Dear Guests of our Gracious God,

“Hey! Give that back! It’s mine!” How many times have we heard those words from the mouths of our children, or, if we are honest, from our own lips. Our sinful human nature seeks to selfishly keep what we have and acquire more. Our heavenly Father reminds us that all things are His. Leviticus 25:23 says, “The land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me” [NJKV]. Sojourners isn’t a word we often use in everyday language. Merriam-Webster defines it as one who stays as a temporary resident. In other words, we are guests in a land that is not ours. Therefore, in essence, God says, “You are My guests.”

**God graciously provides...** That statement has a wonderfully comforting message for us. Through His blessed Word and holy Sacraments, we receive pardon and forgiveness for all our sins, even the power to believe that our Savior Jesus Christ accomplished this for us in our place. Our gracious God goes beyond this, our greatest need, to “richly and daily provide us with food and clothing, home and family, property and goods, and all that we need to support our bodies and lives.” [Luther’s Small Catechism, The First Article]

**…We receive His great provision.** We would like you to take a moment and truly think how, as grateful recipients, we will want to show our thanks by being generous with His gifts in service others. Remembering that “all this God does out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in us; for all this it is our duty to thank and praise, *serve* and obey Him.” [Luther’s Small Catechism, The First Article]

Under the theme, **“You Are My Guests”** we would encourage your church to make use of the provided materials: a sermon study, Bible study materials, and service project suggestions, all geared to help us share God’s gifts with those around us in our communities. By providing for our neighbors’ physical need, we also have the wonderful opportunity to share God’s greatest provision for their spiritual need. God richest blessings to your efforts!

To His glory,

Rev. Erich J. Hoeft

Chairman of the ELS Board for Christian Service