

# Eternal Life Newsletter

## August 2025



A Publication of  
**Eternal Life Lutheran Church**  
**50 S. Jefferson Avenue**  
**Mesa, AZ 85208**

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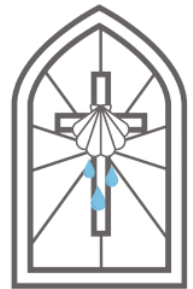
Website: [www.eternallifelutheran.org](http://www.eternallifelutheran.org)



***"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20, ESV)***

Dear Friends in Christ:

**June 26–28, 2025**, I attended the English District Convention at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Also representing Eternal Life at the convention were **Andrew G.**, our Lay Delegate; **Pastor Resner**, as an Advisory Delegate; and **Simon F.**, as a Youth Representative. The theme of the convention was "Living Our Baptized Life in Christ."



Living our Baptized Life in Christ

The English District is one of 35 districts of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Headquartered in Farmington, Michigan, the English District includes more than 150 congregations in 22 U.S. states and one Canadian province. For more information about the English District, including its unique and fascinating history, please visit the English District website at <https://englishdistrict.org>.

Representatives of district congregations meet in convention every three years to elect officers for the district, debate and adopt resolutions, receive reports and updates from synod and district officials, and support one another in our common mission to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ in our congregations and communities. Each congregation can send two voting delegates to the district convention: a pastoral delegate and a lay delegate.

**Bishop Jeffrey Miskus** was elected as our Bishop/District President. As the previous First Vice President of the district, Bishop Miskus became our bishop last August 1 when our former bishop, **Rev. Dr. Jamison Hardy**, accepted the call to serve as President of the Concordia University System. In other elections, **Pastor Michael Morehouse** of Catalina Lutheran Church in Tucson, Arizona, was elected First Vice President of the district, and **Pastor Mark Wood** of Shepherd of the Canyon Lutheran Church in Gold Canyon, Arizona, was elected to serve on the district's Board of Directors.

Even closer to home, my election as Circuit Visitor for Circuit 19, Arizona-North, was ratified by the convention. Circuit 19 consists of eight congregations: Eternal Life, Mesa; Shepherd of the Canyon, Gold Canyon; Family of Christ, Phoenix (Ahwatukee); Shepherd of the Pines, Payson; Faith, Overgaard; Shepherd of the Mountains, Pinetop; Messiah, Parker; and Prince of Peace, Mesquite, Nevada. (Thank you to **Pastor Resner** for faithfully serving as our circuit visitor the past four years.)

The circuit visitor represents and assists the bishop/district president as requested by him within the circuit. One of the primary duties of the circuit visitor is to assist congregations that are going through the call process for a pastor. Currently two congregations in our circuit are seeking a pastor: Shepherd of the Pines, Payson, and Messiah, Parker. The additional duties as circuit visitor will add to my workload somewhat, but I look forward to serving the congregations and pastors of our circuit. We are blessed to be a part of a wonderful circuit and district.

I enjoyed attending the English District Convention. As is often the case at these kinds of events, the best part of the convention was the numerous opportunities we had for worship and fellowship before, during, and after the business sessions. The opening and closing worship services in the

Concordia University chapel were particularly great. You can find more information about the convention, including video recordings of the sessions and worship services, at <https://englishdistrict.org/events/english-district-convention>.

I will close by sharing the opening words of Bishop Miskus' report to the convention. Not only is it a beautiful summary of the theme of the convention, "Living Our Baptized Life in Christ," but it also wonderfully describes our daily life as God's baptized people:

*In our baptisms* we were united with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection. God's act of grace gave us faith and new birth as His children.

*In our baptisms* we have been crucified and raised with Christ. Glory be to God!

*In our baptisms* our sins were washed away, and we were clothed with the holiness and righteousness of Jesus – we were fit for the very presence of God.

*In our baptisms* we were filled with God's Holy Spirit.

*In our baptisms* we were saved.

As baptized believers we are called each day to offer our lives as living sacrifices to God as they are now holy, righteous, and pleasing to God because of Jesus.

We are called to live the baptized life of repentance, faith, and love that we've been graciously given.

Not only is this beautiful revelation our convention theme, but it has been our district's vision for the past year and will be into the future.

Yours in Christ,  
**Pastor Brian Crane**



# CHAIRMAN'S

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At the July 20<sup>th</sup> voters' meeting, the voters approved placing the western portion of our property back on the market. This approval authorized the Chairman and Board of Trustees Chair, per Church constitution guidelines, to sign any LOI (Letter of Intent) initiating sales contract discussions with potential buyers. With Church Council consent, the Chairman would present any brokered agreement to the voters for their consideration and approval requiring 2/3 meeting support, again per Church constitution guidelines. Additionally, the voters authorized the Chairman to enlist a real estate agent and to consult with our real estate attorney, if imperative. The 2025 budget includes \$5,000 for attorney fees.

Developers referred to us by the City of Mesa recently submitted purchase offers to build a National Guard facility and another for single-family homes. Additionally, these offers included connecting the Church drain system to the city sewer line off S. 70<sup>th</sup> St., constructing a west- and north-facing border wall, and various levels of parking lot enhancements. City codes prevent any repair or replacement of our 60-year-old septic system. Having a developer connect us to the city sewer line would save the Church from having to incur this cost ourselves, currently estimated at \$179,223. This and any other improvements provided by a developer would result in substantial savings to our congregation. Initial efforts will concentrate on securing a sales agreement with one of the referred firms.

Thank you to all those who attended and participated in the meeting. Gratitude as well to Pastor Crane, Pastor Doughty, and the Church Council for their time and efforts in these matters.

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



**PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE.** 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!**

**FREE Workshop**

**Eternal Life Lutheran Church (LCMS)**

***Understanding Dementia: Biblically, Medically, and Socially***

**Saturday, September 20, 2025**

**9:15 AM – 1:00 PM**

**Registration begins at 8:45 AM**

**RSVP requested by September 13, 2025**


**Please call the church office at 480-985-0224.**

***Acts 17:28: “In him we live and move and have our being.”***

*Thank you to Thrivent for providing funding  
for the workshop.*

**BOARD OF ELDERS**

**NEW MEMBERS:** We are blessed to have many visitors and guests join us for worship at ELLC. If you or a family member would like to learn more about becoming a member of our congregation, please let me know. I would be happy to meet with you or them. Thank you! – **Pastor Crane**

**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**.



*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* – Proverbs 22:6

### ★ **MEN'S STUDY GROUP**

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

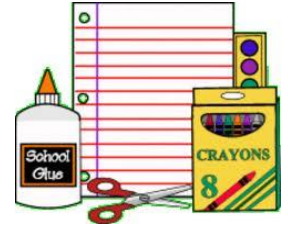


The group will meet in August on **Monday, August 11 and 25**, at 6:30 p.m. to continue our review of the book *Reading Romans with Luther* by Rev. RJ Grunewald.

## SOCIAL MINISTRY



In **JULY** the congregation donated school supplies to Mrs. Nardini's first grade classroom at Jefferson Elementary School across from the church.



**First batch of supplies**

*From Mrs. Nardini:*

*I was just going through all of the school supplies. Everyone was so very generous!!! I appreciate each item very much!!*

*Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!!!*



**plus a second batch, July 20<sup>th</sup>.**



The Lunch Bunch will meet **Thursday, August 21**, at **11:00 a.m.** at **Red Lobster**, 6149 E. Southern Avenue, Mesa (S.W. side Superstition Blvd. & Southern, West side across from Olive Garden.) There is a sign-up sheet is on the counter in the Foyer. For any questions, contact **Joy H.** or **Carol R.**

*~ Everyone is welcome to join us! ~*

**THE JULY LUNCH BUNCH SOCIAL** met on **Thursday, July 17**, at Oregano's Pizza Bistro in Mesa.



**Enjoy lunch, fellowship, and friendship** each month as the **Lunch Bunch** meets at **11:00 a.m.** on the **third Thursday** each month. Location changes monthly. Watch for location in announcements and sign-up sheet in the Foyer. ~ *Please join us next month! Everyone is invited!* ~

Social Ministry

## **FINANCIAL SECRETARY**

**ELECTRONIC GIVING:** Visit our ELLC website and click on the “donate” option in the upper right-hand corner which will redirect you to our vendor Vanco while linking donations back to our church software. OR, scan this QR code to be taken to this secure electronic giving page.



# **BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP**



**THE ENGLISH DISTRICT  
One Dollar – Per Member – Per Week  
Donations from Eternal Life  
through *June*: \$308.00**



From the English District Convention:



Initially, I was an empty, clear container placed inconspicuously at the back of the Convention hall. During his opening remarks at the Convention, Bishop Miskus referenced me, Mission 1-1-1, and encouraged attendees to learn more about the Mission 1-1-1 program: one member, one dollar, one week at a time

Throughout the first day, people followed the Bishop's suggestion by coming over to me and speaking with the person who could explain the 1-1-1 program. Several individuals made contributions. Members of the Mission Action Team wore badges that said, "Ask me about 1-1-1." By the end of the day, I was no longer empty; people were taking notice and talking about me. Communication and visibility were key in establishing momentum.

Day two saw continued efforts by the Mission Action Team and further response from Convention participants during session breaks, resulting in additional contributions and inquiries. An evening agenda item allowed Rev. Laughridge to elaborate on Mission 1-1-1's vision and emphasize the importance of ongoing communication and visibility for future success.

By the conclusion of the third day, participation continued to increase, with many individuals returning to contribute again. My sponsors, Rev. Reaman and Chuck Porter, were excited to learn that Convention attendees contributed a total of \$359 USD and \$20 CAD.

The Mission 1-1-1 objective was clearly supported through these collective efforts. Display your Mission 1-1-1 collection box prominently, be ready to explain its purpose, and be prepared to reach the lost for Jesus.

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*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" Romans 10:14-15*

## **Jesus' transforming presence**

*“But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost’”.* (Luke 19:8-10 NIV)

Who knew, all those kids sitting in Sunday school were getting a lesson in stewardship! Generations of children have very often heard lessons based on the familiar account of Zacchaeus. The diminutive tax collector's curiosity surrounding the person and ministry of Jesus is what the Holy Spirit used to set him on a collision course for a total stewardship transformation. This transformation, according to the text of Luke 19, is not just about this life. This stewardship transformation is about eternity as well!

Remember the story: Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Do not think of friendly neighborhood IRS agents. This was more like a toll booth operator, but the governing authorities did not set the toll. They would contract men to staff roadside booths and tax the commerce that was passing along the road. This was an enterprise full of greed and graft. The tax collectors would take as much as they could and only pass on a portion to the government. The rest did not go into the community chest either! It went into the pocket of the tax collector.

This is why the people had such disdain for *Jewish* tax collectors. They were seen as both crooks and traitors. They were crooks in that they extorted their compatriots and others in the toll process. But worse, they were seen as traitors because their efforts supported the occupying Roman authorities. That is the real reason that the people would not make way so that short Zacchaeus could see Jesus.

For this reason, he runs ahead and climbs a tree. He had heard all the stories. He wanted to see this Jesus with his own eyes. Mercy is on display. This hated crook and traitor gets a direct audience with Jesus — at Jesus' own request! Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house. This is where the transformation is about to take place!

Notice how Jesus does it. He does not preach a three-week sermon series, nor does He ask Zacchaeus to make a pledge. There is nothing programmatic about Jesus' approach. But Zacchaeus is completely transformed! The transforming force is the very presence of Jesus! Direct time with Jesus takes a crooked, selfish, criminal and makes him the most faithful steward.

This new life of stewardship is marked by the promises made. First, he gives half of his ill-gotten gains to the poor. These are people whom he would not have defrauded at all! Yet, after spending time with Jesus, they are His first concern. Only after this does he double the requirement of the Levitical law on fraud. And what does Jesus say is the result? Salvation!

Doing the acts of stewardship does not save. Rather, the faith in Jesus that is created by the Holy Spirit is what saves! This is critical for us to confess. Failed stewardship can and will cut you off from God. The only antidote for failed stewardship is the presence of Jesus.

We do not need to run ahead and climb a tree for this presence of Jesus. He makes Himself available to us every week in the Divine Service. He speaks His Word of invitation to us in the pages of Holy Scripture. This, and this alone, transforms us from sinner to saint, from owner to steward of all that belongs to the Lord.

Do you want to become a more faithful steward? Spend more time with Jesus. Make the Divine Service a weekly priority. Feast on Christ's body and blood weekly! This is the great gift that brings salvation from God's House to yours!

Board of Stewardship

***Is your 1-1-1 2025 donation up to date?***



## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### **A BIG THANK YOU . . .**

to everyone for your understanding and cooperation while the facility was being cleaned in July. It is so nice to know the building is clean! Please help as we work at keeping it that way. If you see something amiss, please notify the church office. Catching a problem early helps to keep it from becoming a BIG problem.

**– Board of Trustees**



## **TREASURER**

## **FIGURES THROUGH JUNE 2025**



	<u>ACTUAL NEEDED TO MEET BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL GIVING</u>	<u>ACTUAL SPENDING</u>
June 2025	\$ 19,762	\$ 19,991	\$ 17,154
Year-to-Date	\$118,572	\$135,142	\$124,053

**Chick Ross**, Treasurer

## **“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.



*Thank you to **Becky K.** and **Janet R.** for serving in July.*

**Carol R.** and **Janet R.** will be serving in August.

The Altar Guild is in need of *loving hearts and willing hands* to assist in setting up Holy Communion for worship services. It is a nice “behind-the-scenes” way to serve the Lord and Eternal Life. Free on-the-job training is offered! If you would like to know more or have a question, please speak with **Pastor** or the Altar Guild Director.

## **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)**

## **41<sup>st</sup> Biennial Convention, Omaha, NE – 33 New Mission Grants!**

Following another successful convention, we are pleased to announce that \$2,622,270 has been approved to fund 33 Mission Grants for the upcoming biennium. Thank you all for your ongoing giving that continues to spread His love and His Word across the world.



A complete list of the new 33 Mission Grants is available on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.

Other fun statistics include 272 singers in the choir, 806 attendees at the Wake Up in the Word Bible study, 2,439 attendees using Whova (an app available to view convention information and network with other attendees), approximately 73,680 hugs given, and 10/10s for everyone brave enough to sing karaoke.

Did you miss the convention? We've got you covered. Visit the LWML website at [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org). You'll find convention information as well as other information about LWML.

**Update:** The last **Mission Goal for the 2023–2025 Biennium**, \$2,350,000.00 was pledged and \$2,742,337.04 was received in Mites.

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



**LWML MITES** collected **July:** \$ 59.01  
**Year-to-Date:** \$427.69

**LWML MITE SUNDAY** is on the first Sunday of each month.  
The next **Mite Sunday** is **August 3**.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
LWML Vice-President

***“SERVE THE LORD WITH GLADNESS”***

**PERMISSION TO GRIEVE:** Have you lost a loved one or are you currently going through the journey of dementia or Alzheimer's with a loved one and you don't feel like you can talk to anyone? Rev. Tim Duerr, an LCMS pastor, leads a bi-weekly grief group for those who are navigating the grief of cognitive decline as well as death. This summer, we are watching videos from GriefShare. We meet on the **2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month** at 10:00 a.m. at the Oakwood Dementia HUB, 6915 E. Main Street, Mesa. For more information, contact Rev. Tim Duerr: [tduerr@srhospice.com](mailto:tduerr@srhospice.com).



**REWARDS RECEIVED** to date in 2025 is **\$75.10!**

**If you haven't already** linked your Fry's (and affiliates) card with Eternal Life, please contact the church office for assistance. **THANK YOU** to everyone who contributes!!

# August 2025

## Eternal Life Lutheran Church

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