A painting of a house by a river

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**October 2025**

As I am writing this, packing for the trip to Italy has begun. Many times, when we take trips, we prepare a list of things we need to remember to take. This might include how many pairs of socks, shorts, underwear, and other such items to pack. The list also might include a detailed list of toiletries to bring.

When preparing to come for church, we should have a similar list. Did you remember to bring your Bible, personal hymnal, sins and guilt? How about your “empty vessel”? Some of these items are used for delving into God’s Word more deeply. Some are used to worship God. Some are brought in order to be left here. This is what worshipping God is all about.

We gather together, using the words provided to us in the Old and New Testaments, to confess our sins and receive absolution for them. This is how we are able to leave our sins and guilt at the altar. As for our “empty vessel”, when forgiveness is received for our sins, it starts to fill our vessel. When we hear the Word of God read to us, it goes into our vessel. The hymns that we sing, goes into our vessel. This vessel begins to fill up. The message that we receive in the sermon, relating to the readings for the day, goes into our vessel.

The vessel is filling up with God’s grace. When we receive Holy Communion, God’s Grace fills our vessel. When we receive the Benediction, God’s Grace fills our vessel. Now our vessel is FULL, possibly overflowing with God’s Grace.

So, what should we do with our vessel? When we go about our business for the week, we distribute God’s Grace as the situation calls for. Someone provokes you to anger. Give them some of the Grace that is in your vessel. Someone requires assistance, there is Grace in your vessel. Someone is hungry, use the Grace in your vessel to do what is right for that person.

The ideal situation is this: you go throughout the week, dispensing the Grace from your vessel. By doing so, you return to church, the next week, with an empty vessel. This is Martin Luther’s theology of the Empty Vessel. This cycle goes on and on throughout your life.

The following is Martin Luther’s Empty Vessel prayer:

*Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it. I am weak in the faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbor. I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether.*

*O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you. In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have. I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are upright. With me, there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness.*

*Therefore I will remain with you, of whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give. Amen*



**– Martin Luther, AD 1483-1546**  — *Pastor De Young*

Christian living in a nutshell:

Witness *(martyria)*, Mercy *(Diakonia)*, and Life Together *(Koinonia)*.

Back in 2011, President Harrison launched a new program in the LCMS. The three parts of this program were: **Witness** *(martyria)*, **Mercy** *(diakonia)*, and **Life Together***(koinonia)*.

**Witness, Mercy, and Life Together** describes the purpose of the Church in a way that keeps the focus on the cross of Jesus and yet also clearly articulates the work of the Church both internally and externally.

In last month’s newsletter, I covered **Witness**. This month I will be covering **Mercy**. Next month, **Life Together** will be covered.

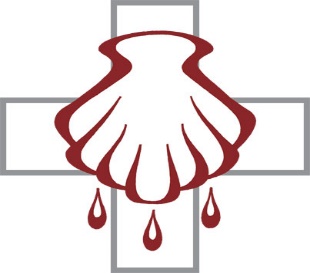
Those in need of mercy, help and service are often sorrowful. Every act of mercy and service flows from the cross, where Jesus came to serve us and to give His life as a ransom. Mercy describes what the service delivers.

The word *diakonia* literally means “waiting at table,” which is how it was used in Acts 6, when the apostles said, “It is not right for us to give up preaching in order to wait tables” (v. 2). In a more general sense, *diakonia* means “to provide for the body” or “to serve.” To the Greeks, such service was looked down upon and considered beneath dignified or noble people. Yet Jesus uses this very word of Himself: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Jesus did not consider serving us to be beneath Him. In fact, His service is centered on His cross. Such service is motivated by genuine love; Christ’s love and mercy for us, as well as His obedience to the Father, led Him to the cross. Because of His love for us, we serve our neighbor and show mercy to him. In so doing, we serve Christ.

In Acts 6:4, the apostles said, “We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” The word *ministry* is also *diakonia*. The service of the Word refers primarily to the preaching of the Gospel, which delivers Jesus, the Bread of Life, to those who hear it. There is an overlap between Witness (*martyria*) and Mercy (*diakonia*). This overlap between Witness and Mercy is shown in our image as overlapping circles. All the areas of the Church’s life are interconnected.

While each area is distinct, they also flow together with one leading to another. So, if a person goes out to witness and discovers another in need, he or she stops and shows mercy to that person. In the third century, Turtullian wrote, “‘See,’ they say, ‘how they love one another,’” (*Apology*, XXXIX; ANF 3, 74). This was written when the Church was struggling against the pagan world of the Roman Empire. The acts of mercy the Early Church did for one another served as a witness to the world. While human care is not the proclamation of the Gospel, it does bear witness to Christ and the love Christians have for their neighbor because of His service to us on the cross.

This source for much of this information is from the LCMS website: <https://witness.lcms.org/2011/witness-mercy-life-together-1-2011/>



Celebrate October’s Baptism Birthdays

& their years as heirs of God’s kingdom!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Name** | **Years** |
| 1st | Rebecca Pickett | 35 |
| 18th | Aiden Henry | 16 |
| 29th | John Belcher | 53 |
|  | Jo Osbson | 2 |
|  | Annallee Osbon | 2 |
| 31st | Kenneth Geis | 60 |
|  | Jana Gilmore | 43 |

**Serving in God’s House this month**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Elder of the Month** | David Geis |
| **Counters** | Lee Hughes / David Geis |
| **Altar Guild** | Lisa Lawson / Jeannine Yowell |
| **Altar Care** | Angie Caswell / Rebecca Pickett |
| **Guest Monitor** | Doris Long |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Acolytes** | **Reader** |
| October 05 | Avery Henry & Karlee Hughes | William Pickett |
| October 12 | Molly Gilmore & Max Gilmore | Lee Hughes |
| October 19 | Parker Lawson & Annallee Osbon | Arn Anderson |
| October 26 | Davin George & Emily Keyes | Bryan Roth |

A collage of a group of people

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A collage of kids playing a game

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A collage of people standing in a church

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A collage of people playing in a pool

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A collage of a group of people

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A collage of people posing for a photo

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A collage of people eating at a table

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A black background with a black square

AI-generated content may be incorrect.A black background with a black square

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

A black background with a black square

AI-generated content may be incorrect.