

The Witness

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. *Acts 1:8*

Ascension Lutheran Church

LCMS

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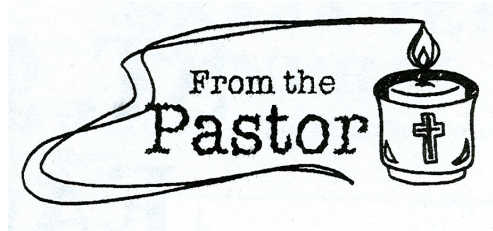
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January 2021

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Volume 6 No. 1

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often, we find this difficult and daunting and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions:

Who are you?
To whom do I give?
And how much?

So, who are you? The Table of Duties in the *Luther's Small Catechism* informs us. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Again, the Table of Duties, gives us a guide. If you are a hearer – a member of the Church who receives instruction – St. Paul taught: "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Gal. 6:6). This means the local congregation is primary.

Your pastor is the one called to preach the Gospel to you and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to you. Your congregation is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind. For "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our only instructions are to give:

Regularly (1 Cor. 6:1–2);
Proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12);
Generously (2 Cor. 8:20);
Of our first fruits (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and
With a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23).

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

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From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

It’s that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

<http://www.lcms.org/stewardship>

Prayer for a Happy New Year

May the Lord make my New Year a happy one...

Not by shielding me from sorrow and pain, but by strengthening me to bear it if it comes.

Not by making my path easy, but by making me sturdy enough to tread any path. Not by taking hardship from me, but by taking all cowardice and fear from my heart as I meet hardships.

Not by granting me unbroken sunshine, but by keeping my face bright even in the shadows.

Not by making my life always pleasant, but by showing me where men and His cause need me most and by making me zealous to be there and to help ...

God, make my year a happy one.

—Guideposts magazine (January 1973)





**Lutheran Women's
Missionary League**
Lutheran Women
In Mission

Where Mites Go

Restoring Hope for Detroit Children and Families

Grant: \$100,000

Camp Restore Detroit provides a safe, nurturing, Christ-centered place for children and their families to come and learn about God's love as they participate in art, theater, and music classes. They also receive assistance with homework and basic educational and developmental skills. The adults are offered parenting, finance, and resume-building classes. This mission grant will fund the renovation of previously abandoned houses into community outreach centers, along with the house furnishings and outreach materials.

Love Packages

Testimony from Malawi

Saved from suicide: Andy was a banker who misused money in the bank he worked at. He was arrested and spent two weeks in a police cell. Relatives contributed the money to bail him out from the police and pay the bank back, so the bank closed the case. However Andy remained in prison in his mind. His sin became too big for him and his name was circulated in all the banks in the country. So he could not get a job and this made him feel like it's over for him and he planned to commit suicide by hanging himself. While he was planning to do that, he met our book distribution team and they gave him a book entitled "Still Waiting." This book ministered to him, and he accepted his salvation and began to trust God for a new beginning. He accepted the Lord and he has peace once again. This week he came to our warehouse to select more books for spiritual growth. Thanks to Love Packages for the wonderful books, you are touching many people in Malawi.

Arletta A. Stuebe, President



Epiphany

Season of Light

Epiphany is a day and season of light, just as the word "epiphany" denotes. Every year on the feast day, we hear the words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, "Arise, shine for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you" (Is. 60:1).

Epiphany enlightens us as it proclaims great Scriptural truths. The time of celebration emphatically declares that Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem, is true God made man. It announces that God has appeared among us as the Promised One to be the Savior of all people of every nation, Gentiles as well as Jews. At Christmas we emphasize that God became man. Epiphany puts the spotlight on the truth that this human being born in Bethlehem is truly God; He is the God-man.

Jesus is the true light who enlightens every person. As the Nicene Creed clearly states, Jesus is "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." Jesus Himself announced: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). It is with compelling reason that Epiphany is often spoken of as the Festival of Lights.

Charles Knippel
Lutheran Witness
January 1, 2007

Time & Talent

Greeters

January 3	Judy Darville Rosalie Streng
January 10	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten
January 17	Gail Bujnowski Judy Darville
January 24	Gail Bujnowski Rosalie Streng
January 31	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten

Deacons/Ushers

January 3	Jim Jenne John Stuebe
January 10	Jim Jenne John Stuebe
January 17	Jim Jenne John Stuebe
January 24	Jim Jenne John Stuebe
January 31	Jim Jenne John Stuebe

Altar Guild

January	Gail Bujnowski Judy Darville
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Requests for the New Year

What shall I ask for the coming year?

What shall my watchword be?

What should you do for me, dear Lord?

What can I do for Thee?

Lord, I would ask for a holy year.

Spent in Your perfect will.

Help me to walk in Your very steps;

Help me to please You still.

Lord, I would ask for a year of love,

O let me love You best!

Give me the love that does not fail

Beneath the hardest test.

Lord, I would ask for a year of prayer,

Teach me to walk with Thee;

Breathe in my heart the Spirit's prayer;

Pray Thou Thy prayer in me!

Lord, I would ask for a year of joy;

Thy peace, Thy joy divine,

Springing undimmed through all the days

Be Thy days of shade or shine.

Lord, I would ask for a year of hope,

Looking for Thee to come,

And hastening on that year of years

That brings us Christ and Home.

—Author unknown



O God, Our Help in Ages Past
(LSB 733)

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

Thy Word commands our flesh to dust,
"Return, ye sons of men:"
All nations rose from earth at first,
And turn to earth again.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

The busy tribes of flesh and blood,
With all their lives and cares,
Are carried downwards by the flood,
And lost in following years.

Time, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

Like flowery fields the nations stand
Pleased with the morning light;
The flowers beneath the mower's hand
Lie withering ere 'tis night.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

We congratulate the following members of Ascension as they celebrate their **birthdays** in January.

- January 5 Kelee Schwenn
- January 8 Lance Ahlgrim
- January 12 Rudy Oliva
- January 16 Rev. Julio Orozco
- January 22 Carolyn Jannusch
- January 25 Eleanore Bailey
- January 29 Mark Plucinski
- January 31 Billy Powyczynski



And we congratulate the following couples as they celebrate their **wedding anniversaries** in January.

None on record

These are the **birthdays** and **wedding anniversaries** recorded in our church records for the coming month. If any birthday or anniversary was omitted, please notify the church office.

ASCENSION 2021 BOARD MEMBERS

President:	Tom Friedewald
Vice President:	Jim Jenne
Treasurer:	Coby Mueller
Secretary:	Audrey Schultz
Financial Secretary:	Sandy Friedewald
Board of Deacons:	Jim Jenne (Chair) Hal Downs Tom Friedewald Jim Jenne Jonathan Schultz John Stuebe
Board of Christian Ministries	Lois Marten (Chair)
Board of Trustees:	Jason Romano (Chair)
Board of Youth:	Sarah Lindahl (Chair)

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OFFICIAL ACTS

None on record

Do you have an announcement to share about your family such as a birth, death, engagement, graduation, etc., **let us know! We'd love to hear from you!**

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of copies: 200

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