

# The Witness

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Matthew 28:18-20 ESV

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LCMS

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**November 2022**

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## Making Every Day Thanksgiving Day

In the fall of 1621 the new settlers to our country gathered with some Native Americans for a three-day thanksgiving feast to celebrate a good harvest. This is probably why pilgrims and turkeys have become inseparably connected to Thanksgiving Day. This event in 1621 was not thought of as a holiday, but simply a gathering to express thankfulness and share in the Lord's bounty. Thanksgiving as a holiday did not come about until 1863 when President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November to be a national holiday on which Americans were encouraged to give thanks to God for His provision. Since then Thanksgiving Day has remained a national holiday.

As Christians we rightly rejoice that our nation observes a National Day of Thanksgiving. However, as Christians we also might find ourselves concerned that the original purpose of the holiday has been lost among many Americans. I have heard people express concern that Thanksgiving Day, for some people, is no longer a day to pause and give thanks to God for His provision, but has been reduced to little more than an excuse to "pig out" and then laze around on the sofa watching football. There is certainly at least some truth to that. Indeed, given our fallen nature, humanity has succeeded in corrupting every holiday that has ever been celebrated. For that matter, it should come as no surprise to us that holidays meant to honor God our creator and redeemer are not going to be respected as such by a society that is becoming increasingly secularized.

Rather than focus on that problem, I'd like to ask the question of whether we Christians have allowed the true purpose of Thanksgiving Day to fall by the wayside, in a different and far more critical way. Has Thanksgiving Day, for Christians, become nothing more than the one day each year that we pause to give thanks to God for all that he gives, and then get right back to our usual routines again for the next 364 days? Or is Thanksgiving for us a day we set aside to give thanks to God AND to remind us that we ought to be living EVERY day in thanksgiving to God for his gracious and bountiful gifts? If we take seriously our God given role as stewards of his creation, then I pray that our purpose for Thanksgiving Day is the latter.

As members of the one holy catholic (Christian) and apostolic Church, we confess that the first article of the Creed teaches that God "*made me and all creatures. He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them. He also has given me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all that I have. He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life. He protects me from all danger and guards me and preserves me from all evil. He does all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this I ought to thank Him, praise Him, serve Him, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.*"

Additionally, Jesus taught us to pray "*give us this day our daily bread.*" Luther in his explanation of this petition teaches that daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body and that we as God's people receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

Since we hold to this confession, it is only natural that we should (to steal and adapt a phrase from Charles Dickens) keep Thanksgiving Day the whole year through. This is the attitude that motivates and undergirds proper Christian stewardship. Keeping this attitude alive is done by starting, developing, and nurturing certain habits. One very important such habit is to be regular and consistent in our prayers when we awake, at mealtimes, and when we retire for the night. Luther provides prayers for these occasions in his Small Catechism, or you might find other suitable prayers, or even Psalms. Truly our Lord is good and His mercy endures forever. Saying prayers like this helps us remember that thanksgiving is a daily activity of God's people. Praying regularly each day (not only in thanks but also bringing before God our needs and those of others) helps us practice thanksgiving as a daily way of life. It is a life of both repentance and thanksgiving that trusts God as the giver of all good gifts.

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Indeed, it is only in trusting God as the giver of all good gifts that allows us in faith to develop another important habit – our regular offering to God of our time, talent, and treasure. When developing our budgets, as we list our necessary expenses for house, food, clothing, etc . . . it is easy to save our offering to the Church until last, giving only what is “leftover.”

Let us be clear, no one ought to give out of guilty obligation, but out of a faith which trusts in God as the provider of all we need to live in this life He has given us to live. However, we must also be clear that giving in faith is giving not from our leftovers, but honoring the Lord with “*your wealth and the firstfruits of all your yield.*” (Proverbs 3:9).

Christian stewards are people who live each day as a day of thanksgiving; who in faith acknowledge God’s created gifts AND his redemptive gifts in Christ Jesus, and in thankfulness receive them both for themselves and for sharing with their neighbor. Let us pause as we gather this November 28th, and as we give thanks, pray that it would be a reminder of our God’s daily gracious and abundant gifts, and a prompting in us of a daily response for all that He so richly provides.

Heavenly Father, God of all grace, govern our hearts that we may never forget Your blessings but steadfastly thank and praise You for all Your goodness in this life until, with all Your saints we praise You eternally in Your heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Pastor Matthew Uttenreither

**Saint of the Month: St. Monica, Mother of Augustine** (November 27) A native of North Africa, Monica (A.D. 333–387) was the devoted mother of Saint Augustine. Throughout her life she sought the spiritual welfare of her children, especially that of her brilliant son, Augustine. Widowed at a young age, she devoted herself to her family, praying many years for Augustine's conversion. When Augustine left North Africa to go to Italy, she followed him to Rome and then to Milan. There she had the joy of witnessing her son's conversion to the Christian faith. Weakened by her travels, Monica died at Ostia, Italy on the journey she had hoped would take her back to her native Africa. On some church year calendars, Monica is remembered on May 4.

And so we pray: O Lord, You strengthened Your patient servant Monica through spiritual discipline to persevere in offering her love, her prayers, and her tears for the conversion of her husband and of Augustine, their son. Deepen our devotion to bring others, even our own family, to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who with You and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. (Treasury, p. 663).



**Lutheran Women’s  
Missionary League**  
Lutheran Women  
In Mission

## Where Mites Go

“Ends of Earth” Scholarships

Grant: \$50,000

MOST Ministries is receiving more requests from LCMS missionaries and national church leaders to provide teams to go to the "ends of the earth" places such as Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, South Africa, Thailand, Peru, and Sri Lanka to work side-by-side with missionaries, sharing the Gospel. The travel cost (up to \$5,050) of the short-term mission trips to these distant places has become prohibitive, and has made it challenging for willing people to join a team. Currently, team members are personally responsible for their total per person cost. Not only do they use personal funds, but they are encouraged to reach out to members of the body of Christ to participate in the mission with encouragements, prayers, and financial support. This grant would offer financial support to cover up to one-half the cost of each participant, not to exceed \$2,000.

## Testimonies from Around the World:

South Africa

We at The Way Christian Church would like to express our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for making our widows tea so successful. The resources from Love Packages have touched and encouraged many of the widows that have attended. We even had a Muslim lady that attended and she was overwhelmed by what she received as a gift. We gave her the DVD, *Iran in the Bible*. She was so happy!



## What Makes for a Cheerful Giver?

St. Paul wrote to Church of Christ in Corinth: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). *God loves a cheerful giver.* But who is a cheerful giver?

Abel was. By faith, he gave the firstborn of his flock, and it was acceptable in God's sight. Abraham was. By faith, he prepared cakes and a tender choice calf for God and entertained angels unaware. So also were David and Solomon. By faith, David would not make a sacrifice to God

that cost him nothing, so he paid Araunah his due. By faith, Solomon built a house for God, where his name would dwell and thereby where He would dwell to be Israel's God and they His people.

What more shall we say? For time would fail us to tell of all those who gave not simply for the joy of giving but for the joy of knowing the One to whom they gave.

So also our Lord, who for the joy set before Him, gave everything – yes, even His life – enduring the cross and scorning its shame. He gave to the shedding of His blood, willingly and resolutely setting His face toward Jerusalem to die for the life of the world. Though He was rich in every way, He became poor, so that by His poverty, we might be rich beyond measure.

So then, let us like Abel and Abraham, like David and Solomon, and even like our Lord Jesus Christ, give cheerfully to God for the work of His kingdom in our midst. Like them, let us decide in our heart for the joy set before us. It's the joy of knowing the One to whom we give is the One who gives us all good things.

LCMS Stewardship Ministry



The season of Advent begins on Sunday, November 27th.

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'

## In Everything Give Thanks

For all that God in mercy sends—  
For health and children, home and friends;

For comfort in the time of need,  
For every kindly word and deed,  
For happy thoughts and holy talk,  
For guidance in our daily walk—  
In everything give thanks.

~Author Unknown



## Thankfulness

Thankfulness is being glad  
For good things every day;  
It's showing joy by sharing  
In a kindly, thoughtful way.

It is remembering God gives  
And cares for every need;  
Thankfulness is loving God  
In heart and word and deed.

~Author Unknown

## Time & Talent

### Deacons

November 6	Tom Friedewald
November 13	Jim Jenne
November 20	Tom Friedewald
November 27	Jim Jenne

### Greeters

November 6	Judy Darville Rosalie Streng
November 13	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten
November 20	Gail Bujnowski Judy Darville
November 27	Pam Hrajnoha Lois Marten

### Altar Guild

November:	Linda Bauschke Lilian Konozsi
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We congratulate the following members of Ascension as they celebrate their **birthdays** in November:

- November 1                      Madison Duszak
- November 3                      Gail Bujnowski
- November 6                      Jean Moy
- November 22                      Kim Giannopoulos



We also congratulate the following couples as they celebrate their **wedding anniversaries** in November:

None on record

These are the **birthdays** and **wedding anniversaries** recorded in our church records for the coming month. If any birthday or anniversary was omitted, please notify the church office.

\* \* \*

### Around Ascension . . .



Along with the refreshing cooler temps, things have been busy around Ascension.

Our Women’s Circle was especially busy in October! They met on the 4th for Bible Study with Pastor Uttenreither, a brief meeting, and of course coffee and sweets! LWML Sunday was celebrated on the 9th. It was nice to see purple scattered around the sanctuary! On October 22nd, Ascension Women’s Circle hosted the annual LWML Women’s Gathering, and on the 30th they organized our Reformation Pot Luck luncheon. Thanks ladies!!!

Just a reminder.....Bible Study meets every Sunday following our worship service. We continue to study the Book of Acts. It would be awesome to see a few new faces.

As we approach Thanksgiving and Christmas, please check *News & Notes* for special worship services and times.



## 2022 ASCENSION COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS

<b>President:</b>	Tom Friedewald
<b>Vice President:</b>	Jim Jenne
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Sandy Friedewald
<b>Secretary:</b>	Audrey Schultz
<b>Financial Secretary:</b>	Carolyn Jannusch
<b>Board of Deacons:</b>	Jim Jenne (Chair) Hal Downs (Emeritus) Tom Friedewald Jim Jenne Jonathan Schultz
<b>Board of Christian Ministries</b>	Lois Marten (Chair)
<b>Board of Trustees:</b>	Jason Romano (Chair)
<b>Board of Youth:</b>	Sarah Lindahl (Chair)

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## OFFICIAL ACTS

### **Wedding**

Haley Duszak & Victor Roman  
October 2, 2022 (officiated by Rev. Matthew Uttenreither)

Do you have an announcement to share about your family such as a birth, death, engagement, graduation, etc., **let us know! We'd love to hear from you!**

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