

*First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod*

*Happy
Thanksgiving*



FIRST FRUITS
November Newsletter



First Evangelical Lutheran Church;
Grand Rapids, MN
A member of the Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod

Pastors Corner

October 31 is commonly referred to as Halloween which is “all-hallows-eve” or the night before all Saints’ Day on Nov.1. November 1 is All Saints Day, a day in which we remember the many people in our lives who have shared their faith and are now with the Lord. In the 8th century, the Roman Catholic Church moved All Saints' Day, a day celebrating the church's saints, to November 1. This meant that All Hallows' Eve (or Halloween) fell on October 31. ... The folklore about Stingy Jack was quickly incorporated into Halloween, and we have been carving pumpkins—or turnips—ever since. A jack-o'-lantern (or jack-o-'lantern) is a carved pumpkin, turnip, or other root vegetable lantern associated with Halloween. ... The name is also tied to the Irish legend of Stingy Jack, a drunkard who bargains with Satan and is doomed to roam the Earth with only a hollowed turnip to light his way. Jack-o-lantern is the real name for the carved pumpkin. Its glowing face was supposed to scare away evil spirits. You carried it around the edge of your village or let it burn outside your house on Halloween night. ... So they used pumpkins instead. Catholicism values peace. Halloween is the opposite, exalting sudden and unprovoked violence, all without the consequences of reality. The Catholic Church forbids séances and all attempts to conjure the dead. ... This pagan belief is honored by Halloween's ubiquitous ghost decorations and costumes. The wearing of costumes at Halloween may come from the belief that supernatural beings, or the souls of the dead, roamed the earth at this time. The practice may have originated in a Celtic festival, held on 31 October–1 November, to mark the beginning of winter. ... The festival is believed to have pre-Christian roots. The custom of trick-or-treating on Halloween may come from the belief that supernatural beings, or the souls of the dead, roamed the earth at this time and needed to be appeased. It may otherwise have originated in a Celtic festival, held on 31 October–1 November, to mark the beginning of winter. October 31 is not only Halloween but also for us as Lutherans it is Reformation Day. Martin Luther is the Reformer who started his life as a Roman Catholic Monk.

At that time only church leaders (monks, priests, etc.) were allowed to read the Bible which had been translated into Latin. In return the church leaders were to explain what God was telling His People through the Bible. As a catholic monk, reading and studying the Bible (God's Divine Word) Luther found some practices and teachings of the catholic church that were not in agreement with God's Word. Some of these teachings were in regard to purgatory, the belief regarding the Pope, praying to the Saints, doing penance to make up for sins and the sale of indulgences. Indulgences were being sold by the church to raise money for the building of a large cathedral. For a specific some of money a person could buy a slip of paper, called an indulgence, that would give that person forgiveness for a particular sin. It was the sale of indulgences that added fuel to the fire for Martin Luther. As he read scripture, he found that God forgives us of all of our sins through the Blood of Jesus Christ and that nothing can be added or needs to be

added for forgiveness. Today I rejoice that there is nothing that I can do (or need to do) to earn forgiveness. As a result, Martin Luther would struggle over the question, "Have I done enough to earn forgiveness"? His answer was the fact as a sinner he knew that he never would do enough to make-up for his many sins.

It was on October 31 that Martin Luther posted Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, on October 31, 1517. To us nailing a sheet of paper to the main door of the church sounds very radicle, but in those days the church door was the community bulletin board. Martin Luther never wanted to start his own religion or even have people who followed his beliefs to be called "Lutheran", he mere wanted to openly discuss the 95 teachings and practices of the church that he found to not be in agreement with the Bible.

**To God be the Glory!
Pastor Steve**





LIBRARY CORNER FOR NOVEMBER, 2020

THE ENDURING CLASSICS OF BILLY GRAHAM: THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS, HOPE FOR

THE TROUBLED HEART, DEATH AND THE LIFE AFTER by Billy Graham, 236 Gra. Billy Graham, the world-renowned author, preacher, and evangelist, has delivered the gospel message to more people face-to-face than anyone in history and has ministered on every continent of the world.

THE ESSENTIAL WORKS OF ANDREW MURRAY – 12 COMPLETE BOOKS COVERING THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN LIFE by

Andrew Murray, 248.4 Mur. Includes complete scripture index and over 800 life application questions to encourage spiritual growth.

ALL MANNER OF THINGS by Susie Finkbeiner, 813.6 Fin. “After Annie Jacobson’s brother Mike enlists as a medic in the Army in 1967, he mails her the address of their long-estranged father. If anything should happen to him in Vietnam, Mike says, Annie must let their father know... In Mike’s absence, their father returns to face tragedy at home, adding an extra measure of complication to an already tense time. Letter by letter, the Jacobson’s must find a way to pull together as a family, regardless of past hurts. In the tumult of this time, Annie and her family will grapple with the tension of holding both

hope and grief in the same hand, even as they learn to turn to the One who binds the wounds of the brokenhearted.”

MEDALS IN THE ATTIC by Cathy Elliott, 813.6 Ell. “Join Annie Dawson and the members of the Hook and Needle Club of Stony Point, Maine, as they track down mysteries connected with the contents found in the attic of Annie’s ancestral home, Grey Gables... Let the good people of Stony Point into your heart, and the mysteries of Annie’s Attic will keep you on the edge of your seat!”

MIRACLE AT THE HIGHER
GROUNDS CAFÉ by Max Lucado, 813.54 Luc. “Step inside the Higher Grounds Café, a place brimming with hope, a heaping helping of comfort food, and a direct line to heaven. Where faith lives, all things are possible, for a family, a community, and one woman who wasn’t sure she had the courage to believe again.” – Lisa Wingate



**MY BOY,
BEN – A
STORY OF
LOVE, LOSS
AND GRACE**

by David
Wheaton,

813.54 Whe. This is the “true story of a young man’s journey with a yellow lab named Ben. That young man was international tennis star, David Wheaton. A touching portrait emerges of an inseparable bond between a man and his dog. Their story, marked by devotion, humor, and unexpected turns, shares an uplifting message that the “God of all grace” offers strength and hope in our most trying times.”

**THE RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES
OF JESUS** by Tom Holladay, 232.9

Hol. “What would you give to radically improve, even transform, what matters most in your relationships? How about forty days of your time? In forty days, bring new depth and health to your marriage, your family, and your friendships. In six weeks, you’ll explore and implement six foundational principles that Jesus taught and lived. You’ll be equipped with insights and a practical path for fulfilling God’s intention for all your relationships – even the difficult ones.”

**CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE
GRANDPARENT’S SOUL** by Jack Canfield, 808.8 Can. “Stories to open the hearts and rekindle the spirits of grandparents.”

KINDNESS IS COURAGEOUS by Nicole J. Phillips, 808.8 Phi. “100 stories to remind you people are brave and kind.” Excellent and uplifting – Janie.

**BILLY GRAHAM NEARING HOME
– LIFE, FAITH, AND FINISHING
WELL** by Billy Graham, 236 Gra.

“Explore with me not only the realities of life as we grow older but also the hope and fulfillment and even joy that can be ours once we learn to look at these years from God’s point of view and discover His strength to sustain us every day.” – Billy Graham

THE HEALER’S TOUCH by Lori Copeland, 813.54. “It’s 1887, and Lyric Bolton doesn’t ask for much – just friendship and acceptance from her rural Missouri community. But her family is regarded with suspicion and fear because of her mother’s sickness – a sickness that of the mind that grows worse by the day. Lyric is resigned to a life of isolation and doesn’t see a way out...but that’s before Ian Cowley bolts into her life on a runaway stallion...A tender story of God’s love and faithfulness...even when all hope seems lost.”

DEADLY DECEIT by Natalie Walters, 813.6 Wal Bk 2 of Harbored Secrets series. “Welcome back to Walton, Georgia, where everyone knows your name – but no one knows your secret...” “A delicious hero, heart-pounding suspense, and an intricate weaving of a heroine’s journey make **DEADLY DECEIT** one of my top-of-the-top favorites of the year! Natalie Walters brings it all together with an ending that will stick with you long after you close the book.” – Jaimejo Wright, author. Please note that our library also has

LIVING LIES Bk 1 and **SILENT SHADOWS** Bk 3.

To our faithful First Readers, it’s good to see that so many of you are using the library during this time. If you’re unable to get to the library, please call Janie at 326-3728 with your book request and she’ll do her best to fill your need to read! – Your church librarians: Darlene Baltus, Shela Cline and Janie Carlson.

“Be careful of the books you read, you can learn anything about everything and everything about anything.” – Paxton Hood

Open Door Coat Rack

Thank you to all who donated monetarily to the Community Coat Drive for children this year. Our Congregation collected \$115, and there were also some very lovely homemade knit items that were very much appreciated. I know that all who needed were not able to be served but hopefully next year the coat drive can resume to it's full measure. God willing.

Board of Human Care

Gingerbread Tree (Toys for Kids)

Due to the Covid pandemic, there will not be a toy drive this year. Let us all pray that next year we can resume this important community effort for our children.

Board of Human Care



Youth News



If you were at the last voter's meeting you heard me talk about the new generation that is coming up called generation Alpha. This generation is those that are born after 2012. Generation Z is from 1996-2012. I have done a lot of research into generation Z to find out how they differ from other generations and what makes them who they are. I know I have shared about this generation before, but I am fascinated by them and learn something new at every training I take. The following was what was shared at the last webinar from the LCMS youth ministry on October 15th.

They don't have the pressure to be like everyone else. Growing up we needed to "fit in" and have what everyone else had. This generation has pressure to cultivate their own look, vibe, and passion. They need to be unique from everyone else.

12% of this generation express their sexuality as something other than heterosexual. They are more likely than any other generation to have friends they have never met in person. They are seeing a huge number of gen. Z'ers registering to vote so they are moving from an icon to an influencer in the nation and in this election.

They feel that when they are financially independent that is when they are considered an adult. Rather than having the emotional maturity most of us feel we need to be an adult.

The biggest problem that they see for their generation is racism and discrimination. The LCMS is the third-least racially diverse major religious group in the country! They would really like us to just have the conversation around racism and discrimination. Which I have read over and over they want to have the tough conversations and find out what the Bible says about these issues. They want to know what the Bible says about it. They want us to be real and authentic. Not to "sugar-coat" any conversation. They don't want a feel-good conversation; they want the hard truth.

This generation has a high pressure to do and be. What they do is who they are. They are focused and driven by achievement. Pre-Covid they are an action-oriented generation. For instance 72% of them want to start a business. 27% are not willing to take on any student loans. 52% of these young adults are still living at home. This is the most since the Great Depression. They want to be strategic and smart with their money.

Mental health has and still is a HUGE concern for this generation. This generation is the least likely to report exceptionally



good or excellent mental health. In 2017, more than 1 in 8 Americans ages 12-25 experienced a major depressive episode. The CDC reports suicide rates have risen 30% since 1999. Mind you this is pre-COVID. Now the CDC is saying 25% of 18-24-year-olds have seriously considered killing themselves during the last month as the pandemic impacts mental health! Not only is the pandemic affecting this age group, but it is having a huge impact on everyone. What can we do? We can reach out to our friends, family, neighbors with a phone call or a physical distance visit. Say hi to strangers at the grocery store. People can no

longer see your contagious smile so a simple wave or hello can go far. We can be a resource to anyone who is struggling by providing scriptures or just an ear to listen. If you are experiencing any depression, sadness, hurt, anger, or you just don't know what you are feeling; we are here for you. God is here for you.

Our local National Alliance on Mental Illness chapter is located at

<http://www.namigrandrapidsmn.org/>

What we are doing at church. We have youth group every Wednesday evening from 6:30-8:00. Sunday school and Bible study are held at 9:15 Sunday mornings.

In Christ,

Jessica Pellinen

Family Ministry Program Director

UPCOMING EVENTS:

NOVEMBER 15TH IS YOUTH SUNDAY. The Sunday School students will sing before the second service at 10:25. We are excited to be able to offer this opportunity to the congregation. It may look a bit differently this year, but the children will still be able to give the gift of music to the congregation.



CONFIRMATION: No confirmation on November 18th or November 25th.

YOUTH GROUP will continue Wednesday evenings in November. 4th, 11th, and the 18th. There will not be youth group on November 25th.

BELL CHOIR: December 6th and December 13th Jennifer Flem will direct the bell choir for the youth. We may need adults to play too. If you are interested sign up in the three-ring binder.

Looking forward in December the **CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** will be on December 16th. The children will practice in November and December during Sunday School.



To All Of Our Youth Born In



FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP SERVICES FOR OCTOBER

November 1

Mite Sunday

8:00a.m. Traditional Service

9:00a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study

10:30a.m. Family Service

November 8 Communion

Dimes For Missions

8:00a.m. Traditional Worship

9:00a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study

10:30a.m. Family Service

November 15

Youth Sunday

8:00a.m. Traditional Worship

9:00 Sunday School and Adult Bible Study

10:30a.m. Family Worship

November 22 Communion

Food Shelf Sunday

8:00a.m. Traditional

9:00 Sunday School and Adult Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Family Worship

November 29

8:00a.m. Traditional Service

9:00a.m. Sunday School and Adult Bible Study

10:30a.m. Family Service

Pastor Breitbarth Hours

November Office Hours:

Tuesdays

Nov 3 9:00-3:00

Nov 10 Circuit Pastors

Nov 17 9:00-3:00

Nov 24 9:00-3:00

Wednesdays

Nov 4 10:30-4:00

Nov 11 9:00-4:00

Nov 18 2:00-4:00

Nov 25 12:00-7:30



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter article – November 2020



Our Father in heaven has claimed us as His own. By the shedding of His Son's blood, His death for our sins, and His resurrection for our justification, God the Father has received us back into His family. By water – combined with His Word, promise, and Name – the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in us. We belong to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is in us, and we are in Him. And, being in Him, all things are ours. In Him, we are richly and abundantly blessed.

Our true treasure is that we belong to the most Holy Trinity, and everything that is His – righteousness, peace, eternal life – also belongs also to us. Even our temporal treasures are gifts from His fatherly divine goodness and mercy.

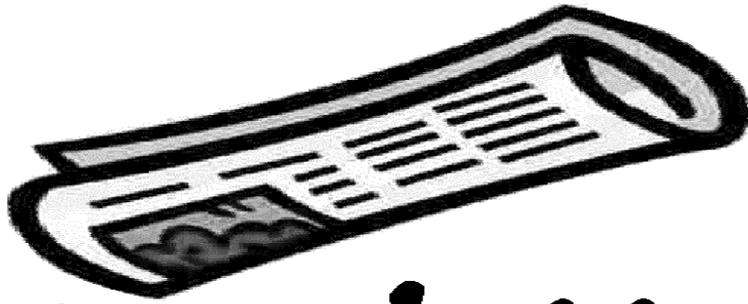
We receive our treasures from Him, and thus, as good stewards of His varied grace, we manage them in such a way that they may be returned to Him. We bring them to Him, hallowed through prayers of thanksgiving and God's holy Word, as a sacrifice.

Thus, all our possessions, as gifts from God, are also sacrifices to Him. We eat to nourish our bodies. We share with our family, neighbors, fellow Christians, the poor, and even our enemies as holy things given by the holy God. His temporal gifts are blessings to and for us, and they bring blessings upon us even as they are pressed into His service for His kingdom.

Thus, we place all that we have into God's hands, and He never fails to remember us. He pours out the fullness of His promises upon us. We give thanks for all that He has done, is doing, and will continue to do. We give thanks by not taking for ourselves, but, giving to all even as our heavenly Father has given to us.

As we prepare for the celebrations of Thanksgiving, may we all give thanks continually for all that we are and all that we have because of God's providential care. And may we be all the more diligent in bringing everything that we have received from God to Him, so that He may bless it and employ it for the good of all – even for us. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance.





Newsletter

Please Have *December* Newsletter
Articles to Shirley
By November 15th.

