



## TIME TO CREATE

Just recently having had Melina's garden highlighted on the Fine Gardening website, it made me appreciate the creativity and time it takes to make a beautiful garden come together. It also caused me to reflect and ask, "Am I taking the time I need to be creative in the gifts the Lord has given me?" Don't get me wrong, I love writing newsletter articles and messages, but the Lord has given all my gifts to use beyond the calling of Pastor. In fact, he has given all of us amazing gifts and abilities to use in new and creative ways. These things not only bring Him glory, but can also bring healing, insight, appreciation, and just plain joy to us and others as we share our creative outlets.

It can be easy to dismiss this notion of Godly creativity for many reasons, but I would encourage you to take the time to create. First off, we can do this because our God took time to create and said it was good. Just look at the beauty of His creation. He is an artist and has made this universe a beautiful palette. Part of that palette is how He has created you in His image. We are reminded of this in Genesis 1:27 as it says, "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." What word is used three times in this verse? Created, which makes it an important point God wants to make to us. Just as we were created, God has made us in his image to live out His attributes. Use the gifts and attributes of His love, patience, grace, kindness, and of course CREATIVITY! Take heart and hold fast to the fact you have been crafted in His image today and accept His permission for you to be the artist He has created you to be!

Of course it takes time to do this, so make time to be creative a priority. It can be so easy to get wrapped up in our "to do list" and just running errands that we don't make creating something beautiful in the Lord a priority. So schedule some time this week to do something creative you enjoy. Block out creative time, as hard as that can be in our busy schedules. As you do this though you will find joy in the gifts God has given to you in a whole new way! It could be woodworking, knitting, gardening, painting, writing, drawing, playing music, sculpting, whatever it is, take the time and enjoy the process!

As Proverbs 22:29 says, "Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men." Commenting on this verse in the article, "4 Things The Bible Says About Your Creativity," Stephen Brewster says, "God desires us to be good stewards with the gifts He has given us. This verse gives us permission to be skilled at making art. Being skilled takes practice, and creativity is a muscle not a magic potion. It takes work to get better creatively. Practice your craft and steward it well in obscurity so when it is time to share your gift you are prepared. Your creativity reflects who you are but also who He is!" This is the day the Lord has made, so now go and make something for the Lord! Let us rejoice and be glad in our creativity!

In Jesus' Creative Love,  
Pastor Matt



### Inside this issue:

- Time to Create, by Pastor Matt 1
- LCMS Stewardship Ministry July 2019 Article 2
- LCMS Stewardship Ministry July 2019 Article, cont. 3
- Truth Serves Love 4
- Making a Cottage Garden from Fine 5
- Treasurer's Report April 2019 6
- Upcoming Events, Announcements, and Ways to Serve 7

## LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY JULY 2019 ARTICLE



Whenever the topic of stewardship and giving comes up, the conversation inevitably turns to the question: “How much should I give?” Answers will vary because the motive behind such questions also vary.

Sometimes the motive behind asking this question is for self-justification. Even though, as Lutherans, we know we are not saved by our works but by grace through faith because of Jesus’ substitutionary atonement, the natural religion of fallen man is to earn God’s favor by what we do.

Take, for example, the response of our Lord to the rich young ruler who asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus first tells him to keep the commandments. The rich young ruler responds by indicating that all this he has kept from his youth. But Jesus tells him that he lacks one thing: He must sell all he has and give it to the poor and then follow Him.

This rich young ruler went away sad because he was quite wealthy and could not part with his possessions. Here we see that those who seek to justify themselves by their giving will hear a response that intensifies the duty that God places upon them. Indeed, they will hear a response that makes it impossible to win God’s favor by their works.

But to those who genuinely desire to know their duty as Christians in the arena of giving, we look to the Bible for our answer. We believe the Bible is the Word of God. And we know that the Word of God has been “breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

So, we begin to answer the question, “What should I give?” with the question, “What does the Bible say about how much we should give and to whom?”

The Old Testament is explicit. The expectation is that the people of God would give a tithe – 10 percent – of the first fruits of their labor to support the full-time ministry of the Levites. This is what the Lord gave Moses to teach the people:

“You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

“And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, when the Lord your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the Lord your God chooses, to set his name there, then you shall turn it into money and bind up the money in your hand and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses and spend the money for whatever you desire – oxen or sheep or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves.

“And you shall eat there before the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household. And you shall not neglect the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.

“At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.” (Deut. 14:22–29)

This principle of tithing is carried over into the New Testament, though not explicitly by calling it a tithe. St. Paul teaches the Church at Corinth the following:

We are to give to the church regularly (1 Cor. 16:1–2), proportionally (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12), and generously (2 Cor. 8:20) of our first fruits (1 Cor. 16:1–2; Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30) with a spirit of eagerness (2 Cor. 9:2), earnestness (2 Cor. 8:7), cheerfulness (2 Cor. 9:7), and love (2 Cor. 8:23). And all of this is because the “Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should make their living by the Gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14), just as the Levites did.

This is our New Testament standard. Since Christ became poor for us in order to make us rich in Him – blessing us with the riches of heaven – so we have also been so blessed to follow the example of our Lord and Savior and give of ourselves and the work of our hands to bless others with the same.

If we have been lax in this, let us, like our Lord, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross and scorned its shame, likewise begin to work toward this goal of regular giving of a generous proportion of the first fruits of God’s giving to us.

And let us do so not begrudgingly, but for the joy set before us – with a spirit of eagerness, cheerfulness, and love – to share the blessings of God with those placed into our care.

## TRUTH SERVES LOVE



As we continue to highlight different online resources, this month we read an article from <https://1517.org/1517blog> called, "Truth Serves Love," by Michael Berg an assistant professor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College in Milwaukee, WI.

In his great love chapter, 1 Corinthians 13, St. Paul tells us that love is the greatest. "Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor. 13:13). That was a hard saying for me growing up. Shouldn't faith be the greatest? That's what I heard in church. We are saved by faith alone and not by anything we did (love). True. I also heard this outside the church. "You just got to have faith." "Believe in yourself."

Faith is sort of a virtue in our culture, something like courage or patience. A person of faith is a confident person in the face of adversity. Faith can solve a lot of problems. If my Little League self had just believed in himself enough, he could have become a great ball-player. Or at least that's what my coach told me. The great MLB stars all "believed" in themselves or had someone who "believed" in them. Faith certainly was the greatest. It was not only essential for salvation but also the highest virtue this side of heaven.

St. Paul flips this upside down. Love is the greatest. Paul is not ranking items in a top ten list here. Paul means that love is the goal; love is the ultimate gift. Faith is penultimate, not ultimate. The ultimate is to receive the love of God for all eternity. Faith is not the end; heaven's love is the end. Love is also the ultimate goal in the Christian life before heaven. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).

As I grew older and further away from my delusions of playing Major League Baseball (I guess I didn't have enough faith because I wasn't that good), the truth became the most important thing to me. It became ultimate. Truth matters. Seeking truth matters. Being truthful was the highest virtue. Truth also became the rallying cry for this budding theologian. Stand up for truth. Fight for truth. How could we not? Like love, the truth has to do with both heaven and life on earth. We are sanctified by the truth (John 17:17). Truth is also a weapon in spiritual warfare. "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:14-16).

So what is the relationship between these two great concepts, truth and love? May I suggest that truth serves love? This does not mean that one is more important than the other, or that truth and love are incompatible. Paul tells us that love loves the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). Jesus calls himself "truth" (John 14:6). He is also love (1 John 4:8). To split faith and love would be almost like splitting Christ. We don't split Christ. That's a big theological no-no! Truth and love are from the same God, and God is both truth and love.

Yet it sure seems like truth and love can be enemies. The truth can hurt. It is hard to come to terms with death, but death is a pretty sure thing in this life. Could there be anything more truthful from our vantage point than, "all will die"? It is devastating to come face to face with our own sin. It is not easy to hear a cancer diagnosis. The truth can hurt. At times, the truth seems to be the opposite of love.

Even worse, we can forget about the virtue of love and replace it with a virtue of truth. Truth becomes a weapon against falsity. This is undoubtedly true in spiritual battle, but truth without love is the most pitiful position. Is it true that humans are so devastated by sin that we have no hope in ourselves? Yes. Pointing this out is necessary, but without the love of the Gospel, only a pall hangs over the sinner. In political (and theological) disputes truth is weaponized. Winning is the ultimate, most important goal. If truth is about winning and not love, then what's the point?

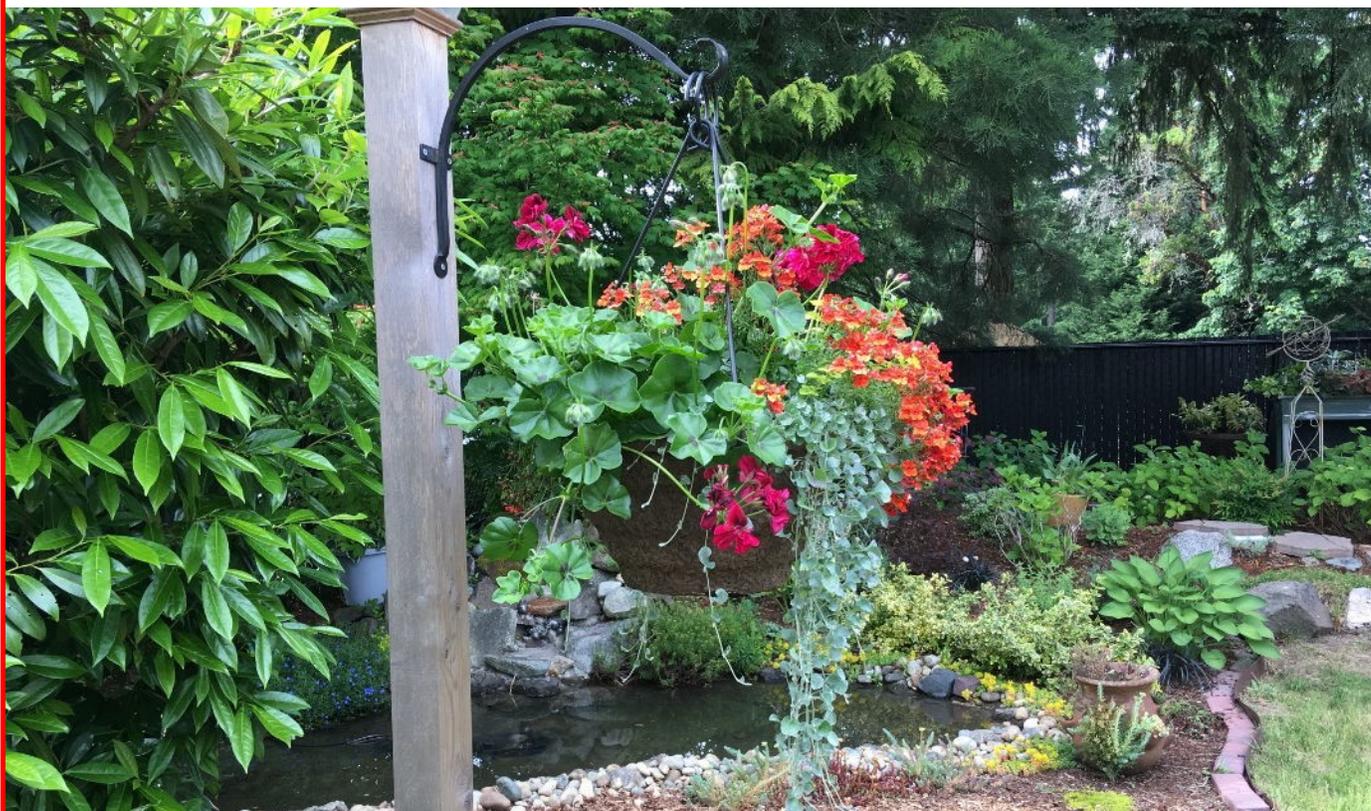
In the same great love chapter, Paul gives us a warning: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Look at all the things Paul says we humans can do. Faith can even move mountains! But without love, we are only making noise. We are a resounding gong. If we hammer home the truth but have no desire to preach the ultimate love, salvation in Christ, we only clang away. If we strut around righteous as a church lady but have not love, we are only making noise and, quite frankly, we're just annoying everybody around us.

I want you to know the truth because the truth sets you free. I want you to know the truth because the truth in Christ is very good news. I want you to know the truth because the truth is Jesus loves the sinner so much that he died for him or her.

Truth is a beautiful gift from God. It sets us free. Faith is a fantastic gift from God. We are given faith as we trust the truth of the Gospel. But love is the ultimate gift from God. To be loved by him for all eternity is truly the ultimate goal. Truth serves love. Jesus is the truth. He is also love. And the greatest of these is love.

## MAKING A COTTAGE GARDEN from Fine Gardening



Welcome to Melina Mantey's garden.

*Color has always been a priority in my garden. The brighter and more diverse, the better. When I first started out, I was aware there were certain trains of thought on color palettes and patterns, but I didn't care. I just wanted to look out my window and see a riot of color. Now that I have been around the block a bit, I know this approach is called a cottage garden. I was thrilled to discover these, and I have spent the past few years painting my garden in splashes of color and turning it into my own version of an English countryside garden. I'm pretty lucky living in the Pacific Northwest, because there isn't much that doesn't grow here. I've been able to experiment until my heart's content (OK, well, a gardener's heart is rarely totally content) and learn what does and doesn't work in my yard purely by trial and error.*

*I didn't come into this with a lot of experience. It started off pretty slow in fact, with mostly pots and maybe a few annuals in the ground (oh, and hydrangeas, because—of course!). However, it slowly grew over time, and before I knew it, I was on a first-name basis with my local nursery. This past year or so, my garden has really taken shape, as a difficult day often ends with a stop at a nursery or a tour around my garden. There are always new ideas to cultivate, plan, and execute; and as it is with many people out there, gardening has been a therapy for me. It has helped me cope and even work through aspects of PTSD, which makes me thankful every day that my plants and I have found each other. When I first started out, it was because I just wanted to see something beautiful when I looked out the window, but now I feel that same beauty within myself. It's amazing what a beautiful plant and a plot of dirt can do for the mind, body (ouch), and soul.*

*As for what you can find in my garden besides just bright colors and random pairings, there are a few "go-to's" I have when it comes to plant shopping. I can rarely resist a colorful heuchera, and I have so many different types of sedum in my garden I have lost count. I like anything that is going to give me color and shape year-round, especially in the gloomy months. Heather is also a great one for that. As for more seasonal options, roses, lavender, hydrangeas, and salvia are always great long bloomers that keep the pollinators coming.*



## RESURRECTION LUTHERAN CHURCH TREASURER'S REPORT

APRIL

2019

**General Fund Opening Balance****46,339.06****Income Sources**

Source	Income
Envelope Offering <sup>(t)</sup>	15,281.00
Loose Offering <sup>(t)</sup>	644.00
Facilities Offset	400.00
Misc Receipts	-
Copies	-
Stock Sale	-
Interest <sup>(t)</sup>	83.61
FCEMR - Congregation Emergency Fund	-
FMEM - Memorial Fund	-
FSOCA - Social Action Fund (Thrivent)	-
FPUB - Publications	-
FTMP - Special Funds	-
FYOUTH - Youth Funds	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>16,408.61</b>

**62,747.67****From Sinking/Special Funds**

From Funds	5,215.24
<b>Total Unrealized Expenses</b>	<b>5,215.24</b>

**67,962.91****Expenses, Realized**

Category	Expense
District_Pledge	(800.43)
Salaries_and_Payroll	(9,042.67)
Administration2	(296.96)
Elders_and_worship	(2,276.95)
Congregational_Education	-
InHouse_Ministries	(290.32)
General_Maintenance	(800.00)
Utilities_Church	(1,259.17)
Utilities_Parsonage	(628.47)
Uncategorized	-
From_Special_Funds	(5.32)
From_Sinking_Funds	(5,209.92)
<b>Total Realized Expenses</b>	<b>(20,610.21)</b>

**47,352.70****Expenses, Unrealized**

To Special Funds	-
To Sinking Funds	(2,835.43)
<b>Total Unrealized Expenses</b>	<b>(2,835.43)</b>

**General Fund Ending Balance****44,517.27**

## UPCOMING EVENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, AND WAYS TO SERVE

### **Summer Matching Gift Challenge**

Resurrection Quilters are on a summer sabbatical **until Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.** to complete more quilts for Lutheran World Relief and Lighthouse Family Ministry. Your generous MATCHING CHALLENGE GIFT BY JULY 24<sup>TH</sup> will provide emergency lifesaving supplies in the Congo.

### **Mighty Mites for Missions**

Your Mite offerings make a big impact for missions! Visit <http://www.lwml.org/thanks> showing global blessings from loose change and checks. Children in your life? Youngsters have fun dropping change into their own Mite Boxes, learning every penny counts in funding vital mission work!

As your individual Mite box fills, convert the coins into checks c/o Resurrection Women's Fellowship marled "Mites" for Sunday morning offerings.

The district mission grant 2018-2020 biennium theme is: "Let Your Mites Be a Beacon of Light for Grants instilling a myriad of values"

Family and friends outings during the summer can be opportunities to save loose change from treats purchases; don't forget to put those bills and coins back in your purse and pockets to fill the large Mite Box by Room 107.

### **Light of Christ Community Garden**

The Community Garden is seen as a place to help improve our community's health and mental well being by providing an enjoyable outdoor physical activity, social contacts and learning opportunities.

The result of people working together is the Light of Christ Community Garden. It is a collective, English style pottage garden that follows the premise of "all for one harvest, one harvest for all" where everyone contributes their efforts to one large garden from which the needful of our community receive the distribution of the harvest. This community garden project is part of our sister-congregation [Light of Christ Lutheran Church](#), LCMS, Care Ministry Program.



Come join us in this special outreach and make a real difference in your community.

**Free class July 20 10:00 a.m. "Safe & Healthy Edible Gardening"** Learn how to determine if the site, soil and containers you have chosen for growing food are safe to use

**Garden Vision:** To cultivate the spirit of community, neighborhood and diversity by growing sustainable food organically and collaboratively.

**Garden Mission:** To bring people together to work in unity for the benefit of others. Our neighbors of all faiths or no faith, ethnic groups, youth, elderly, able bodied and the disabled are all welcomed to participate in the management, building and harvest of the garden.



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