The Grace Lutheran

Newsletter of Grace LCMS – Greenwood, Arkansas

November 2026



From Pastor's Pen…

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus…. 1 Cor 1:4

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I know I've written on this before, but a reminder is always good. What if you only received tomorrow what you were thankful for today? What if God decided that since you weren't thankful for something today, you were no longer going to receive it? *GULP!* Would such a reality change the way you pray? Would you lament less and give thanks more? I know I would! In fact, even as I write this I am faced with the ugly reality that I spend a lot of time complaining (and worrying) and not so much time giving thanks. I take so many things for granted, often failing to acknowledge God's gracious providence and give Him thanks. And yet… I know that if those same things were suddenly taken from me, I wouldn't hesitate to complain to God. How sad! Lord, have mercy!

Here's a good question: What do you complain about right now in your daily life? What is ***SO*** important that all the world needs to hear your lament? *What is ***SO*** important that it actually takes precedence over you being thankful for everything else? If you're honest (and only a few will be), ***most of our biggest laments and heartaches center on some rather stupid, petty little things.*** An even bigger question: What if you received NOTHING tomorrow in the way of material goods/blessings? What if everything (house, home, land, animals, health, wealth, spouse, kids, etc) was taken from you? What if, in an instant, you became a proverbial "castaway" in this daily life of yours? Bear in mind that your Lord Christ Himself commands us to not worry about all those things. *"Your Father in heaven knows that you need them. Look at the birds of the air…; look at the lilies of the field."* We understand what Jesus is saying here… ***from a safe, Sunday morning hypothetical situation.*** God-forbid we'd ever actually have to put it into practice though! God-forbid we'd ever have to actually practice what we preach and walk the walk of humble faith (and not just talk the talk).

As I said, I know that we all understand this call to trust in God's providence from a "daily bread" perspective; i.e., God richly and daily providing us with all that we need (not necessarily all that we want) for the body and life. Hopefully, we also understand this from a First Commandment perspective; i.e., not making all those things our gods, but instead trusting in God above all things; trusting that He is richly and daily providing us with all that we need…. (See how all these things go together?) In fact, I'm quite positive that more than a few will be sure to trumpet from the mountaintops that they not only understand these realities, but they also live them out in their daily lives. We want everyone to know how humble and faithful and thankful we are… not like all those "other" people. This is the problem. We (theoretically) understand all these things, but still… we lament and fail to give thanks for all that God ***already*** blesses us with simply because something relatively minor and petty doesn't go our way. Tantrums come so much easier than humility and thanksgiving. Lord, have mercy!

I'll ask again: What if everything "good" in your life was suddenly taken from you? Would you still give thanks? That's debatable (and highly improbable. Past behaviors are great indicators of future behaviors.) A different question: Would you still have any ***reason*** to give thanks? St. Paul says ***"YES!"*** The reason for this is wrapped up in the word *"charis,"* which is Greek for "grace/gift." We have every reason in the world to give thanks to God, in spite of our situation, because of the free

Continued on next page…

***Pastor's Pen**, continued…*

and unmerited gift of His grace—Christ Jesus; God's gift of grace in the flesh. No matter what befalls you in this daily life—richer or poorer, sickness or health, boom or bust… or just not in control and things don't go EXACTLY the way you think they should go (heaven-forbid!)—you are child of grace; one who has been redeemed in the blood of Christ. Even if everything else in the world would be taken from you, your adoption into God's royal household can never be taken from you. Not even the gates of hell can prevail! Isn't that more than enough reason to give thanks? (Doesn't it kind of put everything else in proper perspective? It should, O "humble servant" of God!)

I know you already know all this, but I want to put it front-and-center. ***We all need to be reminded.*** In just a few weeks we're going to be giving thanks for all kinds of material blessings. What about thanksgiving for Christ? What about thanksgiving for the grace that is already yours in Christ? "Fear, love, and trust in God above all things" (meaning to the First Commandment). "Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS! Again I say, rejoice" (Philippians 4:4) See how all this goes together? I pray that this Christ-centered, Christ-first reality is at the center of your entire life; i.e., ALL that you say and do, ALL the time. If you are a child of grace, forgiven in Christ ALL the time, then shouldn't such a reality be bearing good fruits? Something to think about.

A blessed Thanksgiving to you and yours,

Pastor Zirbel

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Thanksgiving Blessing - Give thanks and praise to the Lord! "*For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace*." John 1:16

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of food You have provided and for all those whose labor brings Your blessings to our table. We pray that at this meal we may be strengthened for Your service and together may await with joy the feast You have prepared for all the faithful in Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

LSB, Hymn 805



Life in Christ...

Pastor Zirbel's **Wednesday Bible Study** will continue the study of Malachi. All are encouraged to attend the study that begins at 10:00 am.

LWML will hold a regular meeting on Tuesday, 11/10 at 12:30pm at Grace. Note: This is an **updated date** due to elections on the first Tuesday. All ladies of the church are encouraged and welcome to attend. Please bring your own sack lunch. Beverages and dessert will be provided.

Thanksgiving Potluck 11/2 – LWML is hosting a congregational "Thanksgiving Family Feast" immediately following the 10:15am worship service. LWML will provide turkey and ham. There will be a sign-up sheet for all the rest of the "fixins." Because of the "family" nature of the day, ***we will be conducting only <u>one</u> service (10:15am) that Sunday.*** It's so rare that we, as the family of Grace, get to worship together! Just like our family members return home at Thanksgiving to be united in family, if only for a dinner, we too will unite as family to worship and feast. We do hope everyone will attend!

Repentant look forward in hope…Advent! The beginning of a new church year and the season of Advent begins Sunday, 11/29. Advent Wednesday evening services will take place at 7:00pm with supper @ 6:00pm. Be on the lookout for updates and Supper Sign-up, more details to follow.

Altar Guild needs your help! As the church seasons transition from Pentecost to Advent, the tasks associated with additional services increase. Candle filling, altar dressing, and communion set-up & take-down are very important. If you can help, please speak with Deaconess Connie.

Thank You Veterans for your service of courage and loyalty to the United States of America!

November Anniversaries

11	William & Irma Mullen
16	Gary & Sherrie Infalt
20	Richard & Jo Scrivner
28	Perry & Helen Hirsch

Happy Anniversary

<u>Remembering in Prayer:</u>

Let my prayer be counted as incense before You, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! Psalm 141:2

For the sick – Father of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need, look with favor upon those who suffer illness and infirmity. Assure them of Your mercy, deliver them from the temptations of the evil one, and give them patience and comfort in their illness. If it please You, restore them to health, or give them grace to accept this tribulation with courage and hope.

For those who grieve – Heavenly Father, into whose keeping we entrust our loved ones, help us to look to You in our time of sorrow, remembering the cloud of faithful witnesses with which we are surrounded, Grant that we may one day share in the joys of those who now rest in Your presence.

For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by the Word and the Sacraments.

For faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.

Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God!

November Birthdays

1	Mary Woodruff
3	Jonathan Pinckney
11	Tatum Gieschen
11	Ricky Freeman
12	Austin Fleer
15	Freda Patterson
23	Richard Willadsen
27	Eileen Zirbel



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Bible Study & Worship Opportunities:

Sunday Worship Service 8:00 & 10:15 AM

Sunday School/Bible Study 9:00 AM

Wednesday Adult Bible Study 10:00 AM

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