

# Eternal Life Newsletter

July 2025



A Publication of  
Eternal Life Lutheran Church  
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Mesa, AZ 85208

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***“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” (Romans 10:9–10, ESV)***

Dear Friends in Christ:

Every Sunday, we confess our faith in God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—using the words of one of the three ecumenical or universal creeds. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds have been recited by Christians for centuries. By using these creeds regularly in our worship, Lutherans show that we are not a sect but that we are a part of the “one holy Christian (or catholic) and apostolic Church.” (The word “catholic” comes from a Greek word meaning “according to the whole,” implying the universal nature of the Church.) For my newsletter article this month, I would like to provide some history about the creeds and discuss their ongoing importance in the life of the Church today.

**The Apostles' Creed** began as the Old Roman Creed in the second century A.D. It was used in the baptismal liturgy to express the faith in the Triune God. It took its name from an old tradition that the creed was composed by each of the twelve apostles, each contributing a sentence. While the Apostles' Creed

was not composed this way, the creed does beautifully summarize and confess the faith of the apostles as taught in Holy Scripture.

**The Nicene Creed** takes its name from the Council of Nicaea, which was held 1,700 years ago in A.D. 325. The council ruled against the teachings of a pastor named Arius, who taught that Jesus was not the eternal Son of God but rather was created by the Father. The Council of Nicaea rejected this teaching and instead confessed the eternal divinity of Jesus, that He is “of one substance” with the Father. Later, at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381, the Nicene Creed was expanded to further affirm and confess the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

**The Athanasian Creed**, which is traditionally recited on Trinity Sunday, is named after Athanasius, who was an opponent of Arius. Though attributed to him, this creed dates to the late fifth century more than 100 years after Athanasius’ death. It is named in his honor, however, because he suffered greatly for the sake of the Gospel. His enemies had him exiled five times; on two occasions he was almost murdered. The Athanasian Creed thoroughly sets forth what the Bible teaches about the Holy Trinity as well as the incarnation of Jesus—namely, that Jesus is fully God and fully man. These and other teachings of Holy Scripture Athanasius boldly and courageously championed throughout his life.

When we say the words of one of these creeds in the Divine Service on Sunday morning, not only are we proclaiming our faith in our Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—but we are also declaring our solidarity with Christians of all times and places who spoke these same words before us. The precise words and phrases in the creeds were determined with great care. Many Christians, such as Athanasius, endured hardship and suffering to ensure the Christian faith was expressed and confessed rightly because they understood that our salvation is dependent on knowing Jesus rightly.

For example, Jesus is not a creature made by God, as Arius taught (and many still teach today), but He is God Himself. He is the eternal Son of God, who took on flesh and became man to save us by dying for our sins and rising from the dead Easter morning. As Jesus said:

*“God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.”*  
(John 3:16–18)

Because these creeds are based on and taken from Holy Scripture, they help us to know and believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. In addition, they connect us with one another as we confess together our common faith in Him. Finally, they give us a foretaste of heaven itself when we will join with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven in confessing and praising our Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—for eternity. For these reasons and more, we treasure and make use of the three ecumenical creeds, just as our fathers and mothers in the faith had done for centuries before us.

**Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Brian Crane**



...at worship services and events here at Eternal Life. We can all get to know one another...putting a face with a name. Don't have a badge, or can't find yours? Please let the church office know. Looking forward to putting **your name with your face!**

## CHAIRMAN'S

ORNER


Beginning in childhood, Fourth of July celebrations remind us of our nation's Declaration of Independence and the personal freedoms that document provides. It's a time to reflect with gratitude on those liberties and the many blessings God bestowed on us as American citizens.

However, approximately two thousand years before, God provided a Declaration of Independence for those in Christ from an eternity in outer darkness. The empty tomb declared all in Christ set free from God's wrath and condemnation. John 8:31 and 32 remind us of this spiritual freedom. *"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'"* Jesus our Savior is truth. He asks that we place our faith in Him, and by surrendering to Him we are truly free in this life and in the world to come. Happy Independence Day.

Quick note, church projects in July include sealing of the Parish Hall floor July 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Carpet cleaning occurs in the Sanctuary, Narthex, and Pastor's office July 15<sup>th</sup> with a confidential offering covering this cost. Building access on those dates will be through the church office door off E. Arbor Avenue. Additionally, please remember the quarterly voters' meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup>. Included with the Board reports will be matters involving the other building and property. Your attendance would be greatly appreciated.

In His Service,  
**Robert K.**, Chairman

## BOARD OF ELDERS

**YOUTUBE:** We live-stream our worship services on our Eternal Life YouTube  channel, where you can also watch previously recorded worship services and Sunday Bible classes. Please consider subscribing to the channel. This will allow us to extend our reach and visibility. You can find the channel by going to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and searching for Eternal Life Lutheran Church, Mesa, Arizona. Thank you!

**LIVE-STREAM:** If you ever need to step out of church, the worship service can be viewed on the television in the Family Room.



... is available at [lutheranhour.org](http://lutheranhour.org), on the Connected by LHM mobile app, on Sirius XM Family Talk Channel, and platforms like Spotify, iHeartRadio, dialing in on your phone, and more.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### ★ SUNDAY BIBLE CLASS



The class meets at 10:45 a.m. in the Parish Hall. **Pastor Crane** leads a Bible study on creation using materials from the CPH resource, *The Lutheran Difference: Creation*.

### ★ CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children preschool age and up meet in the Family Room with **Heidi M.** or **Deaconess Intern Debbie**.



**SUNDAY SCHOOL** will be continuing with class and music throughout the summer.

## ★ MEN'S STUDY GROUP

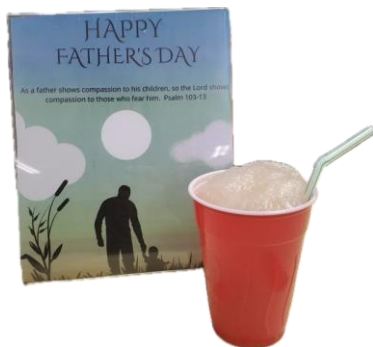
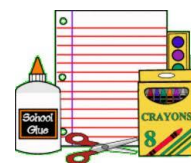
This group meets on the **second and fourth Mondays** of each month from **6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

The group will meet in July on ***Monday, July 14 and 28***, at 6:30 p.m. to continue our review of the book *Reading Romans with Luther* by Rev. RJ Grunewald.



## SOCIAL MINISTRY

**SOCIAL MINISTRY JULY PROJECT:** We are collecting school supplies for Mrs. Nardini's first grade classroom at Jefferson Elementary School across from the church, where **Deaconess Intern Debbie** volunteers. A "wish list" is available in the Foyer and on the Parish Hall bulletin board. A collection box is in the Foyer. **Deadline** to donate is **Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>**.



**FATHER'S DAY:** Root beer floats were served on Father's Day, ***Sunday, June 15***, during Coffee & Treats after the worship service.



**Enjoy lunch, fellowship, and friendship!**

Lunch Bunch socials will be held at **11:00 a.m.** on the **third Thursday** each month. Location will change monthly. Watch for location in the Sunday announcements. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Foyer. Always leave a phone number

where you can be reached just in case plans have to be changed. For any questions, contact **Joy Hampton** or **Carol Ross**.

Lunch Bunch will next meet on **Thursday, July 17**, at **11:00 a.m.** Watch the announcements for the location and for a sign-up sheet in the Foyer.

**THE JUNE LUNCH BUNCH SOCIAL** met on **Thursday, June 14**, at Birdies Bar and Grill, located in the Fountain of the Sun community in Mesa with 11 in attendance.

*~ Please join us next month! Everyone is invited! ~*

### **Pain and Sorrow Can Turn into New Strength and Growth**

Yes, pain and sorrow can be powerful catalysts for growth and strength. This idea is supported by the concept of Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG), which refers to the positive psychological changes experienced after a life crisis or traumatic event. Sorrow and grief can be tools for spiritual growth, drawing us closer to God and deepening our reliance on Him.

As we grow in knowledge, we must remain humble. Painful experiences can make you stronger. Those tears don't just go to waste, but only if they are used in the right way. Convert your pain into a weapon for good. Don't allow your pain and sorrow to backfire on you and tear you down. Ask yourself, "Am I going to be a victim or a victor?" "Do I want to get better, or am I going to be bitter because of what has happened?"

*"My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!"*  
(Psalm 119:28)

*"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."* (Revelation 21:4)

The pain you feel isn't the end of your story; it might just be the beginning of your purpose.

*“And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.” (1 Peter 5:10)*

At some point in our lives, we all feel the thorns that go with roses. Life can be going fairly smoothly until gradually, or all of a sudden, something happens, and we face a major crisis. It may be the death of a close one, a teenager mixed up with the wrong crowd, a wedge in the middle of a relationship, a spouse who becomes abusive, or bad news from a doctor.

God doesn't cause the crisis; our sin and everyone else's sin does, together with the devil's conniving ways. But remember, God has already won the victory over sin, death, and the devil.

The troubles may not all go away, but we do have a choice on how to react to them. Look to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and lean on Him, trusting in His ways and timing. This is far better than burying ourselves in self-pity or looking for help from others and not from God Himself.

For example, St. Paul went to the Lord to ask that the thorn in his flesh be removed. Paul writes, *“So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:7–10)*

I can attest to what Paul writes from my own life experiences. As a child five years old, I had paralytic polio. This meant a lifelong journey of reliance on God's strength, comfort, and guidance. It meant many surgeries, wearing a brace, and much physical therapy. As a child, I didn't realize how important my relationship with God was. Many times when I went into surgery, my dad said I wasn't afraid because I would see God. I think at that stage in my life, I saw my doctor as God.



As time went by and I became older, my understanding of God grew and my relationship with Him deepened. I learned to become more accepting of my disability. I could see how God paved the path for me to become a registered nurse, which I loved doing and felt God's calling to do His work in this way.

Many years ago, as an adult, I was able to thank God for allowing polio to invade my body. Through the adventures and disappointments of life, together with my faith and relationship with Jesus, I reached a point where I could be grateful for this weakness that had affected my whole life. I was able to be more empathetic to the patients I took care of, as well as to my friends and family. I witnessed to them that anything is possible with God, that faith in God does make a difference—all the difference in the world.

I am so thankful to God for the opportunities He offers me to do His work, no matter the challenges or circumstances. Even as my body weakens and I am unable to do some things I used to love doing, I am certain each day of God's power. I am not afraid. Yes, I get discouraged and depressed at times, but then I remind myself that His grace is sufficient. Each day is a new blessing from God. Whatever happens that day is in God's hands and according to His will and timing.

When you feel down because of a difficult time in your life, ask God to help you. Look up and focus on the promises of Jesus, such as:

*“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20)*

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” (Deuteronomy 31:6)*

God bless each of us, every day, one day at a time.

**Mardy Knudsen**, Social Ministry

# **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP**



## **THE ENGLISH DISTRICT**

**One Dollar – Per Member – Per Week  
Donations from Eternal Life  
through *May*: \$269.00**



## **UPDATE ON A RECIPIENT OF 1-1-1:**

**SAMOSAS FOR MISSION** – The Montreal Forum and congregation of **Ascension Lutheran Church**, Montreal, Quebec, served by Rev. Charles St-Onge, is a 2024-2025 1-1-1 Dollar for Missions recipient. This QR code will direct you to Rev. St-Onge's blog, "In the Way," where he posts a monthly newsletter and photo gallery providing updates about the mission.  
([intheway.org/ascensionlutheran.ca](http://intheway.org/ascensionlutheran.ca))



**LCMS Stewardship Ministry** – [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)  
**Newsletter Article** – July 2025

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## ***Faithfulness: The Stewardship Standard***

*"Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).*

What is the standard to which a steward is held? Ask the average person, and they might talk about percentages, tithes, and commitments. Too often, the default mode of measuring stewards is by how much and how frequently they give. This is not helpful. Measuring activity without any connection to baptismal identity is a recipe for disaster. It can either breed a sense of superiority and self-righteousness or create a culture of scarcity and despair. Neither outcome is godly or helpful.

This is not to say that stewardship should be regarded as “no big deal.” St. Paul, within his discussion of the ministry to which he has been called, sets the standard of accountability for the steward: faithfulness. This removes any sense of superiority or self-righteousness and dispels scarcity and despair. When a steward manages what the Lord has entrusted to them — resources and all aspects of life — for God’s purposes, the focus is not on how much or how frequently they give.

This standard reflects the stewardship portrayed in the Gospels where Jesus entrusts varying amounts, each according to ability. The commended stewards were recognized for their faithfulness in their vocation, not the amounts they managed. Conversely, the condemned stewards were not castigated for their lack of performance but for their lack of faithfulness.

What does this mean for the steward in the pew? The Lord has entrusted you with various things. Luther captures them in his explanation of the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed and the Fourth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer. The familiar couplets of food and drink, house and home, spouse and children, land, animals and all possessions are the Lord’s, and He has entrusted them to you for His purpose. This trust brings an active realization of thanksgiving.

This active thanksgiving is our stewardship. It can be distilled into two questions that the steward regularly needs to answer:

1. How has God blessed me?
2. How is He calling me to respond?

The first question is quite simple to answer: if the Lord has entrusted something to you, it is a blessing. This blessing is for God’s glory and the benefit of your neighbor. The second question is more challenging to measure; it is not about percentages and charts. Instead, it is about a life of thanksgiving that flows from the mercies of God revealed in Jesus Christ. This thanksgiving starts at and flows from the cross and the empty tomb. Our stewardship of the Gospel drives our stewardship of everything else.

The standard, then, is faithfulness. Faithfulness flows from eyes focused on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. It does not come from our efforts but through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, through Word and Sacrament. It begins at the altar in the Divine Service but extends into the world — from hearth and home to workplace and classroom, from commerce to leisure. The mercy of God, freely given in Jesus, leads us to demonstrate a faithfulness that reveals to others the same mercy we have received in Jesus.

This faithfulness cannot be measured empirically. It is simply allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us for the glory of God and the benefit of our neighbor. Weekly. Daily. Faithfully.

Board of Stewardship

## **TREASURER**



## **FIGURES THROUGH MAY 2025**

	<b><u>ACTUAL NEEDED TO MEET BUDGET</u></b>	<b><u>ACTUAL GIVING</u></b>	<b><u>ACTUAL SPENDING</u></b>
May 2025	\$19,762	\$ 16,585	\$ 18,568
Year-to-Date	\$98,810	\$115,151	\$106,899

## **"OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE" AT ETERNAL LIFE**

Please prayerfully consider where you can serve. There is always "room for one more" in any of the "opportunities" here at Eternal Life! Please prayerfully consider where you can serve . . .



. . . check where you would like to serve. Contact the appropriate person to let them know, "I want to be a part of your group."

- ☐ **ALTAR GUILD** ... speak with **Janet R.**, Director.
- ☐ **COFFEE & TREATS** ... speak with **Susan M.**
- ☐ **COUNTERS** ... speak with **Robert M.**, Financial Secretary.
- ☐ **PRAYER CHAIN** ... speak with **Mardy K.**
- ☐ **QUILTERS** ... will meet up again in the Fall.
- ☐ **SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPER** ... speak with **Heidi M.**
- ☐ **TRUSTEE TUESDAYS** ... will be on an as-needed basis over summer.
- ☐ **USHERS** ... speak with **Robert K.**, Head Usher.



The Altar Guild is always looking for loving hearts and willing hands. Contact the Altar Guild Director, **Janet R.**, to find out more about this “behind-the-scenes” opportunity to serve, or ask one of the current members: Men are welcome, too!

## CHANCEL FLOWERS



Chancel flowers and green plants for Sunday services come from donations to the Flower Fund. Should you wish to provide flowers for a particular Sunday to commemorate an anniversary, birthday, or to remember a loved one, please speak with **Janet H.** to reserve your date. The usual amount is \$35-\$45.

Don't have a special occasion? Or simply enjoy the flowers on Sunday? Donations, in any amount, would be appreciated. Please make your donation for flowers by using one of the **“Flower” envelopes, which are available in the Narthex** on the partition by the restrooms.

## COFFEE & TREATS . . .



are served every Sunday after service in the Parish Hall. This is a wonderful time to visit and get to know one another a little better.



On the bulletin board in the Parish Hall, find the **sign-up sheet** to provide “treats” on Sunday. Your treat can be dropped off in the Parish Hall on a serving table or in the refrigerator before service.



### Faith Guild LWML (Lutheran Women's Missionary League)

The Guild does not meet again until ***Monday, November 10*** (Martin Luther's birthday). Watch the Sunday Announcements and future newsletters for upcoming events.

On ***Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>*** the Faith Guild LWML prepared and served the reception following Ginger H's funeral service at the church.



**LWML MITES** collected **June:** \$71.00  
**Year-to-Date:** \$368.68

**LWML MITE SUNDAY** is on the first Sunday of each month. The next **Mite Sunday** is ***July 6***.

**LWML Mite boxes** are available on the counter in the Foyer.

***“SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS”***

## **IN THE FOYER:**


- **JULY NEWSLETTER** ~ to have it emailed or mailed to you, please notify the church office.
- **PORTALS OF PRAYER** ~ July – September 2025 devotional is available in three (3) sizes. You can subscribe through Concordia Publishing House to ensure you never miss a copy by going to [cph.org](http://cph.org), or contact the church office for details.
- **LWML: MITE BOXES** (*free*)  
**ENVELOPES** for donations to Mites.
- **EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS** on communion rail kneeling cushions.
- **MEMBER INFORMATION FORM.** Wonder why your birthday or anniversary isn't on the monthly calendar? Have you filled out a form? Pick up a form and return it to the church office.
- **FUNERAL ARRANGEMENT FORM.**  
*Both confidential "Information" and "Funeral Arrangement" forms are kept in your personal file in a locked file cabinet.*

## **IN THE NARTHEX:**

- **1+1+1 CLEAR ACRYLIC "LITTLE CHURCH"** for your weekly \$1.  
***Contributions through May = \$269.00.*** You can also make a one-time donation of \$52.00 per family member for the year.
- **BROCHURES** with lots of information to share with family and friends, including on how to become an Associate Member of Eternal Life.

# July 2025

## Eternal Life Lutheran Church

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6 <div>9:00 AM Divine Worship 10:45 AM Bible Class &amp; Sunday School ~ LWML Mite Sunday ~ ~Coffee &amp; Treats, after worship~</div>	7	8 <div>9:00 AM Pastor's WINKLE at Shepherd of the Pines, Payson</div>	9 <div>Deep Cleaning of Nave, and stripping &amp; resurfacing of Parish Hall floor. (Only access to building at Arbor Street door.)</div>	10 <div>Deep Cleaning of Nave, and stripping &amp; resurfacing of Parish Hall floor. (Only access to building at Arbor Street door.)</div>	11 <div>Church Office Closed</div>	12																																																																																												
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20 <div>9:00 AM Divine Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School After worship: ~ Coffee &amp; Treats ~ ~ Quarterly Voters' Meeting ~</div>	21 <div>2:00 PM Newsletter Article Deadline</div>	22	23	24	25 <div>Church Office Closed</div>	26																																																																																												
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