

Covenant News



November 2022

Pastor's Spin



Siblings in Christ of Covenant,

Greetings! On November 3, the wider church celebrates Martín de Porres, who may more so be lifted up by our Roman Catholic siblings in Christ, but nevertheless, he is a humbling figure that deserves our recognition. The closest connection I have with him is being at several conference centers and other event halls that bear his name. So, for a bit of background from the website of the Martín de Porres Center in Columbus (martindeporrescenter.net):

Meet St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639):

- *born in Lima, Peru*
- *son of a Spanish nobleman and a freed black slave*
- *raised in poverty*
- *at the age of 12, he learned barbering and the medical arts of the day*
- *at 15, he began working with the Dominicans as a lay helper and, eventually became a professed Lay Brother*
- *tended the sick in the monastery infirmary*
- *cared for the needy in the town*
- *spent hours each day in prayer*

As we also celebrate All Saints Sunday in November, we recognize not all the saints, past and us still living, are quite on the same level of charity and spending however many hours each day in prayer as Martín de Porres. But All Saints Sunday isn't about somehow trying to prove to God about our loved ones no longer with us being this good because they did this and that to qualify

for sainthood. The special day isn't meant for us to read about a beloved Martín de Porres, making us wonder and even feeling guilty about not doing this and that enough.

Perhaps there's something about celebrating all the saints at places of fellowship around random tables, some of those places bearing the Martín de Porres name. For around such simple tables, siblings in Christ share meals and conversations and laughter. They offer compassion and love and hope for each other. They are reminded that they didn't have to do a thing to earn a spot at that table, or at Christ's table for the Lord's Supper, not to mention anything at all to achieve being a saint in the eyes of God. We are made saints from the beginning with God's steadfast presence, God's wonderfully dwelling within us, and God's joyous calling for us to serve as disciples of Christ for the sake of the world that God still loves.

It isn't about us making sure we do all of this and that before we die to somehow prove to God we are worthy of an eternal embrace, or so that we can hear "Well done, good and faithful servant." It's about giving thanks to God for what God has already done for us in Jesus Christ. It's about the Holy Spirit churning within us, insisting we take part in bringing the Gospel to life. It's about being so overwhelmed with God's grace that we cannot help but be part of God's work through all the saints, those past and present. We may not reach the point of having a day on the calendar when we're recognized like Martín de Porres, but we still do our essential part in helping others know they are cherished by this ever-lasting and ever-loving God. Sometimes it happens around simple, and yet, beautiful tables. And time and time, again, from the Lord's table of Communion, we'll be empowered to be the living saints with all the grace and love and hope that took on death itself and rose victorious for us all to enjoy, not just in some heavenly banquet hall, but here around earthly tables, too. Thanks be to God, indeed!

In Christ,
Pastor Brad



On the weekend of November 5/6, we celebrate all the saints, giving thanks to God for Bob Buettner, Donald Rusher, Jr., Nancy Werner, Linda Wright and all the saints who have gone before us. We also remember the calling from our baptism: to be our Risen Lord's living disciples and saints, doing our part in bringing the Gospel of love and grace to life!



11/2 Matt Marik

11/13 Lois Williams

11/3 Donna Franz

11/26 Vince Besednjak

11/3 Steve Senderak

11/29 Emily Garberich

11/7 Donna Kobella

11/30 Dylan King

11/12 Dave Gaglione



*11/17 Elaine & Keary Knerem
Happy 47th Anniversary!*

*From all of us at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant,
we wish you and yours:*



For All the Saints, Who from Their Labors Rest



Robert Buettner (July 9, 1925 – June 23, 2022)

Known as “Uncle Bob” by so many, joined his wife of 63 years on June 23rd at the age of 96. Bob’s chosen profession was finance and accounting which he drew upon in every aspect of his life. He was the treasurer for the church and some of the special projects within the church for many years. He loved his church and was continuously contributing to the church’s needs with time and funding. His contributions helped fix the bells, the roof, the organ and probably many more.

Bob’s generosity continued to other charities throughout his life. Some of his and Marge’s favorite charities were to protect and help animals. He was a 10-gallon blood donor for the Red Cross and would have continued to donate if he was able. Bob also loved his country and was an Army veteran who received a purple heart. I personally, will never forget his quirky sense of humor. He was always there with his support and guidance whenever I or his loved ones needed it.

Your family, church family and I miss you. - Donna Kobella

Donald Rusher, Jr. (November 1, 1960 – January 29, 2022)

Donald David Rusher Jr.: beloved son of Jean (nee Lambrecht) and the late Donald D. Rusher Sr., dear brother of Kimberly (Scott) Russell, Lisa (Tom) King and the late James D. Rusher, father of Haleigh and Paige Rusher, grandfather of Lyla, Sophie and Penelope, loving uncle to Amber, Matthew, Dylan, Alexandra and Blake. Great uncle to many. Don served in the US Army Reserves and the Ohio National Guard.



Nancy Werner (September 28, 1954 – May 8, 2022)

Linda Wright (January 5, 1952 – May 23, 2022)

Beloved daughter of the late Wilbur and Anna; loving sister of the late Sharon Konte; dear aunt of nieces and nephews and friend to all. Animal mother to adopted dogs, Honey Bun, Jelly Bean, and many former dogs. Pittsburgh Steelers lover and a wonderful contributor of Wednesday Words, when we were in between pastors at Covenant, along with many Lenten devotionals between Covenant and Lutheran Church of the Master. Also Worship & Music member and an avid St. Nick Nite craft contributor.



A True Thanksgiving

Martin Luther on Giving Thanks

“For all of this I owe it to God to thank and praise, serve and obey him.” With these words in his Small Catechism, Martin Luther concludes his paraphrase of the First Article of the Apostles’ Creed. The point is clear: We owe God thanks for all God gives to us.

But there is a trap here that we can easily fall into. Just because we ought to do something for God doesn’t mean we can do it—or, in Luther’s succinct language: “An ‘ought’ never implies a ‘can.’”

The problem with thanksgiving (let alone praise, service and obedience) is twofold. On the one hand, we try to turn it into a “must,” and we put on our smiley face and say thank you. Every time my Aunt Gladys gave me wool socks for Christmas, I was faced with the same dilemma: I had to write a thank-you note, but I wasn’t really thankful at all. Hypocritical thanksgiving is the very opposite of true thanks.

On the other hand, we imagine that we can manufacture true thanksgiving on our own, and we take credit for being thankful (or feel guilty when we aren’t). But this isn’t true thanksgiving either.

Like all Christian good works, thanksgiving comes spontaneously. We’ve experienced this with children or grandchildren. When they are truly thankful, it’s written all over their faces and they come running up to us with hugs and kisses. Otherwise, their parents whisper in their ears, “Come on, say thank you!” To which they moan, “Thanks for the socks.” So, too, with God.

What creates thanksgiving is not our attitude but God's gifts. That is why, in his explanation of "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth" from the First Article, Luther lists all the things he can think of that God has specifically given him: body and soul with their physical and mental capacities, shoes, clothing, food, drink, house, farm (by this time his wife, Katie, was beginning to purchase land to grow food for the expanding household and their many guests), wife, children, fields, livestock, property and all necessities for life.

Though our lists may vary, true thanksgiving arises not from our work at "being thankful" but out of God's gifts, which include protection from "all danger ... and evil," as Luther goes on to say in the Small Catechism. Luther doesn't mean to suggest that nothing bad will ever befall us, only that, when we are shielded from harm, danger and evil, this protection comes from God.

If you want to be thankful but you can't do it, make a list of God's gifts of creation. Or use Luther's—you'll run out of ink and paper before you get to the bottom, and like him, you may suddenly realize that "all this is done out of pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness of mine at all" (First Article).

Some people concentrate on the word "Father" when explaining this article. Luther instead concentrates on the word "creator" and turns "Father" into an adjective: "fatherly." In 1531, when Luther added an explanation to the words "Our Father in heaven," his oldest child was 5 and he had discovered his own fatherly heart. "With these words God wants to attract us," he writes (introduction to the Lord's Prayer).

In the Bible, we deal with loving children and a loving, divine parent. Thanksgiving will come spontaneously as we discover this "pure, fatherly, and divine goodness and mercy."

But still we fail. We take so much for granted, or we fake it, or we break our arms patting ourselves on the back. That's when a second aspect of Luther's explanation comes to our rescue in the form of the Second Article of the creed: there Luther repeats the word "ought" or "owe" but in ways that are nearly impossible to capture in English. Jesus Christ "has purchased and freed me ... not with gold or silver but ... with his innocent (in German, *unschuld*, meaning "non-owed") suffering and death."

We owe everything to God. Jesus, truly human and divine, owed God nothing but gave up everything for us. The result, according to Luther? "He has done all this in order that I may ... serve him in eternal ... innocence." There's that word again. We belong to Jesus, we live in his kingdom, and he frees us from debt.

Thanksgiving arises not because we owe it to God—even though we do—but spontaneously, because Jesus made us his own and frees us to "thank and praise, serve and obey." Amen! Or, as Luther paraphrased that word in this same explanation, "This is most certainly true."

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*Timothy Wengert, an ELCA pastor, is professor emeritus of Reformation history at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. Author and editor of more than 20 books, including *Martin Luther's Catechisms: Forming the Faith* (Fortress, 2009), his translation of the *Small Catechism* is used extensively throughout the ELCA.*

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

November 2022

Server Schedule	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parish Hall	2	3 1:30 pm Worship & Music Meeting	4 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	5 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 Worship in Sanctuary
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susanek	6 All Saints Sunday 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	7 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	8 7:00 Congregational Council 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall	9	10	11 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	12 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Claudia Senderak, Jean Rusher, Gwen Susanek	13 Twenty Third Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	14 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	15 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parlor	16	17 5:00-6:00 pm Community Meal Drive Thru in Parking lot	18 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Parish Hall	19 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall 5:00 Worship in Sanctuary
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	20 Thanksgiving Service 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	21 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	22 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parlor	23	24 Office closed for Thanksgiving Weekend	25 Office closed Thanksgiving Weekend 6:30-8:30pm GOD AA meeting in Hall	26 3:00 pm Women's AA meeting in Hall
AG: Sheila Werner, Annie Copeland, Paula Hohenstein	27 First Sunday of Advent 9:00 Eucharist 10:00 Adult Class in Parlor	28 6:30-8:00 pm Girl Scout troop meeting in Nursery	29 6:30 pm Women's AA meeting in Parlor	30			

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