

Lutheran Campus Ministry
at the University of Delaware

We are
LCM strong!



November 2020
A Thanksgiving Devotional

Romans 12:9-13

⁹Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

During this time of uncertainty in our community, country, and world, Lutheran Campus Ministry has prayerfully decided to protect the health and well-being of everyone involved with the ministry and postpone our traditional in-person fall gathering. Instead we have prepared this **Thanksgiving Devotional** for your spiritual journey.

Personal reflections were written by a selection of individuals associated with LCM. Their words will reflect on the themes of: *thanksgiving, community, prayer, saints, service, and giving*. Despite COVID-19 affecting all aspects of our personal lives including the way we live, learn, work, and worship, LCM has continued serving our students virtually. As our students returned to their studies this fall, weekly meetings resumed with the joyful addition of several new students!

Lutheran Campus Ministry survives in this time of uncertainty. We are proud of our ongoing virtual connections, thankful for needed property improvements, grateful for continuing to serve those suffering food insecurities through Fellowship in Serving the Hungry (FISH), and blessed by a community of saints who surround us — **We are LCM strong!**

As you journey through this devotional, may the Holy Spirit guide your heart and mind and lead you to keep LCM in your daily prayers. You are a blessing!

JoAnne Gross

Ministry Coordinator

THANKSGIVING

By Taira Baldauf, LCM student

Psalm 100: 4-5

⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.*
⁵ *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.*

When sitting down for a meal, what is one of the first things you do? Most Christians give thanks for the meal provided. If you are like most, this might be the only time during the day that you think about giving thanks to the Lord. We as humans have the tendency to be self-absorbed in our own matters and get distracted by the minutiae of everyday life. Remember: there is always a reason to be thankful.

In this Psalm there is an emphasis on giving thanks and praising the Lord. The Lord's steadfast love for us is always a good reason to give thanks. In the good times, and even in the bad times, God's love is unchanging. Take a minute and think of three things you are thankful for. It never takes long to be grateful for God's constant care. Take the time this week to notice your surroundings, your location, the people in your life, and what you have. Give thanks for all these gifts God has put in your life.

***O Lord, we lift our praise to You. We give thanks for
Your unfailing grace and mercy. We ask that You open
our eyes to see the gifts around us and open our hearts
to giving thanks for Your blessings.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.***

COMMUNITY

By Louis James, LCM Directing Committee member

Leviticus 19:15-18

¹⁵Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. ¹⁶Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD. ¹⁷Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. ¹⁸Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

We all are members of a community; this community can be very local or can extend far beyond the horizon. The most successful are those that have you involved in the growth of that community. God bestowed blessings on all of His children; twenty four tribes were bestowed with His blessings. Wait... I thought that there were only twelve tribes... There were twelve tribes through Jacob and twelve tribes through Ishmael.

Our historical community not only includes Christians and Jews but, also includes Muslims. There is rich heritage in all of our roots that can be shared and appreciated by all members of the community. There is a quote from the motion picture *First Knight*: "In serving one another, we become free."

Looking at the world today, one can see that our community needs **a lot** of help; help is needed both nearby and in the distance. With the Lord's guidance, we will be there to provide that needed help, help for our neighbor.

Dear Lord, thank You for the community that You have given us. Help us to be an asset to strengthen our community so that it can grow and be an asset to the world. In Your name we pray. Amen.

PRAYER

By Mindy Holland, Minister of Word and Service,
and LCM Chaplain

Ephesians 3:16-19

¹⁶ I pray that, according to the riches of His glory, He may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through His Spirit, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸ I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

At its heart, prayer is spending time with God, just as we would with a best friend or spouse, someone whom we trust deeply and who loves us at our best and at our worst. Though we often think of prayer as the words that we speak, prayer is also the choice to be open and present to God, as Jesus is ever open and present to us, even when it may be most difficult to be aware of His loving grace. Whether in silence or in speech; sitting quietly or dancing in joy; speaking in gratitude or grief, fear or anger, hope or longing—in all of these expressions, which reflect the cries and desires of our hearts, the Lord is present, listens deeply, and holds us close in unconditional love. One of my favorite Hebrew words is *rahamim*, which, though translated as “mercy” or “compassion,” is literally speaking of the “wombness” of God. Just as a mother tenderly shelters her growing child for nine months, so does our Holy Parent hold us tight in an enfolding, deeply personal, and ever-tender embrace *every day*!

Sometimes when I pray these days, I have no words. I beat my fists against Jesus’ chest, demanding that He do something! Or I crawl into God’s lap and listen for Abba’s lullaby while I cry and cry. On the best days, I feel lifted on vibrant wings of the Holy Spirit, somehow able to know the joy of the Lord, in spite of everything. As you pray, rest assured of the focused, intimate attention that our Wise Counselor extends to us at each moment. Dwelling outside of time, Jesus can be present to every single prayer, even as thousands of petitions are lifted at once, even when it may seem that God is absent.

In the face of COVID-19, when many have cried out for healing that has not come; for an end to the virus that keeps spreading; and for a return to a "normal" life that seems beyond our reach, it can be tempting to suspect that Christ does not hear or care. I don't know why our grace-filled Shepherd has allowed our paths to be fraught with such loss and strife this year. I grieve for those who feel stuck in the valley of the shadow of death, with so little light for the path. My own coronavirus journey started in initial panic and fear, and along the way I experienced anger, hurt, grief, and frustrated resignation. However, after many prayerful hours, at last I arrived at a place of abiding assurance that, no matter what, the holy and unwavering love of God, best shown and revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, still holds us tight and will never let us go! We are so precious in our Abba's sight.

Nothing can separate us from the love of our Triune God. Whatever we may bring into God's presence through our prayers, we are beloved. No matter what, the Father's *agape* welcomes us, forgives us, and restores us. As we pray, our Beloved even rejoices over us with singing, taking true delight in us. May our times of prayer, dance, song, and silence draw us ever closer to Jesus, our dearest Friend, our Light of Life, and our tender Lover! And whatever comes, may we rest in the shalom of Christ's embrace.

Dear Lord, life can overwhelm us, and this year has been especially hard. Pour Your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may grow in experiencing the beautiful truth of Your love for us, just as we are. Loving and forgiving Savior, break through sin, fear, and all past hurts, that daily we may rest and abide within Your radiant and unconditional acceptance. Heal, comfort, and enfold Your people, tender Shepherd. Fill us with Your fullness and root us in Your love. In turn, empower us to share Your agape with all whom we encounter. May they too come to see the power of Your love! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SAINTS

By Jason Day, LCM alumnus

Colossians 1:3-6

³In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.

What is most interesting about the letter to the Colossians is that the author (the letter is attributed to St. Paul but was likely written by one of his followers) is trying to refute the Colossian heresy. He disagreed with their doctrine, yet despite that, Paul starts his letter with a compliment and praise of the people. He joins them in a message of unity rather than scolding them. The letter was meant to unite a Christian community around the sovereignty of God. If ever we needed this message, it is now.

Lutheran Campus Ministry has a unique opportunity to bring together students from many different Christian backgrounds and join them together in a new faith life. It brings together young minds that are growing academically and spiritually. These minds may not always agree, but they all are saints and share a love for God. They are also all sinners, and this parallel makes Lutheran Campus Ministry and the Christian church so unique. We are not without our faults, but by the grace of God, we are saved. We are saved because of the only saint who is not a sinner: Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are given freedom to love all the saints of the world.

Loving God, we are blessed by You to be a saint to the world. Help us to love our neighbors, even through differences, so that Your light may shine throughout the world. Guide our hearts so that we may be a blessing to others. We ask this through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

By Anna McCarter, LCM graduate student

Matthew 25:35

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Serving others is a beautiful opportunity to reflect the love of God into people's lives, and in turn to serve God. We see throughout the Bible incredible moments of Jesus' care and devotion to every person, from every walk of life. By continuing to serve others, we carry on His commandment to love others as He has loved us.

I have been blessed to have the opportunity to work with Fellowship in Serving the Hungry (FISH) in partnership with LCM since freshmen year. It has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my college career. We don't just give our clients food and drink to help them get through the month, we also welcome them in, and both literally and figuratively walk alongside them. It has been a joy to get to know each of them and see how, despite their hardships, many of them still praise and trust God. Their steadfast faith inspires me. I'm incredibly thankful for my time spent serving with FISH and how it has instilled in me the importance of serving others. I encourage you to think about the ways serving others in the name of God has led you to grow in your faith or impacted you in other ways.

I have been particularly touched by how FISH has continued to serve the community during these particularly challenging times. Before COVID-19, our volunteers and clients would gather in St. Paul's Lutheran Church for the food distribution. Beginning in March we had to quickly adapt our distribution style to fit the health restrictions in place. Since then we've had a drive-through food distribution each month, and it's been working beautifully. I'm so glad that we're able to continue serving our clients during the pandemic, when so many are experiencing exacerbated financial struggles. I encourage you to reflect on ways that you can continue serving those around you, even during this time.

Dear God, thank You for the unconditional love You show each of us. Please help us to show that love to others by humbly serving them. Amen.

GIVING

By Karen Kretschmann,
Associate for Generosity, DE-MD Synod

2 Corinthians 9:10-14

¹⁰ God gives seed to the farmer and food to those who need to eat. God will also give you seed and multiply it. In your lives he will increase the things you do that have his approval. ¹¹ God will make you rich enough so that you can always be generous. Your generosity will produce thanksgiving to God because of us. ¹² What you do to serve others not only provides for the needs of God's people, but also produces more and more prayers of thanksgiving to God. ¹³ You will honor God through this genuine act of service because of your commitment to spread the Good News of Christ and because of your generosity in sharing with them and everyone else. ¹⁴ With deep affection they will pray for you because of the extreme kindness that God has shown you. ¹⁵ I thank God for his gift that words cannot describe.

One common method of reading scripture is to ask folks to listen for the word or phrase that stands out to them. Recently in a gathering with colleagues on Zoom, the question was instead asked, "What do you notice?" When I read this passage, I notice God's incredible generosity: "God gives"; "God will also give...and multiply it"; God "will increase"; "God will make you rich enough", and that's only in the first three sentences!

These words offer me confidence that God will continue to give so we can have and be enough as we generously live out God's generosity. They give us a guide to living as a disciple of Christ and to trusting in God. This passage opens by asking us to accept God's generosity and let it multiply, to act in ways that cultivate generosity and produce thanksgiving. As disciples of Christ, we are called to serve others and share generously in the name of Christ Jesus, which will inspire us all to declare the good news of Christ, to pray to God, and to celebrate God's generosity and abundant love in ways that even cause us to be at a loss for words.

It is my greatest hope that when you consider this passage and reflection, you might notice how God is nudging you to be generous. In these days of uncertainty and injustice, it is tempting to hang on to what we have, not knowing what might be given in the future. But here we experience the power of

generosity given to us and given from us. God gives; just hear that again. He gives to us not so we gain more than others, but so we can share with others. As we come to a close on this devotional time with Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware's students, alumni, and friends, I ask that you honor God and live out His generosity and abundant love by generously and lovingly giving to keep this ministry vital and enriching to all who encounter it.

In closing, hear these words from Henri Nouwen: "God is a generous giver, but we can only see and enjoy God's generosity when we love God with all of our hearts, minds, and strength. As long as we say, 'I will love you, God, but first show me your generosity,' we will remain distant from God and unable to experience what God truly wants to give us, which is life and life in abundance."¹

¹<https://henrinouwen.org/meditation/god-generosity/>

I pray you know you are loved.

I pray you experience the joy of giving as God gives to us.



GIVING OPTIONS TO SUPPORT LCM



Electronic giving is easy and secure through Vanco. Online options include donations directly to LCM and/or FISH (Fellowship In Serving the Hungry).

For your convenience, donations can be one-time or on a recurring basis.

Use the link below or the QR Code to visit our website for online giving:

<https://lcmde.org/donations>



Donations

Thank you for choosing to help support the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Delaware.

If you've already created a profile, please "Log In" on the right, otherwise continue.

ACH PAYMENT:	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
Donation to LCM at UD	
FISH:	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
Donation earmarked for Fellowship In Serving the Hungry	
Total:	\$0.00

Donation Frequency:

Consider Recurring Donations

Recurring donations provide a steady stream of support. It is a great way to manage charitable giving without the worry of missing a payment- you set the frequency, select the payment method and your gift continues to give over time.

If you prefer to write a check, an envelope has been provided for your convenience.

**Checks should be made payable to:
Lutheran Campus Ministry at UD**

Please indicate on the memo line if your gift is for FISH

LCM is a 501(c)3 organization, #51-0203510



Are you a member of **Thrivent Financial**? Please consider Lutheran Campus Ministry at UD when you are managing your **"Thrivent Choice Dollars."** Those who are eligible members of *Thrivent* earn these dollars based on insurance premiums, contracts, and volunteer leadership. By virtue of your dollars, you can influence how *Thrivent* distributes portions of its charitable funding.

For additional information on this program, please call 1-800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice," or visit <https://bit.ly/XJrPZN>.



**WATCH OUR NEWLY
RELEASED VIDEO!**

Through the eyes of our students, alumni, and community members, learn more about

Why LCM?

Video created by Jeremy Gross, LCM alumnus!

Use the link below or the QR Code to watch!

<https://tinyurl.com/whylcm>

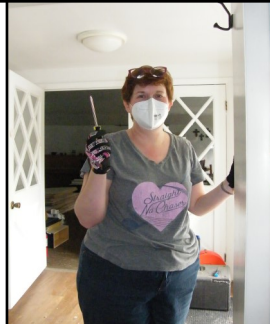
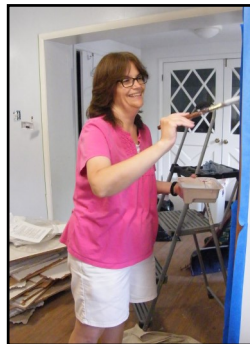
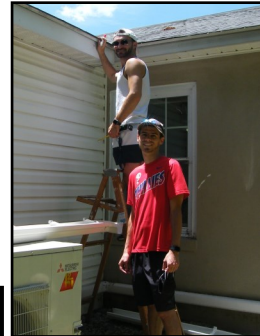


WE GIVE THANKS FOR ALL OF OUR SAINTS!

We give thanks for our Directing Committee members, alumni, and volunteers who dedicated their time and talents this summer to make needed property repairs and improvements.

We are LCM strong and we are blessed!

(more pictures available on our website)



Dear Lord,

We thank You for all who bless LCM at UD out of their generosity and trust in You! May we be faithful, discerning stewards of what You have first given us. As a beloved community of saints, called to give thanks, pray, and serve together, may our words and actions bring healing and reveal Your love to a needy world. Please bless and guide all who are part of the community of Lutheran Campus Ministry at UD, that we might come to know You better. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.