



Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

August 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

Johann Gerhard: The Great Lutheran Theologian Who Sang the Faith

When Lutherans think of the great teachers of the Church, the names of Martin Luther and Martin Chemnitz often come to mind first. Yet among the second generation of Lutheran theologians, one man stands above nearly all others during his time for his profound defense of the Scriptures, his deep pastoral heart, and his enduring influence upon Lutheran theology. It is this servant of Christ that the Church observes on August 17th.

Johann Gerhard (1582–1637).

Gerhard has often been called "the greatest Lutheran theologian after Martin Luther and Martin Chemnitz." While he was one of the most brilliant scholars of his age, he never viewed theology as merely an academic exercise. For Gerhard, theology was the living voice of Christ that comforts troubled consciences, strengthens faith, and leads Christians to everlasting life.

A Life Shaped by God's Grace

Johann Gerhard was born on October 17, 1582, in Quedlinburg, Germany, only sixty-five years after Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses. During his youth, Gerhard became seriously ill with a life-threatening disease. Believing death was near, he devoted himself to reading the Scriptures, the Catechism and the devotional writings of Johann Arndt. Through this experience, the Lord redirected his life. Rather than pursuing medicine, Gerhard entered the study of theology to prepare for the holy ministry.

His education eventually led him to the University of Jena, where he became professor of theology at only twenty-four years of age. There he would spend the remainder of his life teaching pastors, writing theological works, advising princes and churches, and defending the Lutheran Confession against every form of false doctrine.

Defender of the Lutheran Confession

The early seventeenth century was filled with theological controversy. Roman Catholic theologians sought to reclaim Lutheran territories following the Council of Trent. Reformed theologians challenged the Lutheran understanding of the Lord's Supper and Christ's person. Various movements within Lutheranism itself threatened to compromise biblical teaching.

Gerhard responded not with personal attacks but with careful study of Holy Scripture. Every doctrine was built upon the clear Word of God. His careful scholarship helped preserve the confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church during a turbulent period.

His greatest work is the monumental *Loci Theologici*, a twenty-three volume systematic presentation of Christian doctrine. Even today it remains one of the finest theological works ever written. Unlike many theological textbooks, Gerhard's writing continually points readers back to Christ and the comfort of the Gospel.

A Pastor Before Everything Else

Although remembered as a theologian, Gerhard never forgot that theology exists for the sake of Christ's people.

He regularly preached, cared for souls, and wrote devotional books for ordinary Christians. His beloved *Sacred Meditations* (Meditationes Sacrae) has comforted believers for nearly four centuries. In these meditations, Gerhard constantly directs readers away from themselves and toward Christ crucified, reminding Christians that forgiveness and eternal life rest entirely upon God's grace received through faith.

This pastoral concern is evident throughout all his writings. He understood that true theology is not merely knowledge about God but the proclamation of God's saving work in Christ.

A Musician Who Loved the Church's Song

Many people do not realize that Johann Gerhard also possessed remarkable musical ability. He played several instruments and deeply appreciated the rich musical heritage that had developed from the Reformation.

Like Martin Luther before him, Gerhard understood that music is a precious gift of God. Hymns teach the faith, comfort the afflicted, and allow the Church to confess God's truth together. Throughout his life he encouraged the faithful use of sacred music in the Divine Service, recognizing that the Church sings because she first hears the saving Gospel proclaimed.

The close relationship between Lutheran theology and Lutheran hymnody continued through Gerhard's generation, producing many of the treasured hymns that still fill our hymnals today.

Why Johann Gerhard Still Matters

More than three hundred years after his death, Johann Gerhard continues to influence Lutheran pastors and congregations throughout the world.

His writings remind us that:

- Holy Scripture is God's inspired, inerrant, and sufficient Word.
- Every doctrine of the Church must be drawn from Scripture alone.
- Christ alone is our righteousness before God.
- The Gospel is delivered through the Means of Grace—the preached Word, Holy Baptism, Holy Absolution, and the Lord's Supper.
- Theology must always serve the care of souls.

Gerhard combined profound scholarship with genuine humility. He defended the truth without losing sight of the sinner who needed forgiveness. His life demonstrates that faithful theology is never cold or abstract; it is always centered on Christ and His saving work.

A Lasting Legacy

Johann Gerhard died in 1637 during the devastation of the Thirty Years' War. Yet his voice continues to speak wherever faithful Lutheran theology is taught.

As we continue to confess the faith handed down through the prophets, apostles, and faithful teachers of the Church, we give thanks to God for servants such as Johann Gerhard. Through his preaching, teaching, and writing, countless Christians have been strengthened in the certainty that salvation is found in Christ alone. May we likewise remain steadfast in that same confession, rejoicing in the Gospel that Gerhard so faithfully proclaimed:

"For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." — (Isaiah 40:8)

Listen to Jesus,

Pastor Zimmer

A Brief Clarification

In my newsletter from March of this year, I wrote that St. Patrick *"preached, baptized, catechized, and prayed. Through these means of grace, God gathered a church in Ireland."*

A parishioner correctly noted that this wording could be understood to identify prayer as a Means of Grace. That was not my intention. In our Lutheran confession, God bestows His saving grace through the **Means of Grace—the Gospel in Word and Sacraments alone**. Prayer is not a Means of Grace, but the response of faith that trusts God's promises. As Luther writes in the *Large Catechism* (III.19), "*We should be more encouraged and moved to pray because God has also added a promise and declared that it shall surely be done for us as we pray. He says in Psalm 50:15, 'Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you.' And Christ says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, 'Ask, and it will be given to you; ... for everyone who asks receives' (7:7–8).*"

I am grateful to the parishioner who brought this to my attention. I apologize for any confusion my statement has caused.

First Commandment and Christian Stewardship



In 2006 George Barna published research which found that on average Protestant pastors contend that 70 percent of the adults in their church consider their personal faith in God to transcend all other priorities. When the same survey was given to members of Protestant congregations the results were quite different. Not quite one out of every four (23 percent) named their faith in God as their top priority in life. There seems to be a significant gap between what pastors perceive about their members beliefs and what the members actually believe.

The First Commandment says, "You shall have no other gods. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things."

"We usually think of the Ten Commandments as God's demand, but in the First Commandment Luther found the best news that there can be for God's human creatures: that He insists on being our God and providing us with all we need. Luther began Christian instruction with the First Commandment, with God's announcement that He is our God. God stands in first place in our lives. God was concerned first of all not with what Adam had done wrong but with where he was—'Adam, where are you?' (Gen. 3:9)—That is, with the relationship between them and the places which they occupied in relation to each other. So also God is ultimately most concerned that He occupy the proper place in our lives, the place where the Creator belongs" writes Robert Kolb in *Teaching God's Children His Teaching*.

What does the First Commandment have to say about Christian stewardship?

The First Commandment makes it very clear to the Christian steward that we belong to God. We are not our own. Raymond Olson writes in *Stewards Appointed*, "We owe everything we are to God. Nothing we will get out of life will be without His prior claim resting upon it and upon us. While He is under no obligation to us, we are under unremitting obligation to Him. We have not been given freedom to rule our lives and the world in which we find ourselves apart from the purposes and intentions of God. The steward is to be under no illusions about his position. He is steward and not Master. He is sinner and not Savior. He is to be guided. He is not the Guide. He is the property manager, not the property owner. He is the one entrusted, not the one who gives the trust. The purposes of life are revealed to him; he is not the determiner of those purposes. In his true devotion to God, he will find no sound reason to question this arrangement, but will understand that it is established in this way by the perfect love and infinite wisdom of God". The Christian steward understands and lives out the fact that he/she is a steward and not the owner.

The First Commandment reminds Christian stewards that we are not to dismiss God in our daily lives. Martin Marty writes in *The Hidden Discipline*, "God faces man in the practical decisions of daily life. Men reject God not so much because in the chambers of their academics or the chambers of their hearts they have reasoned their

way past Him. What makes it easy for them to dismiss God is the way they live their practical daily life. There is where unbelief is the problem: there men act as if God did not exist". The Christian steward lives daily life as a response to God's love in Christ. This daily living is to glorify God and be a faithful witness to the neighbor.

The First Commandment reminds Christian stewards that we must keep special watch over our relationship with God. God always acts first in this relationship. He created us. He redeemed us in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Yet, as sinful human beings we are tempted to trust other things or other people. In the Large Catechism Luther warns us that money and possessions can become idols, "Many a person thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions. He trusts in them and boasts about them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Such a person has a god by the name of 'Mammon' (i.e., money and possessions; [Matthew 6:24], on which he sets all his heart. This is the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure [Luke 12:16-21] and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has no money doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few people can be found who are of good cheer and who neither mourn nor complain if they lack Mammon. This care and desire for money sticks and clings to our nature, right up to the grave". The Christian steward trusts in God alone and not in money and possessions. Money and possessions are entrusted to us by God to be used for His purposes.

Olson summarizes the relationship between The First Commandment and Christian stewardship when he writes, "The First Commandment is a call to the Christian steward to acknowledge continually that the one true God alone has a claim upon him, and to remember that this claim is a good and beneficent one. This Commandment is a witness that he should faithfully and daily offer to God what he is and has, bringing his selfishness under the discipline of using the material world to do God's work. It is a reminder to the Christian steward that he should seek to grow in the knowledge of the God who is revealed, with no side journeys to create gods of his own liking. It is an invitation to seek from Jesus Christ, God's Son, the cleansing, restoration and abiding grace which will make of a man what this Commandment calls him to be" (page 22).



Week of August 2-8

Sun, Aug 2, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, Aug 2, 9:45 am Fellowship

Week of August 9-15

Sun, Aug 9, 8:30 am Divine Servi
Sun, Aug 9, 9:45 am Fellowship
Sun, Aug 9 10:00 am Bible Study

Week of August 16-22

Sun, Aug 16, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, Aug 16, 9:45 am Fellowship
Sun, Aug 16, 10:00 am Bible Study

Week of August 23-29

Sun, Aug 23, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, Aug 23, 9:45 am Fellowship
Sun, Aug 23, 10:00 am Bible Study

Week of August 30

Sun, Aug 30, 8:30 am Divine Service
Sun, Aug 30, 9:45 am Fellowship
Sun, Aug 30, 10:00 am Bible Study

August Birthdays

13 Diane Bronson
19 Mary Braasch
20 Bobbie Koritzke (H)
21 Linda Asche
28 Kathy Wilson



August Baptismal Anniversaries

07 Ruth Ogden
11 Andrew Fox
14 Anne Gernenz



August Wedding Anniversaries

20 Howard & Christine Stocker

Bible Studies

All Bible Studies will resume August 9. There will be fellowship after the divine service during the summer.

CareNet Baby Bottles

We received an email from Kevin Applegate, Church Partnership Director. He thanked our church for our prayerfully & financially helping CareNet for another Year. By participating in our Coins for Caring network Baby Bottles Drive, Divine Shepherd Lutheran Church raised money toward the work of Caring Network, enabling our client interacting team to serve women by sharing the gospel, helping to remove obstacles that cause women to consider aborting their child and minister those who need.

Congratulations

Caitlin Collins graduated May 10th from Illinois State University with her Bachelors of Science in Nursing (BSN) in the accelerated nursing program. She will complete her last semester this month and will be eligible to take the final national nursing board exam. With her BSN, she plans on working in a hospital in the Plainfield-Naperville area.

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

Altar Flowers



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

Trustee's Corner

If you can clean the church on the 4th weekend of each month, please contact me.

Can you spare an hour or two to help maintain the church flower beds (weeding/trimming/etc)? If so bring your own tools.

Kelly Stewart, Trustee

Important Phone Numbers

Church office: 630-759-5300
Pastor Zimmer: 630-759-5300
Prayer Chain: 712-584-5301 (Julie Zimmer)
Head Elder: 630-360-5573 (Scott Collins)
Newsletter info: 630-759-3188 (Karen Moritz)
(Due August 21)

RaiseRight

Shop with RaiseRight cards are available throughout the year for everyday expenses and gifts for any special occasion. **The next order date is August 16.** 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. RaiseRight 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

Sunday Treats



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

Sunday(s). *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. Remember to donate your third quarter choice dollars.

A Prayer

Lord, no matter the time of day, You hear us when we call upon You. I lift up this prayer of thanksgiving to You for all the blessings You have given me out of your love today, knowing that You will answer my Prayer. I pray that You will continue to bless me this day while also giving me opportunities to share Your love with others. Thank you, Lord for Your kindness to me and for the gift of salvation through Christ, Your Son. Bless me, my family, and those who worship You. Send us the comfort found in Your Word and our baptismal grace. May I continue to walk in Your ways this day. In Jesus's name. Amen

Portals of Prayer

Words To Live By

1. **Wake Up!!** Decide to have a good day. "Today is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." (Psalms 118:24)
2. **Dress Up !!** The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks. "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance: but the Lord looks at the heart." I Samuel 16:7)
3. **Shut Up!!** Say nice things and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking. "He who guards his lips guards his soul." (Proverbs 13:3)
4. **Stand Up!!** For what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. "Let us not be weary in doing good; for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good." (Galatians 6:9-10)
5. **Look Up !!** To the Lord. "I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)
6. **Reach Up !!** For something higher. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, And He will direct your path." (Proverbs 3:5-6)
7. **Lift Up !!** Your Prayers. "Do not worry about anything; Instead, PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING."

The first ever cordless phone was created by God.
He named it prayer
It never loses its signal, and you never have to
recharge it.
Use it anywhere AMEN!!