

Dear Friends in Christ:

As our long hot Summer is drawing to a close, we have much to give thanks to God for.

1. We survived. The death rate in this country is still one for every man, woman, and child. That means we should never take God's gift of life for granted. Are we the worse for wear? Probably. But it is distorted thinking when Christians apply the grace of God only to salvation. The fact that you and I were brought safely into, through, and out the other side of every day this past Summer can only be understood as a gracious act of God who owes us exactly nothing, but showers us with life in abundance.
2. We had the great good fortune of knowing Christ and his benefits throughout the Summer. God has no obligation to reveal himself to his creatures. The fact that we have seen the loving, forgiving, healing, and nurturing face of God in the loving, forgiving, healing, and nurturing face of Jesus, the King of Love and the Good Shepherd, is a tremendous gift to us.
3. We were blessed to be part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church throughout the Summer. The half-sacrament for Lutherans of the *mutual conversation and consolation of the faithful* continued unabated through the Summer as we shared the burdens of grief, sickness, tragedy, loneliness, and even the good times with one another. We should feel sorry for people we know who are not part of the church, and then, of course, we should invite them.
4. The Summer maintenance projects on the church building and parsonage went far better than we had any right to expect. They will continue into the Fall.
5. We said Goodbye to some dear friends and welcomed some new ones. We look forward to improving our welcoming and including skills as we move into the Fall.

In all, God was pretty good to us over the Summer, for all of which we should *call upon his name in time of need and offer to Him our prayers, praise and thanksgiving* (Small Catechism, 2nd Commandment).

Yours in Christ,

John S. McKenzie