

August 2025

BROADCASTER

A magazine of Worship Anew

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black clerical shirt with a white collar, stands in a modern church interior. He is smiling and has his hands clasped. The background features large windows, wooden bookshelves filled with books, and a wooden table with red chairs. The overall atmosphere is warm and contemporary.

**GOD'S PATH
FOR YOUR LIFE**

NEVER TOO LATE TO GROW



A Story of Faith and Calling

Growth in faith is not confined to a single season of life. It is a lifelong journey — one that often takes unexpected turns and reveals God's calling in surprising ways. I've seen this truth lived out most vividly in the life of my father, who answered the call to ministry not in his youth but as a second-career pastor.

My father's decision to pursue pastoral ministry later in life was one of the most defining moments of my own life. At an age when many are settling into routine, he felt a stirring from the Lord that couldn't be ignored.

With my mother's support, he moved our family from a quiet town in western Iowa to the unfamiliar bustle of St. Paul, Minn. He didn't have a college degree at the time, so the road ahead meant eight years of schooling — twice the typical path for second-career pastors. I

still remember arriving at our new apartment with all our belongings packed into a horse trailer, freshly cleaned by my uncle for the occasion. It was a humble beginning to a bold new chapter.

Though his time in ministry was marked by unexpected challenges and health struggles, my father never lost his sense of purpose. He radiated a quiet confidence and deep contentment that could only come from knowing he was carrying out God's will. His courage to follow that call, even when the outcome was uncertain, changed the trajectory of my life. It taught me that growing in grace and knowledge is an ongoing journey, even when the path is long and the destination unclear.

Looking back, I realize how much that season shaped me. Watching my father study late into the night, preach with

Matthew F. Leighty
Executive Director

Photo by Ashley Wiehe

Jason von der Lage recently graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind. He is on his way to his first call as a pastor.



August 2025 | Vol 3 Issue 8

Worship Anew
5 Martin Luther Drive
Fort Wayne, IN 46825
(888) 286-8002

EDITORIAL STAFF

MATTHEW LEIGHTY
Executive Director

ASHLEY WIEHE
Director of Communications

THOMAS MOLL
Director of Content & Innovation

SHEILA BANKS
Communications Specialist

KATELIN MOQUIN
Copy Editor

ELIZABETH PULS
Copy Editor

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



conviction, and serve with humility left an imprint on my heart. It taught me that ministry isn't about titles or timelines — it's about obedience. It's about trusting that God's timing is perfect, even when it doesn't align with our own expectations. It's about growing in grace and knowledge, day by day.

I love the theme of this month's Broadcaster Magazine because it was such an important part of my own life. Second-career pastors bring with them a wealth of life experiences — perspectives shaped by the workplace, by raising families, by navigating the complexities of the world outside the church walls. They understand the joys and burdens of everyday life in a way that resonates deeply with their congregations. Their ministry is often laced with real-world perseverance, and their pastoral care is grounded in empathy born from lived experience.

In many ways, their journey mirrors the message of 2 Peter 3:18. Growth in grace and knowledge is not a destination but a direction. It's not something we achieve and then move on from; it's something we pursue daily, in every season of life. Whether one is just beginning their walk with Christ or stepping into a new chapter of service, we are all called to grow.

My father's story continues to shape how I understand growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior. His ministry may not have unfolded the way he

envisioned, but the impact of his obedience is still felt. He poured into others with quiet strength, and the seeds he planted continue to grow. His life reminds me — and I hope it reminds others — that it's never too late to follow where God leads.

At Worship Anew, we believe that God continues to work through His people in every season of life. The story of my father — and of so many second-career pastors — is a powerful reminder that spiritual growth doesn't stop with age. In fact, it often deepens. Our mission is to proclaim Christ's love to those who may feel overlooked or forgotten, especially older adults. And what a joy it is to affirm that God is still calling, still equipping, and still growing His people in grace and knowledge — whether in the pulpit, the pew, or the quiet moments of daily life.

As I reflect on his life, I'm reminded that God's call is not limited by age, background, or circumstances. It can come in the middle of a career, in the quiet of retirement, or in the chaos of transition. What matters is that we put our trust in the Lord. My father responded with courage, humility, and unwavering faith. And in doing so, he showed me — and so many others — what it means to live a life surrendered to Christ, always growing in grace and knowledge.

To Him be the glory — now and always.

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

2 Peter 3:18 ESV

In This Issue

5 Making an Impact
Worship Anew shares about our ministry to LCMS and LWML districts across the country.

8 Luke's View
Learning more about the writer of Luke and Acts.

9 Program Summaries
See what is on Worship Anew for August.

12 Second Time Around
Pastors share about their second-career ministries.

16 Rocky Road
Viewer shares how his faith never wavered and now it's his legacy.

22 Brain Game
Games to fuel a workout for your brain.



12



16

Growing SPIRITUALLY

By Thomas Moll
Director of Content & Innovation

Take a moment to think about a time in your life when you grew. What were the circumstances? Did you have a teacher who encouraged you? Did you have a cohort to compete with? Was there a project you were especially passionate about that required you to learn some new skills?

When we think about learning and growing, for many of us, our school days come to mind. Yet, we know that no matter what age or stage we find ourselves in, we can learn and grow.

In our “Aging Well” research journal we conducted with The Barna Group, we found that 87 percent of older adults agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “It is important for me to see continual progress in my own spiritual life.”

This isn’t too surprising as passages like 2 Peter 3:18 (ESV) encourage us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” There is certainly no age limit on spiritual growth! We know that the Holy Spirit works through God’s Word to create, sustain, and grow our faith.

If you’re open to some new ways to grow spiritually or if you’re looking for a spiritual refresh, here are some ideas to spur you on:

Getting Into God’s Word with Others

Studying God’s Word with others is a great blessing. If you’re connected to a local church, call and ask about opportunities they provide to study God’s Word in a group. Cognitive growth is more pronounced when other personalities and ideas are part of the discussion. You’ll also have the opportunity to share your vast knowledge and wisdom with others.

If you’re not able to get to a church Bible study, see if a friend or family member would be willing to come to you or do a devotion together over the phone. Every one of our Broadcaster Magazines has a Bible study toward the end with questions that you could work through together.

Getting Into God’s Word on Your Own

A great way to start every day is in God’s Word. If you don’t already have a daily practice of reading the Bible, it’s never too late to start. We offer a daily devotional called Hope-Full Living that is written for seniors, by seniors. We have a paid subscription for the printed devotion, but each devotion can be read for free online at HopeFullLiving.org where you can also listen to each devotional as an audio track.

There are other great daily devotionals out there such as Portals of Prayer and Our Daily Bread. Ask your local pastor if they have any

spiritual resources they would recommend to daily grow in God’s Word.

Grow Through a Church Community

Having a community where you can grow and receive God’s gifts of grace in worship is a wonderful opportunity that we’re called to value. There are so many benefits we get from meeting together. If you’re unable to get to church, contact your local church to see if they have a visitation pastor who could come to you so that you can continue to hear God’s words of forgiveness, pray together, and receive communion. Even if you’re unable to be in a church assembly together with parishioners, they can be connected to and pray for you.

Practice of Prayer

Isaiah 65:24 (ESV) reminds us that even before we call upon the Lord, He will answer us and that while we are speaking, God will hear us. We’re called to cast our burdens on God. He loves you and wants to hear from you, His beloved child.

One way to pray is to keep a list of requests in a journal or on a pad of paper. What’s nice about this method of prayer is that you can return back to it and see how God has answered prayers. If you’re having a hard time thinking of things to pray for, you can break up your prayers into categories such as thanksgiving, struggles, others in need, and praise.

Don’t forget that it’s never too late to grow. Psalm 1:3 (ESV) tells us that being in God’s Word is “like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.”

May you continue to grow and prosper daily with our loving God.



NEWS FROM OUR MINISTRY TEAM



Members of Worship Anew's ministry team attended the Dying Well in Christ Forum in July. Deaconess Pamela Nielsen (shown second from right) organized the event.

Ministry Team Activities

Our ministry team has been honored to attend numerous conventions and forums recently to further the gospel and to share about our ministry. At the beginning of July, Worship Anew was honored to participate in the Dying Well in Christ Forum hosted at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. The Forum brought together pastors and others from the ministry to talk about important end-of-life issues.



Above left, (left to right) Worship Anew board member Michael Nowling, Worship Anew pastor Thomas Ahlersmeyer, and ministry team members Ashley Wiehe and Matthew Leighty pose for a photo at the Indiana LCMS District Convention. Above right, Worship Anew was blessed to spend time with the South Wisconsin LWML District while at the LCMS District Convention. Below, the ministry team was blessed to share the week with 4,000 women at the LWML (Lutheran Women in Mission) Convention in Omaha, Neb. Worship Anew even made the LWML newsletter!



Katelin Moquin
Editor of Hope-Full Living

We are blessed to announce the addition of Katelin Moquin to our ministry team. Katelin began in June as the Editor of Hope-Full Living as well as a copy editor for this magazine. Katelin brings a rich background in English education and composition with experience teaching at both the college and secondary levels. She's passionate about helping writers find clarity and confidence in their voice, and she brings a deep commitment to Christ-centered service, both as an educator and as a pastor's wife. She resides in Ohio with her husband and four children.



Jeremy Klopfenstein
Acting Director of Production

We are excited to announce that Jeremy Klopfenstein has moved into the role of Acting Director of Production. He will be working with the production team on the weekly worship program as well as other video projects for the ministry.



DIFFERENT TITLES, SAME ROLE

DCE wears different hats throughout his role, all working for the Lord

*By Ashley Wiehe
Director of Communications*

“It’s not our job to change hearts — that’s the Holy Spirit’s job. It’s our job to walk with people the way Jesus did.”

Paul Wendt has worn many hats, as well as many titles, during his career. As a Director of Christian Education (DCE), he helps to lead the spiritual development of adults and youth alike within the congregation.

In his work at St. John Lutheran Church in Kendallville, Ind., Wendt runs the Sunday school program as well as the adult education program — not to mention, teaches confirmation, leads a mental health ministry called “Present Refuge,” runs the Vacation Bible School (VBS) program each summer, teaches beginning guitar, and coaches soccer.

For much of his work, he's stepping in where he is needed because, as he said, he had an interest in it, and it was something the school at his church needed.

He has served as a DCE for more than 20 years at various churches and in various roles, but all in service to the Lord through teaching the faith. He said that it's all possible because of the great team that he works with in his congregation.

"Part of DCE ministry is knowing when to lead out front and knowing when to lead from behind, where you support people that are doing the work," he said.

Wendt has served at St. John since 2018 and that followed a long career as a DCE. For him, a mentor inspired him to enter the ministry, and he is hoping to do that for others.

"He helped me to really understand how much God loved me, and I just really wanted to be able to do that for other people," he said. "If you've got somebody that's really impacted your life for the faith, and you think, well, they're a pastor, but I really don't know that I'm cut out for that or I'm not cut out for the structure that a classroom teacher uses, DCE ministry may be something worth exploring. The heart of it is helping people connect to Jesus."

Each day, he stands in front of children and adults and encourages them to grow in their study of the Bible. He even takes time to take out his guitar and lead preschoolers in song in the sanctuary. His heart for helping people is truly shown in his ministry.

"It's not our job to change hearts — that's the Holy Spirit's job," he said. "It's our job to walk with people the way Jesus did."

LEARN MORE ABOUT A DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Watch a video that Worship Anew created about church workers, especially those students wanting to be a DCE.

Use your camera app to scan the QR code or visit our YouTube page at youtube.com/@worshipanewonline to watch.





St. Luke, the Evangelist

By Sheila Banks

Communications Specialist

Despite growing up in the church from birth, it somehow escaped me that the Gospel of Luke, written by Luke, was not written by an eyewitness to the life and works of Jesus. It is very likely that Luke never even met Jesus. So, who was Luke?

Luke was a close associate of St. Paul and part of the early church. He is mentioned three times in the New Testament. Paul references him in Colossians 4:14 (ESV) as “Luke the beloved physician.” In Philemon 24 (ESV), Luke is listed as one of Paul’s “fellow workers.” And in 2 Timothy 4:11 (ESV), Paul shares that “Luke alone is with me.”

Luke wrote two books of the New Testament: the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, which make up over one quarter of the New Testament.

As a physician, Luke was an educated man, and his writing reflects his education.

In Luke 1:1-4 (ESV), he expresses his desire to establish the authenticity and trustworthiness of the Christian message. He desires to provide an “orderly account” of the life and works of Jesus Christ as shared by eyewitnesses. In his dedication to provide accurate accounts, he shares historical details, including cities, rulers, and dates. This information matches other historical accounts, making him a reliable source.

Luke had a universal outlook. The emphasis in his writings is on Jesus as the Savior of the world, not just for the Jewish people. The Book of Luke highlights the big picture of Christianity, connecting the dots of the Old Testament to its fulfillment in Christ.

More than any other author in the New Testament, he refers to Jesus as the “Son of Man,” focusing on Jesus’ compassion and accessibility for all humanity. In particular, Luke includes stories with women and children, the poor and desolate, and people who were outcasts at the time.

Britannica, a research website, says of Luke’s focus, that “Luke’s Gospel is clearly written for Gentile converts: it traces Christ’s genealogy, for example, back to Adam, the ‘father’ of the human race rather than to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people.”

The Book of Acts is a continuation of what the Lord Jesus is doing through the work of the Holy Spirit. It includes the expansion of the gospel and of the church. In chapter 16, Luke’s terminology changes from “they” to “we” indicating that Luke had joined with the group spreading the gospel, and, from this point on, he is giving a first-hand account.

Combined, the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts convey the first Christian history, outlining God’s purpose through three historical stages: the Law and prophets, the ministry of Jesus, and the church’s mission.

So, who was Luke? He was an educated man who valued accuracy in sharing the story of Jesus Christ and the formation of the early church, who connected the dots between the Old Testament and its fulfillment in Christ; a man who recognized that Jesus came for all humankind; and a reliable source who wrote over one quarter of the New Testament, so that for generations after him, countless people could read and come to know and grow in faith in Jesus Christ.



Worship Anew in August

Year 2025 | Series C



Regarding Possessions

August 3, 2025 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Walter Maier III

Our society often seems crazed with the desire to possess. Christ frequently encountered this same kind of attitude. This parable leads each one of us to ask, “What is my view regarding possessions?”

Sermon Text: Luke 12:13-21

Readings: Psalm 100; Colossians 3:1-11; Luke 12:13-21

Featured Choirs: St. John Lutheran School of Plymouth, Wis.;

Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School Choir of Centralia, Ill.

Featured Art and Architecture: Immanuel Lutheran Church, Terril, Iowa



Do Not Be Anxious

August 10, 2025 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Dr. Thomas Ahlersmeyer

Do you feel as if you are being stretched beyond your limits? That your world is breaking apart? God holds the entire world in His hands. He gave His Son for us. Do not be anxious!

Sermon Text: Luke 12:22

Readings: Psalm 33:12-22; Hebrews 11:1-16; Luke 12:22-34

Featured Choir: St. John Lutheran School of Plymouth, Wis.

Featured Art and Architecture: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa



The Faith Race

August 17, 2025 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Shayne Jonker

Run the race of faith with joy and hope. Focus on Jesus. His joy was to save you. Your joy is to receive the salvation He won for you, to be welcomed at the end of your race into the open arms of your Savior.

Sermon Text: Luke 12:49-50

Readings: Psalm 119:81-88; Hebrews 11:17-31, 12:1-3; Luke 12:49-53

Featured Choir: Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School Choir, Centralia, Ill.;

Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Zion Lutheran Church, Arcadia, Iowa



The Time is Coming

August 24, 2025 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. William Mueller

Isaiah prophesies about the last days and the gathering of believers from every nation. Who is at the center of this? How is He described as “the glory of God”?

Sermon Text: Isaiah 66:18-23

Readings: Psalm 50:1-15; Isaiah 66:18-23; Luke 13:22-30

Featured Choir: St. Paul Lutheran School, Munster, Ind.; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ind.

Featured Art and Architecture: Faith Lutheran Church, Cumming, Ga.



It's Hard to Be Humble

August 31, 2025 – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost ~ Rev. Paul Shoemaker

It's hard to be humble. Our pride encourages us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. Our Lord Jesus humbled Himself and became like we are, yet without sin.

Sermon Text: Luke 14:1-14

Readings: Psalm 131; Proverbs 25:2-10; Luke 14:1-14

Featured Choir: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Decatur, Ind.;

Christ Our Rock Lutheran High School, Centralia, Ill.

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



LONELINESS

The balance of emotional intimacy & social connections

By Thomas Moll
Director of Content & Innovation

My grandmother on my mother's side lived in a small Iowa town. The last 30 years of her life, she lived alone but wasn't lonely. She had deep family and church connections. She had opportunities to grow, to connect, to flourish as a Christian woman who lived more than 100 years on this earth.

A lot of factors were present for my grandmother that aren't the case for many older adults in the United States. She had a family who lived close by and helped her stay in her own home. She had an active congregation that supported the faith needs of older adults. She had resources in her community that supported her physical needs.

When I say that my grandmother lived alone, but wasn't lonely, this exposes the difference between loneliness and isolation. Loneliness is a subjective feeling of lacking meaningful social connections, while social isolation is an objective state of having few social contacts. You can feel lonely even when surrounded by people, and you can be socially isolated without feeling lonely. Another way to

put this is that loneliness occurs when there's a deficiency in our need for emotional intimacy due to lack of social connections.

You might be asking yourself, "Is it so bad to feel alone from time to time?" We know that there is nothing wrong with having time away from other people. In the Bible we see Jesus withdrawing, taking some precious alone time, to pray. In order for us to think and process the world and to talk to our God, it's good to be alone.

We also know, as Christians, that some feelings drive us to call out for God, to support and to rely on our neighbors, and feeling lonely can certainly spur us on to take positive action. Things get serious when loneliness becomes chronic — when feelings of loneliness don't fade but stay for the long term.

In her book "The Loneliness Epidemic," Susan Mettes describes chronic loneliness: "Chronic loneliness is defined by deficiency and distress, and it has destructive effects on human life and creativity. Chronic loneliness



is rooted in unquenchable insecurity. Such loneliness pushes people toward death, senility, heart trouble, and poor response to disease.”

From a research project that Worship Anew conducted with Barna Group called “Aging Well,” we found that loneliness is a real problem with older adults, especially with older adults who would describe themselves as dependent. More than twice the number of dependent older adults (compared to independent seniors) said that they always felt “lonely and isolated from others.”

We may be tempted to become hopeless about the epidemic of loneliness in this country, but there are reasons to be hopeful. Hebrews 4:15 (ESV) states, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” We have a Savior who can relate to our feelings of loneliness and our states of isolation. He took the hard road to the cross, knowing the pain and isolation it would bring Him, so that we might never be alone. And though it is difficult to be dependent on others, it is a wonderful gift our God gives us to not only love and serve our neighbor, but also to be loved and served by others.

If there are a couple of tasks you find difficult or laborious on your own, reach out to someone to do it with you. Depending on others strengthens connections. Doing a task together can be a great way to make social situations less uncomfortable if you’re more introverted by nature.

It may seem strange, but friendships and the relationships that we choose can help even more with loneliness than our relationships with family. Researchers don’t know exactly why this is the case, but it could be because it connects to our other psychological

needs to have a sense of autonomy over our decisions and relationships. It takes work and a multitude of small decisions to maintain a friendship. When that work pays off, it’s deeply rewarding.

Proverbs 27:17 (ESV) reminds us that, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.” Friendships take hard work, but they make us better by challenging certain thoughts and behaviors.

If you feel like you’d like more social connections but don’t know where to start, the church is a great place to begin. There have been numerous studies that highlight the benefits of church involvement. From the joy of communal singing to the numerous opportunities for social connections and deep engagement, many churches have wonderful resources to strengthen community. If you don’t have a church home, you can look for one at locator.lcms.org or give Worship Anew a call at (888) 286-8002, and we can help you or a loved one find a church in your community.

If you’re a part of a church community, talk to your church leaders about addressing issues with loneliness in your church community. Make plans to reach out to those who may be socially isolated. Start community events such as hymn sings and find volunteers to offer rides so that you can remove common barriers to finding social connections.

As believers, we know that we are never alone. We have a God who loves us and will never forsake us. May we continue every day in that hope, knowing that we can do something to help others with loneliness by picking up the phone and making a call.

“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)



SECOND CAREER, SECOND CHANCE

Pastors share about their path to the ministry

*By Ashley Wiehe
Director of Communications*

The chapel on the Concordia Theological Seminary campus in Fort Wayne, Ind., reflects in the water on a serene summer day.

As you walk around a seminary campus, most of the faces are bright-eyed and bushy-tailed (aka young). But, on occasion, someone will enter these studies with more years on his face and more tools in his arsenal.

These future second-career pastors share a unique perspective on the ministry. They come from careers inside and outside of ministry, and all bring skillsets that are different from their recent college graduate counterparts. They are juggling jobs and families while working toward a new calling from God — to be a pastor.

THE REV. DAVID SCHEMM: A WINDING PATH

The Rev. David Schemm had a winding path throughout his ministry.

He entered the church in the traditional sense by attending an undergraduate university and then attending Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill., (which closed in 1976). He spent 10 to 15 years in the ministry before a divorce led him to a new path.

“I felt unworthy to be standing up there preaching to people when I’m going through a divorce, so I had a degree in chemistry and physics, and I became a field chemist,” he said.

His undergraduate degrees in chemistry and physics led him to go and work for SMC Technologies. For 12 years, he served as a representative for this chemistry company, but the Lord was at work in his life.

His church in Wichita, Kan., asked him to start filling in, and he became plugged into the ministry once again. After a while the district president sought for him to be reinstated so that he could offer Word and Sacrament once again.

The turning point for Schemm was when he landed a large account with SMC, and his boss, while celebrating his accomplishments, asked about the next company on this list.

“Most jobs are just about making money, and I’d rather have a job where I was actually helping people, so that’s where I wanted to get plugged back in again,” he said.

The process to being reinstated was rather easy. A couple of steps and a call between district presidents, and

*Photo
Provided
The Rev.
David
Schemm
began in
ministry
straight out
of college but
his winding
path found
him out of the
ministry but
then back in
the pulpit — a
stronger
pastor than
ever.*



he was back to his life’s calling.

Upon his return to the ministry, he found that his work was stronger because of his time out in the world.

At his first call upon returning to the pulpit, he saw that there was a number of delinquent members in the congregation.

“I think before I would have just said, ‘Let’s have an active Sunday morning worship and things will pick up,’” he said.

But, because he has learned how to chase down accounts in his other position, he changed his strategy with the church.

“You just change your perspective, so I made a list of every delinquent member, and I called on every one of them,” he said. “It changed everything about the way I did ministry.”

Today, now 26 years after returning to the ministry, he is semi-retired but continues to support churches as needed, including at his congregation, Hope on the Beach in Santa Rosa Beach, Fla., where he preaches in the sunshine and

performs baptism in the waves.

“I think the ministry is the best job in the world,” he said.

MARK DOLDE: FINDING A CALLING IN GRIEF

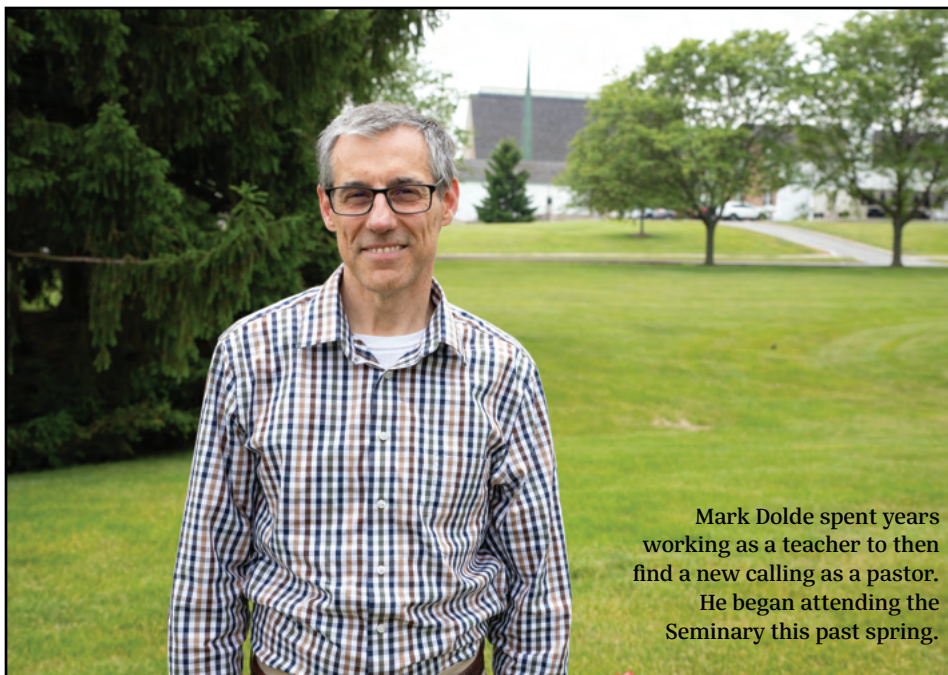
A big moment can change everything in your life. It can change the trajectory, or for Mark Dolde, it showed him where God was leading him all along.

Dolde’s calling to be a pastor began after the loss of his father, but the idea to enter the ministry was always there.

When his father died in March 2023, Dolde saw what the pastor at his father’s bedside was able to do in his last days by reading scripture, singing hymns, and providing communion.

“This is the role of the pastor,” he said. “There’s nothing more meaningful than to see my dad cared for spiritually and emotionally.”

continued on page 14



Mark Dolde spent years working as a teacher to then find a new calling as a pastor. He began attending the Seminary this past spring.

continued from page 13

It was that moment that stuck with him.

Since 1997, Dolde has served as a teacher at Concordia Lutheran High School in Fort Wayne, Ind., teaching math and theology and coaching as needed. Even two years ago when his father passed away, he wasn't planning — or quite ready — to make any changes.

He would frequently hear from friends and family, "You should really be a pastor" or "When will you attend the Seminary to become a pastor?" But, it wasn't until the loss of his father that he really felt that pull from God.

"I've heard that throughout my life. But a lot of times, it's like, you're very kind or thank you, but right now, I know I'm supposed to be a teacher, and I didn't think much of it," he said. "But, my son was the one that took it from the back burner to, 'Dad, have you really considered this?'"

It wasn't until after his father's death that he decided that he needed to do something about it.

"I stepped back after his funeral,

and on the scale of weeks later, I contacted (the Seminary) to say I'm really considering this," he said.

As Dolde reflected on his story, he shared how God was at work all throughout this life in getting him ready for this moment.

When he attended Concordia University–Chicago, he was a pre-Seminary major, studying some Biblical Greek and even Latin, but keeping his focus on high school math and science.

"That's what I'm pretty sure I want to do," he said about being a teacher. "But people tell me that I should consider the ministry. Pastoral ministry, I'm not opposed to that. I just don't see myself in that role, at least, I didn't at 18."

He continued to follow his path of becoming a high school math teacher. For many years, he continued to teach but eventually was feeling the drain from teaching some of the same classes. His calling came knocking again when he was asked to teach theology classes at Concordia.

"You know, only God could orchestrate details like this," he

explained as everything was falling into place, including being able to continue his teaching position while going to the Seminary.

Two years after his father's death, his calling to become a pastor is becoming a reality. Dolde began his classes at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne this past spring. It has been a unique experience as he steps behind the student's desk instead of in front of it to pursue a new path.

"I love to learn. I recognize that this is how the Father created me, and despite my 'older' age in life, I see how this gift is useful as I begin my Seminary studies," he said.

His path to becoming a pastor will likely take five years as he finishes classes and then completes his vicarage.

What's next then? He's not sure, but he is content on following where God leads.

"I truly am open to whatever God has in mind because he hasn't ever steered me wrong before," he said. "I'm content to be on the back of the tandem bike because I don't know where the driver is steering things, but it's a great ride, and I'm loving the ride, including the view."

JASON VON DER LAGE: FINDING THE TITLE OF PASTOR

Jason von der Lage has spent his life in the ministry, but today, he is doing it with a collar for the first time.

He recently completed his Seminary training and is on his way to serving at his first church as a pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Each step to becoming a pastor has been a step in faith — some with doors wide open while others

slamming shut.

He originally began working toward becoming a Director of Christian Education (DCE) through Concordia University-Texas, but circumstances forced him to enter the workforce before finishing the program. Yet, God had great plans for him.

As one door had closed for him, he found connections at Texas churches where he worked with youth and continued to do so until his family found another door closing when his wife's teaching contract was not renewed.

"We were devastated, but my wife, being super professional, just said, 'Well, this is what God wants for us,'" he recalled.

A new call for her career led them to her alma mater in Michigan. However, the doors continued to close for von der Lage as he remained unemployed for three years.

"I'm struggling. I'm working part-time jobs at little, tiny churches. It's just part-time gigs to keep my résumé fresh," he said.

He was finally connected with a larger church and a larger ministry, but the church faced problems, as many others did, when COVID hit. But, as those doors were closing, others finally began to open.

He considered applying to the Seminary, and around the same time, he received a call from Concordia-Texas about completing his degree because he was only a couple of credits shy of his diploma.

To his surprise, another door opened.

Jason von der Lage graduated this past spring from the Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind., and is now serving as a pastor in Cincinnati.

"In the very same week that happened, I got a call from the Seminary. Somebody had dropped my name off and said we have a new program called Alternate Route," he said about the program at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. "If you're over 35 years of age and you've worked for at least 10 years in the church, which checks all my lists, then you could come to the Seminary."

Doors were opening, and by faith, his family moved forward in the process and began to see if his wife could find a job in the Fort Wayne area.

"She had five job offers before we left town," he said. "But, then, of course, the devil does what he does."

His father suffered a stroke the same day that they were signing the papers to close on their house. He began to ask, "What should I do? Should we even sell? Should I wait up on this? Should I not go to Seminary?" But, his sister kept that door open for him.

"She's like, 'No, no, go. Dad wants you to go. Mom would want you to go. We're going to do this, and you'll be fine,'" he recalled.

And the door remained open. He

continued his two years of studies, his vicarage at St. Paul Lutheran Church-Gar Creek in New Haven, Ind., (supplemented with work at a local school and care facility), and graduated to see God's work in him as a pastor.

"Getting here was totally a God thing," he said. "I was thinking the real reason I wanted to be a pastor was because I have a lot of experience in the church. Now, I see that it just opened another door — another way to use the gifts and talents that I've been gifted with."

He shared his favorite verse from 1 Peter 4:10-11 (ESV), "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies — in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

"God used a burning bush with Moses; he used a talking donkey with Balaam; and sometimes it kind of felt like a 2 by 4 with all of the life happening with us," he said. "God put me in Cincinnati for a reason."





MAKING A LASTING LEGACY

Don Thompson shares about his rocky road and how he never lost faith

By Jon Dize, CFRE

Director of Development & Strategic Initiatives

A *s we face the end of our lives, we are frequently struck with what will be left behind and what kind of impact that we can make for God's Kingdom.*

For Don Thompson, it has been a life of ups and downs — offacing loss and uncertainty in his relationships and even facing his own mortality. But, his faith was not shaken. When his mother passed, he sought to make a contribution that would further His Kingdom as well as pay tribute to his mother. He shares that in his letter on the next page.

If you would like to learn more about how you can remember the ministry of Worship Anew in your will, IRA, trust, or other option, please contact Jon Dize, Director of Development, at Jon@worshipanew.org or (888) 286-8002. If you have already included Worship Anew in your estate plans, we would be grateful for the opportunity to personally thank you.



“I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Hebrews 13:5 ESV

Dear Reader,

For me, life has been a journey, and sometimes it has been a rocky road, yet I have kept my eyes on the cross through difficult times. The Bible verse stating, “I will never leave you or forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5 ESV) has been true in my life because God has been with me every step of the way.

I was familiar with Worship Anew through tending for my mother who passed away in 2014. She was an avid follower of the program since she was unable to attend church. She enjoyed the singing of the hymns, the sermons, and praying with the ministers each week. She wished she could support Worship Anew.

Hopefully, I will be able to satisfy her desires with a part of my estate to Worship Anew. It will be money well spent to give honor and glory to the Lord who has been very good to me.

If you can find it in your heart, Worship Anew is an opportunity to honor the Lord for all of His wonderful blessings He has given to you. It would be a way to help spread the gospel to others. It will be something that you would be proud of and never regret doing.

God bless you and Worship Anew. Our good Lord is our perfect judge to always look at our heart in action with our giving.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21 ESV).

~ Dan

What are the requirements for a pastor to be ordained in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)?

To become a pastor through Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind., or through Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Mo., the primary path is the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree program. This program typically takes four years to complete, including a year-long internship called a vicarage. Applicants must be members of the LCMS, have a bachelor's degree, and demonstrate the required qualifications through recommendations, interviews, and competency exams.

There is also an Alternate Route Program and a Specific Ministry Program. Alternate Route is a two-year residential program with a one-year vicarage for those with 10 years of theological work who are over the age of 35.

The Specific Ministry Program (SMP) is designed for men serving in specific ministry contexts within the LCMS. It offers a four-year distance education program alongside on-the-job training through mentorship. Upon completion, SMP candidates are certified as specific ministry pastors.

To learn more about becoming a pastor in the LCMS, check out lcms.org/how-we-serve/education/pastoral.

I see church colors changing for different seasons, but I noticed it's been green for a while now. Is there a reason for all the green?

Green is used in many churches during the seasons of Epiphany and Pentecost. The time of Pentecost can be long as it can last from 22 to 28 Sundays depending on the year. This time after Pentecost is also known as “the time of the church” and can be referred to as the season of the “green meadow.”

As we grow older as Christians, we also continue to grow in faith and love toward others, as a green meadow would. This is a nice, long season to reflect on the growth and longevity God gives us.

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!

The Brain Game

Tips for keeping your brain active and healthy

*By Elizabeth Puls
Copy Editor*

It has been said that “aging isn’t for the faint of heart.” One day we feel young and vibrant, and the next, we are struggling to do even the easiest of tasks. As we age, our bodies and minds naturally go through many changes. Much has been written on ways to keep our bodies in peak physical condition, but what about our brains?

Brain health encompasses cognitive, sensory, emotional, and motor functions. Our brain health is crucial for overall well-being and quality of life. A strong and healthy brain is paramount to helping us participate in daily activities, maintain independence, manage stress and emotions, protect us from cognitive decline, and improve our mental health.

So, how do we strengthen our brains? Here are a few ways to stave off neural decline while strengthening our brains.

Learn a New Skill

- ▶ Learn a new language or musical Instrument: This is a great way to strengthen existing neural pathways, create new pathways, and improve cognitive function.
- ▶ Take a course or workshop: Many communities offer free adult education classes that allow you to explore a new subject.
- ▶ Learn a new hobby: Getting involved in activities like cooking, crafting, photography, or painting can stimulate your brain.

Maintain Social Connections

- ▶ Join a club or group: Social interactions are crucial for maintaining cognitive function and wellbeing.

- ▶ Spend time with family and friends: Being active in social exercises will help stimulate your memories as well as keep your mind active.
- ▶ Volunteer: When you make it a point to engage in meaningful acts of service, it can provide a sense of purpose as well as challenge your mind.

Stay Physically Active

- ▶ Exercise: Regular physical activity increases blood flow to the brain which is imperative for cognitive function.
- ▶ Walking and swimming: These activities will not only improve your mood and energy levels but boost your cognitive function as well.
- ▶ Balance exercises: There are many free programs available to help you improve your balance, flexibility, and focus. Improving your balance can also help to alleviate falls, a major factor in head injuries and broken bones in the aging community.

Engage in Mental Exercises

- ▶ Solve a puzzle: Sudoku, crosswords puzzles, jigsaw puzzles, and brain teasers are fun and easy ways to improve memory, problem solving, and focus.
- ▶ Play games: Board games, card games, and memory games can provide a challenging way to improve your thinking skills while strengthening your brain.
- ▶ Read: Reading your Bible, a novel, or magazine can help improve your vocabulary, memory, and keep you updated on current news and information.



Extra Tips for Improving Cognition

Remain curious: Ask questions, explore new topics, and continue learning.

Challenge yourself: Step outside your comfort zone and don't be afraid to try something new or different.

Make sleep a priority: The National Sleep Foundation has updated its guidelines on optimal sleep for seniors. It is recommended that people over the age of 65 get seven to eight hours of quality sleep per night to not only heal and strengthen your body but to fortify brain health and cognitive function.

Eat a healthy diet: A balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats are crucial for supporting brain health.

Medicine interactions: Make sure to talk with your

physician about all the medications you take on a regular basis to ensure you are taking the proper dosage, and that you can alleviate any interactions between medications.

Control stress: The impacts of high levels of stress can negatively affect our cognitive function. In a study by Brown University, they found that people who are chronically in a state of stress, anxious, or depressed, tend to have higher levels of the hormone cortisol which can cause “brain fog” and, over time, can destroy brain cells resulting in brain shrinkage. The above ideas are good ways to help alleviate stress while, at the same time, making connections with others and having fun.

Growing older does not mean you have to slow down and lead a life of isolation. As we age, we can find new opportunities to engage in the world around us. Developing healthy brain habits is a key way to keep your brain healthy and vibrant.

See page 22 for more games to feed your brain.



THE BEGINNING OF LEARNING

By Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt

The Christian life is not a “one and done” reality. Like breathing, eating, or walking with a friend, it is continual, life-shaping, and always growing. Proverbs 1:7 (ESV) helps us see that, but it comes with its own challenge that lasts our entire life — to keep on learning with reverence, humility, and trust in the Lord.

The verse begins with the phrase, “The fear of the Lord ...” This kind of fear is not the terror we think of most often, but instead it is a deep respect, awe, and submission to God’s wisdom and authority. In the Bible, to “fear the Lord” means to recognize who He is: Our Creator and holy, just, loving, and perfectly wise. It means we understand that we are not the source of wisdom, but He is. And so, learning begins when we stop trying to be self-sufficient and instead trust the One who created us.

And yet, Proverbs 1:7 doesn’t just offer encouragement — it gives a warning too: “fools despise wisdom and instruction.” This should give

us pause. The opposite of a life of learning is a life that refuses to listen, a life that sees correction as a threat rather than a gift. Whether we are young or advanced in years, the temptation to assume we already know enough is real. But the wise person — no matter their age — is the one who remains teachable, especially before the Lord.

But Proverbs doesn’t just talk about the start of knowledge. It sets the tone and the pace for all learning, especially for us Christians who seek to grow in faith over the course of a lifetime. We often think of learning as something reserved for children, for the classroom, or formal Bible study. But the Scriptures speak of wisdom as a lifelong pursuit. In Proverbs 4:7 (ESV), Solomon says, “Whatever you get, get insight.” That’s not just a call to study more but a call to keep the light of Christ, the Word of God, to illuminate the path as we walk through this world.

Lifelong learning in the Christian

life is not about collecting facts or accumulating knowledge for its own sake. It is about being shaped in and by the Word of God, transformed by His Holy Spirit, and continually molded into the likeness and image of Christ. It’s about hearing His Word and seeing His promises anew each day, especially when our hearts are tired or our bodies grow weak. God is never done teaching us. He is never finished speaking His mercy and His grace into our lives.

Worship is a time of learning. So is prayer. So is opening the Bible alone or with a group. Wisdom isn’t found just in head knowledge but in consistent and faithful trust in the Lord and His Word.

Let us never stop learning, never stop listening, and never stop leaning on the God whose wisdom is eternal.

The Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt is the Assistant Vice President of Admissions at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind.

**Prayer:**

O Lord our God, the fountain and source of all wisdom and knowledge is You. Teach us to fear, love, and trust in You over all other sources of knowledge. Help us see when we put others, including ourselves, ahead of You and forgive us when we put our trust in them above You. Continue to make us lifelong learners of Your mercy and grace that we may point others to You, as well, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

In what areas of your life are you currently seeking wisdom, and how are you turning to God's Word for guidance?

How does “the fear of the Lord” shape your attitude toward learning, especially when it comes to being corrected or challenged?

What practices — such as prayer, worship, or Bible reading — help you remain a lifelong learner in your walk with Christ?

This month's study text:***The Beginning of Knowledge***

1 The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel:

*2 To know wisdom and instruction,
to understand words of insight,*

*3 to receive instruction in wise dealing,
in righteousness, justice, and equity;*

*4 to give prudence to the simple,
knowledge and discretion to the youth —*

*5 Let the wise hear and increase in learning,
and the one who understands obtain guidance,*

*6 to understand a proverb and a saying,
the words of the wise and their riddles.*

*7 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

Proverbs 1:1-7 (ESV)

Ways to feed your brain with games

By Elizabeth Puls
Copy Editor

These are a variety of games to try to strengthen your brain. Try a weekly game night and rotate through the suggestions! (But don't play the game in the cartoon! That's just for laughs!)



Chess

Crosswords

Sudoku

Wordle

Scrabble

Trivia

Checkers

Card Games

Word Searches

Jigsaw Puzzles

Bingo

Solitaire

Backgammon

Memory Games on your Phone

Board Games



Time for a Laugh



Answer Key

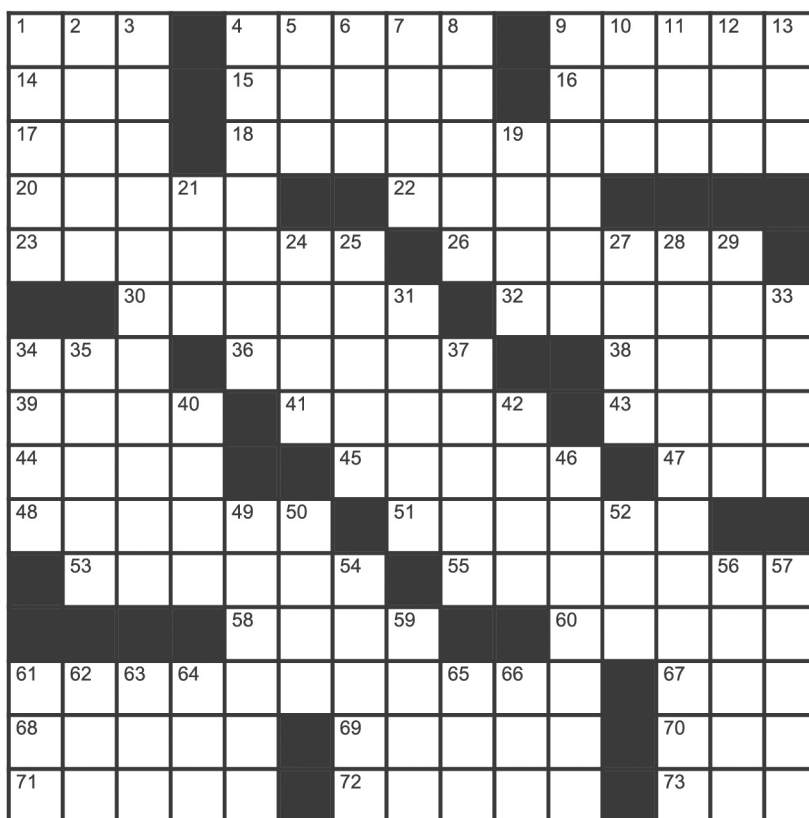
T	A	M	R	E	S	E	T	S	A	L	S	A
E	G	O	A	L	I	K	E	I	L	I	A	C
M	A	N	I	M	P	E	R	M	E	A	B	L
P	R	O	E	M	S	C	A	R	A	T	A	
O	S	P	R	E	S	E	R	A	T	A		
S	O	R	N	A	T	E	C	A	R	U	S	O
E	L	L	T	W	I	X	T					
C	E	I	L	S	L	U	R	P	A	T	O	M
R	A	Z	E									
U	N	E	V	E	N	B	E	L	I	E	F	
T	R	A	G	I	C	D	E	S	E	R	T	S
A	B	R	A	C	A	B	R	A				
C	O	Y	P	U	R	E	R	U	N			
T	W	E	R	P	E	L	A	N	D			
I	L	K										



FEED YOUR BRAIN WITH A CROSSWORD

Across

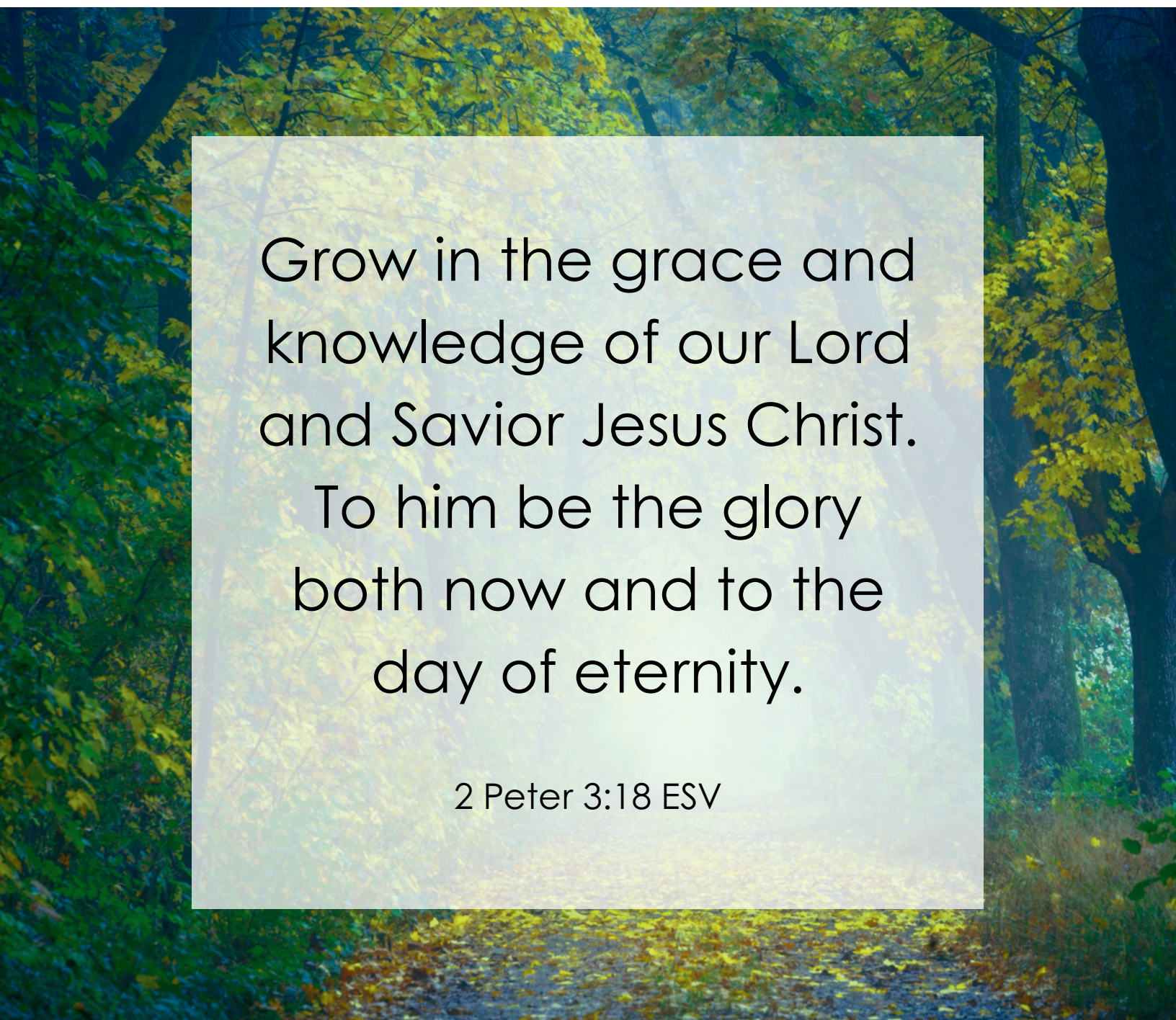
1. Cap
4. Change, as a clock
9. Chip dip
14. "I" problem
15. Similar
16. ___ artery
17. Word before and after "oh"
18. Hard
20. Intro
22. Cicatrix
23. Fish hawks
26. Slips
30. Victorian, in a way
32. Tenor Enrico
34. Addition
36. Between, in poetry
38. Allergic reaction
39. To put a roof on
41. Impolite dinner sound
43. Bit
44. Bring down
45. Simple chord
47. "___ alive!"
48. Odd
51. Conviction
53. Calamitous
55. Abandons
58. Pesky insect
60. Speak without thinking
61. Magician's incantation
67. ___ cross
68. South American rodent
69. Summer TV offering
70. ___-tac-toe



- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 71. Dweeb | 12. Erie Canal mule | 49. Breakfast container |
| 72. African antelope | 13. Trick taker, often | 50. Ship of 1492 |
| 73. Breed | 19. Artist Chagall | 52. Moray, e.g. |
| | 21. "To ___ is human ..." | 54. Close-knit group |
| Down | 24. Swerves at sea | 56. Bring up the rear |
| 1. Beat | 25. Artificial leg? | 57. Baffled |
| 2. Ice cream thickeners | 27. "Mi chiamano Mimi," e.g. | 59. Old Chinese money |
| 3. Someone who has it all | 28. Richard's first hit | 61. Appear |
| 4. Attire | 29. English race place | 62. Fiddle stick |
| 5. Common street name | 31. Bedroom community | 63. Deli bread |
| 6. Bit of a draft | 33. ___ law | 64. 30-day mo. |
| 7. Barely gets, with "out" | 34. Almond | 65. Car accessory |
| 8. Third canonical hour | 35. Inclined | 66. Bleed |
| 9. Code word for "S" | 37. Put to the test | |
| 10. ___ grecque (cooked in olive oil, lemon juice, wine, and herbs, and served cold) | 40. Bulgarian money | |
| 11. Ballot abbr. | 42. Blanched | |
| | 46. Dissolve | |

Answer key on opposite page

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Grow in the grace and
knowledge of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ.
To him be the glory
both now and to the
day of eternity.

2 Peter 3:18 ESV