

July 2026

BROADCASTER

A magazine of Worship Anew



THE CHURCH'S
One **FOUNDATION**



The Church: More than a building

There are certain moments you never forget. I was a teenager in Fort Wayne, Ind., in the summer of 1993, when lightning struck the steeple of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in the heart of our city. Within hours, that iconic 237-foot spire came crashing down. When it was over, only the exterior brick walls remained standing.

home since 1865. The blaze had started in the steeple while members were gathered for their annual Oktoberfest picnic on the church grounds.

Fort Wayne is known as the City of Churches — steeples are part of its skyline and part of its identity. St. Mary’s stood about a block from the historic St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, among the closest steeples to one another in that part of the city. I wasn’t a member of either congregation, but as a Fort Wayne native, watching that steeple fall left a mark on me — about grandeur, about impermanence, and about what truly endures.

I stood near the ruins of that building, taking in what remained. Across the parking lot was the parsonage, and before long, the pastor, the Rev. Michael Stein, came out to meet me. His office was gone. His personal library was gone. And yet what struck me most was not what had been lost. Standing together on those grounds, Pastor Stein told me the church was still there, very much intact. The building was gone, he said, but Christ was still with them — and so they were still the church.

That memory came rushing back in the fall of 2021 when I had the opportunity to visit St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Beecher, Ill., just days after a fire had destroyed their beloved sanctuary — a building the congregation had called

The apostle Paul was clear on this point. Writing to the congregation in Corinth, he declared: “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 3:11). The foundation of the church is not stone or timber or stained glass. It is the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who declared that even the gates of hell

Matthew F. Leighty

Matthew F. Leighty
Executive Director

Cover photo courtesy of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
The stained glass is shown in the historic chapel of Laclede Groves in Webster Groves, Mo.



July 2026 | Vol 4 Issue 7

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Worship Anew engages and equips aging adults with resources to live a full and abundant life in Jesus Christ.

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For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:11

shall not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18).

I think about all of this often in the context of Worship Anew’s ministry. Some who receive this magazine are no longer able to worship in a church building regularly. Perhaps illness or injury has made travel difficult. Perhaps the years have simply made Sunday mornings harder than they once were. Perhaps you have known the particular grief of watching a beloved congregation close — the building where you were married or your children were baptized now serves another purpose entirely.

We have felt that grief alongside you. Over the years, we have had the privilege of receiving stained-glass windows from two congregations whose earthly journeys came to a close: Trinity Lutheran Church in Glencoe, Ill., and Trinity Lutheran Church in Evansville, Ind. Those windows — carefully extracted from

each sanctuary and restored — now reside here at Worship Anew and appear on our weekly television program. Glass that once filtered light into pews full of worshipers now filters light into a studio that carries the Gospel into the homes of people who can no longer make it to a pew. The ministry of those congregations did not end. It was transformed.

And yet, you are not outside the church. You are the church.

Christ is present and active through His Word wherever it is received — even in a living room chair, through a television set, or a devotional booklet in hand. That is precisely why Worship Anew exists: to carry that living Word to you, wherever you are. The Gospel that Paul preached in synagogues and homes and in prison is the same Gospel we carry into your home each week. No fire can touch it. No storm can topple it.

No circumstance of age or illness or isolation can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).

As for Pastor Stein and the people of St. Paul’s in Beecher, they did not simply rebuild. They joined together with two neighboring congregations to form Peace Lutheran Church. Three bodies, each with their own history and memory, became one. It is the Body of Christ doing precisely what Christ calls it to do.

They are the church, and so are you.

No matter what has been lost in your life — and the years have a way of taking things we love — that foundation holds. He who laid it “is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). And on that Rock, dear friend, we stand.

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The Worship Anew Choir is made of a variety of members who come together to regularly record for the program.

Below, our production volunteers make the weekly programs possible. Below top is Rich Kraus and below bottom is Dean Rodenbeck (right) with retired Production Director Paul Melin.



Celebrating Our Volunteers

Worship Anew has more than 60 volunteers who help on a regular basis with productions, the Care Ministry, delivering magazines, recording Hope-Full Living audio devotions, assembling mailings, and so much more. Thank you for giving of your time and for helping us to share the Gospel with aging adults!



Our board members give generously of their time to further the mission of Worship Anew. Shown above is (left to right) Jerry Fuhrmann, Tim Thoms, Production Director Jeremy Klopfenstein, and Mike Nowling. Below is Phyllis Thieme with Executive Director Matthew Leighty.



Many volunteers have served faithfully for years. Edie Rodenbeck (at left), shown with the Rev. Scott Zeckzer, a pastor on "Worship Anew," is one such example. Our volunteers serve in many capacities — with our altar guild, including Judy Kiess (shown above right with Hospitality Coordinator Cathy Tapp at left); and with our audio descriptive services, where host Eric Kaschinske (shown right) records in our whisper room.





Joyfully sharing the Gospel weekly

PASTOR AHLERSMEYER HONORED FOR HIS MANY YEARS ON 'WORSHIP ANEW'

By Ashley Wiehe
Director of Advancement

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer brings with him energy and joyfulness whenever he enters a room. The same is true whenever he enters the homes of all of the viewers of "Worship Anew."

Pastor Ahlersmeyer has been warming the hearts of viewers since his start on the program nearly 20 years ago — always with a unique prop or song to share.

One viewer shared about one of Pastor Ahlersmeyer's messages, saying how she and her husband "both liked the message and had a laugh about the movie topic."

In recognition of Pastor Ahlersmeyer's longtime service to Worship Anew, he is being awarded the Rev. Oswald Bertram Award.

This award is named in honor of the Rev. Oswald Bertram who conceived the idea of "Worship Anew" (then known as "Worship for Shut-Ins") in 1965, when he was pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio. He continued the television ministry in Toledo until his death from cancer in 1979.

This award recognizes volunteers who serve their Lord by devoting their time, talents, and energy in assisting Worship Anew in its ministry.

"Pastor Ahlersmeyer has been warmly sharing the Gospel with 'Worship Anew' viewers since 2007," said Matthew Leighty, executive director. "With energy, joy, and a gift for connecting God's Word to everyday life, Pastor Ahlersmeyer has touched countless lives."

Pastor Ahlersmeyer's connection to Worship Anew began long before his first appearance on the program.

When he first became a pastor back in 1979, he met Pastor Bertram, and it fueled his interest in television broadcasting.

"I've always been intrigued by media. I was a rock 'n' roll disc jockey at one time and so the idea that I could be involved in a televised program was really kind of intriguing to me," Pastor Ahlersmeyer said. "That just kind of lit my fuse. I wanted to be part of that."

While serving as president of Concordia University-Ann Arbor, Worship Anew's former executive director, Ken Schilf, approached him about being a guest pastor on the program. The program was still being recorded at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., at the time.

The Holy Spirit was at work, and in 2010, Pastor Ahlersmeyer accepted a call to Holy Cross as their senior pastor. Around that

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Three sisters, Ruth, Diane, and Eloise Hartmann, serve together in the Care Ministry at Worship Anew. They are all being honored this year with the Bertram Award.

Care that reaches across the country

THREE SISTERS HONORED FOR THEIR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

*By Ashley Wiehe
Director of Advancement*

With prayer and compassion, they assemble each care package. For a veteran, a red, white, and blue tissue holder. For a widow, a devotional written for times of grief. For a caregiver, a cross to hold in times of stress.

From the start of the Care Ministry in 2023, Diane, Ruth, and Eloise Hartmann are sisters who have been faithfully serving the ministry at Worship Anew. Before their time with the Care Ministry, they served by helping with mailings and other needs in the ministry.

This year, they are being honored with the Rev. Oswald Bertram Award. They were recognized at the Appreciation Luncheon on June 9.

This award is named in honor of the Rev.

Oswald Bertram who conceived the idea of “Worship Anew” (then known as “Worship for Shut-Ins”) in 1965, when he was pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio. He continued the television ministry in Toledo until his death from cancer in 1979. This award recognizes volunteers who serve their Lord by devoting their time, talents, and energy to Worship Anew’s ministry.

“Diane, Ruth, and Eloise Hartmann have served faithfully since the launch of our Care Ministry in 2023,” said Matthew Leighty, executive director. “Their service is a beautiful picture of Christ’s love made tangible.”

They know how important the Care Ministry is to people because it is supporting them at some of the lowest times in their lives. With each

“Their service is a beautiful picture of Christ’s love made tangible.”

~ Matthew Leighty, executive director

package, they reflect on that person's needs and fill the box with items chosen just for them.

"We know how much it means to people. We had a brother who passed away and his wife received it," Diane said. "We know she really appreciated it."

They take care with each package — noting a favorite Bible verse or a favorite color — to find items, such as a mug or journal, that perfectly suit that person.

"We try to coordinate colors," said Ruth, adding that they take special care with the snacks for any health issues.

In these past three years, nearly 800 care packages have been sent out to aging adults and caregivers in need — many packed by these three sisters.

"I know that it helps people that have lost their husband or wife or that have a lot of sicknesses or illnesses," Eloise said.

"I think, too, it makes us realize how blessed we are personally — that we can help with the care packages and volunteer," Diane added.



All three Hartmann sisters assemble care packages for aging adults each week.

WATCH A VIDEO IN HONOR OF OUR BERTRAM AWARD RECIPIENTS

Watch the video by scanning this QR Code (use your camera app to scan) or watch on our YouTube channel.



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time, Pastor Ahlersmeyer was invited to appear regularly on the program.

"I have just been blessed to be part of the Worship Anew family," he said. "I love the people that work there — the staff as well as the volunteers."

He shared of warm memories and of a viewer encounter that has stayed with him.

"I was in Lowe's with my wife," he said, sharing that a man approached him, saying how much he loved "Worship Anew." The man asked if he could call his wife so that Pastor Ahlersmeyer could talk to her.

"She answers and I go, "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it! And she starts to cry. ... We had a little prayer with her," he said.

He said that he treasures those moments because he knows that they connect brothers and sisters in Christ.

"That's the miracle of media and the reason, probably the biggest reason, why I just love this (ministry). It is that we can just multiply the impact of Christ," he said.

Pastor Ahlersmeyer was recognized with the Bertram Award during a special Appreciation Luncheon with volunteers and staff on June 9.

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer loves to share props during his messages. Here are some from recent years.



A Founding Vision, A Lasting Legacy

Remembering Ray Huebschman

Ray Huebschman helped to create a legacy by bringing Worship Anew (then “Worship for Shut-Ins”) to Fort Wayne, Ind., and revitalizing the ministry into what it is today.

We join in prayers for the family of Ray Huebschman who was welcomed into his heavenly home on May 11.

“I was truly touched by Ray’s deep love for the Lord and his unwavering support for this ministry, which we’re still doing today. I’m so thankful for the legacy he leaves behind,” shared Matthew Leighty, Worship Anew’s current executive director.

In 1980, Huebschman was the minister of education at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. Alongside Senior Pastor Jim Stalder and Associate Pastor John Westra, he helped to re-establish “Worship for Shut-Ins” after the passing of the original founder, the Rev. Oswald Henry Bertram.

Huebschman produced and directed the program for five years and served as our first executive director.

“The challenges that we faced in getting the program going again were not tremendous hurdles. One really got a feeling that the Lord was operating this whole system because everything was falling together,” Huebschman shared in a 2014 interview.

Prior to his work at Holy Cross and Worship for Shut-Ins, Huebschman served in the U.S. Navy Reserve and spent many years as a high school teacher. He earned his master’s degree and a Doctorate of Educational Technology. Following his time at Worship for Shut-Ins and Holy Cross, he worked at Concordia University, Seward, Neb., as the media director and dean of information technology.



After his retirement, he and his wife continued to share the Gospel through Worship Anew resources in their community in Nebraska as well as evangelism outreach in Alaska and Indonesia.

Huebschman was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Dorothea, in 2024. He is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, and 13 great-grandchildren.

We, at Worship Anew, are so thankful for Ray Huebschman for his work in establishing this ministry, his service to the program, and his ongoing support. His family is in our hearts and prayers. He will be dearly missed.

“Well done, good and faithful servant.”
~ Matthew 25:21a

During one of his returned visits, Ray Huebschman celebrates 25 years of the ministry in Fort Wayne.



WATCH A VIDEO IN HONOR OF RAY HUEBSCHMAN

Watch this video by scanning this QR Code (use your camera app to scan) or watch on our YouTube channel.





Worship Anew in July

Year 2026 | Series A



Jesus Gives You Rest

July 5, 2026 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

Our bodies need rest. Of greater importance is rest for our souls. Only one Person can give this, who says to us, “Come to Me, and you will find rest for your souls.”

Sermon Text: Matthew 11:28-30

Readings: Psalm 145:1-9; Zechariah 9:9-10; Matthew 11:28-30

Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Sanctuary Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Indiana LWML District Choir

Featured Art and Architecture: Welcome Home Soldier Monument, Albia, Iowa



Now What?

July 12, 2026 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

You have heard — or read — God’s Word. Now what? The question isn’t “How do we make the Word more life changing?” Instead, how does this life-changing Word shape and guide our lives as we live in response to it?

Sermon Text: Matthew 13:23

Readings: Psalm 65:9-13; Isaiah 55:10-13; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Featured Choir: Indiana LWML District Choir

Featured Art and Architecture: St. John Lutheran Church, Sherwood, Ohio



Weeds Among Wheat

July 19, 2026 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker

Christians must always contend with false teaching and false Christians. Jesus said so. There is nothing wrong with the good seed that Christ sows. The pure Gospel rightly proclaimed produces faithful Christians, but the devil deliberately sows bad seed where the good seed has been sown.

Sermon Text: Matthew 13:24-25

Readings: Psalm 119:57-64, 89; Isaiah 44:6-8; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Featured Choirs: Holy Cross Sanctuary Choir, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul’s Choristers, Fort Wayne, Ind.; St. Paul Preble Adult Choir, Decatur, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Zion (Cicero) Lutheran Church, Edgerton, Ohio



Priorities

July 26, 2026 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Paul Shoemaker

What is your priority in life? Jesus’ priority was to do the will of His Father. That means that His priority was you. His priority was to pay in full the penalty of your sins so you could be in heaven forever.

Sermon Text: Matthew 13:44-52

Readings: Psalm 125; Romans 8:28-39; Matthew 13:44-52

Featured Choir: Valley Lutheran High School Golden Voice Choir, Saginaw, Mich.

Featured Art and Architecture: Lake George Lutheran Chapel, Fremont, Ind.



Advocating for yourself at the doctor's office

By Amy Kaschinske, RN, BSN, FCN

Navigating the healthcare system can be overwhelming, particularly as we age and our “problem list” starts to rival our grocery list.

In 27 years of nursing, I have seen firsthand how overwhelming it can be during and after a medical office visit, especially for the aging population.

How many times have you left an appointment and thought, “I wish I had asked more about _____!” While providers continue to give excellent care and communicate the necessary information and explanations, the time in office visits is getting shorter and shorter. Medical information often comes at a rapid pace, creating opportunities for misunderstanding and lost pieces.

When I meet with patients, I often encourage them to create a list of questions they would like to ask — PRIOR to the appointment. Having things written down, almost as a list to be checked off, will



help put them in control of the office visit and decrease the likelihood they walk away feeling uninformed. I also encourage them to ask “why, what, and how?” Why are tests being ordered, why am I being prescribed this medication, and when and how should I take it? What can I expect from these medications and when should I hear back about the test results? This not only gives them the answers they need, but it provides the provider an opportunity to educate and assess understanding.

In the digital age, almost every healthcare system has moved to an electronic medical record. While there are significant benefits to these, there are equal amounts of drawbacks. I encourage my patients to ask for everything to be printed out. If they need to know it, then it should be on a piece of paper they can hold in their hands. A printed summary provides an immediate reference for appointment details, medication names and instructions, procedure information, and diagnoses — and it can easily be shared with family members or caregivers.

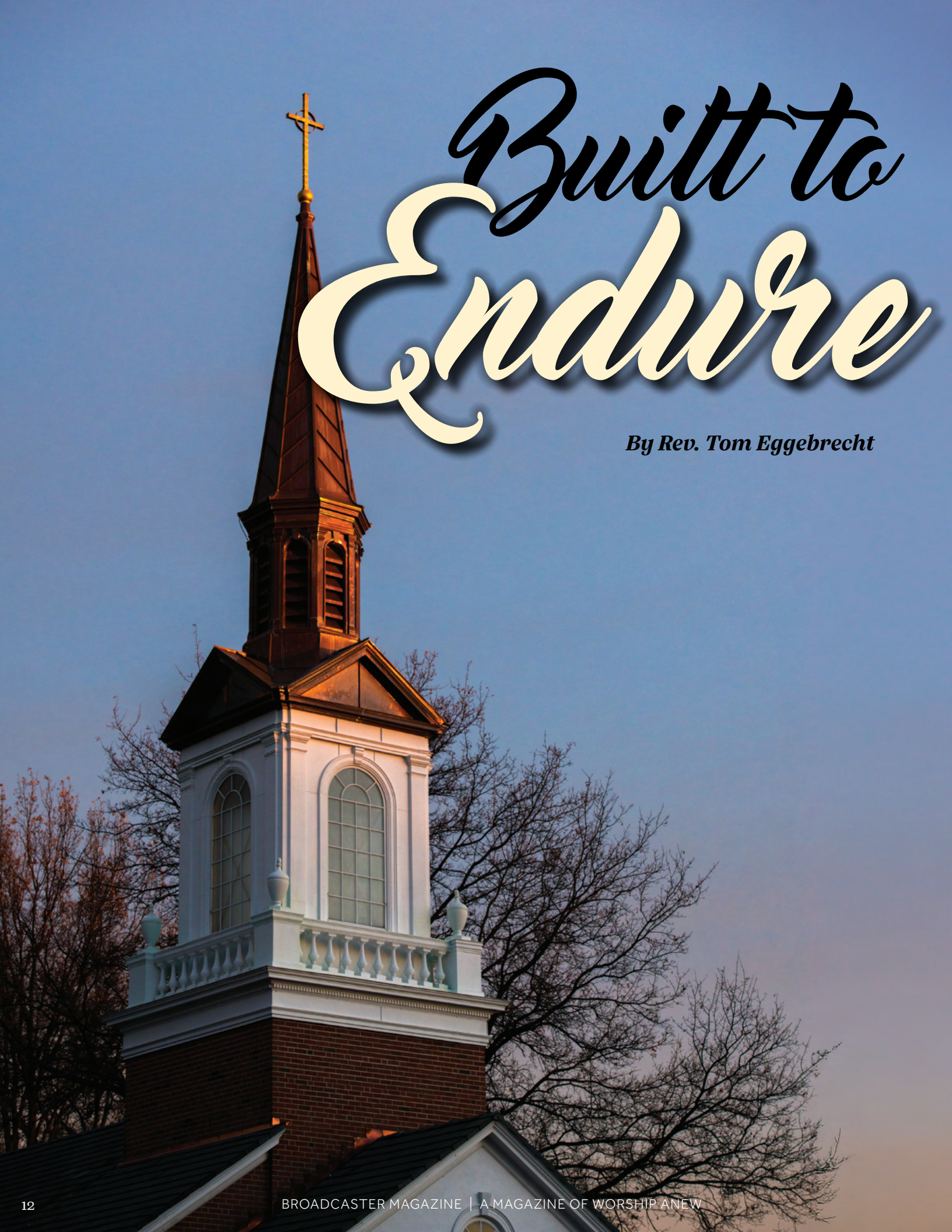
One of the strategies that I encourage most is having another person present during an office visit, especially someone who is familiar with your health history. Having an additional set of “ears” is invaluable. This allows the patient to freely have their conversation with the provider while the second person can really listen and take detailed notes for clarification later. Everyone should have an advocate to help navigate office visits as well as procedures and tests.

In the end, advocating for yourself is the best tool you can bring to the office visit. I encourage my patients to act on feelings of uncertainty or uneasiness. Asking questions and clarifying instructions are not burdens on their healthcare team. These initiatives are essential to a solid patient-provider relationship as well as ensuring safe and effective healthcare. By actively participating in your healthcare, you help ensure your needs are met, and your dignity and wishes are preserved.

Amy Kaschinske, RN, BSN, FCN, is the director of congregational health and the school nurse at Concordia Lutheran Church and School in Fort Wayne, Ind.

QUESTIONS TO ASK AT A DOCTOR'S VISIT

- ▶ What is my diagnosis, and what does it mean in simple terms?
- ▶ What might have caused this?
- ▶ Is this temporary or something I'll manage long term?
- ▶ Are there warning signs I should watch for?
- ▶ Do I need any tests? What will they show?
- ▶ How should I prepare for them?
- ▶ When and how will I get the results?
- ▶ What happens if the results are normal — or abnormal?
- ▶ What are my treatment options?
- ▶ What do you recommend, and why?
- ▶ What happens if I choose not to treat this right now?
- ▶ How soon should I expect improvement?
- ▶ What is this medication for?
- ▶ How and when should I take it?
- ▶ What side effects should I watch for?
- ▶ Are there interactions with my other medications or supplements?
- ▶ Is there a more affordable or simpler option?
- ▶ What can I do at home to improve my condition?
- ▶ Are there activities I should avoid or start doing?
- ▶ How will this affect my daily routine?
- ▶ When should I follow up?
- ▶ What symptoms mean I should call you sooner?
- ▶ Who do I contact if I have questions later?



Built to Endure

By Rev. Tom Eggebrecht

“The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord; she is His new creation by water and the Word.” (LSB #644)

Most of us have sung those words so many times that they have become as familiar as breathing. We have sung them in white clapboard churches on the prairie, in city parishes packed with young families, and in sanctuaries that smelled of candle wax and old wood. We have sung them at confirmations and funerals, at anniversaries and installations. The melody lives somewhere deep in us — not just in memory but in faith.

But what happens when the church is tested? What happens when the building is gone, the congregation is aging, the community is shrinking, or the road ahead is uncertain? Do the words still hold?

They do. They always have. And the moments that have proven it most powerfully have never been the easy ones.

A HYMN BORN IN THE FIRE

Samuel Stone did not write “The Church’s One Foundation” from a place of comfort. He wrote it in 1866 — in the middle of a bitter doctrinal controversy that was threatening to fracture the Anglican Communion. The church he loved was in conflict, and Stone responded, not with despair, but with confession — putting into verse what he most deeply believed to be true: that the church’s survival did not depend on its institutions, its leadership, or its circumstances. It depended on Christ alone.

That is a confession the Lutheran church has always understood. It is stitched into our history, our theology, and our hymnal. And it was understood long before Stone ever picked up his pen.

PAUL’S CHURCH HAD NO BUILDING

When the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, he was in prison. He had no sanctuary, no nave, no steeple. The congregation he was writing to had begun, improbably enough, by a river — a small gathering of women who came to pray, among them a cloth merchant named Lydia whose home became the first meeting place of what would grow into a thriving Christian community.

No building. No endowment. No property committee. And yet, Paul called them his “joy and crown” (Philippians 4:1) and expressed confidence that “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Paul knew suffering intimately. He knew that the church would face pressure from without and struggle from within. But he also most certainly knew the promise

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Photos courtesy of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

Above, this altar and cross stand in the St. John's Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Wis. Far right, this stained glass is displayed in St. Paul Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas.

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Jesus had made to Peter: that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church (Matthew 16:18). That was not a promise of ease. It was a promise of endurance — a promise that the church built on the rock of Christ would hold, not because of what we bring to it, but because of Who holds it.

The *ekklesia* — the called-out assembly of believers — was never defined by its address. What made the church at Philippi the church was that the Word was proclaimed, the sacraments were administered, and the people of God bore one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). Where those things are present, the church is present.

That truth has been tested in every generation. It was tested in ours not long ago — in a way I witnessed firsthand.

THE CHURCH THAT WOULD NOT END

It had only been a few months since the church burned down. As part of my work with the Lutheran Church

Extension Fund, I drove out to see the site before a meeting we were to have that same evening. It was a sad sight — a footprint of ash and debris where a congregation had gathered for years to hear the Word, receive the sacraments, baptize their children, and bury their dead. The kind of place that holds a community's whole story within its walls. And the walls were gone.

I parked the car there for a while. There is no way to look at something like that without grief. A church building is not just a building — it is layered with memory, with meaning, with the invisible weight of 10,000 ordinary Sundays. To lose it is a real loss, and it deserves to be named as one.

But that very evening, something else happened that deserves to be named just as clearly.

The pastor and lay leaders of that congregation came together with leaders from two neighboring LCMS churches. They did not come to mourn, though they had every right to. They came to work. And out of that evening's conversation began a process that would result in something none of them had imagined when they

woke up that morning — the combination of three congregations into one new church, stronger and more united than any of them had been alone.

The building was gone. The church was not.

In fact, in the ashes of that loss, something that had perhaps grown quiet — the urgent, clarifying sense of what the church actually *is* — came alive again. They were not three congregations protecting their individual histories. They were the Body of Christ, and they had work to do.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US NOW

We all carry our own versions of that story. We have watched beloved congregations struggle. We have seen membership rolls thin, budgets tighten, and buildings that once rang with children's voices grow quiet. These are real griefs, and they are not nothing.

But they are also not new. The church has always carried its treasure in jars of clay (2 Corinthians 4:7). It has always looked, from the outside, more fragile than it actually is. The congregation by the river looked like nothing much. The letters from the prison cell looked like defeat. The smoking ruins of a sanctuary looked like an ending.

They were not endings. They were, in the hands of God, beginnings.

You may have already survived things that looked unsurvivable. You have held the faith through losses that were supposed to break you and did not. That faithfulness is not a small thing. It is the very thing you are called to hand down.

The church will endure. Jesus has already settled that with His promise, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension.

THE FOUNDATION STILL HOLDS

Samuel Stone ended his hymn with a vision not of struggle but of glory:

“Yet she on earth has union with God, the Three in One, and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.”

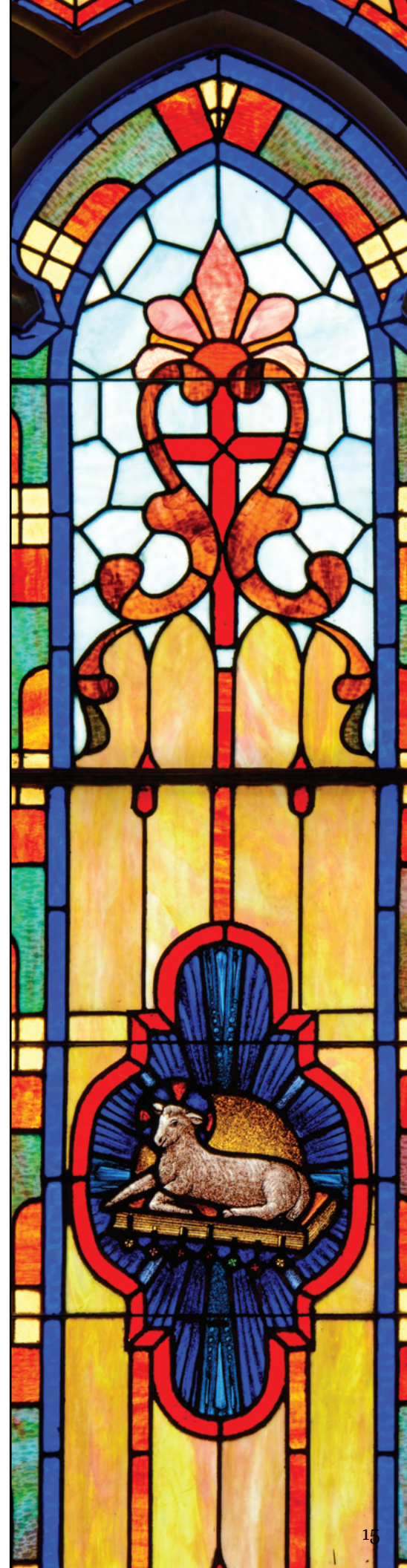
The church we belong to is larger than any building, any generation, any controversy. It stretches back to a riverbank in Philippi and forward to the Church Triumphant. It has survived Roman emperors and doctrinal firestorms, prairie winters and parish fires. It will survive whatever comes next.

We are not the last generation of the church. We are one faithful link in a chain that holds — because the One who laid the foundation is still holding it.

“The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord.”

It always has been. It always will be.

The Rev. Tom Eggebrecht is senior vice president of ministry solutions for Lutheran Church Extension Fund and lives in Winter Springs, Fla.



Creative generosity at Calvary

By Jon Dize, CFRE
Director of Development

For two months around Christmas, a tree stood at Calvary Lutheran Church in Plymouth, Ind. But this wasn't an ordinary tree. It was a tree that was making an impact.

In January 2026, Worship Anew received a gift from Calvary in support of our mission. While every gift to our ministry is a cherished blessing, what especially caught our attention with this donation was the note that was attached. In this note, the congregation expressed their desire “to support the inspirational television program” of Worship Anew, noting how “several members who are homebound benefit regularly from Gospel proclamations and music provided weekly.”

Calvary's gift was not simply a routine missional offering. It grew out of a thoughtful, intentional effort by their Board of Stewardship: a “Giving Tree” initiative held during November and December 2025. Through this effort, members were invited to support selected ministries and organizations. Among these, Worship Anew held a special place.

“Many members who are shut-ins or sick watch the show and it is one way of hearing God's Word on a weekly basis,” said Steve Skibbe, chairman of the Board of Stewardship at Calvary. “Our congregation will continue the support for Worship Anew, allowing more people to hear the message of God's love for all.”



Photos provided by Calvary Lutheran Church
The Giving Tree, shown at right, is a wonderful example of generosity from a church. Calvary Lutheran Church, shown at top, is located in Plymouth, Ind.



With this Giving Tree, the congregation had a visual and communal reminder of generosity, an opportunity for members to engage intentionally in stewardship, and a way to connect giving to real ministry outcomes.

The Worship Anew broadcast reaches members who due to illness, age, or circumstance cannot gather physically for worship. These brothers and sisters remain part of the Body of Christ yet often experience isolation. Calvary recognized this need as a real ministry to their own people, and we thank them for helping reach those who cannot be present in the sanctuary.

The saints of Calvary Lutheran Church remind us that stewardship is not only about maintaining what we have; it is about extending the Gospel where it is most needed. Their generosity ensures that the Word continues to be heard by those who might otherwise be spiritually isolated.

Whoever brings blessing will be enriched.

~ Proverbs 11:25a

If I watch “Worship Anew,” do I still need home church?

Yes! Community is deeply important to our faith walk. By having a home church, you are connected to a pastor and to a family that cares for you. Your pastor provides the Word and Sacrament, and your church family can help to care for your well-being. At Worship Anew, we want to walk alongside your church by providing resources to support your spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. It's the whole Body of Christ working together. If you are in need of a church home, please contact us for assistance at (888) 286-8002 or info@worshipanew.org.

How does Worship Anew partner with churches?

Worship Anew provides resources to churches to support the aging adults in and around their congregations. This is done by providing access to the “Worship Anew” program which can be shown at a local care facility and to homebound members. It's done by making our print materials available within their churches, including our daily Hope-Full Living devotional and our monthly Broadcaster magazine (both available as bulk subscriptions). And finally, it's done by partnering with us to send care packages and grief resources to aging adults and caregivers in need. If you would like to learn more or would be interested in receiving a sample box of our materials, please contact us at (888) 286-8002 or info@worshipanew.org.

In the introduction of the “Worship Anew” program, the announcer says that the service was recorded in the Wolf Chapel. Where is that?

The Wolf Chapel is our studio where all of our pastors and choirs are recorded. Our studio is located in Fort Wayne, Ind., on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary. If you would ever like to see our studio or to observe a production, please contact us at (888) 286-8002 or info@worshipanew.org.

How can I watch “Worship Anew” in my area?

“Worship Anew,” our Sunday worship program, is available on local TV stations across the country as well as on TCT, a national, all-Christian station. The program is also available each week on streaming platforms such as Roku and Amazon Firestick as well as on our YouTube channel. Check out your Broadcaster magazine each month to see a synopsis of the upcoming programs as well as a list of choirs on that program (see page 9). For a full list of local stations and times, please visit worshipanew.org/where-to-watch.

A note from the Editor ...

In our letters to the editor section, we would like to answer any and all questions that you have about Scripture, aging well, and our ministry. Please send your questions to editor@worshipanew.org. Please know that we will try to answer as many questions as we can. Thank you and enjoy!

SUPPORTING YOUR PASTOR'S MENTAL HEALTH

By Rev. Gary Zieroth

Pastors, and other church workers, are called by God to serve His people in a joyful vocation of sharing the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, and life forever with Christ.

The pastor's main job is as a *seelsorger*, or one who "cares for souls." Pastors teach, preach, and administer the sacraments faithfully. They counsel people, attend meetings, contact and visit those who have wandered away, baptize, marry, conduct funerals, and well, the list can go on. In many ways, the ministry can be considered a "high-stress" occupation.

In their efforts to serve God and others, many pastors can find themselves discouraged, burned out, anxious, or depressed. Pastors are not unlike the general population. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five people today suffer from some form of mental illness. These conditions are often exacerbated for the pastor when he experiences ongoing criticism and conflict from his own parishioners, very high if not impossible expectations, and the pastor's unwillingness to address his own mental health issues — or spiritual care — until it is too late.

Many pastors have left the ministry because of feelings of guilt or shame in that they failed God and their people in some way. If pastors are married and/or have a family, there can be the added guilt of neglecting them in trying to please everyone in the congregation.

Many times in teaching seminarians in my classes about these issues, warnings, and dangers of serving in the pastoral office, many of the students cannot grasp these things until they actually go out and serve in a real parish setting. Even many students can experience mental health issues, but I feel that they have better support from the seminary and its community than pastors do in the ministry.

As dean of students, I was able to work with students and their families very closely and to refer them to capable mental health professionals when needed. But what kind of





Photo courtesy of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. This is a prayer for pastors as seen in the sacristy at Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind.

support can a pastor find when he is out in the field?

Supporting our pastors, and other church workers, involves proactive care, including utilizing LCMS-specific resources, encouraging rest, reducing stigma, and offering friendship.

One of the joys in my ministry was when people would come to me and say, “We are praying for you, pastor.” Or “we have been praying for you and your family.” These words of encouragement were often the balm that I needed, especially during a particularly hard or stressful time. I have been encouraged when my people have extended grace and forgiveness to me in times when I needed to hear the absolution in my life and be reminded of my loving and forgiving Savior.

Here are some other ways to support your pastor:

- ▶ Utilize LCMS Resources: Encourage your pastor to use the Pastoral Support Network by calling (888) 712-1805 (Employer ID: PASTOR) for counseling.
- ▶ Advocate for sabbath and rest: Actively ensure your pastor takes days off, vacation, and breaks to prevent burnout. Also, many pastors have been renewed in the

ministry by taking a “sabbatical.” One congregation’s policy reads as follows: “After seven years of service, all ordained or commissioned staff are eligible for a sabbatical of six months.” Shorter or longer sabbaticals can also be helpful. This can be a time for writing, study, travel, research, and other helpful activities.

- ▶ Provide practical support such as adequate compensation and care, which would include coverage for counseling and psychiatric care.
- ▶ Reduce isolation. Be a friend, not just a congregant. Ask about their family, hobbies, and how they are doing personally.

Continue to wrap your pastor and his family in prayer. Work with him, support, and encourage him as he brings God’s gifts to you. Ask that our gracious God continue to sustain him for all that he is called to do. For the sake of Christ and His Church!

The Rev. Dr. Gary Zieroth serves as the associate pastor at Ascension Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind., and also adjunct professor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.



A TRUE FOUNDATION

By Deaconess Sarah Longmire

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

~ 1 Corinthians 3:11

About a year ago I bought my home. To say that it was a learning experience would probably be too tame of a description. There are financial terms to consider (escrow?), an appraisal to get completed, and of course, inspections to schedule (what **is** radon?). There are banks to speak to, realtors to respond to, and copious amounts of paperwork to sign, initial, and date.

After purchasing my home and moving in, I then was an official homeowner — with all the surprises that come with that title! Is the garage door closing correctly? When was the last time the fireplace was inspected? Where did these stink bugs come from? The upkeep of a house takes a lot.

The quoted verse from 1 Corinthians speaks of a

foundation. Before I would finalize the purchase of my home, I had to make sure that living here would be safe. Are the floors level? Are the walls sturdy? And those questions hinge on this important one: Is the foundation solid?

When we consider the church, our faith, and our identity, the foundation of these things is of life-and-death importance. Jesus teaches about it in Matthew 7:24-27 as noted in our study text.

The church is Christ's bride. Jesus lays down His life for her. The church rests and is sustained through Christ. Our faith and our identity are given in Baptism, where our Old Adam is put to death and our new man is raised to life. God's Word is the most solid of foundations; it is the only place where the church and each of us can truly rest and be safe.

It is God's Word that rightly shows us our sins. It also describes the wages of sin: hurt, sickness,

Photo courtesy of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

This stained glass sits in Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lu Verne, Iowa, and depicts the Bible.

brokenness, loneliness, and death. When we try to build our foundations on our own works or worldly, false teachings, they are on sand. No one wants a house built on shifting sand.

It is God's Word that graciously points us to our Savior, Jesus. God's Word declares that He will pour out our rightfully gained wrath onto Jesus instead. God's Word makes promises and keeps them. God's Word declares that Jesus' death and resurrection rescues sinners.

Peace is found in a solid foundation. As Jesus' words in Matthew note, there will be rain, floods, and wind.

Living as sinners with sinners in a sinful world brings hardships, troubles, and sadness. However, on Jesus — our solid foundation — the rain, floods, and wind do not destroy us — indeed they cannot. We are firmly rooted in our Savior. Our Baptism defines us and Jesus' victory over sin, death, and the devil is ours!

Deaconess Sarah Longmire serves as director of family life at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Lee's Summit, Mo.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. He is the Word made flesh; it is in Him and through Him that we know peace, mercy, love, and forgiveness. Thank You for giving us a firm foundation in Your Son. You keep Your promises; we are reconciled and redeemed through Christ. Forgive us when we try to build our own foundation; remind us and bring us back to the truth of the hope that we have only in You. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

How does remembering that the church — and all of us in it — rests in Christ give us hope (especially in moments of uncertainty)?

Think back over your life; what were some moments when you experienced “rain, floods, and wind?” How did your Baptism and the gifts of God's forgiveness and mercy give you peace?

This month's study text:

Build Your House on the Rock

24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Matthew 7:24-27

NAME THAT BOOK

Select the book of the Bible that related to these questions.

1. The book of the Bible that tells the story of Paul's shipwreck.

- a. Luke
- b. Philippians
- c. Acts
- d. 2 Corinthians

2. The two books of the Old Testament that do not mention God.

- a. Exodus
- b. Ruth
- c. Esther
- d. Song of Songs

3. The book of the Bible that tells about the Israelites finally getting to cross the Jordan River and enter the Promised Land to live there.

- a. Exodus
- b. 1 Chronicles
- c. 2 Chronicles
- d. Joshua

4. The book of the Bible that tells about the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

- a. Nehemiah
- b. Ezra
- c. Malachi
- d. Jeremiah

5. This Gospel is not like the others in stories and content, so it is not considered a "synoptic Gospel."

- a. Matthew
- b. Mark
- c. Luke
- d. John

6. These books of the Bible were written by Jesus' brothers.

- a. Colossians
- b. Jude
- c. Acts
- d. James

7. This book of the Bible contains the following quote, "Meaningless, meaningless ... everything is meaningless."

- a. Song of Songs
- b. Ecclesiastes
- c. Proverbs
- d. Psalms

8. The book of the Bible that is noted for providing the people of that time a long list of laws and regulations plus instructions for worshiping God.

- a. Deuteronomy
- b. 2 Chronicles
- c. Leviticus
- d. Ecclesiastes

9. The book of the Bible that mentions the constellations the Bear, Pleiades, and Orion.

- a. Genesis
- b. Revelation
- c. Job
- d. Amos

10. The book of the Old Testament that Jesus quotes from most often.

- a. Psalms
- b. Deuteronomy
- c. Isaiah
- d. Exodus

ANSWERS BELOW

Reprinted from Our Daily Bread "Bible Word Search & Activity Book" with permission.

- 10. a (12 times)
- 9. c (also Amos mentions Pleiades and Orion)
- 8. c
- 7. b
- 6. b and d

- 5. d
- 4. b
- 3. d
- 2. c and d
- 1. c



FILL-IN, or CRISS-CROSS, else KRISS-KROSS, CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Fill in the blanks with the words provided.

5 letter words

ARROW
EASEL

6 letter words

ASSUME
BAILEE
COCOON
FUSION
GLIDER
MORASS
NEWBIE
NOTICE
RESCUE
SPIRIT
TRITON
UNLINK

8 letter words

LOCATION
SALESMAN

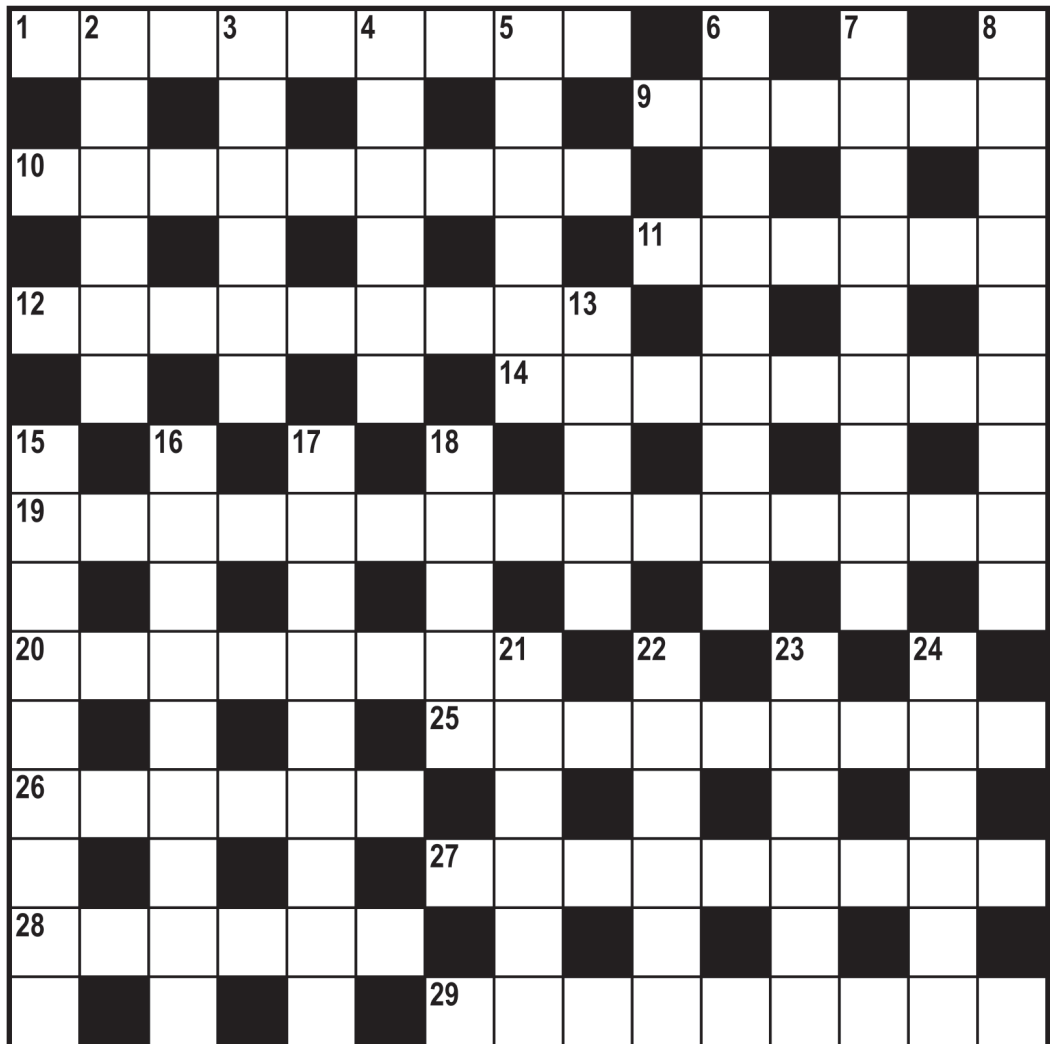
9 letter words

BEEKEEPER
INVERNESS
JELLYFISH
LOWERCASE

MINIATURE
OBVIOUSLY
SOVEREIGN
SPACESHIP

STAGE NAME
TRATTORIA
VOICEMAIL
WEDNESDAY

15 letter word
EMPEROR PENGUINS



ANSWERS:

Across: 1 STAGE NAME, 9 COCOON, 10 MINIATURE, 11 RESCUE, 12 LOWERCASE, 14 SALESMAN, 19 EMPEROR PENGUINS, 20 LOCATION, 25 WEDNESDAY, 26 FUSION, 27 OBVIOUSLY, 28 SPIRIT, 29 BEEKEEPER.
Down: 2 TRITON, 3 GLIDER, 4 NOTICE, 5 MORASS, 6 SOVEREIGN, 7 VOICEMAIL, 8 INVERNESS, 13 EASEL, 15 JELLYFISH, 16 SPACESHIP, 17 TRATTORIA, 18 ARROW, 21 NEWBIE, 22 UNLINK, 23 ASSUME, 24 BAILEE.

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