



Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



July 2026 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 10:27-285

Dear Sheep of the Divine Shepherd:

The Prophet Elijah: A Voice of God's Word in Dark Times

Among the great figures of the Old Testament, few stand as boldly as the prophet Elijah, whom the Church celebrates on July 20th. His ministry took place during one of the darkest periods in Israel's history, when false worship flourished, political leaders opposed God's Word, and many believers felt isolated and discouraged.

Yet through Elijah, God demonstrated a truth that remains central to Christianity: The Lord preserves His Church through His Word, even when all seems lost.

A Brief History of Elijah

Elijah's ministry is recorded primarily in 1 Kings 17–19 and 2 Kings 1–2. He lived during the ninth century B.C. in the northern kingdom of Israel.

The kingdom was ruled by King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who promoted the worship of Baal, a pagan fertility god. Under their influence, Israel sank deeper into idolatry and rebellion against the Lord.

Into this spiritual darkness God sent Elijah.

His name itself was a sermon:

"Elijah" means "My God is Yahweh."

At a time when many questioned who the true God was, Elijah's very name proclaimed the answer.

Highlights of Elijah's Ministry

1. The Drought and God's Provision

Elijah first appears suddenly before King Ahab with a startling announcement:

"As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (1 Kings 17:1).

The drought was God's judgment against Baal worship. Baal was supposedly the god who controlled rain and fertility. By withholding rain, the Lord demonstrated that Baal was powerless.

During this drought God cared for Elijah in remarkable ways:

- Ravens brought him food.
- A brook supplied water.
- A poor widow in Zarephath fed him.
- The widow's flour and oil never ran out.

These events illustrate God's fatherly care. As Luther teaches in the Small Catechism, God "richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life."

Even when circumstances appear bleak, God remains faithful.

2. The Widow's Son Raised to Life

While staying with the widow of Zarephath, her son became ill and died.

Elijah prayed earnestly, and the Lord restored the child's life (1 Kings 17:17–24).

This was the first recorded resurrection miracle in Scripture.

The miracle points beyond itself to Jesus Christ, who would later raise the dead and ultimately conquer death through His own resurrection.

Christians must always read the Old Testament through the lens of Christ. Elijah's miracle was not merely an impressive display of power; it was a sign directing God's people toward the coming Savior.

3. Elijah on Mount Carmel

Perhaps the most famous event in Elijah's ministry occurred on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).

Elijah challenged 450 prophets of Baal to determine once and for all who was truly God.

Two altars were prepared. The prophets of Baal cried out all day, but no answer came.

Then Elijah repaired the Lord's altar, drenched the sacrifice with water, and prayed:

"Answer me, O LORD, answer me."

Immediately fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and even the water.

The people cried:

"The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God!"

The lesson is clear: salvation does not come through human effort, emotional enthusiasm, or false religion. The true God reveals Himself through His Word and His promises.

This remains a distinct Lutheran emphasis. Faith rests not upon human experience but upon God's objective Word.

4. Elijah's Despair and God's Comfort

After the triumph at Carmel, Elijah fled from Queen Jezebel's threats.

Exhausted and discouraged, he sat beneath a broom tree and prayed that he might die (1 Kings 19).

Many Christians are surprised to discover that one of God's greatest prophets struggled with fear, loneliness, and despair.

Yet the Lord did not abandon him.

God provided:

- Food and water
- Rest
- His presence
- His Word

At Mount Horeb Elijah witnessed wind, earthquake, and fire, but the Lord came in a gentle whisper.

We often see in this account a reminder that God ordinarily works not through dramatic displays but through His appointed means.

The Church does not seek God in emotional spectacles. We find Him where He has promised to be:

- In His Word
- In Holy Baptism
- In Holy Absolution
- In the Lord's Supper

God strengthens weary sinners through His promises.

5. The Faithful Remnant

Elijah believed he was the only faithful believer left in Israel.

The Lord corrected him: "I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal" (1 Kings 19:18).

God always preserves His Church.

This truth has encouraged believers throughout history.

During the Reformation, Martin Luther often felt isolated while opposing the errors of his day. Yet the Lord preserved His Church just as He had during Elijah's ministry.

The Church's survival does not depend on numbers, popularity, or worldly influence. It depends on God's faithfulness.

6. Elijah's Ascension into Heaven

Unlike most Old Testament saints, Elijah did not experience death.

Near the end of his ministry, the Lord took him into heaven in a whirlwind with chariots and horses of fire (2 Kings 2:11).

His successor, Elisha, witnessed the event and continued the prophetic ministry.

Elijah's departure reminds Christians that death is not the final word. Through Christ, believers have the promise of eternal life and bodily resurrection.

Elijah and Lutheran Theology

Several themes from Elijah's ministry resonate strongly with Lutheran teaching.

The Power of God's Word

Everything Elijah accomplished flowed from the Lord's Word.

He did not invent his own message.

He proclaimed what God had spoken.

Likewise, Lutheran theology emphasizes that the Church's authority rests entirely upon God's Word.

As Romans 10:17 teaches:

"Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

Law and Gospel

Elijah proclaimed both judgment and mercy.

He condemned idolatry and unbelief.

At the same time, he proclaimed God's forgiveness and compassion toward repentant sinners.

This distinction between Law and Gospel lies at the heart of Lutheran theology.

The Law exposes sin.

The Gospel brings Christ's forgiveness.

Both are necessary.

God's Care for the Weak

Throughout Elijah's ministry, God repeatedly cared for:

- A poor widow
- A grieving mother
- A discouraged prophet
- A faithful remnant

The Lord's mercy extends to those who feel forgotten or overwhelmed.

This remains a great comfort for Christians today.

Christ at the Center

Like all the prophets, Elijah ultimately points us to Christ.

In fact, Elijah appeared with Moses at the Transfiguration of Jesus (Matthew 17:1–8).

There Elijah stood beside the One to whom all the prophets pointed.

Jesus is the greater Elijah.

Elijah confronted idolatry; Jesus conquered sin.

Elijah raised a child temporarily; Jesus rose never to die again.

Elijah was taken into heaven; Jesus ascended after accomplishing the salvation of the world.

Everything Elijah did prepared the way for Christ.

Lessons for Christians Today

Stand Firm in the Truth

Elijah stood nearly alone against the false worship of his day.

Christians today are often pressured to compromise God's Word.

Elijah reminds us that faithfulness matters more than popularity.

Trust God's Promises

The widow trusted God's Word and was sustained.

Elijah trusted God's promises and was preserved.

Christians can confidently trust God's promises in Christ.

Look to Word & Sacrament

God did not strengthen Elijah through grand displays of power but through His Word.

Likewise, God continues to strengthen believers through:

- The preaching of the Gospel
- Holy Baptism
- Holy Absolution
- The Lord's Supper

These remain God's chosen means for creating and sustaining faith.

Conclusion

The prophet Elijah served during a dark and difficult time, yet God accomplished mighty things through him. His ministry teaches us that God remains faithful when the world seems faithless, that His Word is powerful even when opposed, and that He cares deeply for His weary and struggling people.

Most importantly, Elijah points us to Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of every promise and the Savior of sinners. In Him we find the forgiveness, comfort, and eternal life that Elijah proclaimed and anticipated.

Suggested Scripture Readings

- 1 Kings 17 – Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath
- 1 Kings 18 – Elijah on Mount Carmel
- 1 Kings 19 – Elijah at Mount Horeb

- 2 Kings 2 – Elijah Taken into Heaven
- Matthew 17:1–8 – The Transfiguration
- Romans 10:17 – Faith Comes by Hearing

A Closing Prayer

Lord God, heavenly Father, You preserved Your servant Elijah in times of fear, opposition, and uncertainty. Strengthen us through Your holy Word, keep us steadfast in the true faith, and direct our hearts always to Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Listen to Jesus,
Pastor Zimmer

Christian Stewardship and the Small Catechism?



What is the connection between Luther's Catechisms and Christian stewardship? Dr. Robert Kolb a Lutheran Professor writes in *Teaching God's Children His Teaching: A Guide for the Study of Luther's Catechism*, "Luther himself thought that the chief contribution of his reforming efforts had been that men and women, young and old, had come to know the Catechism. That meant that 'they know how to believe, to live, to pray, to suffer, and to die.'"

Kolb continues, "Why have so many people found this little book so important? It is because Luther's Small Catechism is more than a book. It is a way of life. Or, more specifically, it cultivates a world view, out of which we live as believers in Jesus Christ. It creates a mindset which is grounded in the Scriptures and grows out of them. It is a handbook for Christian living". Christian stewardship is about living the Christian life. It is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the Church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

Unfortunately the word "stewardship" has come to be defined not as living the Christian life but as giving money to the church. We need to be much more precise in how we define stewardship if we are going to fully understand the richness and fullness of the term. Raymond M. Olson writes in "Stewards Appointed: Ten Studies in Christian Stewardship Based on Luther's Small Catechism," "While the commonly accepted meaning of the word (stewardship) is the one indicated above (giving money to the church), there is also wide recognition, within the Christian church, that there are other areas of life where the Christian is to exercise a 'stewardship' given by God. The Parable of the Talents is often used to illustrate the fact that each person has been given certain unique personal skills, inherited talents, and particular abilities. It is a part of his responsibility to accept these with mingled humility and self-respect, keeping them sharp and useful for the service of God and of the world which God loves, improving them constantly. A part of stewardship is the responsibility for the use of time.

Most clearly the Christian steward is a steward of the Gospel. This is the greatest treasure with which he is entrusted. It must be his concern to use all he is and has that the Christian message will be kept clear and will be sent forth freely and actively among men. It will be his purpose to cultivate the desire of others to share generously in such a concern. This is a part of the accounting due to his Lord in the stewardship which he holds".

Luther's Catechisms provide wonderful tools for the life of the Christian steward. Timothy Wengert writes in "Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith," "The Small Catechism is not just the Lutheran equivalent of a political slogan: sounds nice but means nothing. It actually reveals the heart of the Christian life: revealing one's sickness through the commandments, the Great Physician in the Creed, the desperate call to the pharmacy for medicine in the Lord's Prayer, and the medicine itself in Baptism, Confession, and the Lord's Supper. There is nothing more to the Christian life! So why is it that so many Lutherans think they have graduated from the catechism given how little they use it?"

Luther's Catechisms will help us answer the question, "What does Christian stewardship look like if I believe in the forgiveness of sins?" In the next newsletter the theme will be "The First Commandment and Christian Stewardship.



Week of July 5-11

Sun, July 5, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, July 5, 9:40 am Fellowship

Week of July 12-18

Sun, July 12, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, July 12, 9:40 am Fellowship
Mon, July 13, 6:00 pm Elders Meeting

Week of July 19-25

Sun, July 19, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, July 19, 9:40 am Fellowship
Mon, July 20, 6:00 p Council Meeting

Week of July 26-31

Sun, July 26, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, July 26, 9:40 am Fellowship

July Birthdays


05 Ruth Ogden
07 Ann Gernenz
13 Andrew Fox
16 Patricia Lewis
21 Kelly Stewart



July Baptismal Anniversaries

02 Colleen Donaldson 
30 Catlin Collins 

July Wedding Anniversaries

15 Stephen & Angela Pruitt
15 Rev David & Julie Zimmer
27 Kevin & Teresa Pape 

CaringNetwork

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

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.

Bible Studies

All Bible studies will resume August 9. There will be fellowship after the divine service during the summer, unless otherwise noted.

Portals of Prayer

Pick up your July – September 2024 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

RaiseRight

Shop with RaiseRight cards are available throughout the year for everyday expenses and gifts for any special occasion **Next order date is July 12.** Pre-purchased cards are available after Sunday services and forms are on the bookcase in Luther Hall. 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. Script pays 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

dslcmanna@yahoo.com shopwithscrip.com

Your Enrollment Code:

B2LD2C7A55973

Follow Us on Social Media

Follow us on social media to keep up to date with church happenings and events, find a variety of new and old congregational photos, and read inspirational posts and quotes from Holy Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions, and various Christians throughout the centuries.

Facebook: fb.me/DSLcbolingbrook

Twitter: [@dslc60440](https://twitter.com/dslc60440)

Trustee's Corner



A special thank you to our church's cleaning crew for all their hard work in 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 the 4th weekend of each month, please contact

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



Don't sign up for altar flowers until future notice as Ruth is unable to order/arrange the bouquets.

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.



Give thanks to God for the freedom we enjoy!