



Have You Unwrapped Your Gifts?

After Jesus' death, a dozen disciples spread the miraculous news of God's Son. That small band of believers multiplied and became the early church. Through the Holy Spirit, God equipped each member of the church with a gift to help them serve and strengthen each other. These gifts empowered Christians to do God's work, yielding fruit than might be possible beyond their own talents.

Spiritual gifts are special gifts given by God for Christian service. They're unique abilities God gives to help us do his good work.

What are some things you do well? What are the things you're good at? Some of the gifts God has given you fall into the category of "natural talents." Talents are given to everyone. The saying "you're born with it" really is true! At our physical birth, we're born with natural abilities that we can do well. Things like sports, cooking, artistic ability, and math aptitude would fall into this category.

The Bible tells us that at our spiritual birth we receive spiritual gifts.

Scripture gives these insights about spiritual gifts:

- God wants us to be knowledgeable about spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1).
- Every Christ-follower has been given at least one gift (1 Peter 4:10).
- God wants us to use our gifts (1 Timothy 4:14).
- Our spiritual gifts have been given to equip us to be able to serve (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- God has already planned the good works he wants us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

So, "How can I identify my gifts so that I can serve with purpose and passion?"

At the end of January, you will be mailed an assessment tool to help you identify your strengths or areas of gifting. The goal in taking the assessment isn't to label or box people into a type of service, but to open hearts and eyes about types of ministry that God has prepared you to do.

On February 5th the theme of the service will be, "Have You Unwrapped Your Gifts?"

It's a New Year! Let's make a good start!

In Jesus Love,

Pastor Ray

Deacon's Digest

Peaceful. Did you attend any of our Christmas services? We had a Christmas eve service and a Christmas Day service. The Christmas Eve service started with a half hour of Christmas Carols, we had instrumentals and choir arrangements. The music was exceptional; our musicians both professional and volunteers really poured their hearts into it. I believe more than one remark I heard was what a peaceful experience it was to enter a candlelit place with wonderful, familiar, and comforting music. Even Pastor Ray's sermon was about peace. On the way home, I started thinking about the apparent connection with peaceful music and the concept of Jesus not only teaching peace but being the Prince of Peace [Isaiah 9:6]. It made me want to see how much the entire bible talks about peace. Well, when I looked it up in the Concordance [I use the Lutheran Study Bible, which is the ESV translation] I should not have been surprised about the lengthy list of places where "peace" is mentioned. I did some internet research and here is a brief summary:

The number of instances of "peace" in biblical text is dependent upon the translation, so there is no simple answer. For instance, the KJV has 425 instances, the ESV has 356, and the NIV has 230.

When explaining translations, we have to consider that the New Testament comes largely through Greek text. The Greek word for "Peace" is *Eirene* [i-ray-nay]. Meaning: "one, quiet, rest, calm. From the root word *eiro*, meaning to join or tie together into a whole. By the way our English word, "serene" comes from *Eirene*.

This translation information came from research [in actual paper books!!!] in the new Jewish Encyclopedia and Harper's Bible Dictionary. The Old Testament comes from Hebrew text, so translators are seeing "*Shalom*" as Peace. The root word for shalom is *shalam* which means making amends or making whole or complete. We might say that the Hebrew word for peace means all is well between humanity and all of the other items of God's creation. [wow!!]

Prince of Peace Here are a few thoughts on what God's peace means to people of faith. Jesus is really our peace with God. As sinners we became enemies of God with the original sin. Jesus returned our relationship with God when he died for our sins and erased them. He, the Prince of Peace, provided a path for our salvation and reconciliation with God. We should be familiar with this story having just celebrated our Messiah's birth.

Jesus is also our peace with others. His spirit enables us to be peacemakers with people with whom we interact. [Please check out my "People of Peace" experiment below, for you].

Finally, Jesus is also our source of peace within ourselves to provide comfort from the trials and tribulations that Christians often experience [John 16:33].

People of Peace Experiment In the New Testament Jesus instructs his disciples to search for a "Person of Peace" upon entering a village [Luke 10:6, Matthew 10:11]. If you have attended one of our Church's Discipling Workshops, you may remember our definition of a person of peace as a person who God has placed ahead of time as being helpful in disciple making. For today's discussion and to make our experiment simpler, I would like to start out with a simplified definition and that is "one who tries to be a peace maker." A person with whom anyone would like to share ideas and thoughts. A quick example: we all know people who won't hesitate to be critical of something we did or did not do. Our person of peace would reject the urge to make defensive responses to critical remarks and would try to keep the conversation going without anger or confrontation. Another situation is our person of peace would resist the urge to "pile on" when someone makes judgmental remarks about someone known by all, even public figures. [Even though our person of peace might agree to some degree with the judgement, our person of peace is also a person of faith and almost always [!] practices the principles of non-judgement]. You get the idea I hope -- our person of peace is a true peacemaker when it comes to everyday conversations. You can do this at home, at work, in your social circle, at store checkout [if you do self-check out I recommend you don't have a long conversation with yourself!].

Will you try to do this one-month experiment and be a Person of Peace in January? If it works out, maybe it could be a New Year's resolution for 2023. If you do try it, can you please let me know and also be ready to see some changes in your relationships. Also, be ready to answer the question: Hey, do you know any people of peace here?

Praying for God's Peace to you in the New Year and always!

Deacon Joe

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Your Past Does Not Define Your Future

New Year's is a celebration of the past and the future. We take stock of the past with thanksgiving and sometimes even relief (that it's over), and we look to the future in hope and anticipation, and perhaps with some worry, for what it holds.

As we look forward to the new year, here are some practical advice to help you take stock of your giving in years past and change what needs to be adjusted, improved, or done away with altogether.

First, participate in church. If you've not been faithful in attending worship to hear the preaching of God's Word then repent and come to receive the gifts God freely gives. God doesn't want your money. He wants you — all of you (Matthew 22:20–22).

Second, pray. It is your right as a Christian is to speak with God. Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength and wisdom to fully live out your faith. (John 15:1–16).

Third, consider what the church is and what the church does. The church is a place of mercy. It inhales the mercy of God through the preaching of the Gospel. It exhales this mercy in love toward neighbors. You are a member of the church, a member of God's family. Thus, you are not only a recipient of God's mercy, but you are a bearer of that mercy. You spread that mercy through the generous giving of your income to support the work of the church in the world. (Leviticus 27:1–34).

Fourth, take stock of your current giving in light of the New Testament's teaching on supporting the work of the church. Are you giving of your first fruits, taking it out of your paycheck first? Are you giving voluntarily and cheerfully? Are you giving proportionally and generously? The Old Testament required a tithe, or ten percent. The New Testament gives freedom to be generous, to give more for the Church's work. Are you relying on God's promise to provide and increase what you need to do His work? If God gave you His only Son, He will provide for you all things, even physical things. Trust Him and His Word.

So, don't let your past define your future. Rather, commit for the year a generous proportion of your income, which is God's gift to you for this body and life.

POBLO⁺ International

Rev. Farrukh Khan **Director of Development**

Reverend Farrukh Khan, POBLO's Director of Development, has been serving with POBLO for 22 years. Originally from Pakistan, Rev. Khan comes from a family that converted from Islam to Christianity and raised him in the Christian faith. After spending 15 years in Saudi Arabia as an engineer for a Texas-based multinational corporation, where he also worshipped with Lutherans. Rev. Khan was called to work as a missionary for POBLO International Ministries in Toronto, Canada in 1993. While there, he helped to plant All Nations Lutheran Church, a primarily Pakistani and Indian congregation. He is a graduate of Concordia Seminary's Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology. He has also received church planting training through the Center for U.S. Missions.



Since joining POBLO, Rev. Khan has helped to plant new churches in North America and trained existing churches on how to effectively engage in outreach to Muslims and other unreached people groups. He conducts workshops on Islam and speaks regularly to churches about the rise of Islam in the U.S. and how Christians can respond to it, among other topics. Rev. Khan travels around the U.S. sharing about the work of POBLO and encouraging individuals and churches to become partners in outreach to Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Rev. Khan is married and has three children. He primarily works toward raising support for the organization, new mission startups, building the support network, builds partnerships with LCMS District Circuits and congregations. He also raises individual donors to support the work of POBLO. He identifies new mission fields, places POBLO Ambassador's (retired LCMS pastors) to do development and supervises all Ambassadors in six different regions.

Speaking Topics

The History of Islam • The Teachings of Islam • Women in Islam • The Allah of the Quran Vs. the God of the Bible • How to Respond to the Challenges of Islam • Islam's Agenda in America

Resources Developed

The History of Islam (Recorded Lecture)
The Teachings of Islam (Recorded Lecture)
Women in Islam (Recorded Lecture)
The Allah of the Quran Vs. the God of the Bible (Recorded Lecture)
How to Respond to the Challenges of Islam (Recorded Lecture)
Islam's Agenda in America (Recorded Lecture)

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF BIBLE TIMES

People of the land

The inseparable link between people and land caused the ordinary people to be known as the “people of the land,” the *am-ba-aretz*. (It is this consciousness of land that lay behind the repurchase and repossession of land in modern Israel.)

Land passed from father to sons, the eldest son receiving twice as much as each of his brothers. Joseph, as Jacob’s heir, received a double portion in the names of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Elisha asked for an eldest son’s portion, a double portion of the spirit of Elijah to fall upon him (2 Kings 2:9). The prodigal son was able to take his share of the inheritance with him, but when he returned, the whole property, a double portion, belonged to his elder brother (Luke 15:31). Case law established that the inheritance could pass to daughters if there were no sons. Numbers 27:1-11 describes the circumstances where this rule was given, along with other laws of inheritance.

Upcoming Church Elections: (12 February 2023) Elections for church council are fast approaching. We are seeking candidates to fill vacancies. If you or someone you know would be a strong candidate let us know. The overall responsibility for our church lies with all of us, not just our Called Ministers. If you are led to serve or want more information on roles and responsibilities please contact Garry Haase at haazer@aol.com or Ann Lienemann at alienemann4@gmail.com

President: Creates agenda and preside at Council and Voters’ Assembly meetings; Appoints Financial Review Committee, Brown Scholarship Committee.

Vice President: Acts for President in his absence; serves as chairman of the Finance Committee.

Recording Secretary: Record the minutes of Council and Voters’ Assembly meetings. Distributes copies of the minutes.

Treasurer: Oversee the finances of the congregation; Provides monthly treasurer reports; Serves as a member of the Board of Stewardship and the Finance Committee.

Board of Elders: Together with the Called Ministers, are responsible for corporate worship, fostering the spiritual health of the congregation, and the constancy of the doctrinal position of the congregation.

Board of Education: Provides faith appropriate opportunities of study and the sharing of God’s Word among the community of believers.

Board of Fellowship: Encourages the incorporation of God’s people into a family where they can be known and encouraged.

Board of Human Care: Seek ways to provide limited well-being and social support for the congregation and the local community.

Board of Outreach: Communicates the Gospel of Christ through the members of the congregation and endeavors to identify the congregation with the Gospel in the local community.

Board of Properties: Provides proper maintenance, administration, and repair of church property, keeps buildings and grounds attractive with a well-cared-for appearance, and provides general protection of the congregation against loss or damage of whatever nature.

Board of Stewardship: Encourages members to contribute their time, talents, and treasures to support the work of the Church through the congregation.

Board of Youth: Nurture discipleship among youth by building a community focused on the Word of God.

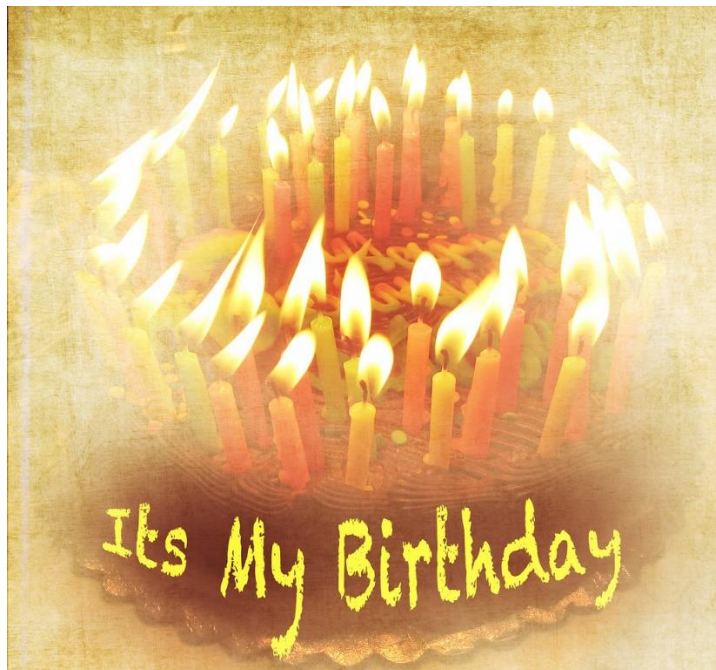
Fresh Start thanks for support!



January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Early Communion Both Services Mite Collection 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:00 PM Youth Group	2	3 7:00 PM Lifetree Cafe	4 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Pastor's Midweek Bible Study 4:00 PM Confirmation	5 6:00 PM Elder's Meeting	6 1:00 PM Bible Study	7 8:00 AM Praise Band
8 Late Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary Noon Puppet Practice 6:00 PM Youth Group	9	10 7:00 PM Lifetree Cafe	11 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Pastor's Midweek Bible Study 4:00 PM Confirmation	12	13 1:00 PM Bible Study	14 8:00 AM Praise Band 10:00 AM Women's Bible Study
15 Early Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:00 PM Youth Group	16	17 7:00 PM Lifetree Cafe	18 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Pastor's Midweek Bible Study 4:00 PM Confirmation	19 5:30 PM American Heritage Girls 6:00 PM Council Meeting	20 1:00 PM Bible Study	21 8:00 AM Praise Band
22 Late Communion Faruk Kahn Preaching 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Puppet Show 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:00 PM Youth Group	23	24 7:00 PM Lifetree Cafe	25 9:30 AM Quilting 10:00 AM Pastor's Midweek Bible Study 4:00 PM Confirmation	26	27 1:00 PM Bible Study	28 8:00 AM Praise Band
29 Both Communion 8:00 AM Traditional Service 9:30 AM Sunday School 10:45 AM Contemporary 6:00 PM Youth Group	30	31 7:00 PM Lifetree Cafe				

1/7 Don and Terri Snyder
1/13 Bob and Nancy Pruess



- 1/1 Jan Bailie
- 1/1 John Bailie
- 1/4 Parker Adams
- 1/6 Sara Brown
- 1/9 Darrell Bittle
- 1/15 Lew Paul
- 1/17 Dave Hudson
- 1/22 Roger Riggenschach
- 1/22 Tom Cox
- 1/26 Jacob Schwartz
- 1/27 Connie Haney
- 1/28 Christel Austin

THANK YOU!!! These families were blessed because of your generosity this Christmas. 6 families and 20 kids. Good Job!









Regular Sunday Worship Times
Traditional Worship @ 8:00 AM
Contemporary Worship @ 10:45 AM

Sunday School @ 9:30 AM



Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Pastor Ray Angerman
Family Life Minister Curtis Wiese
Music Director Lois Henry
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