



# Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



## July 2025 Newsletter

*"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." [Saint John 10:27]*

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. John 10:27-28

*Dear Sheep of the Divine Shepherd:*

### J.S. Bach: The Fifth Evangelist?



When we think of Lutheran theology, we often turn to names like Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, and the authors of the Book of Concord. But there is another voice—more melodic, more polyphonic—that has carried Lutheran doctrine across centuries not by pen and parchment, but by counterpoint and cantata: Johann Sebastian Bach who the Church observes on July 28<sup>th</sup>. Born in 1685 in Eisenach, the same town where Luther had once translated the New Testament into German, Bach was immersed in a world where music and theology were inextricably linked. Raised in a devout Lutheran family, he was trained not just as a musician, but as a theologian in sound. To hear Bach's music rightly is to overhear a confession of faith.

### **Soli Deo Gloria: To God Alone Be the Glory**

Nearly all of Bach's compositions—whether sacred or secular—bear the initials "S.D.G." at the end: *Soli Deo Gloria*. For Bach, music was never merely an art form or a profession; it was a divine calling. He viewed his vocation as a composer and church musician as a means of proclaiming the Gospel. His goal was not applause, but edification. As he once said, "The aim and final reason of all music is none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit." This is the Lutheran doctrine of vocation lived out. In his daily work, Bach exemplified how the Christian serves God and neighbor, not by seeking some spiritual ladder, but by being faithful in the tasks given—whether composing a cantata for Sunday or teaching music to schoolboys. All work, done in faith, becomes a liturgy of love.

### **A Musical Confession of Faith**

Bach's deep grasp of Lutheran theology permeates his sacred compositions. His *St. Matthew Passion* and *St. John Passion* are not just dramatic retellings of the Gospel accounts but profound meditations on Christ's atoning sacrifice. In these works, the listener is not merely an observer of the events of Holy Week but is drawn into the story through the lens of repentance, grace, and faith. His *Mass in B Minor*, though written in Latin and never performed in full during his lifetime, is a breathtaking musical creed. It reveals a man who knew the depth of human sin and the greater depth of divine mercy. In the *Credo*, we hear a confident trust in Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection. In the *Sanctus*, we are transported to the heavenly liturgy of Isaiah 6. Bach didn't just set theological truths to music; he preached them.

### **Word and Music United**

Martin Luther himself was a champion of music, saying: "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Bach took this to heart. In his hundreds of church cantatas, each based on Scripture and appointed for specific Sundays and festivals in the liturgical year, he wrote sermons in sound. For example, Cantata 80, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, is not merely a setting of Luther's famous hymn—it's a fortress of theological truth against the powers of sin, death, and the devil. Through intricate fugues and tender chorales, Bach gave the congregation not just something beautiful to hear, but something true to believe. His music was catechesis. His harmony was confession. His counterpoint was proclamation.

## The Comfort of the Gospel

Bach knew suffering. He was orphaned as a child, buried his first wife, and outlived ten of his twenty children. Yet his music never descends into despair. Even his darkest laments end in hope. This, too, is profoundly Lutheran. As those justified by grace through faith, we may suffer, but not without Christ. We die, but not without promise. Bach's music echoes this theology of the cross—honest about sin and sorrow yet always moving toward the resurrection.

## A Legacy of Faithful Beauty

To this day, Bach's music is performed in cathedrals and concert halls, classrooms and sanctuaries. But for those with ears of faith, it continues to do what it was always meant to do: point to Christ. In an age that increasingly separates art from truth, beauty from goodness, and faith from life, Bach stands as a witness to their unity. His compositions are not just relics of the Baroque era; they are reminders that the Gospel can be sung, that theology can be beautiful, and that every note—played in faith—can echo the joy of salvation. Perhaps this is why some have called him the "Fifth Evangelist." Not because he wrote a Gospel, but because his music sings the one true Gospel still.

### Soli Deo Gloria!

Listen to Jesus,  
Pastor

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## Christian Stewardship

### *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.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry: [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)



### **Week of July 6-12**

Sun, July 6, 8:30 am Divine Service

Sun, July 6, 9:40 am Fellowship

### **Week of July 13-19**

Sun, July 13, 8:30 am Divine Service

Sun, July 13, 9:40 am Fellowship

Sat, July 19, 10:00 am Ladies Aid Meeting

### **Week of July 20-26**

Sun, July 20, 8:30 am Divine Service

Sun, July 20, 9:40 am Fellowship

Mon, July 21, 6:00 pm Elders Meeting

### **Week of July 27-31**

Sun, July 28, 8:30 am Divine Service

Sun, July 28, 9:40 am Fellowship

Mon, July 28, 6:00 pm Council Meeting

### **July Birthdays**

05 Danielle Asche

05 Ruth Ogden

07 Ann Gernenz

13 Andrew Fox

16 Patricia Lewis

21 Kelly Stewart

30 Steve Stroh



### **July Baptismal Anniversaries**

02 Colleen Donaldson

30 Catlin Collins



### **July Wedding Anniversaries**

15 Stephen & Angela Pruitt

15 Rev David & Julie Zimmer

24 Hector & Jenny Martinez

27 Kevin & Teresa Pape



### **Bible Studies**

There are no bible studies in July. There will be fellowship after the divine service during the summer, unless otherwise noted.

### **Ladies Aid**

Ladies Aid will be sponsoring a wine/chocolate social on Saturday,

September 13 at 3:00 p.m. there will be more information in the weekly bulletins and September newsletter.



Now is the best time to join Ladies Aid at our next meeting on July 19 at 10:00 am. Our efforts for this meeting will be focused on the programs for the coming year.

- Do we want to sponsor social get togethers?
- Projects around the church, what needs to be done?

### **CaringNetwork**

Dear Brothers & Sisters at DSLC: thank you to everyone who helped with 'CaringNetwork Baby Bottle Drive'. It was good to see all the bottles filled with money and they assured us that this money would help mothers in need. We hope that we will be able to help with CaringNetwork for many more years to come! Thanks again for this outreach project.

### **Prayer Chain**



Several members are part of a church prayer chain. If you (men or women) would like to join them in praying for our congregation's special needs, please contact Julie Zimmer at 712-584-5301 or [jdzimmer@aol.com](mailto:jdzimmer@aol.com).

### **Portals of Prayer**

Pick up your July – September 2025 copy of Portals of Prayer in Luther Hall. The cost is \$15.00 a year. God's continued blessings as you study His word.

## Sunday Treats



Do you enjoy treats and fellowship after Sunday services? If so, please consider signing up on any given Sunday(s).

Why not sign up with a friend? *Empty slots mean no treats.* To enable our diabetic members to enjoy these treats, please consider supplementing some of the “sugary goodies” with crackers and cheese and/or fruit. The signup sheet is posted on the Luther Hall bulletin board.



Directing Choice Dollars is a great way for eligible Thrivent members to show support for what matters most to them. Thank you to everyone who donated their choice dollars. If you haven't donated the first two quarters, please do so ASAP.

## Trustee's Corner



A special thank you to our church's cleaning crew for all their hard work helping to clean our church facilities on a regular basis. This volunteer cleaning crew works diligently to vacuum, dust, scrub, mop, tidy, empty trash, and prepare our facilities each weekend. If you can clean the church on the 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of each month, please contact Kelly.

Do you like to garden, have a green thumb, if so, bring your own tools and help beautify the gardens. There is always weeding, pruning/etc to be done.

Kelly Stewart, Trustee

## Altar Flowers



The 2025 flower charts are posted. This is a wonderful way to help beautify God's house, celebrate a birthday or anniversary, or remember a departed loved on. If you would

like to contribute flowers to help beautify the sanctuary on a Lord's Day, please add your name to any open Sunday on the flower charts. Ruth Ogden will do two altar bouquets for **\$30**. **Karen** will contact you to get your flower request, and a brief note to place in the worship bulletin.

## RAISERIGHT

RaiseRight cards are available throughout the year for everyday expenses and gifts for any special occasion **Next order date is July 13**. Pre-purchased cards are available after Sunday services and forms are on the bookcase in Luther Hall. See page 5 for list of pre purchased cards. These cards make many of the Ladies Aid projects possible, and best of all they do not cost members anything beyond the face-value amount. They pay us to use their service. What is more, many of these cards can be reloaded so you do not have to continually buy new cards

*Your Organization:*

Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church – Manna

*Your Coordinator:* **Lisa Cruz**

630-636-6359

[dsbcmanna@yahoo.com](mailto:dsbcmanna@yahoo.com) [shopwithscrip.com](http://shopwithscrip.com)

*Your Enrollment Code:*

B2LD2C7A55973



## Prayer For Our Nation

Heavenly Father, Your Son is “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32). Let the light of Christ shine brightly in our nation and among our fellow citizens, that “many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD” (Psalm 40:3). Make Your Christians bold to speak the light of Your Word into our national darkness; for You live and reign with the Son and the Holy Spirit , one God forever. Amen  
(Portals of Prayer)

## Happy Birthday America!



This Independence Day pause and take a few moments to thank God for **ALL** of our freedoms. The freedom to share His hope – read His Word – Worship together – pray aloud – spread the Good News – teach His truth – sing His praise – follow Him – vote – help the needy.

Ask God for His guidance for all who serve and protect this great nation. Pray for wisdom to those in leadership/authority that they may make wise decisions for the good of all according to God's will.

God has poured His richest blessings on our Great Nation. May His light continue to guide our path.

**Prepurchased RaiseRight cards on hand, available after the service.**

- (2) McDonalds
- (3) Panera
- (7) Starbucks

**\$25 cards**

- (1) Amazon
- (2) Bass Pro
- (1) Bath & Body Works
- (2) Darden
- (3) Dunkin
- (2) Honey Baked Ham
- (5) Jewel
- (2) Kohls
- (1) McDonalds
- (5) Meijer
- (2) Red Lobster
- (2) Shell
- (1) Starbucks
- (2) Target
- (4) Walmart

This is what we have on hand. Many more cards are available at [raiseright.com/](https://raiseright.com/) brand list.