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# CONNECTION

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Our Savior Lutheran Church

Mesquite, TX

August 2025

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## **Mr. Cheat-Os ... Meet Mr. Free-Tos**

Remember when cheating was almost fun ... the mischievous smile on my face when I held two wild cards out of the Canasta deck before shuffling the cards ... the mock outrage, appealing to parental justice and vindication: “Mom, John is cheating!”? (Of course, I **never** cheated—unless it was card games or board games or baseball games!!)

Growing into adulthood means growing out of cheating—unless it’s just in jest. But, for some, cheating develops from a prank into a pattern. Cheating becomes a way of life.

It seemed innocuous, if not amusing, to hear about an elderly man cheating on the golf course this past week. It wasn’t the PGA or the Masters, after all. No real money was at stake. No harm. No foul.

Unless the cheating had changed and metastasized ... unless cheating on a golf course was a symptom of something so deeply ingrained that it was no longer possible to differentiate the dye from the fabric ... as if cheating had become one’s very DNA. Then, cheating becomes habitual. It becomes easy.

Then the golf course cheater makes it a matter of course to cheat—to cheat on taxes, to cheat on wives, to cheat on bank loans, to cheat on contractors, to cheat with the fraud of inflated valuations. No harm, no foul, right?

A lifestyle of cheating wreaks havoc. It breeds corruption. Acting only out of self-interest, it bullies the weak. It destroys lives. It cheats immigrants out of due process. It cheats the most vulnerable people out of medicare. It cheats the poorest of the poor in Africa out of food and medical supplies. It cheats our allies out of the respect they deserve. It cheats minority communities with blatantly unfair redistricting. It cheats schoolkids out of the truth by banning history books. It cheats refugees by denying them basic rights. It cheats the people of Gaza out of life itself.

Cheating strangles the truth by choking it in lies. It cheats our democratic process with autocratic power. It cheats justice by pardoning insurrection. Finally, it even cheats Christianity by substituting a bogus, pseudo-faith that is rooted in privilege and power, not compassion and grace. It blurs truth with blatant lies and hypocrisy. It pretends to be Christlike without the cross. It undermines the Gospel.

One may protest that I’m being too harsh on chronic cheaters. So, it’s only fair, I guess, to note that God cheats too.

With a mischievous smile, God held back all the wild cards before he shuffled the deck in the duel with the devil. While the devil held four aces and death seemed destined, God’s hand was flush with wild cards—a royal flush, in fact, of eternal life in Christ.

It’s not fair what Jesus did. He didn’t play by the rules. After all, Pilate sentenced him to death ... and death has firm and final rules. Death always gets the last word—until Jesus came. Jesus let go of his power and let death have its way—all the way to the cross. Jesus let death play its game—all the way to his last breath.

But then, God cheated. He changed the rules and ended the game. And with it, God exposed all cheaters of all time for their fraud. And God still calls out their lies and undoes their work. Those who have been victimized by the lies have their humanity restored. The vulnerable poor are cherished and fed. Refugees fleeing despair and death are given hope and a home. The cheating ways of humanity are trumped by the freedom of Christ. Christ makes you free so you don’t have to cheat anymore. Not at golf. Not at grifting. Not at all ... because Christ has already justified us and given us the victory.

Cheating doesn’t finally win anything anyway because finally, your cheatin’ heart will tell on you—always. Today, Mr. Cheat-Os has met his match. Mr. Cheat-Os. Meet Mr. Free-Tos. (And please, stop cheating.) (I offer my full apology for the most egregious puns in this article. Only God can forgive such folly.)



## Back-to-School Backpacks—August 10<sup>th</sup>

A new school year signals a fresh start, a new beginning of learning and growth. New teachers, new classrooms, new friends... new backpacks! Backpacks symbolize the excitement and energy of back-to-school, so we're having a "Blessing of the Backpacks" in worship, August 10<sup>th</sup>. Kids, bring your backpacks before your first day of school. We'll bring them forward for the children's dialog and say a prayer of blessing on them—and you! May God bless teachers and students alike—and their backpacks—as school begins anew.

## So You Think There's a Devil?

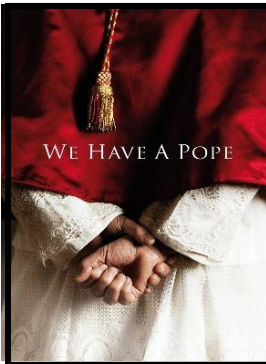
August 7 & 14, 6:30pm

Join us to tackle one of the most complex issues in the Bible—the concept of El Diablo. We'll take a look at various biblical references to the devil and deal with nagging questions that often go unanswered. Is there a personal devil? Is the world filled with demons? Is demon possession a possibility? How much power does Satan have? What about satanic cults and devil worshippers? How are we to live in response to this world's evil? The biblical images are many, but we'll try to separate fact from fiction based on the Word of God. Above all, we'll lift up the one who has delivered us from the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh. Sure sounds like fun, doesn't it? Sign up on the bulletin table or just come. May your blessings be many and your demons be few.



## FLIX FOR FAITH

POPE MOVIE #3 FRIDAY, AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30PM



We've gone from the intense drama of "Conclave" to the charming conversation of "The Two Popes." How about something a little more lighthearted? "We Have a Pope" is a comedy/drama about a reluctant pope who struggles to reach the spiritual heights and human demands of the papacy. Come join us for our final journey to the Vatican in our Summer Film Festival. Instead of popcorn, we'll serve Pope-corn! Sign up in the centrum

## Thanksgiving in August



We can't wait 'til November to say Thank You to some exceptional gifts of time and energy during this hot summer. Brian Murphy brought the heat with his patented hot sauce before cooling us down with his 'cool as a cucumber' pickles and relish. All his wares are organic and home-grown, and all his profits went to the community garden. How does \$355 sound to keep our garden ministry going?

Speaking of gardens, Julie Williams has made it her mission to make our garden courtyard a place of serenity and beauty. She personally arranged—at her expense—to clean out the weeds and re-do the path with a striking new railing.

Speaking of weeds, Cheri Allred took on the task of cleaning out all of the garden areas around the church. That monumental challenge was met with her fierce determination to make Our Savior sparkle. Her main accomplice was Jackie Clayton with an occasional assist from Julie Williams, Baerbel Williams, Jenny Pickett, and Lois Schelter.



Speaking of sparkle, there is no florist in Mesquite that can match the beauty of our Sunday floral arrangements. Carolina Flanigan has used her floral arrangements and personal garden flowers to make this church sparkle inside and match the beauty of our sparkling exterior. Surrounded by such beauty, it becomes a joy to worship at Our Savior Lutheran Church.

Speaking of worship, the Cannon family musicians have ably and artfully filled in on the Sundays when Dr. Anderson could not lead our Sunday music. Over the years, they have help us hundreds of times to "Sing to the Lord a New Song."



Speaking of singing, how about joining in an August chorus of "Now Thank We All Our God" as a summer warm-up in anticipation of Thanksgiving Day for all that the above and many, many more have done "with heart, and hand, and voices." Your witness has inspired to live lives of gratitude and grace.

# AUGUST

## BIRTHDAYS

Date	Name	Date	Name
6	Shirleen Reese	20	Mark Fretheim
7	Austin Morton		Jeremy Richardson
10	Jana Mayfield	23	Kaethe Combs
13	Jon Cook	25	Mark Grafing
14	Randy Peterson	31	Richard Mastin
17	Diana Bruneau		John Schelter
	Renata del-Busto		
19	Sophie DeShazo		
	Jake Lippincott		
	George Morton		



## BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

Date	Name
9	Sonja Conoly
12	Cynthia Lubben
25	Jordan Grafing
31	Laura Stidd



## WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Date	Years
10	Michael & Sonja Conoly 34

### Worship Leaders for August:

Worship Assistant: Chip Cannon Reader: Jamie Nivens  
 Usher: Earl Herndon & Debbie Lonon Greeter: Katy McCabe & Laura Stidd  
 Altar Guild: Julie Williams



## Making Our Savior a Secure Place for All

Many churches have a security committee to ensure the safety and protection of both people and property. Our committee disbanded with covid, but there is some interest in starting it again. If you would like to serve on a newly formed Our Savior security committee, please let Pastor Schelter or a council member know. We'll try to fill in any details and answer any questions you may have for our "social security!"

## FACEBOOK FAILINGS AND YOUTUBE EUPHORIA

Once again, Facebook is failing to preserve our online worship services. Just as they wiped out almost 3 years of services during and after covid, it is now beginning to delete the Facebook services that are on our website. All 5 Sunday in August will be streamed on both Facebook and YouTube. We will be switching to YouTube eventually, but may continue Facebook as well, so give us your feedback. You can find our YouTube service under the handle [@oursaviorlutheranmesquitetx](https://www.youtube.com/@oursaviorlutheranmesquitetx). (Our Facebook service remains under the name OSL Mesquite—[www.facebook.com/osl.mesquite](https://www.facebook.com/osl.mesquite))

SCAN HERE  
FOR  
YOUTUBE  
LINK



## USHERS BEGIN WITH "U"

"Ushers" is an old church word that hardly make sense for Our Savior. No one needs to be ushered to our seats, nor do they need to be ushered forward for communion. Yet even if the word is getting obsolete, we dare not let the work of ushers become obsolete. Ushers welcome our guests, pass the offering plates, and circulate the attendance pads during the children's sermon. Those tasks are among the most important every Sunday, and we need many more welcoming greeters to help our worship. Please sign up or see Pastor Schelter if you can help make "ushers" into a brand-new welcoming word at Our Savior Lutheran Church. (We will schedule and Usher's training meeting soon with our new volunteer ushers.



## Helping the Homeless at Austin Street Shelter

A small group of Mesquite churches are helping serve an early breakfast every fifth Sunday at Austin Street Shelter. We are looking for volunteers as well as contributions. In August we will provide paper goods (napkins, plates, paper towels). If you would like to help in-person or with a donation of paper goods, call the office or talk with Jamie Nivens.

# August 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<b><u>Each Sunday</u></b> 10:00am Worship Service 4:30pm Worship Service		29 9:30am Mother's Day Out		31 9:30am Mother's Day Out	2	2
3	4 6:00pm Table Talk	5	6 10:30am Sages for All Ages	7 6:30pm "So You Think There's a Devil?"	8	9
10 <i>Blessing of the Backpacks</i>	11 6:00pm Table Talk 7:00pm Boy Scouts	12 9:30am Mother's Day Out 10:30am Communion at the Waterford	13 10:30am Sages for All Ages	14 9:30am Mother's Day Out 6:30pm "So You Think There's a Devil?" 7:00pm Cub Scouts	15 6:30pm "Flix for Faith"	16
17	18 6:00pm Table Talk 7:00pm Boy Scouts	19 9:30am Mother's Day Out	20 10:30am Sages for All Ages	21 9:30am Mother's Day Out 7:00pm Cub Scouts	22	23
24	25 6:00pm Table Talk 7:00pm Boy Scouts	26 9:30am Mother's Day Out	27 10:30am Sages for All Ages	28 9:30am Mother's Day Out 7:00pm Cub Scouts	29	30