

# November 2024 Newsletter

## St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church and School

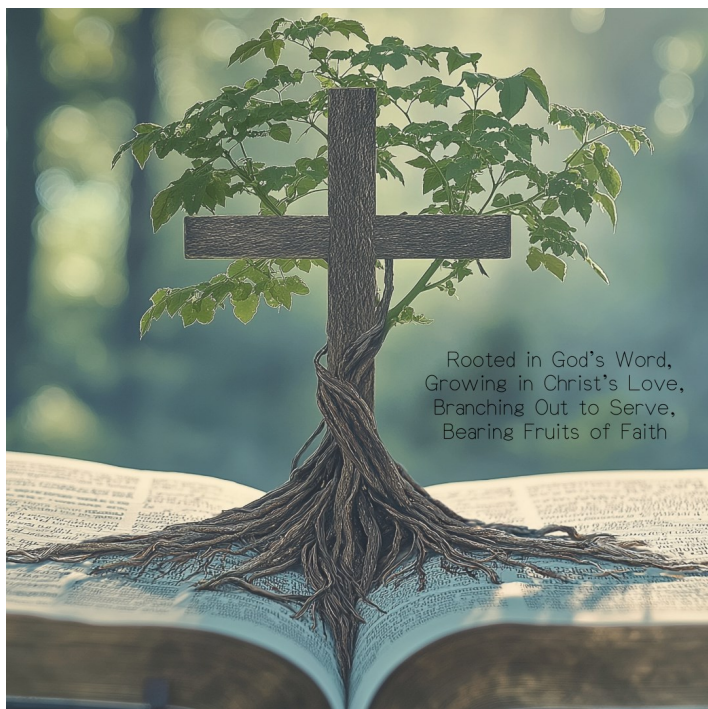
1664 Amelith Road  
Bay City, MI 48706

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Website: [www.amelith.org](http://www.amelith.org)



Rooted in God's Word,  
Growing in Christ's Love,  
Branching Out to Serve,  
Bearing Fruits of Faith



*Can you spot the  
Luther Rose in  
the newsletter?*



## From The Pastor's Desk

Few have ever taken up issue over Thanksgiving unlike other holidays. Yes, the founders were Pilgrims who came from a branch of Christianity called Puritans. Their harvest festival gave thanks to God and sparked a new relationship with Native Americans. When Thanksgiving became a national celebration, it looked to unite a far more diverse people to give thanks. People today give thanks for their families, good food, and even to watch football. A more recent change also includes "Giving Tuesday" which falls the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. The Old Testament tied a great deal of thanks and giving to the land as we read, "you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there" (Deuteronomy 26:2).

Family and food are the symbols for thanksgiving in our secular society. Grocery stores overflow with good deals to bring home. Restaurants offer to serve you with the fixing of meal. Tables decorated are the image tied to this day. There is no baby in a manger like Christmas. No crosses sticking out in the open like Easter. On this day the ordinary simple things of life are glorified. Thanksgiving with family and food can be among every region, race, and religion. People believe this is "safe" territory, but it's not. God gladly works in ordinary life to witness the extraordinary message that has come now by the Gospel.



Jesus taught His disciples about Thanksgiving and even gave thanks before He ate. It is right there in the Lord's Prayer saying, "Give us this day our daily bread." The Old Testament is full of this need for God's daily goodness as the Psalmist declares, "Oh give thanks to the Lord for He is good his love endures forever...He gives food to every creature" (136:1, 25). God gives because He is good and it goes out to even evil people as Luther notes in the Catechism. Yet, underneath such ordinary gifts must lay a Giver who cares for life greater than we can give thanks over. All families and food have a need for forgiveness that only God's Word supplies. God gives because He is gracious to a whole sinful world and the sacrifice of Christ upholds this promise.

If the Lord has given families and food, surely to give thanks in His Son celebrates eternal treasures and blessings. Jesus has promised, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matthew 5:6). As with life, God's goodness through Christ comes in ordinary ways with grace at work for our life through water, bread and wine. All possible because God's Word has made us by baptism into a household of faith gathered around Him. Let us give thanks to the Lord for His goodness sustains life, but finally is to save by the Gospel. Against sin, death, and the Devil we give thanks in faith to God and beyond "Giving Tuesday" is love going out as God loves you daily in His Son.

Blessings to all that are in Christ Jesus,

*Pastor Jerry Gauthier*



# Stewardship Under the Cross

## God's Word on How We Use His Gifts

St. John is taking the time once a year to consider what God's Word says about stewardship of the gifts He gives us. Rather than basing our giving on what we think the church and school need, or on what we think we ought to give, we look to God's Word for guidance. In the following weeks, consider these words of Scripture and how they apply to this question, "What percentage my income is God calling me to give to His work in the Church?"

Jesus at the temple said, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on." – Mark 12:43-44

St. Paul explains, "The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." - 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

After hearing God's Word about stewardship...

**1. Receive God's gifts.** Christians live from the Word of God and the Sacraments. Continue to receive these gifts to be strengthened spiritually.

**2. Pray.** Go to the throne of grace and ask for strength to follow the Lord faithfully.

**3. Consider what God does in the Church.** The Church is called to spread the Good News about Jesus Christ by preaching the Gospel to all who will hear it and administering the Sacraments to the faithful. You are a part of God's Church on earth and are called upon to support God's work in the Church.

**4. Examine yourself.** Consider the commands of God from the New Testament about supporting His work in the Church and examine your own giving. Are you: a) giving of your first fruits – that is, does your offering come out of your income first, not just from what's left over; b) giving voluntarily and cheerfully; c) giving proportionally in a generous way, beginning with a tithe; d) relying on God's promise to provide for you? Trust in God's provision and remember that all of God's commands are for your blessing: for God gave the life of His Son on the cross to forgive you all your sins – He will certainly not abandon you in your physical needs. Trust His Word, and trust that God wants to bless you in heeding His Word.

**5. Decide on your proportion.** Based on this, consider what proportion of your income you will give faithfully, proportionally, generously, and cheerfully to God's work.

Example Pledge Card for Stewardship Sunday Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>

### Stewardship Pledge Card for 2025

*Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your  
Produce. Proverbs 3:9*

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7*

1. I would like to pledge this percent of my income for the year:

\_\_\_ 10% \_\_\_ 7% \_\_\_ 5% \_\_\_ 3% \_\_\_ 1% \_\_\_ % (other percent)

2. (Optional) I would like to pledge this amount as my offering for the year: \$\_\_\_\_\_

*If you would like a pledge card mailed to you, please reach out to the secretary by calling the office 989-686-0176 or emailing [office@amelith.org](mailto:office@amelith.org) and she will mail you a copy to your address.*

# Beyond the Booth

September 13, 2024

By Joel Biermann

## Religion and politics

One of the cherished notions that typically guides the lives of Americans is that politics and religion do not mix. Of course, there are some areas of overlap that Americans accept and even expect, like a prayer at a presidential inauguration or candidates ending speeches with “God bless America.” But, on the whole, it is taken for granted that there needs to be a clear distinction or even a wall of separation between church and state. People do not want the government telling them what to believe about God, and they do not want the church telling them how to vote. Actually, they do not want anyone telling them how to vote.

In our lives as citizens of a democratic republic, the voting booth is considered sacred ground. In this revered space each person exercises his right of franchise and votes for people, proposals and platforms as he chooses. Voting, it seems, is the ultimate exercise in individual choice and the expression of personal opinion. No one tells you how to vote; no one but you decides how you cast your ballot. And no one knows your vote unless you tell them — well, almost no one.

God knows, of course; Christians know that. And Christians know that strict divisions between the different parts of their lives make no sense, or at least they should not make any sense. As people who follow Christ, we understand that no part of our lives lie beyond the claim of our Savior and Lord. As believers, we belong to our Lord completely, and our lives are normed by Him entirely. God directs all the spiritual and all the material aspects of our lives. He teaches us not only how to receive His gifts and worship Him, but He also teaches us how to be creatures as He intended. Such direction touches every part of our lives — including the political part of being the citizen of a nation. There can be no doubt, then, that God most certainly goes with you into the voting booth and has something to say about the ballot you cast.

## A two realms guide

Emphasizing the unity of the spiritual and temporal aspects of our lives to better understand a Christian approach to voting does not negate the distinction between them. In fact, it is the biblical and confessional understanding of God’s two kingdoms or realms that guides this right understanding of voting. Simply put, the teaching of the two realms helps us see that God is directly involved in caring for His creation in two different but complementary ways. In the spiritual realm, He answers our need for a right relationship with Him and through His church gives us forgiveness and grace in Christ. In the temporal realm, He enables us to live in right relationships with one another as He provides for all that we need to live in this world and through His appointed gov-



ernment extends His justice in the world (Rom. 13:1–7). The realms are not in opposition or competition, but together work to accomplish God’s purpose of claiming, preserving, saving and finally restoring the whole creation.

It is in this context of the two realms that we understand what it means to vote. Voting is an activity of the temporal realm, one of the many ways that we strive to uphold God’s justice and live in right relationships with other creatures. As citizens of a democratic republic, we participate in government in ways unimaginable to our fathers in the faith. When we vote, we are the government. Voting, then, is no mere right or privilege; it is a holy obligation, a responsibility, a small but significant vocation given by God to each Christian citizen. You need to vote.

## What does this mean?

So, how does God want you to vote? Actually, that is not a trick question; it has an easy answer: God wants you to vote for the people, principles and platforms that will uphold and advance His justice in the world. In other words, you should vote in ways that will best serve your neighbor and his needs. A Christian never votes for the proposal or the candidate that promises to make her own life somehow better or that resonates with a favorite cause or interest. The Christian’s objective is always aimed out, focused on doing what helps the other. When the time comes to determine how best to serve which neighbor, things get quite interesting.

Christians often debate fiercely among themselves about what is just, most just or patently unjust. But justice is not an amorphous idea or a hollow husk waiting to be filled with meaning according to the dictates of particular conscience or the whims of personal conviction. The definition of justice is not determined by what makes sense or what feels right or what seems fair. God, who created the world and set in place the rules for how the world works (Psalm 96:13), establishes what is just. That is precisely the function of God’s eternal Law that is hardwired into the very fabric of the creation (FC Ep VI 6–7). For Christians who seek to honor God and serve their neighbor by the way they vote, God’s Law is the guide.

And God’s Law is not a chaotic competition of conflicting rules or standards. Yes, discerning the path of justice can be complicated. Since we each have almost 8 billion neighbors — just counting the human ones — taking into account the application of justice for every neighbor is an overwhelming task. But even here, God’s Law provides us a way of sorting through the myriad demands. They are not all the same, and do not make equal claims on us.




When you cast your ballot, consider the following triage: First, your overriding responsibility is to your nearest neighbor who has the most acute need. The defenseless neighbor faced with imminent death has a more pressing need for justice than the one who may lose access to a favorite meadow where he likes to stroll. Second, the protection of human life outweighs the enhancement of human life. Third, people always rank ahead of animals; and fourth, the stuff we accumulate and want to keep always ranks last. Fifth, and finally, respect for each human person, or basic fairness, ranks ahead of any alleged right to keep what is “rightfully yours.” Christians know that what they have belongs to God, and every one of their nearly 8 billion neighbors is someone for whom Christ died — someone to whom we owe justice in the temporal realm and someone to whom we owe the proclamation of the Gospel in the spiritual realm.

Of course, one must expect that different Christians who faithfully and accurately apply this guide will neverthe-

less reach different conclusions about the best vote to extend God’s justice. We each have different near neighbors and different understandings of their needs. It should also be expected that there will be more agreement at the top of the triage checklist and less at the bottom. Basic moral questions touching on the protection of life have simple answers with little room for nuance; intricate policy issues seeking to address economic inequality have complex and variegated answers, and all of them may be legitimate options in the pursuit of God’s justice.

There is something sacred about voting — it is a holy task given to you by God and done for the sake of your neighbor. Cast your ballot wisely, selflessly and confidently. Seek God’s justice for your neighbor and God’s grace for you as you follow your Lord into the thick of a messy and broken world that He is eager to save.

**This article first appeared in the August 2020 print issue of *The Lutheran Witness*.**



**PRAYER & PRAISE**  
12-1:30PM  
SUNDAY, NOV. 17  
HOLY CROSS  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
600 COURT ST., SAGINAW

### **St. Peter Christmas Bazaar:**

Saturday, Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 2:30 pm.

Featured are crafts, holiday baked goods, quilts, rock candy, fresh greens, white elephant sale, and more. Luncheon from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm.

WSGW will be there! 2440 N Raucholz Road, Hemlock

### **Spiritual Respite Companion Care Workshop**

Providing Spiritual Support and Care by Partnering with your congregation.



### **Spiritual Respite Companion Care Workshop**

**Saturday November 9th**  
**St. John Amelith Lutheran Church**  
**1664 Amelith Rd.**  
**Bay City, MI 48706**  
**10:00am – 2:30pm**  
**Lunch is included**

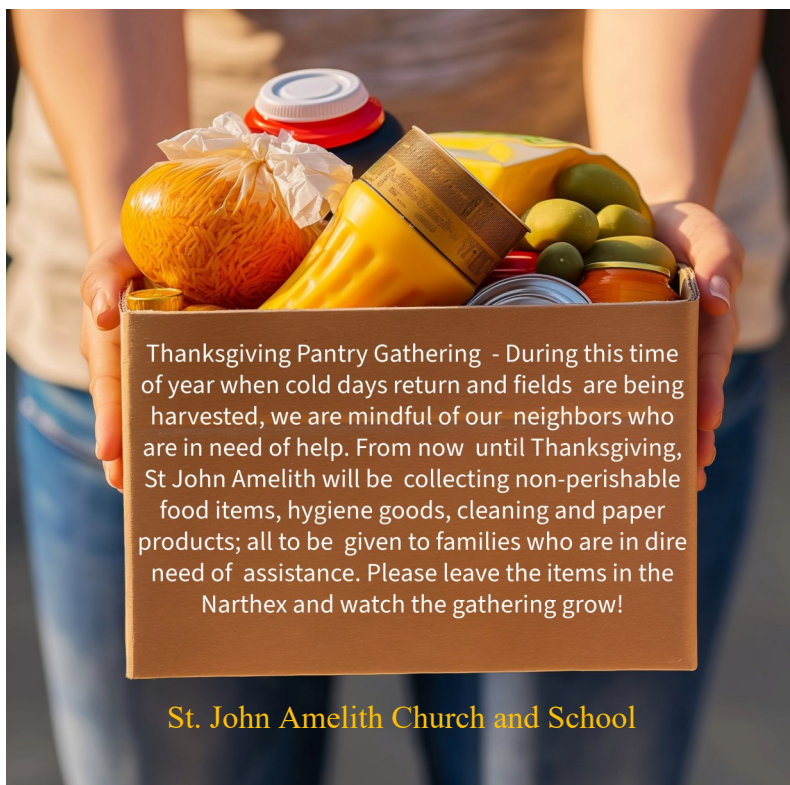
#### **Discover the Power of Spiritual Respite Companion Care:**

- ❖ **Guidance from Leaders:** experienced in spiritual, respite, companion care, comfort and support.
- ❖ **Companionship and Connections:** Foster a sense of community and spiritual wellbeing in a culture of belonging.
- ❖ **Nourish Your Spirit:** Engage in activities that uplift and nurture your spiritual journey and the ones with whom you interact.
- ❖ **Impacting Community Uniquely** = ICU = I See You.

**VOICE OF CARE.** P.O. Box 771.  
Lombard, IL 60148  
630.231.386 Register at  
[voiceofcare.org](http://voiceofcare.org), use QR code  
or Call Dennis Pieper  
At 708-759-4954



You can sign up on the sheet in the gathering area at church or you can call Deb Hutter directly at 989-316-8322



Thanksgiving Pantry Gathering - During this time of year when cold days return and fields are being harvested, we are mindful of our neighbors who are in need of help. From now until Thanksgiving, St John Amelith will be collecting non-perishable food items, hygiene goods, cleaning and paper products; all to be given to families who are in dire need of assistance. Please leave the items in the Narthex and watch the gathering grow!

**St. John Amelith Church and School**

***This concludes the series on the practice and usefulness for every Sunday communion from the Lutheran Witness. We look forward to introduce this practice at St. John in December at the start of a new Church Year. The fifth Sunday of a month will be reserved for still doing Matins or Prayer and Preaching.***

## Waiting for Him

February 15, 2021

### **7. Just waiting ... or waiting for Him?**

We all wait. Sometimes we wait for others impatiently. Sometimes we wait for changes discontentedly.

Sometimes we wait for ourselves, procrastinating instead of pressing on. We all wait.

We wait for many things: the next weekend, school year, election, bull market, sports season, technological toy or retirement. Eventually, many end up waiting to die. Scripture exhorts us to “wait for the LORD” (*Psalms 27:14*).

As we wait, God encourages us to think on death. “The soul who sins shall die” (*Ezekiel 18:4*).

“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (*Romans 5:12*). “The wages of sin is death” (*Romans 6:23*). He has appointed for us to die once. God already knows the day and manner of our death. “Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” (*Matt. 6:27*) It is freeing to leave it in His hands.

### **Eager waiting**

God connects our appointment to die with our waiting. “And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (*Hebrews 9:27–28*). How can we wait eagerly for Judgment Day? How can we sinners straighten up and raise our heads, confident that our redemption draws near (*Luke 21:28*)? Because Jesus will return, “not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Jesus was made to be sin, to deal with and bear your sins away (*2 Cor. 5:21; John 1:29*). He dealt with your sin fully on Calvary. At His Table, He now delivers to you full forgiveness of sin, justification before God and reconciliation with God. His second coming will be without your sins. They are gone. He will return to save those eagerly waiting for Him.

“To save” here means that He will bring to completion what His saving grace bestowed through faith, the new life He began in you in your Baptism. His completed sal-

vation includes the new heavens and the new earth (*2 Peter 3:13–14*) and the redemption of our bodies, for which we wait (*Rom. 8:23*). This is our hope, for this is His promise. We wait for this unseen hope with patience (*Rom. 8:25*).



### **Waiting for the wedding**

The Lord's Supper provides the perfect position for patient, eager waiting for the Lord. It proclaims the Lord's death until He comes again (*1 Cor. 11:26*). In their eating and drinking, the communing congregation proclaims both the victory of Jesus' sacrifice in the past and His return in glory in the future. This proclamation also points to the marriage supper of the Lamb that has no end. The angel announced to John, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (*Rev. 19:9*). The proclamation of the death of Christ by those receiving the Sacrament now echoes the new song at the eternal feast, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing” (*Rev. 5:12*).

For this eternal celebration, you must wear garments of righteousness; Christ provided these by His death. It is no small thing that you are baptized into His death (*Rom. 6:3*) and therein clothed with Him (*Gal. 3:27*). Jesus unites His body with His gathered body — the church. There is no finer clothing than Christ Himself. Amid signs that heaven and earth will pass away, including a pandemic and widespread lawlessness and destruction, it is good that our confidence in every earthly system and structure is ultimately shaken. Instead, let us draw near in confidence to the throne of grace, “that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (*Heb. 4:16*). This we do in Jesus, and the announcement “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (*Rev. 19:9*) applies even now to those who approach the Sacrament of the Altar in faith.

### **Waiting for the promise**

Beloved of God, this is God's promise to us. We wait eagerly for the Lord not because of any confidence in ourselves. “Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed, lest he fall” (*1 Cor. 10:12*). We wait eagerly for the Lord with full confidence solely in Him. “If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord and in his word I hope” (*Psalms 130:3–5*). “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (*Heb. 10:19–22*).



“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

We wait eagerly for Jesus’ return only because of the free gift of entering the holy place of God’s eternal presence through the flesh and blood of Jesus. That’s why He nourishes you repeatedly with His flesh and blood; He joins Himself to you with a personal love that is given “for you,” shed “for you.” He will return to take you into His eternal presence. You are not just waiting. You wait for Him.

Your death is not an interruption of fellowship with your Lord (Rom. 8:38–39). The completion of your Baptism is being carried through death’s dark valley to the joy of Christ’s presence face to face (John 17:24). You will be temporarily away from your body, yet still present with the Lord (Phil. 1:23–24). On Judgment Day, you will hear the judgment already given you in Christ (John 5:24) and experience God’s presence also in your glorified body (1 Cor. 15). “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). *You are not just waiting. You are waiting for Him.*

The Judge stands at the door. The coming of the Lord is at hand. We wait in patience, remaining steadfast. As we wait, we renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age. We are zealous for good works. Though easily we fail, we wait “for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works” (Titus 2:11–13). We wait for Him who paid dearly to possess us.

### Promises fulfilled

The Son of God for whom you wait delivers you from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10). Agony and bloody sweat did not turn Him aside from draining that cup. As we sing, “Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior, Turned away God’s wrath forever” (LSB 627:1). *We wait eagerly for Him.*

God is faithful and has called you into the fellowship of His Son. As you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, He will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:8). Christ’s forgiveness covers all your guilt. You may not feel guiltless before God, but Jesus, for whom you wait, has you covered.

Your end is clear. As a real sinner, receiving real forgiveness from the Son of God, you will not be put to shame. “To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame” (Psalm 25:1–3). You are right to wait eagerly for Him.

God grant us eager expectation for the return of Him who waits at His Table. Whom do we seek in weekly worship? We wait for Him who makes right all things, Jesus Christ, our Lord. At His Altar He is knocking at our portal (LSB 636:2). *Even now His Bride says, “Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20)*

The Bridegroom soon will call us, “Come to the wedding feast.” May slumber not befall us Nor watchfulness decrease. May all our lamps be burning With oil enough and more That we, with Him returning, May find an open door! (LSB 514:1)

Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray:  
O keep us steadfast till that day  
When each will be Your welcomed guest  
In heaven’s high and holy feast.  
(LSB 623:5)

The Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Wieting is a retired pastor and author of *The Blessings of Weekly Communion and Lutheranism 101 - The Lord’s Supper*, both available from Concordia Publishing House. <https://witness.lcms.org/2021/waiting-for-him/>

*Dear Saints at St. John,*

*Christ is risen! Thank you so much for your support of our mission work here in Germany. It is amazing to see the Lord blessing the fruit of our labors in our church and community. I am especially excited about the opportunity to teach a weekly Bible study at the military prison. Witnessing the hunger of these men for God’s Word makes it a highlight of my week. The Lord is taking your gifts & working mightily through them that His Word might be purely proclaimed in this Place.*

*In Christ, The Jensens*

### **28th Annual Living Nativity**

Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Frankentrost  
8220 E. Holland Road, Saginaw, MI 48601

**Friday, December 6, 2024: 7-9pm**  
**Saturday, December 7, 2024: 6-8pm**  
**Sunday, December 8, 2024: 6-8pm**

For more information see the flyer on the bulletin board,  
visit [www.frankentrost.org](http://www.frankentrost.org) or find them on Facebook  
LivingNativityImmanuelFrankentrost



Valley Lutheran has many things happening this month! Here are just a few of the things that you might be interested in!

One of our own Valley students has been cast in Alice in Wonderland! Make sure to go to see it so you can find out who it is and show your support.

The Valley Lutheran High School Drama Department presents

# ALICE in Wonderland

By: Brainerd Duffield

November 7, 8, 9  
7 p.m.  
VLHS Gym

Tickets available in advance in the office beginning Oct. 28  
\$7/adults, \$5 students, \$24/family

"Alice in Wonderland (Duffield)" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.  
www.concordtheatricals.com

VLHS MUSIC DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

## FALL INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT



NOVEMBER 10, 2024  
3 P.M.  
VLHS GYM  
DOORS OPEN AT 2:30 P.M.



## It's Fruit Sale Time!

Consider supporting Valley Lutheran Booster Club by purchasing:

Florida Indian River Navel Oranges    Florida Pink Grapefruit    Mixed Navel Oranges/Pink Grapefruit  
Florida Mandarin Oranges    Citrus Delight (all 3)

Sale Ends: November 8

Pick up Orders: December 7

7:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Valley

To Order:

- Go online at [www.vlhs.com/fruitsale](http://www.vlhs.com/fruitsale)  
(Online orders can be delivered to homes for an additional fee.)
- Contact a Valley student
- Call the school office at 989-790-1676

The Fall Bazaar is one you do not want to miss! Each year there is a waiting list for vendors so there is always an abundance of tables/booths to shop and support! You might even see some of our own members!

Here is a hint:  
Proverbs 24:13 "My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to



## Fall BAZAAR

NOVEMBER 16, 2024  
9 A.M. - 3 P.M.  
Lunch Available: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

VLHS MUSIC DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

## Christmas Choral Concert

ON  
December 8  
3 pm

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
6100 WESTSIDE SAGINAW ROAD  
BAY CITY







LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces



October–December 2024  
NEWSLETTER

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## SHARING YOUR STORY

by CH (LTC) Steven Hokana  
USA (Ret.)

I was sitting outside in the shade last week, thumbing through my YouTube feed. It fascinates me that this site and its algorithms make best guesses at who we think we are. But truth be told, I'm more interested in learning about what I don't know rather than what I know. So, I regret, with some humor, that the mighty AI can't figure out my needs and desires. Certainly, you should know



U.S. World War II veteran Ceo Bauer, who was a 377th Infantry Regiment rifleman, is buckled in by Staff Sgt. Carlos Garcia, 86th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron aeromedical evacuation technician, for a veterans flight commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day at Cherbourg-Maupertus Airport, France, on June 7.

by now my passion for understanding alternate energy sources (solar power), exploring innovative engine designs (Sterling Engine, invented by a clergyman in the early 1800s), or searching for videos about Great Danes on my iPad.

But something I watched that day on my YouTube feed awakened a memory of a prior assignment, when I served as the pastor for death row inmates incarcerated by the military. My official title was Chief of

the Department of Ministry at the Confinement Facility (the military term for prison). I won't reveal what was shared — I heard everything with complete confidentiality, and I hold those confidences dearly.

One inmate committed several awful and heinous crimes. He understood the punishment handed down by military justice. One day, after making my rounds and attending meetings and setting up Bible studies, I

*Continued on page 2*

Check it out! CPH released a devotional edition of the Lutheran Service Book in 2024. After each hymn it summarizes the verses of the hymn. A great Christmas gift for sure!

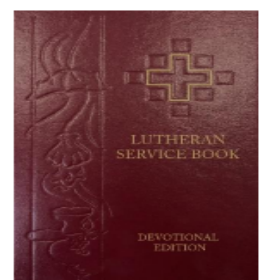


## Lutheran Service Book: Devotional Edition

Item #: 031203  
\$49.99

Our hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book: Pew Edition*, is a treasure trove of historical content connecting you to Christians who have sung God's praises before you. The hymn texts themselves are beautiful vessels showcasing how God's love has been given to His believers through the ages.

Spend time discovering the beauty in each hymn from *Lutheran Service Book* alongside historical, contextual, and devotional content. Each page is free from any musical notations so you can truly focus on the stunning words passed down to you through the years. Following each hymn text is a short, one-page summary of information that will bring your heart closer to each verse of the hymn.





Continued from page 1

was called by the head of security. This one inmate had a special request. It was directed to me. The head of security wanted to know if I was comfortable being in a room with this inmate and a guard and teach him the Christian faith. Of course, I said yes.

A cell was set up close to where the man was incarcerated. I had my Bible open, a small table, and two chairs. There were in fact two guards that accompanied the inmate, who was dressed in an orange jumpsuit and had his wrists, waist and feet all bound. He sat down. I asked if I could tell him about my walk with Jesus. He was interested. I started sharing my faith and teaching him what the Bible tells us regarding man, God and Christ. Although the Bible was opened to Genesis, I just shared my story.

Now, if I can digress for a minute, I want to let you know that I was cleared to give this dangerous man a copy of Luther's Small Catechism (It was inspected by security and carried a stamp of approval). Second, this is not the first time we talked about faith. We talked about the great void he felt in his life. He shared about his upbringing,

his lack of a father, an impoverished and unstable home, an abusive family. Although heart-wrenching, none of it would ever absolve or excuse his behavior. So, I asked him if I could tell him about my faith and my Christian walk.

At the end of the first visit, he expressed astonishment that God created man in His image, that God loved man, and that man sinned and as a result needed God's Son, our Savior Jesus, to redeem humanity by His death on the cross. I can only guess what the look of astonishment on his face was trying to tell me. Was God non-present rather than omnipresent? Was God uncaring and cruel, similar to the stories of Greek deities in mythology? I'm certain he did not want to place his soul into the hands of a God of pain



and cruelty. He had never read the Bible. He didn't know the unfolding of creation by God's loving hand, the Fall of all humanity into sin and the redemption won by our Lord Jesus.

I told him about "Grace alone" and how everyone is fallen yet everyone is loved, though we don't deserve it. I spent time talking about forgiveness, and I had to revisit again the sacrifice of God's Son, Jesus our Savior. In a way, I was surprised he never heard of the "Love" chapter (1 Corinthians 13) or "the Lord is my Shepherd" (Psalm 23). John 3:16 was just associated with a "crazy dude in a rainbow wig" near the uprights.

The first session ended. He was thankful for our time and grateful for learning who God was and His Son, Jesus. Before he left, I did something risky. I asked him to give me his hands. The guards became concerned and shuffled toward me in a worrisome way. I placed his hands into my hands, closed my eyes and I prayed with him and for him. Picture a flawed human holding the hands of a condemned man and asked the Lord to show mercy on us both. What a beautiful sight.



Ministry to the Armed Forces

1333 S. Kirkwood Road  
St. Louis, MO 63122

888-THE LCMS (843-5267)

[lcms.org/armedforces](http://lcms.org/armedforces)

[lcms.org/operationbarnabas](http://lcms.org/operationbarnabas)

[f MinistryArmedForces.LCMS](https://www.facebook.com/MinistryArmedForces.LCMS)

*So Help Me God* may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## TELLING YOUR STORY

### Be a good listener.

Telling your story of your faith in Jesus is best done by permission. Listen to the person you are engaging. In the book of Proverbs, we read: "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame" (Prov. 18:13). In James 1:19 we read: "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger."

### Prepare your story.

There is nothing wrong with writing your story out ahead of time. It takes practice and it takes time.

### Fasten yourself to God's Word.

Read your Bible. Do you have a theme verse or a passage in the Bible that resonates with you? Memorize this passage.

Proverbs 6:21 says, "Bind them on your heart always; tie them around your neck." In Deuteronomy we hear: "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deut. 11:18).

### Study God's Word with others.

Join fellow believers and study the Word of God together. In Hebrews 10:24-25 we read: "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near."

### Be receptive to others.

This is especially helpful as they describe the meaning of Jesus' love in their life. In 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."

St. Paul Lutheran Church Dorcus Presents

The Annual

# Christmas BAZAAR

Saturday, November 9th 2024

Shopping 9AM-3PM Homemade Luncheon 11AM-1:30PM

4941 Center St, Millington, MI 48746

Baked Goods. Quilts. Crafts.  
Rugs. Cookie Walk. Rag Rugs.  
Crochet Items. And More!

Looking for more vendors!

Contact Meagan Tolbert- 989-302-0256

Or Lori Osborn 989-205-0256

For more vendor information!



## Peace Annual Apple Pie Sale

10:30AM-1PM Saturday, Nov. 9

Peace Lutheran Church

Deadline Nov. 1: Order Online at <http://bit.ly/3Yg20al>  
or Scan QR Code HERE

Limited Cash-and-Carry Pies Available on Nov. 9





Dear Friends in Christ,

Your wonderful generosity to Orphan Grain Train—Michigan is most respectfully acknowledged especially in view of your response to the urgent need of people injured by recent hurricanes. Most of us can only faintly imagine the heartbreak of those who have lost homes, businesses, livelihoods—or most tragically loved ones.

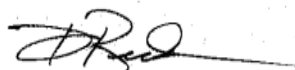
The need is pressing, and we sincerely thank you for contributing to the response mounted here by Orphan Grain Train—Michigan. A wide array of relief goods are being accumulating here at our work and warehouse center. On the one hand we want to be as rapid as possible bringing care and supplies to those in need. At the same time we are trying to balance that urgency by providing sufficient time to gather needed supplies, arrange trucking, and identify as much as possible where need is greatest and where we will have confidence all materials are distributed reliably.

Orphan Grain Train has an admirable record of domestic disaster relief which we intend to mirror. Please know we pledge as much as possible to be responsible stewards with what you have kindly entrusted to us.

We are grateful Orphan Grain Train—Michigan remains vibrant in our continuing regular efforts. These have been bountifully endowed by our Lord Jesus in sending relief along with the Gospel as we have to Kyrgyzstan, Panama, Moldova, the Republic of Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Malawi, South Sudan, and Peru. We have also made domestic distributions most recently this past spring to Myra, Kentucky serving the disadvantaged in Appalachia.

Such regular efforts are now temporarily suspended as we devote attention to the immediate hurricane relief. We trust these and all efforts will continue well under God's providence. Thank you so very much for being advocates for this work and for the loving and generous support. Be assured your gift certainly is being directed specifically for those seeking to recover from the difficulties caused by the storms. We thank our Heavenly Father for your support. We pray the darkness of tragedy will be replaced by the brightness of Christian hope and loving care made tangible through your kindness.

Sincerely in Christ,



Pastor David Reed, Branch Manager  
Orphan Grain Train—Michigan

## SEND OUR TROOPS A TASTE OF HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Stockings  
FOR  
SOLDIERS**

**F**rom now through November 29th, stop in and pick up a free Christmas stocking to decorate and stuff with Christmas cheer. Return the stocking and we will ship it to a hero overseas!



Please pick-up stockings at:



www.VeteransHonored.com

GEPHART FUNERAL HOME, INC.  
201 W. Midland St.  
Bay City, MI 48706  
(989)686-2291



**VETERANS**  
Burial & Cremation Society  
Free to Join  
VeteransBurialSociety.com  
VeteransCremationSociety.com

## Motherhood Under the Cross

Sometimes it feels like you are going it alone. Life can be hard. Mothering children is definitely hard. The authors of the devotions in this booklet know hard and they know Je-



sus. They have experienced the loneliness, the exhaustion and the fear about what the future will hold. They have felt isolated as they raised their children. They wrote these words and picked out Scripture passages to help keep your eyes fixed on Jesus in the midst of the challenges of raising children. These authors are your Cloud of Witnesses (Heb. 12:1-2). You have others in your Cloud of Witnesses; go to church and meet them there.

The words in this booklet are written for you, anticipating the circumstances and emotions you might experience day in and day out. There are other very important words written for you. God gives you the Holy Scriptures, the very Word of God — the Bible — so that you can know His Son. We pray that reading these devotions increases your eagerness to be among the Church, receiving His Means of Grace, the Word of God and the Sacraments.

Download the booklet <https://files.lcms.org/file/preview/Life-Ministry-Devotional-for-Mothers>

### List of Recommended Items for Stockings

- Candy Canes
- Hard Candy, jolly ranchers, etc.
- Chewing gum
- Mints
- Multivitamins, vitamin tablets or drops
- Moisturizer
- Lip balm
- Shampoo
- Eye drops
- Sun block
- Batteries AA and AAA
- Deck of playing cards
- Crossword puzzles
- Dominos
- CD's and DVD's

### Instructions

Place items in the stocking  
Fold over the top of the stocking and staple or secure closed so that the items inside do not fall out.

**\*\*Please do not place any aerosol items in the stocking\*\***

**Drop off stocking by November 29, 2024 to the  
Gephardt Funeral Home, Inc.**

# November



## Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> Men's Group	<b>2</b> November Birthdays
<b>3</b> November Anniversaries	<b>4</b> Quilting Group	<b>5</b> Council Members	<b>6</b> November Altar Guild Servers	<b>7</b> The lunch lady	<b>8</b> Preschool Director	<b>9</b> Respite Seminar
<b>10</b> Our Veterans	<b>11</b> Stewardship Committee	<b>12</b> Bookmobile	<b>13</b> Didache Class	<b>14</b> Office Volunteers	<b>15</b> Treasurer	<b>16</b> Fund Development
<b>17</b> Auditing Committee	<b>18</b> Coffee Hour Volunteers	<b>19</b> Confirmands	<b>20</b> Finance Team	<b>21</b> Choir	<b>22</b> Nominating Committee	<b>23</b> Trustee Members
<b>24</b> Youth Group	<b>25</b> Board of Ed	<b>26</b> Endowment Committee	<b>27</b> Music Director	<b>28</b> Budget Committee	<b>29</b> Pastor	<b>30</b> Church Secretary

Every day, let us include the person/position/event mentioned in our prayers. You can pray for them, the job they do, those who receive or in whatever way you are led.