
CALVARY COMMENT

October 2024

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
English District

208 Woods Drive

Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

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STEWARDSHIP CORNER

How Much Should I Give?

Is there an answer to this question? Is it give until it hurts? Give what you are able? Should I tithe? What about the time and efforts I give; how do they factor in?

Let's go to the Lord's Word: ***"Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver"***^(2Co 9:7) This Scripture certainly indicates the heart has a strong influence; we should give *not grudgingly and be cheerful*. If left to the mind, we might rationalize the answer to suit our circumstances.

We can also ask: (1) *How has God blessed us?* (2) *How is God calling us to respond?* With Paul's response above and these questions, the matter always starts with the One who created and sustains everything. God gives. The steward responds in faith and gratitude: our giving is voluntary and cheerful. It all seems so simple! The questions are asking us to describe what we are to do, not telling us what to do. The Scripture and questions call on our *patience and faithful reflection*.

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Harvest time is upon us, as the calendar has turned to October. We will focus on that in a specific way in worship next month when we gather on the evening prior to Thanksgiving Day. But even now, we can consider the matter of how harvests are spoken about in the Scriptures, so that we can be guided in our thinking, speaking, and acting.

Paul uses the image of sowing and reaping when writing to the Corinthians: ***"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."***^(2Co 9:6-10)

The application of the image isn't hard to grasp. Paul is speaking about what God has planted in the hearts and minds of Christians. They have been recipients of His divine grace. That has changed their lives completely around, bringing them into true knowledge of God and a right relationship with Him. They have been redeemed and restored.

Redeemed and restored hearts and minds manifest themselves in what believers do. Jesus had taught that concept in the Upper Room Discourse: ***"Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."***^(Jn 15:3-5)

The fruit that Jesus' disciples bear is the effects of His work done in and through them. Each has enough grace of God abounding in them, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, so that they can abound in every good work. All that is necessary for Christians to bear much fruit is provided, as they abide in Jesus and Jesus abides in them. This is done as believers are tied to the gifts that Jesus provides through His Word—what Christians hear when they gather in worship or study, when they partake of items set aside by Jesus' word of promise, or when they pray based on Jesus' teaching about Himself and the Father.

As you are involved with that Word of Jesus, the seed is planted in you—a seed that produces faith and its expression in the activities that you are led to conduct. This is what Paul means by stating: ***"He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."***^(2Co 9:10) The righteousness of Christ has been conferred to you. It establishes you in a right relationship with God. It also manifests itself in what you think, say, and do.

The harvest of righteousness are your good works prompted by faith. That includes how you decide to use what God has given to you. How you employ your wealth, abilities, and opportunities is part of your harvest of righteousness. Every believer can produce a harvest of righteousness because they have the seed of the Gospel planted in them. But as individual believers have more and more of that Gospel seed sown in their hearts and minds, it shouldn't surprise us that the harvest of righteousness becomes more plentiful. That's how the Lord has designed it. He has sown bountifully to us; let us see a bountiful harvest of righteousness raised in return.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER (Continued from Page 1)

Our stewardship necessarily includes the offering plate, but goes far beyond it as well. Giving time and efforts in service is part of our response. But the question remains how much? A pastor once passed on this piece of theological wisdom: "Pick a number. Start there, then add to it. When you begin to miss the time, your talents weaken, or you miss the finances, then stop at that point." Note he did not say stop your actions and giving, he just said stop at that point.

So we ask ourselves: *How has God blessed us? How is God calling us to respond? How are we giving of ourselves for the work of the Lord's Church?*

Stewardship Commitment Sunday (October 20) approaches! We count our GOD-given blessings.

What is the purpose of Stewardship Commitment Sunday on October 20?

- It is a time to think about what we do to carry forward the Great Commission. (Mt 28:16-20)
- It is a time to consider our continuing stewardship actions and the ongoing corporate stewardship actions of Calvary Congregation.
- It is a time to express our commitment to finding opportunities to use our abilities and wealth in stewarding/managing what God has providentially give us.
- On October 20, we make a personal commitment based on those thoughts.

Each of us brings gifts, but the actions of Christians are unified toward thanking and honoring God and the mission He has given us. Paul tells us: ***"And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."*** (2Co 9:8)

Some excerpts have been used from LCMS *Lutheran Witness* resources.

Upcoming Dates

Saturday & Sunday, November 2 & 3
English District BOD Meeting Hosting

Tuesday, November 5
Election Polling: 7:00am—8:00pm

Sunday, November 17
Voters Assembly Meeting: 12:15pm

Wednesday, November 22
Thanksgiving Evening Prayer: 7:00pm

Tuesday, December 24
Christmas Eve Evening Prayer: 7:00pm

Wednesday, December 25
Christmas Day Divine Service: 10:30am

EVANGELISM BOARD UPDATES

The Evangelism Board is organizing a "Bring a Friend Sunday" event on **November 10**. This will include a church dinner after Divine Service on that day. Look for postings and bulletin announcements for more details.

Parishioners are also encouraged to wear their name tags that are located in their parish mailboxes. Speak to a member of the Evangelism Board if you are in need of a name tag.

LWML/LADIES AID SOCIETY NEWS

"SCHOOL DAZE CRAZE": Thanks to your many donations, New Hope Ministries has been able to help meet students' needs for this current school year! We were able to donate 144 pounds of school supplies, which included 76 backpacks and 31 scientific calculators.

NHM THANKSGIVING STUFFING COLLECTION: The annual stuffing collection will be happening in the Narthex during October. The goal is to collect 300 boxes of stuffing for New Hope Ministries to distribute at Thanksgiving. Every box is appreciated!

LWML SUNDAY - OCTOBER 13: We're asking everyone to wear something purple in support of LWML. A listing of what we have done during the past year will be given out; the coffee social will offer goodies from our members. While in the Social Hall, please check out our bulletin board. THANK YOU for all the support you have given to LWML/LAS.

NEXT MEETING: Our next monthly meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, October 19 at 9:30am**. Meetings are held in the Education Wing Meeting Room. Bring your calendar, your *Quarterly*, and your mites.

NOVEMBER 2025 VOTERS ASSEMBLY MEETING

The Fall 2024 Voters Assembly Meeting is scheduled for **November 17** after Divine Service. This meeting is where congregational officers are elected and the 2025 parish budget is approved. The Nominating Committee is hard at work to find members willing to take lay leadership roles in the congregation. Please consider using your abilities and opportunities to serve.

ALTAR GUILD MEMBERSHIP

Our situation in regard to Altar Guild membership has not changed.

We are still in dire need of new members and welcome any man, woman, or confirmed teenager who is interested.

You see the Chancel and Altar each time you enter the sanctuary. If you desire to help in the care and presentation of it and its appointments, then please consider joining us in this valuable work for the church.

Please ask any member for information, or call Polly Pass at (717-579-0296).

CALVARY MEN'S IMPACT GROUP

The Calvary Men's Impact Group is continuing its multi-part study about vocation: "Masks of God."

Its next meeting will be on **Saturday, October 26 at 8:00am**.

Men of the congregation are invited to participate in these gatherings of prayer, fellowship, and learning.

PARISH CASH FLOW REPORT
January 1–August 31, 2024

INCOME	
General Offering	\$ 159,286.55
Mission Offering	9,900.00
Building Fund	6,276.00
Plate Offering	3,129.40
Memorials	243.77
My Neighbor Fund	0.00
1-1-1 Project	303.00
Initial Offering	200.00
Church Seasonal Service Offerings	5,005.15
Building Use	200.00
Refunds	0.00
Other Income	60,832.81
Thrivent Choice Dollars	358.00
Lutheran Witness Subscriptions	253.56
Sunday School	45.00
Youth Group	430.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 246,463.24
EXPENDITURES	
Pastoral Expenses	\$ 69,790.62
Personnel Expenses	26,685.02
Real Estate Expenses	25,201.77
Operating Expenses	38,343.33
Ministry Expenses	4,328.22
Mission Expenses	13,350.00
Mortgage Expenses	72,455.21
Non-Budgeted Expenses	36,648.73
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 286,802.90
NET CASH FLOW	– \$ 40,339.66

NOTES: Other Income includes contributions to the Education Wing Roof Replacement Fund Drive and the Robert Wallick Estate Gift that was designated for the Endowment Fund. Mortgage Expenses include payment of remaining Renovation Funds toward the principal of renovation loans. Non-Budgeted Expenses include transfer of the Robert Wallick Estate Gift to the Endowment Fund.

SEPTEMBER CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

- Pastor Zimmerman announced that our District Regional Vice-President Douglas Spittel has accepted a call to the Concordia University System. A replacement will be appointed soon.
- Treasurer Andy Barnes reported that the Education Wing roof repair cost of \$44,430 will be paid in September; \$37,353.48 will come from the special fundraiser initiative; the remaining balance will come from an LCEF saving account.
- Deacon Board is working on revising several manuals involving worship matters (ushers, assisting ministers).
- Trustee Board informed the Council that carpet in the Education Wing hallway and one classroom will be replaced in October. Much of the cost will be covered by an insurance claim due to damage from leaks in HVAC air handlers.
- One youth member and two chaperones will attend the 2025 National Youth Gathering.



OPERATION BARNABAS: A DECADE OF SERVICE

The Operation Barnabas Committee at Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church was formed in mid-2014. We are currently an Operation Barnabas Chapter under the Synod’s Ministry to the Armed Forces office. As such, we function as an auxiliary would function.

In September 2014, committee members met with Rev. Gary Danielsen, LCMS Project Director for the Synod’s Operation Barnabas governance board, who was very supportive of the initiatives that were being discussed by the committee as action items.

During those 10 years, Calvary’s Operation Barnabas Chapter has supported the following initiatives:

- Provided 100 toiletry kits for homeless female veterans.
- Staffed veteran resource fairs and the Harrisburg Stand Down for Homeless Veterans.
- Organized the Toaster Oven Challenge and donated cooking sets and utensils for recently housed veterans.
- Assembled Comfort Bags for homeless female veterans and backpacks for their children twice per year.
- Established an Honor Wall for Calvary members who are veterans.
- Provided support for members of Calvary who are currently serving in the Armed Forces.
- Gathered and delivered clothing and personal care items for hospitalized veterans at the Lebanon VA Medical Center.
- Organized cleanup of the Stanley Fisher property.
- Sponsored several Armed Forces Day picnics.

OUR CURRENT INITIATIVES

Emergency food boxes for veterans: 5 boxes provided so far.

Move-in boxes: For homeless veterans moving into transitional housing; 25 provided so far.

Move-out boxes: For veterans moving from transitional housing into permanent housing; 5 provided so far.

Military Share Program (October 2017–Present)

During the years we have been hosting a Military Share site, distributing 172,095 pounds of food. Congregation members have provided 2,906 volunteer hours on distribution days.

At the September 18 distribution, we served 36 households, totaling 102 people.

All of these past accomplishments and current initiatives are made possible through the work of the Holy Spirit and the generosity of our congregation.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

CALVARY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

208 Woods Drive

Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Address Service Requested



Next *Calvary Comment* Deadline is Sunday, October 20, 2024.
Please send info to CalvaryComment@Verizon.net.

BYLAW REVISION PROCESS UPDATE

At the May 2024 Church Council meeting, board chairs were tasked with reviewing the congregational bylaws in respect to each chair's board (e.g., Deacons, Trustees, Education,, etc.). Congregational officers were also asked to review their bylaw sections. The Vice President provided an overarching, but flexible, Plan of Action and Milestones (POAM) to provide a timeline for the process to move forward.

At the August 2024 Church Council meeting, an "editorial committee" was established to review proposed changes submitted from the boards, obtain clarification from board chairs if needed, and collate and develop a draft document incorporating any changes if warranted. Members of this "editorial committee" members are Karen Appel, Robert Ardner, Brandon Smith, and Pastor Zimmerman.

The task of the group is narrow, focusing on input from the boards and congregational officers produced by their reviews as noted above. The "editorial committee" is tasked only with incorporating any changes into the bylaws. The constitution itself is **not** being looked at at this time. Noting that, following any revisions approved and implemented by the Voters Assembly, some sections of the constitution itself may need to be brought into compliance with LCMS and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requirements.

The "editorial committee" anticipates submitting its report to Church Council in October 2024. Following that report to Church Council and any further changes that may need to be made, a special Voters Assembly meeting will be scheduled after January 1, 2025 for a first reading. Draft revised governing documents will be provided to the congregation prior to any special Voters Assembly meeting so the voters can review the draft and ask questions or gain clarification for changes.

The target date for a second reading of the draft revised governing documents is tentatively scheduled for a February/ March 2025 time frame; however, the congregation is not bound to this as a strict timeline. It is better to ensure that the congregation completes any revision process correctly, so planned dates may slip to ensure this happens.

If you have any questions, please direct them to the Vice President, Jim Blockus. Please do not hesitate to speak to him regarding the process. If there are questions about possible changes to the bylaws more than about the process itself, it would be helpful to have your questions or comments in written form, so they can be considered and answered.