

PASTOR'S PENNINGS

How can I be happy when I have little to be thankful for?

“Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”

Revelation 19:9

For many of us, as the calendar is flipped to the month of November, thoughts of turkey and pumpkin pie make our mouths water. We think ahead to family traditions that we have faithfully followed through the years. Family, food, and football all provide the opportunity to gather and reflect on the many things we're thankful for.

But for some--perhaps you--giving thanks might not be high on your “to-do” list this year. It may be that you simply don't feel that there are all that many reasons to give thanks. A lost job. Dwindling savings. Poor health. Any one of these circumstances, or a combination of them, may lead you to the conclusion that you can't be happy when you have so little to be thankful for.

But here's some good news to lift your spirit: there's a huge party being planned in heaven, and you're invited. This party is being thrown in honor of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Why? Because Jesus Christ has overcome our sin and all the evil in this world as well as its source, the devil. God has extended an invitation to all people to come and celebrate!

No, being invited to this party won't necessarily mean your career will pick up again, your savings will plump up, or your health will suddenly be restored. But being invited to this party reminds us that the struggles of this life are temporary while the blessings of the wedding supper are eternal. We can start to identify with a man in the Bible who wrote, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18). This writer was elated to know that he was going to the heavenly wedding party.

God wants more guests there too. He wants you there. He wants you to share in the joy that is yours in Jesus Christ.

We invite you to a Thanksgiving worship service at our church on Thursday, November 24th at 10:00AM. Find out how others, many of whom have the same struggles and hardships that you do, nevertheless have found something to be thankful for. Come and share in the blessings they enjoy because of their invitation to the greatest party ever. Find out more about your invitation and how richly God wants to bless everyone invited to His party. In doing so, you'll truly have a happy Thanksgiving!

PRAYER LIST

Psalms 138:3 - “When I called you answered me; you made me bold and stouthearted.”

** This last month we prayed for Dale May's brother, Gary, who has inoperable cancer. We prayed that the Holy Spirit would use this sickness to bring him back to the saving faith of his youth. Please continue to pray for his return to the truth.

** We also prayed for God's blessings on Sarah Buczynskyj who was married in a private ceremony. Please continue to pray that she and her new partner will grow in their love and firmly root their marriage on Christ the Rock.

** Terry Eischen had hernia surgery and is recovering. Please pray that the healing process continue, if it is God's will, so that he can get back to his work at church and in his business.

** Please continue to pray for Patricia Mackey's son, Wesley, who had some severe seizures. He was planning to visit and stay with Patricia this winter, but now that doesn't seem possible.

** Please pray regularly for Paul and Aimée Barnett. Paul has a tumor behind one of his eyeballs that is causing him a lot of pain. He will be going into a hospital soon for a biopsy. Pray that God would strengthen their faith through this trial as it leads them to rely more and more on Your Word.

** Please pray for those former members who have chosen to leave our fellowship. Pray that they are brought to desire the truth of God's Word that is found here and to come back and be united with us in doctrine and practice.

** Don't forget to thank the Lord today for the blessings that God has granted us in the Reformation. Pray that our church and Synod never takes for granted or falls from adherence to the cornerstone of the Reformation and our Christian faith, namely, "Faith alone, Scripture alone, Grace alone."

OUR TREASURE OF TIME

Imagine that you had won the following prize in a contest:

Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400.00 in your private account for use. However, this prize has certain rules, just as any game has rules.

The first set of rules would be:

Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.

You may not transfer money into some other account. You may only spend it.

Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400.00 for that day only.

The second set of rules:

The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say, "It's over, the game is over!"

It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you personally do?

You would probably buy anything and everything you wanted right? Not only for yourself, but for all people you love, right? Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend all that money on yourself, right? You would try to spend every cent, and use it all up, right?

ACTUALLY

This GAME is called REALITY!

Each of us is in possession of such a magical bank. Sometimes we just can't seem to see it.

This MAGICAL BANK is called TIME!

Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life, and when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is NOT credited to us. What we haven't used wisely that day is forever lost.

Yesterday...is...forever - gone!

True, each morning the account is refilled, but God can also dissolve your account at any time...
OFTEN WITHOUT WARNING.

SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds?

Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars.

Each of us have been given time to accomplish God's purpose for us on this planet. The Scriptures exhort us to invest our time wisely, reminding us that God determines the length of our stay on earth. "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16). Toward the end of his life, Moses prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom" (Psalms 90:12).

Time is our most valuable asset, but without a proper perspective, we will spend it foolishly. A biblical perspective on time involves several things:

- (1) Life is brief, and we cannot be presumptuous about the future (James 4:14).
- (2) The eternal gives meaning to the temporal (Romans 13:11; 2 Corinthians 4:18).
- (3) Like other assets, our time is owned by God (Psalms 31:15).
- (4) We must be sensitive to opportunities so that we can make the most of them (Ecclesiastes 8:5; Colossians 4:5).
- (5) Our use of time will reflect our priorities (Matthew 6:19-21,34).

MARY-MARTHA GUILD NEWS

The Women's Advent by Candlelight service with the ladies of Gethsemane Lutheran Church will be held Sunday, December 4, 2011 at 3:30PM at Gethsemane. The theme title will be "Keeping Christ In Christmas." The ladies of Gethsemane will be furnishing the tables, decorations, and food. The Holy Cross ladies will plan and present the service. All ladies and girls from Holy Cross are invited to attend.

The Holy Cross Mary-Martha ladies will be meeting on Saturday, November 12, 2011 at 9:30AM. All ladies of the congregation are invited to attend.

THANKSGIVING SERVICE/DINNER

A special Thanksgiving service will be held on Thanksgiving day at 10:00AM. Following the service there will be a special Thanksgiving pot luck meal for everyone who wants to be a part of it.

VOTERS' BODY REPORT

All Boards, along with the Fiscal Secretary and Treasurer, gave their reports on the 3rd quarter activities. The Nominating Committee presented a slate of candidates for the vacant officer and board positions. The slate of candidates was accepted and candidates were elected to the various offices and boards. The Finance Committee submitted a proposed operating budget for the year 2012. An operating budget of \$126,891.00 and mission pledge of \$25,000.00 was adopted. A proposal was made to amend the Holy Cross Constitution to establish endowment and trust funds for use by members of the congregation. This proposal was adopted which now allows endowment and trust funds to be established for members to use in their estate planning and financial giving. The next Voters' meeting will be held January 15, 2012.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the Holy Cross Voters' Body Meeting on October 16th, men of the congregation were elected to the following positions:

President: Butch Barnett

Recording Secretary: Phillip Class

Financial Secretary: Gene Hill

Elders: Duane Stuever

Board of Education: Fred Jenkins and Patrick Roberts

Board of Property Management: Ricky Poulin, Tom Finney and Glen Albertson

Board of Stewardship: Terry Eischen and Paul Barnett

Board of Outreach: Kris Timm, and Trevor Oestreich

WORK DAY

A work day for doing various repair and cleaning projects is scheduled for Saturday, November 12 beginning at 8:00AM. So, put on your work clothes and gloves and come to church. All supplies and tools will be provided.

REACHING OUT

When you hear the name Jonah, what is the very next thought in your mind? Why Jonah and the big fish, of course. I suppose that is because people latch onto the spectacular, the miracles. And you won't find anyone else in Scripture being swallowed by a big fish. But really, Jonah being fish bait is really only a small part of his little book, and it is not the main point. The little Book of Jonah is a fish story of another kind, the kind where Jesus said to His disciples: I WILL MAKE YOU FISHERS OF MEN. The little Book of Jonah is actually the greatest missionary book in the entire Old Testament. It reminds me of another fish story that has made rounds in evangelism seminars.

There was once a society of fishermen, who decided to organize and hold meetings and seminars about fishing. They held classes and wrote books and talked about their call to go fishing. They built large, beautiful buildings and established their Fishing Headquarters. They researched all the best ways to catch fish, and debated the pros and cons of various baits and flies. They researched the history of fishing, and went all over the world to observe the best methods. Those who taught all had doctorates in fishology. They established fishermen's clubs in faraway places. They encouraged everyone to become fishermen. And they anguished over those who were not committed enough to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. But one thing they didn't do, however, they didn't fish.

Jonah might have talked a good show, but he didn't want to go fishing, at least not where God wanted him to. He is the original unwilling missionary. His little book has a lot to teach us as a mission-minded congregation, although much of what we learn is found in his poor example. On the other hand, he also teaches us about the great grace and love of God for all people.

One of our most well-loved hymns is: God's Word Is Our Great Heritage. The hymn says for us: To spread its light from age to age, shall be our chief endeavor. But is it? Do we really have the foremost desire to preach the Gospel to every creature, as the Savior commissioned us? Or are we more like Jonah at heart, an unwilling missionary at best? Let us repent of our unwilling sinful natures as Jonah did and be motivated by God's forgiveness and grace to look for opportunities to talk about the Savior with people whom God has put in contact with us.

The Outreach Board of Holy Cross is planning some interesting outreach efforts:

1-- An outreach letter will be mailed monthly to all people on our prospect list. You can help increase our prospect list by giving names of prospects you would like to have put on our prospect list so that they can receive this evangelism letter. Give the names to Kris Timm.

2-- Our Mary-Martha group of ladies or the Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS), as they are sometimes called, will be wrapping some candy and putting them in a coffee cup with the Holy Cross logo. Pastor, members of the Board and anyone else who would like to help will go out once a month and personally distribute this "gift" to new members who have moved into the community within a one mile radius of Holy Cross. There are usually 20-40 new names on our list.

3-- An attempt to introduce a large number of people to the Gospel will begin early next year when every member will be urged to go through a membership class again with Pastor to review the basic doctrines of the Bible. The program will be called "The Andrew Plan" because, like Andrew, each member will be encouraged to bring and mentor one unchurched friend, acquaintance, or associate to the class. At the end of the class, the unchurched participants will be invited to join Holy Cross if they are in 100% agreement with the teachings they have learned from the Bible in the class. Now is the time to target the people you would like to bring to this class and start praying for the opportunity and the courage to ask them to come with you to the class. If you cannot make such a class, pray that the effort will be blessed by God.

WALKING TOGETHER

Walking Together Sunday will be celebrated on the last Sunday in November. "Walking Together" is a good definition for the word, "Synod." It is a day to celebrate our unity with the other approximately 2,000 congregations that have chosen to walk together to better fulfill the great commission and to better accomplish needed tasks that would be difficult to do alone, like train pastors and teachers.

The 2011 service demonstrates how our ministerial education schools are providing workers for the harvest in one of our synod's highest priority mission fields.

The worship service and sermon focus on Isaiah 49:1-6 where God calls for His Gospel to be shared throughout the world.

GRACE NEWS

The move into the new facilities has been successful. The building is leased by a catering company and has a large meeting room with lots of parking. To get to it you take I-35 to the Main Street exit in Norman. Go East and turn left (South) at the second stop light. Turn right into the first parking lot. Look for Grace Lutheran in the storefront window.

Since few of the people who live around the new worship site know where we are, a large effort will be made this month to inform the people in the area that we are here and that they are invited to come on Sundays at 1:00PM.

BIBLE QUIZ CORRECTIONS

In the October edition of the Holy Cross newsletter some of the answers to the questions in the Bible Quiz were incorrect. Question No. 8 should read: "Some sins apart from the sin against the Holy Spirit are so great they cannot be forgiven." This is false. The correct answers to other questions whose

answers were in error are: 9) F; 10) F; 14) F; 15) F; 16) F; 19) F. We are sorry for any confusion this may have caused.

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS!!

Once again it is time to start thinking about the Children's Christmas Eve service practice. Here are the practice dates:

November 26th, December 3rd, 10th & 17th.

Please note that ages 3-6 will only need to be at church 30 minutes, from 9:30-10:00AM the first 3 Saturdays, and then 9:30-11:30 on December 17th. All other ages will practice from 9:30-11:30 each Saturday. Post confirmation teens will also be welcome for those interested.

What a privilege it is for us once again to be able to tell the story of Jesus' birth. Hope to see everyone at practice on November 26th.

Sunny and Cheryl

SEASON OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Christmas is around the corner. Once again, we will have three advent services on Wednesday nights beginning on December 7th at 7:00PM. Christmas Eve service will be on Saturday the 24th.

ENDOWMENT/TRUST FUNDS

The Holy Cross Voters' Body amended the Holy Cross congregation's Bylaws to allow the establishment of Endowment and Trust Funds (FUNDS). The purpose of the FUND shall be to further the work of Christ's church by supporting the work of the congregation both in the community and in the world at large today and until the Lord returns. These funds are to be used by members of Holy Cross congregation in their estate planning and giving. Each FUND shall be a permanently restricted fund established to receive and administer all gifts that are designated for the FUND from sources such as cash, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, bequests, life insurance, charitable gifts, annuities, insurance policies, trusts, real estate, personal property, or any other gift, whether current or deferred. All gifts to the FUND shall be invested and the distribution from the FUND shall be made available as stipulated in the Constitution Bylaws.

Numerous funds are established within the Endowment FUND and within the Trust FUND. The main difference between the Endowment FUND and the Trust FUND is the manner in which the gifts (assets) of the fund are held and distributed. In the Endowment FUND, gifts to the FUND are never distributed, they remain in the FUND. The distribution from the Endowment FUND comes in the form of interest, dividends, or other income produced by the original gift. A Trust FUND allows the distribution of the original gift along with income generated by the gift.

In the coming months a Planned Giving Committee will be established by the Holy Cross Church Council to provide everyone with additional information and administer the Endowment Trust FUND. In the mean-time, if you have any questions, please contact Butch Barnett, President of the congregation.

SOUP CAN LABELS/CEREAL BOX TOPS

Please continue to bring your Campbell Soup labels and box top coupons and give them to Dina Shoumaker.

THANKSGIVING THOUGHTS

You met me in the story of the Ten Lepers (Luke 17:11-19), I was the one who went back to thank Jesus. Then I didn't give my actions much thought. I was so overwhelmed by Jesus' compassion, saying thanks just seemed like the natural thing to do. But later I realized thanking God is not always easy for a Christian to do. That's why I offer you this special encouragement.

>>>GIVE THANKS EVEN THOUGH GOD'S GIFTS SEEM SO "COMMON" -- What's "common" about a complete healing from leprosy? Nothing at all! But because all ten of us in that exclusive social circle called a leper colony shared the same gift, it may have cheapened its value and importance in the eyes of the others. God gives wonderful gifts to millions: health, prosperity, family, friends, peace, education, etc. He gives all believers eternal life. Because so many share common gifts, they may see them as "common," ordinary -- not worth special thanks. Wrong! Because God richly shows His mercy to many others does not diminish the value of His gifts to me. Because I deserve none of what He gives, His gifts merit my appreciation and He my sincere thanks.

>>>GIVE THANKS EVEN THOUGH THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ARE PREOCCUPIED -- I thanked Jesus; the rest -- 90% -- did not. The rest were Jews, taught about God's goodness -- yet they did not respond. It's not that they didn't enjoy their new-found health; they got so preoccupied with it, they just forgot! It happened so "naturally." Here we were wretched lepers: social outcasts, permanently separated from family, friends and society, doomed to die by inches, slowly and painfully. Then, with just a word, Jesus changed all that. He healed us. He gave us back the things that matter most: our hopes, lives and loves. Once cured, we only focused on Life After Leprosy: to rush to the temple to be certified healthy and then resume the lifestyle we had missed for so long. It was easy for the nine to forget to thank the One who made our second chance at life possible.

It still is easy for people to get so preoccupied with God's good gifts they neglect to say thank you. They focus on regained health or restored social position, and the natural flow of things carries them away. Thanksgiving becomes an irritating inconvenience that interferes with their wonderful new life. Perhaps in every age the 90% get so preoccupied, but the 90% are wrong. God, our gracious Giver, is far more important than any of His gifts. Don't let the enjoyment of His gifts distract you from taking the time and making the effort to thank Him.

>>>GIVE THANKS EVEN THOUGH THE LORD IS SILENT -- I went back to thank Jesus although He never specifically requested it. After He heard our plea, He told us to go to the priests, then was silent. As we went our way, healed, Jesus didn't call after us to come back and give Him the thanks He deserved; He didn't send a disciple to remind us of a debt we owed. Because He was silent perhaps my companions assumed He did not expect to be thanked.

People still misread the silence that accompanies God's blessings. The Lord gives generously, regularly, quietly. He doesn't send nasty letters or hire a collection agency to get the thanks people owe Him. His silence doesn't mean He doesn't want or expect their thanks. That silence, in fact, allows people to offer thanks cheer-fully, willingly -- and sincerely.

I went back to thank Jesus. Will you? Jesus' marvelous love helped me overcome the obstacles that trip up so many. His love can do the same for you. I offered Jesus my heartfelt thanks for His great deliverance. Will you? Will you in this season of Thanksgiving and for all your life go back to your Lord in prayers, worship, service and gifts to give Him thanks for all He graciously gives you?

(Article from Lightsource Vo. 9 #2 Nov. 1986)

HC - NOVEMBER GREETERS

Nov. 6 - Tom & Janet Finney

Nov. 13 - Gene & Ada Hill

Nov. 20 - Jack & LaVon Post

Nov. 27 - Scott & Carole Peters

HC - NOVEMBER CLEANING LIST

Nov. 5 - Bill & Fran Shoumaker/Cheryl Littlejohn

Nov. 12 - Mary-Martha Guild

Nov. 19 - Chad & Whitney Walker/Kris Timm

Nov. 26 - Craig & Jeanie Trowe/Dean & Lynn Thomas & Family

WORDS FROM OUR SYNOD PRESIDENT

The Conference of Presidents (COP) held its regular fall meeting last week in Milwaukee, WI. In addition to its normal discussions involving congregations and called workers, the COP addressed the following issues:

The COP discussed how matters relating to creation and the flood are addressed in WELS publications and presentations. While scientific explanations are sometimes offered to explain or understand the biblical teachings regarding creation and the flood, the COP reaffirmed the importance of recognizing

that these explanations are to be viewed as scientific theories only. The district presidents will be reminding pastors, teachers, and presenters not to present as factual anything that goes beyond what Scripture says on any issue that lies in the realm of scientific observation and theoretical explanation. The COP recognizes that there are scientific theories that do, in fact, violate statements of Scripture and must be rejected--not on the basis of science but on the basis of clear statements of Scripture.

The presidium of the Southeastern Wisconsin District provided a report to the Conference of Presidents describing its efforts to resolve questions involving the status of Time of Grace as a "Recognized Service Organization" of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. While considerable progress has been made, the matter has not yet been fully resolved, and the Southeastern Wisconsin District presidium will continue its efforts to bring about a resolution.

The COP supports the concept of free conferences and will be developing definitions and guidelines for those who desire to plan such events.

The COP heard a brief update on the initial work of the Translation Feasibility Committee (TFC), which is studying the possibility of producing a new or revised Bible translation by Lutherans. The COP encourages any member of the synod to provide input to this committee as it carries out its assignment. The TFC will report its findings to the districts of the synod next summer when the matter of Bible translations will be on the agendas of all district conventions.

A task force on Lutheran schools was appointed. This committee was formed as a result of a convention resolution and will explore ways to strengthen our Lutheran schools. The membership of the committee will be announced when all members have accepted appointment. The committee will report its findings and recommendations to the 2013 synod convention.

The COP approved the implementation of a program that will provide mentoring for all first-year teachers.

The COP continued to develop plans for a synod wide every member visit as included in the "In Christ Alone" long-range plan adopted by the 2011 convention. The COP also discussed ways to encourage all congregations to support our joint work as a synod through Congregation Mission Offerings.

The COP considered the matter of developing a process of appeal for workers whose positions are eliminated for non-disciplinary reasons. The district presidents will be working proactively with congregations that face such decisions to ensure that the divine call is honored and that affected called workers are cared for in Christian love and concern. With that system in place, the COP determined that no special system of appeal will be necessary for such workers.

Our synod has entrusted the district presidents as the supervisors of doctrine and practice and has called them to serve as the pastors of their respective districts. We pray that God will continue to bless these men with wisdom and strength as they carry out their important work in our behalf.

Serving in Christ, Mark Schroeder

SHOULD WE CONTINUE TO USE THE NIV OR NOT?

Placed on the west bulletin board, at Holy Cross church, are several conference papers on the pros and cons of several translations. WELS has a Translation Committee made up of various Hebrew and Greek scholars who have evaluated the pros and cons of various translations of the Bible. The problem is that although the NEW 2011 NIV has made some good updated translations, they have also made some bad translations. The old NIV will not be available for any new works the Synod wants to publish after 2012. Other options that are being studied include: the Holman Bible, a Baptist translation, the ESV or English Standard Version which is an update of the Revised Standard Version, The New King James Version, The AAT or Beck a Lutheran translation. Salvation and every doctrine can be clearly found in any of these translations. Nevertheless, each has their strong and weak points. If you want to familiarize yourself with the strong and weak points, make a copy of the papers on the church bulletin board and put the originals back on the bulletin board. If you have questions, talk to Pastor. He would love to hear from you. There is another remote possibility and that is for WELS to publish their own translation of the Bible over a seven year period.

I AM THANKFUL

...For the wife who says it's hot dogs tonight because she is home with me and not out with someone else.

...For the husband who is on the sofa being a couch potato because he is home with me and not out at the bars.

...For the teenager who is complaining about doing dishes because that means she is at home and not on the streets.

...For the taxes that I pay because it means that I am employed.

...For the mess to clean after a party because it means that I have been surrounded by friends

...For the clothes that fit a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat.

...For my shadow that watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine.

...For a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home.

...For all the complaining I hear about the government because it means that we have freedom of speech.

...For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation.

...For my huge heating bill because it means I am warm.

...For the lady behind me in church that sings off key because it means that I can hear.

...For the pile of laundry and ironing because it means I have clothes to wear.

...For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been capable of working hard.

...For the alarm that goes off in the early morning hours because it means that I am alive.

HUMOR

Ole is the Pastor of the local Norwegian Lutheran Church and Pastor Sven is the minister of the Swedish Covenant Church across the road.

One day they are seen pounding a sign into the ground, which said:

DA END ISS NEAR!

TURN YERSELF AROUND NOW

BAFOR IT ISS TOO LATE!

As a car speeds past them, the driver leans out his window and yells, "Leave people alone, you Skandhoovian religious nuts!"

From the curve they heard screeching tires and a big splash.

Shakin' his head, Rev. Ole says "Dat's da terd one dis mornin'."

"Yaa," Pastor Sven agrees, then asks, "Do ya tink maybe da sign should yust say, 'Bridge Out?'"