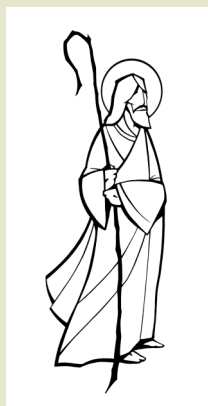


# The Shepherd's Voice

## From The Pastor



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Why is Jesus Christ so special? The traditional Christian answer has always been that His resurrection from the dead proves that He is God, and thus establishes His unique status and identity which distinguishes Him from all other human beings. Others - like Socrates of the ancient world, or Gandhi in more recent history - were rightly respected as fellow human beings because of their personality or conduct, but not as God. Jesus' uniqueness is, for the Christian, ultimately grounded in who He was, rather than what He said and did. In other words, Christians have always tended to regard Jesus' teaching and lifestyle as of importance only because of who they knew Him to be, rather than because of what this teaching and lifestyle were in themselves. Christians do not regard Him as a distant teacher from the past, a long-dead rabbi or guru - they know Him as their risen Lord, one whom they worship and through whom they know the living God.

The twentieth century has witnessed human cruelty and ferocity rarely paralleled in the history of the world. The horrors of the First World War in Europe, of the Stalinist purges in the old Soviet Union, of the Nazi extermination camps, the programs of genocide in South-East Asia, and the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia - all have raised the question in the minds of many people concerning how God is involved in this world of suffering. The birth of God in a crib and the death of God on a cross preserves the crucial Christian insight that God in Christ subjected Himself to the cruelty and evil of the world. A playlet entitled *The Long Silence* brings out this insight with remarkable force.

*At the end of time, billions of people were scattered on a great plain before God's throne. Most shrank back from the brilliant light before them. But some groups near the front talked heatedly - not with cringing shame, but with belligerence.*

*'Can God judge us? How can he know about suffering?' snapped a pert young brunette. She ripped open a sleeve to reveal a tattooed number from a Nazi concentration camp. 'We endured terror, beatings, torture and death!' In another group, a Negro boy lowered his collar. 'What about this?' he demanded, showing an ugly rope burn. 'Lynched - for no crime but being black!' In another crowd, there was a pregnant schoolgirl with sullen eyes. 'Why should I suffer?' she murmured. 'It wasn't my fault.'*

*Far out across the plain there were hundreds of such groups. Each had a complaint against God for the evil and suffering he had permitted in his world. How lucky God was to live in heaven where all was sweetness and light, where there was no weeping or fear, no hunger or hatred. What did God know of all that man had been forced to endure in this world? For God leads a pretty sheltered life.*

they said.

*So each of these groups sent forth their leader, chosen because he has suffered the most. A Jew, a Negro, a person from Hiroshima, a horribly deformed arthritic, a thalidomide child. In the center of the plain they consulted with each other. At last they were ready to present their case. It was rather clever.*

*Before God could be qualified to be their judge, he must endure what they had endured. The decision was that God should be sentenced to live upon earth - as a man!*

*'Let him be born a Jew. Let the legitimacy of his birth be doubted. Give him a work so difficult that even his family will think him out of his mind when he tries to do it. Let him be betrayed by his closet friends. Let him face false charges, be tried by a prejudiced jury, and convicted by a cowardly judge. Let him be tortured. At the last, let him see what it means to be terribly alone. Then let him die. Let him die so that there can be no doubt what he died. Let there be a host of witnesses to verify it.*

*As each leader announced his portion of the sentence, loud murmurs of approval went up from the throng of people assembled. And when the last had finished pronouncing sentence, there was a long silence. No one uttered another word. No one moved. For suddenly all knew that God had already served his sentence.*

It is quite possible that we can express sorrow or regret through someone else. Yet, sending someone else to apologize for something, to send your condolences, is hardly anything like actually entering into the situation of suffering yourself. In the cross we see that God knows what it is like to suffer first-hand; God took human suffering upon Himself, lending it meaning and dignity through His presence in order to redeem the world. The militant feminist, the promiscuous liberal, the skeptic - all are impotent in their attempts to conceive a god against this God - the God who revealed Himself to us through the man Jesus Christ, the real God of the Christian faith.



# **LCMS Stewardship Ministry**

## **A Better Way**

The most common question about stewardship is not whether a Christian should give to their church. Of course Christians should give to their church. Everyone knows this. Rather, the question asked most is, “How much should I give?” But this question really means, “Should Christians give a tenth of their income to their local congregation?”

Here are some common reasons against tithing. Some say tithing isn't necessary because it isn't expressly commanded in the New Testament. There is no “Thus saith the Lord,” or “should” concerning tithing. Others say that Christians give to their congregation in ways much broader than money. They give of their time and their talents, and these together with treasures (money) add up to more than a tithe. Still others say that they give of their treasures to other things besides their congregation, and they want to support those things alongside their church. And then there are those who think Christians shouldn't tithe because of some fear. They are afraid that if they tithe, their gift will be misused, or that after tithing, there won't be enough left over to get the things that they use, want or need.

Here are some reasons why Christians should tithe. Even though the New Testament doesn't specifically command Christians to tithe, the Old Testament people were commanded to. And on top of this, St. Paul often describes giving a regular and generous proportion of the first fruits of one's income — terms similar to a tithe (2 Cor. 8:7–23; 2 Cor. 9:2–7).

But here's another way to think about it. What was the point of the tithe in the Old Testament? Where did it go? This tithe was intended to support the ministry of the Levites. They were not given any land because they had no time to farm; their full-time job was the ministry. What does it say in the New Testament? “The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14). This is the verse that Luther used in the Small Catechism's Table of Duties to explain what Christians owe to the support of the ministry.

It seems clear from both the Old and the New Testaments that the tithe is the goal of Christians in their giving. But what if we're not there yet? How should we handle this? What are we to do?

Let's answer this by asking a different question. What would you say to your adult children who only attended church quarterly or once a month? After all, there is no passage in the New Testament that requires Christians to go to church weekly. Hebrews 10:25 is the closest verse we have, and it states simply that Christians should not neglect gathering together. And even though there is no passage that commands Christians to gather weekly, that is the implicit expectation throughout the Old and New Testaments.

So, what would you say to that son or daughter? The conversation might go something like this. I'm glad you're still going to church. It is a wonderful blessing to hear God's promises of forgiveness, life and salvation, and to receive His gifts in Word and Sacrament. But you can do better, and it will only be a blessing to you. There is a better way, and I'd really like you to try to attain it.

We should approach the topic of tithing with a similar conversation. The tithe is not specifically commanded in the New Testament, but it sure seems like the implicit expectation of both the Old and New Testaments. So, we're ecstatic that you're giving, and that you're giving in all these various ways — time, talents and treasures. But there is a better way. And that will only be a blessing to you, just as the Word of God — Old and New Testament alike — promises. Can you try increasing your gifts over the coming weeks, months and years? Can you put your trust in the God who sent His Son to take away your sin and give you everlasting life? And if He did this for you, if He did not spare His only Son, how will He not give you all things? He will not disappoint.

♦ LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](https://lcms.org/stewardship)



My Sheep hear My Voice ... And they follow Me. John 10:27

## To God Be the Glory! Good Shepherd Lutheran Church is Celebrating 40 Years of God's Blessings of Good Shepherd Lutheran School



Please plan to attend the Prayer Vigil on Thursday before:  
**April 27, 2023, 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.**

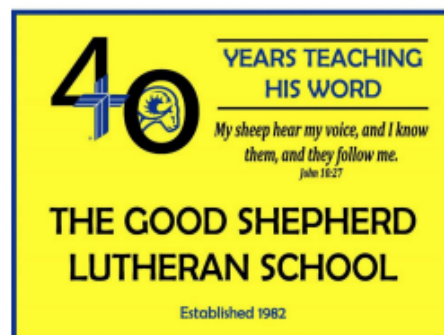
Join us for our Celebration on:  
**Sunday, April 30, 2023**  
40<sup>th</sup> Celebration to include -  
In Church:

- 9:15 Sunday School/Bible Class
- 10:30 Celebration Service: Children's Message, and Children Singing Songs with guest, former Pastor, Rev. Rick Mensing, delivering the Message.

In Family Life Center:

- 11:45 BBQ Dinner (Brisket, pulled pork, smoked turkey, green beans, potato salad, cole slaw, relish tray, rolls, Celebration Cake, and beverages)

The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund is to raise monetary gifts toward extra-curricular activities, i.e., P.E. equipment, music, etc., for the school. Mark your donations payable to the church and write 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund on the memo line. Thank You. All gifts are much appreciated.



**Please Plan to Join Us for these events to Celebrate 40 years of God's Blessings here at Good Shepherd. Join in welcoming Alumni, enjoy Food, Fellowship, and Celebration to God's Glory!** (Register in Narthex to reserve your dinner.)





# Love

## THE GROUND OF LUTHERAN EDUCATION

**“How much will it cost?” “What are we willing to spend?” “How much can we afford?”** How often have you heard those questions and similar ones asked when people talk about education? Money is usually the topic, but time is also expensive. The money and time available to us, our churches and our schools seem to shrink while demands for money and demands on time grow.

Throughout this year we will explore the reasons for Lutheran education and the wisdom that the past has for the future of Lutheran education, with much of the substance of that wisdom found in J.C.W. Lindemann’s *American Lutheran School Praxis*, the first handbook on Lutheran schooling the LCMS produced. We will not cite page and paragraph from a German book published in 1879, but it will guide our thoughts on love, discipline and the goal of all that we do in Lutheran education.

The demands for money and demands on time are perennial. We have never been without them. When money was scarce in pioneer times, time was also needed; when our churches and schools became more prosperous, time was still at a premium. From prairie schools with sod roofs to multimillion-dollar building projects to the kitchen tables where homeschool and homework are done, the need for more money and the need for more time were always there.

Before answering the questions asked above, we need to ask: What drives us to provide Lutheran schooling? If incessant demands for funding, time and attention will always be

there, why bother? Many people answer with a simple and understandable “Don’t bother.” Don’t put the time in, don’t pour the money in, don’t worry about it at all. We have public schools, other private schools and every other manner of school you could imagine. Don’t bother with it.

That makes sense if love does not get to answer the question, “Why?” If love is silent, then, truly, don’t bother. But if love speaks in your heart or in your home or in your church, then it says something different from “Don’t bother.” It says that you want the absolute best for your children, and you cannot offer anything better to a child’s soul than Christ’s Gospel of grace. Love says that you want the absolute clearest truth for your children, and you cannot give them anything truer or clearer or more beautiful than the Word of God. Love says that you want your children to live with God forever, and the best way to do that is to make their entire education about and for and from Jesus.

**Love has a different way of doing things.** It neither begins with “How much will it cost?” nor is it satisfied with “What are we willing to spend?” When the Good Samaritan saw the man lying by the side of the road, battered and near death (LUKE 10:25-37), he did not hold anything back. Anything he could use to heal the man, he put to use. Regarding whatever extra costs were required to care for the man, the Good Samaritan said, “I’m good for that, too.” Whatever the other needs to flourish, love happily spends.

Our children are not born knowing God’s truth. They do not pick up the Gospel just any old place. They will not be taught God’s Word in just any kind of school. Their souls will not feast on Christ by happenstance. Like the man fallen among thieves, they need some help. They need some direction. They need wisdom and knowledge. They need Jesus every day and in every way, just as we do.

So why provide a Lutheran education? Because you love somebody. You love the little guy who is learning his ABCs but is also learning how God loves him in Christ. You love the teenager who is confused about herself and





a lot of things and could use the clear direction and healing wisdom God's Word provides her. You love the couple who met in Lutheran school 60 years ago and still sit in the third pew from the back on the pulpit side. You provide a Lutheran education because you know God loves not just in general, not just sitting back and hoping things work out for us. You love because you know God loves us individually, directly, attentively, the way a kindergarten teacher bends over the little guy's shoulder to help him form his letters.

God willingly spent His life's blood for the love of us. The cost was immaterial; the task of saving us was everything to Him. That task He finished and that price He paid joyfully, running His course with joy. Our courses, the paths God has marked out for us, are paths of love, and our joy is to

spend ourselves for the love of others, especially the littlest ones.

**Cost is a great question**, and wisdom will show us what costs of money and time we can actually bear, what gifts we have to give. But it is not the first question, and it will never explain why — from one-room schools on the prairie to large campuses to kitchen tables — Lutherans have taught the little ones the Word of God. We cannot understand why so many sacrifices have been made, why so many burdens have been carried, why so much time, attention, money and devotion have been given to education unless we see love as its heart and its motive.

Love pushes you to do things that look crazy to other people. It pushes you to make sacrifices you never thought you would make. Love can make you stay up late to get ready for the next day and spend all that next day busy in teaching. Love can make you do lots of things, but it does not make you ask first about cost. First, you ask what that child needs. First, you ask how the Gospel can be deeply known and deeply sown in the child's soul. Love always wants the best, and the best we can give our children is Christ with all His truth, a gift abundant, "pressed down, shaken together, running over" (LUKE 6:38), given to us and to our children.

**THE REV. DR. ADAM KOONTZ** serves as associate pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Denver, Colo.



## Expanding God's Love in Uganda LCMS Office of International Mission, Africa Region — \$92,000

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10). The Lutheran Church of Uganda (LCU) is steadily growing in eastern Africa. It has requested LCMS assistance to train deaconesses locally so they may assist the small number of Lutheran pastors throughout Uganda to teach the faith, provide spiritual care, and show mercy to communities throughout Uganda. The LCU wants to be able to provide training to qualified women at their seminary, Lutheran Theological College of Uganda (LTCU). There are 30 pastors and two deaconesses serving 150 congregations in Uganda. The LCU leadership serves to share the Gospel message to all corners of Uganda. On average, there are twenty-five baptisms per week throughout the Lutheran churches. The two deaconesses currently serving were trained at the Neemia Lutheran College in Matongo, Kenya, and lived apart from their families, including young children, for up to three years. Their service with the LCU started in May 2019. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, they have helped strengthen Bible study groups, started or expanded children's Sunday school, expanded a Lutheran day school, and educated individuals and families about God's design for the family in various ways, thus encouraging a change in habits and behavior. They have also strengthened music ministries in their various communities. This grant will help establish a training center for women who wish to serve as deaconesses. The funds will purchase land next to the seminary, purchase fencing, and allow for the building of a small dormitory. It will help support ten students with healthcare, food, utilities, books, and transportation. Women who wish to serve their Lord, can remain in their home country as they learn to care for their people and assist the pastors in the LCU. Uganda is a patriarchal society, which means the needs of women and children are often placed secondary to the men and many opportunities are not available to them. Trained deaconesses serving in communities throughout Uganda will help combat the stigma towards women and children. Their presence will provide opportunities to educate communities as to the value of all people within the Christian household and their various vocations, as well as show mercy and care to those in need.

Learn more about this mission grant at [lwml.org/mission-grants](http://lwml.org/mission-grants)



# OUTDOOR MARKET

Saturday, May 6, 2023

9:00—3:00 p.m.

Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 6501 NW 23rd, Bethany, Oklahoma

## Vendors Wanted

New and Used | Crafts | Antiques | Food

### Participating Vendors

10' X 20' space \$20.00

Includes garage sale permit and advertising

Tables (8') \$15.00 each

Includes setting up and taking down

To register go to:

[www.oursaviorokc.org/community](http://www.oursaviorokc.org/community)

For more information call or email:

Church Office (405) 495-1605

[secretary@oursaviorokc.org](mailto:secretary@oursaviorokc.org)



**HAPPY  
ANNIVERSARY**

Jacob Kristina Bowen	4/2
Steve & Lynnice Hamlin	4/6
Michael & Amber Parker	4/23
John & Janice Grundmann	



**BIRTHDAYS**



**BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY**

## BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

Ruth Allsebrooke	4/1
Peter Ewing	4/6
Valerie Calfe	4/8
Jaxon Carrasco	4/10
Aria Carrasco	4/10
Vic Ewing	4/11
Kiyoko Harke	4/15
Leslie Tucker	4/19
Jerry Bacon	4/22
Steve Hamlin	4/24
Natalee Norton	4/24
Ethan Norton	4/24
Kent Allsebrooke	4/24

Pat Northrup	4/6
Jeannie Guillotte	4/8
Tom Moran	4/8
Nathan Bratton	4/10
Jim Marlatt	4/17
Jim Dolezel	4/18
Gary Kuschneret	4/19
Kayleigh Armand	4/24
Ross Bartmess	4/25
Alexander Williamson	4/26
Jaxon Carrasco	4/29
Paula Anderson	4/30

