiveness of sins on His people. So, they gave abundantly, so abundantly that they had to be told to stop giving! (Ex. 36:5–6). In the same way, we should bring generous offerings to support the Lord’s work. We support our congregations in the preaching of His Word, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which bestow His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation, and we take care of those who are poor and needy.

Our Savior calls us to follow His example in generous giving. Let us then, with thankful hearts, rededicate ourselves to following Him in generosity.



Stewardship is  WORK

Treasurer Gleanings

Below is a summary of Blessed Savior’s finances at the end of March, 2026.

(BTW, this information was presented at the Voter’s Meeting on Sunday, April 19th as well.)

As of **March 31, 2026**, the church is doing very well for the first quarter of 2026. The church has a nice reserve (2 CDs and 2 accounts at Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF)) on top of the monies in the checking account.

Checking	\$ 133,973.15
LCEF	\$ 388,050.10
	=====
Total	\$ 522,023.25

As far as giving and expenses, the church is roughly \$17,000 in the black for the first quarter of 2026.

Giving	\$ 82,423.28
Expenses	\$ 65,456.02
	=====
Net Income	\$ 16,922.26



Compared to the first quarter of 2025, Giving was up in 2026 (\$82K vs. \$65K). Expenses were also up in 2026 due to paying for a full-time pastor vs. paying for vacancy and visiting pastors in 2025. In 2025, expenses were close to \$43K compared to \$65K in 2026.

The church will need Giving to continue upward to help pay for the increase in expenses. If not, the church will have to dip into the LCEF reserves.

Remember we have three tools in which you can set-up automatic giving to the church (instead of writing a check), such as Joyful Giving (thru LCEF – no fees) or Tithely and PayPal (fees are charged for both). **For more information regarding these tools, please contact Dave Reynolds (Joyful Giving) or Curtis Kuppler (Tithely/PayPal).**



THANKS to all for your continuing support (money as well as time and talents) to the church.

**In God’s Name,
Curtis Kuppler
BSLC co-Treasurer**



Junior High Confirmation Sunday, May 24th
During the 9:30 worship Service

Our confirmands:
Brooklyn Emmons
Luke Kinsella

Join Brooklyn and Luke following worship for a reception in their honor.

Congrats to the confirmands



Grateful for Those Who Gave All

We remember, O Lord, the men and women who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country. Help us never to breathe the air of freedom, claim the right to justice or enjoy the privilege of worship without deep gratitude for those who gave “the last full measure of devotion” for our sake.

May they now know the peace of eternity and the joy of your presence. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1— *Chris Michael*
 1 -*Rev. Perry Schefelker*
 1—*Autumn Kesting*
 2—*Oliver Sanchez*
 4 – *Kyle Kesting, Kasen Schefelker*
 7 – *Payton Johnson, Oscar Garcia*
 8 – *Ben Lesire, Stephanie Yep*
 (Mabry) *Gloria Alvarado*
 11 – *Mary Stake, Haydin Williams*
 11—*Leia Evans*
 13—*Madison Emmons, Kaitlyn Emmons*
 14 – *Kim Williams*
 17 – *Steve Foster*
 19 *Bob Strohm, AJ Moureau*
 20 – *Donna Jackson, Tate Husemann, Angela Dalton, Ava & Cohen Morton*
 22 – *Greg Conrad*
 25 – *Noah Geis, Andy Herran*
 26 – *Gary Williams, Travis Lintvedt*
 27 – *Jon Williams*
 29 – *Darla Kesting, Andrew Brandmeyer,*
 29 – *Dave Reynolds, Sr.*
 30 – *Mary Geis*
 31—*Charlie Morton, Janet Buck, Keatyn Schefelker*



We are sorry if your birthday or anniversary has been overlooked. Please call the church office, 632-0126 or email Nancy at nancy@mybslc.org so we may add your name to our list. Thanks for your help.



10 – *Chris & Sandie Rust*
 11– *Kyle & Virginia Kesting*
 15 – *Roger & Phyllis Miesner (50th!)*
 22 – *Don & Laura Drouin*
 26—*Greg & Ginger Kieffer*
 29—*Dave & Loriann Reynolds*

An A-Plus Answer

Twelve-year-old Daniel was doing his best to test the patience of his mother, the Rev. Ann Lewis. He pushed back on every request, and the tension in the room kept rising as he refused to cooperate.

Finally, his mother reached her limit. Looking at him firmly, she said, “Daniel, you have tested me to my limits.”

Without missing a beat, Daniel grinned and replied, “Yes! And you get an A-plus.”

A Prayer for Open Hearts and Minds

O Lord, our heavenly Father, in you is the fullness of light and wisdom. We ask that you enlighten our minds through the work of your Holy Spirit. Clear away distraction and doubt, and help us turn our full attention to you.

Give us grace to receive your Word with reverence and humility. Shape our hearts so we may listen not only with our ears, but with willing spirits, ready to be taught and transformed. Remind us that true understanding does not come from our own insight or effort, but from your truth revealed to us in love.

As we hear and reflect on Scripture today, draw us closer to you. Strengthen our faith, deepen our trust and guide us in the way we should go. May your Word take root within us and bear fruit in our lives, bringing honor to your name.

We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, through whom all wisdom and grace are given. Amen.

Honor Your Mother

Anna Jarvis, the woman who first suggested a national day to honor mothers, had an incredible mother to honor. Her mom, Ann Reeves Jarvis (1832-1905), was a Sunday school teacher and activist who helped lower infant-mortality rates in Appalachia and promoted friendship among families of Civil War soldiers.

At a memorial service for her mother, Anna Jarvis distributed carnations — her mom’s favorite flower — to attendees. Her idea to set apart one day each year for moms gained traction, and in 1914, President Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May Mother’s Day. It was customary by then to wear white carnations in honor of departed mothers and red carnations to honor the living.

Of the white flowers, Jarvis said they “symbolize the truth, purity and broad-charity of mother love; its fragrance, her memory, and her prayers. The carnation does not drop its petals, but hugs them to its heart as it dies, and so, too, mothers hug their children to their hearts, their mother love never dying.”





An Unusual Answer to a Mother's Prayer

Linda Jo Peters of Terre Haute, Indiana, felt her "worry button" get pushed when her daughter, Esther, called from college with an unexpected plan. Esther explained she wanted to go camping alone in a park in southern Illinois. She needed quiet time to think and asked her mother for Bible verses to read as she prayed about her future.

Linda knew Esther felt strongly about going, even if it made her uneasy. After the call ended, Linda dropped to her knees and began what she later called "a dialogue with God." She closed her prayer with a simple surrender: "I guess you want me on my knees that weekend."

And that is exactly where she stayed.

The morning after Esther's first night at camp, she called home. She was safe, she said, and no one had come near her tent. All night long, however, a skunk had wandered nearby, circling the campsite.

Later, Linda reflected on the moment with quiet confidence. "There was no way anyone with evil intent would have approached Esther's tent," she wrote, "while the power of prayer, in the form of a black-and-white critter, was circling it."

In-carnation

The official flower of Mother's Day is the carnation, the favorite flower of the mom of the holiday's founder, Anna Jarvis. Over time, the custom arose of wearing a white carnation on Mother's Day if your mother has died and a red one if she's living.

In fact, many carnation colors have special meanings. Pink carries the richest Christian symbolism. According to legend, carnations first appeared on earth as Mary wept while watching Jesus carry his cross. Where her tears fell, there appeared pink carnations, symbolizing a mother's undying love.

According to one theory, the English word for carnation comes from *carnis*, Latin for flesh. From the same root comes *incarnation*, God's coming to earth in flesh. Thus, carnations remind us of our loving mothers as well as our loving Savior.

Mother — and More

Though I've primarily known God as Father — along with metaphors such as rock, eagle, shepherd, potter — I also learned of Scripture passages portraying God as mother. For example (all NIV):

- "For a long time I have kept silent. ... But now, like a woman in childbirth, I cry out, I gasp and pant" (Isaiah 42:14).
- "As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you" (Isaiah 66:13).
- "Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them" (Hosea 13:8).

In others, God is pictured doing traditional "women's work": making clothes (Genesis 3:21), sweeping (Isaiah 14:23), preparing and hosting a meal (Proverbs 9:1-6), baking bread (Luke 13:21).

One of my favorite images of God is tucked in Hosea. While many modern dads nurture their toddlers this way, the tender words surely call to mind a mama's care: "It was I who taught [Israel] to walk. ... To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them" (Hosea 11:3-4). Most importantly, God — however known — is loving and good. —Heidi Hyland Mann

HAPPY
Mother's
Day

GROWING IN GOD'S word



Try this craft as a reminder that we need to continue to grow in God's Word.

What you need:

- Small terra cotta pot and plate
- Acrylic paints (various colors)
- Paper plate
- Potting soil (enough to fill the pot)
- Small inside plant or packet of seeds
- Newspaper or paper
- Paintbrush
- Cup of water
- Permanent black marker



What you do:

1. Spread some newspaper out on a table for your working area.
2. Squeeze the paint colors that you wish to use onto your paper plate.
3. Paint designs on the pot and plate.
4. When the pot is dry, take the black marker and on the top part of the pot write: Growing in God's Word.
5. Pour a small amount of potting soil into the bottom of the pot. With adults help, place your plant into the pot and surround your plant with the rest of the soil. If planting seeds, follow the packet instructions.
6. Water your plant so the soil is moist. Check your plant everyday and keep the soil moist.
7. Enjoy watching your plant grow, and remember that you too, need care as you grow in God's Word.

2 Peter 3:18 NIV

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.



Teatime treat



Make these sweet sandwiches for a Mother's Day tea party.

What you need:

- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 Tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 6-10 strawberries, washed and sliced
- 6 slices of white bread
- Cellophane
- Adult help



What you do:

1. With an electric mixer, whip the cream cheese in a bowl until fluffy.
2. Add cream, powdered sugar, and lemon juice. Continue whipping on high speed until mixture is stiff.
3. On each slice of bread, spread a layer of the mixture. Then arrange some sliced strawberries on top.
4. Place the sandwiches together, with filling on the inside.
5. Wrap tightly in cellophane. Chill for two hours so the filling sets.
6. Trim off crusts with a serrated knife. Cut sandwiches in squares or triangles. Serve and enjoy!



a fun Flower Frog

A flower frog sits atop a vase to help arrange flowers and hold stems in place. This personalized frog will become a favorite!

What you need:

- Air-dry clay
- Roller
- Vase (or jar)
- Plastic knife
- Straw
- Acrylic paint and brushes



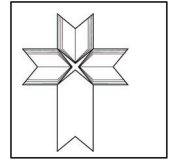
What you do:

1. Roll out a portion of clay to about 1/2-inch thickness.
2. Cut out a circle that's slightly larger than the vase opening. (This will allow the finished frog to sit securely on top.)
3. To make holes for stems, use a straw to punch out circle shapes. If you make more than one frog, try arranging the holes in different patterns.
4. Let dry completely. Then personalize your work with acrylic paint.
5. When dry, place the frog atop the vase. Arrange flowers and greenery to make a Mother's Day bouquet.





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PUZZLE

A LEGACY OF FAITH

You're blessed when you have a mother, a grandmother or any relative or friend who passes down a strong faith to you. In the Bible, Timothy learned about faith from his mother and grandmother.

Complete the verse below by filling in the blanks with the correct vowels.

VOWELS: 1 = a 2 = e 3 = i 4 = o 5 = u

1 3 1 m r 2 m 3 nd 2 d 4 f

y 4 5 r s 3 nc 2 r 2 f 1 3 th, wh 3 ch

f 3 rst l 3 v 2 d 3 n y 4 5 r gr 1 ndm 4 th 2 r

L 4 3 s 1 nd 3 n y 4 5 r m 4 th 2 r

2 5 n 3 c 2 1 nd, 3 1 m p 2 rs 5 1 d 2 d,

n 4 w l 3 v 2 s 3 n y 4 5 1 ls 4 .*

2 Timothy 1:5, NIV

*Answer: "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."