

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)

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November 25, 2020

Day of Thanksgiving

Based upon Responsive Prayer 2 (Lutheran Service Book, p. 285)

Opening Versicles

- P** O Lord, open my lips,
- C** and my mouth will declare Your praise.
- P** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
- C** make haste to help me, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Opening Hymn: 892 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come



- 1 Come, ye thank-ful peo - ple, come; Raise the song of har-vest home.
- 2 All the world is God's own field, Fruit un - to His praise to yield;
- 3 For the Lord, our God, shall come And shall take His har-vest home,
- 4 E - ven so, Lord, quick - ly come To Thy fi - nal har-vest home;



- All be safe - ly gath - ered in Ere the win - ter storms be - gin;
- Wheat and tares to - geth - er sown, Un - to joy or sor - row grown.
- From His field shall in that day All of - fens - es purge a - way,
- Gath - er Thou Thy peo - ple in, Free from sor-row, free from sin,



- God, our mak - er, doth pro - vide For our wants to be sup - plied.
- First the blade and then the ear, Then the full corn shall ap - pear.
- Give His an - gels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast,
- There, for - ev - er pu - ri - fied, In Thy gar - ner to a - bide:



- Come to God's own tem - ple, come; Raise the song of har - vest home.
- Lord of har - vest, grant that we Whole - some grain and pure may be.
- But the fruit - ful ears to store In His gar - ner ev - er - more.
- Come with all Thine an - gels, come, Raise the glo - rious har - vest home.

Psalm 67

¹ May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,

² **that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.**

³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

⁴ **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.**

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!

⁶ **The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, shall bless us.**

⁷ God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The Readings

Sit

Old Testament Reading

Deuteronomy 8:1-10

⁸ “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. ² And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word^[a] that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. ⁶ So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by

fearing him. ⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

Philippians 4:6-20

⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned^[a] and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

¹⁴ Yet it was kind of you to share^[b] my trouble. ¹⁵ And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again.

¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.^[c] ¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Stand

Holy Gospel

Luke 17:11-19

¹¹ On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,^[a] who stood at a distance ¹³ and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." ¹⁴ When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; ¹⁶ and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? ¹⁸ Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."^[b]

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Kyrie

- P** O Lord,
C have mercy.
P O Christ,
C have mercy.
P O Lord,
C have mercy.

Lord's Prayer

- C** **Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;**

**give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Apostles' Creed

- C** **I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the
dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.**

Versicles

- P** Hear my prayer, O Lord;
C let my cry come to You.
P In the day of my trouble I call upon You,
C for You answer me.
P Hide Your face from my sins,
C and blot out all my iniquities.
P Create in me a clean heart, O God,
C and renew a right spirit within me.
P Cast me not away from Your presence,
C and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
P Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
C and uphold me with a willing spirit.
P Because Your steadfast love is better than life,
C my lips will praise You.

- P** For You have been my help,
C **and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy.**
P Teach me Your way, O Lord, that I may walk in Your truth;
C **unite my heart to fear Your name.**
P I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
C **and I will glorify Your name forever.**
P May all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You.
C **May those who love Your salvation say evermore, “God is great!”**
P Save Your people and bless Your heritage!
C **Be their shepherd and carry them forever.**
P Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
C **listen to my plea for grace.**

Collect of the Day

- P** Let us pray.
 Almighty God, Your mercies are new every morning and You graciously provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your goodness, give thanks for Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience all our days; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

- P** Dear heavenly Father, we thank You for the kindness and mercy You have showered upon us, Your beloved children in Christ. You continually feed, clothe, guard, and protect us, and in countless ways amply provide for our physical well-being. The bounties of land and ocean, of forest, mine, and factory, which we receive from Your hand, fill our hearts with gladness. We thank You, kind and gracious God, for Your many blessings upon our Christian families. We are confident that You watch over us whenever we leave our homes, and that unknowingly we are constantly brushed by the touch of Your holy angels that You send to guard us. Furthermore, You supply shelter over our heads, and provide us with jobs and incomes and with health and strength to carry on. By the example of Your own love for us You have taught us and the members of our families to love and respect one another and to live together in peace and harmony.

It is true, O Father, that at times You find it necessary to chasten us. But You also heal. You bring us low but then graciously raise us up again and make us better people

through the experience. By hearing and answering our prayers You are our refuge and strength, an ever present help in times of trouble. We thank You and bless Your holy name.

As a nation we have in far too many ways turned from Your law written in nature and on the heart and so have offended You greatly. We ask You to not forsake us, but in Your mercy continue to care for our land and people. Though we are often wasteful, You show Your love by continuing to supply our homes and industries with the necessary resources. Though we have lifted science and medicine to an idolatrous level, yet You continue through such to bless us with a high standard of living and have provided relief and cures for countless ailments. For all these evidences of Your love we praise You dear Father in heaven, and recognizing Your love for us Your children, we beg You to bring an end to the pandemic we are now facing.

But Your choicest benefits are those which have secured our everlasting salvation. How gracious You are to forgive the many sins we daily commit, because You sent Your Son Jesus to make payment in full for them! How richly blessed we are, for who can now condemn us? How blessed we also are for the numerous opportunities to receive Your holy Word through faithful preaching and teaching! Through Your Word the Holy Spirit continues to establish our hearts in the true faith unto eternal life. We thank You for these spiritual blessings that bring life to the body as well as the soul in the glories the new creation.

O Father, continue to open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Fill us with the Holy Spirit that we may walk the way of Your commandments, offering our bodies as living sacrifices, holy, pleasing to You. All our prayers and all our praises we offer in the name of Jesus, our living Redeemer and Lord.

C **Amen.**

Evening Prayer

- C** **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy**

angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

Benedicamus

- P** Let us bless the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Blessing

- P** The Lord bless you, defend you from all evil, and bring you to everlasting life.
- C** Amen.

Closing Hymn: 895 Now Thank We All Our God



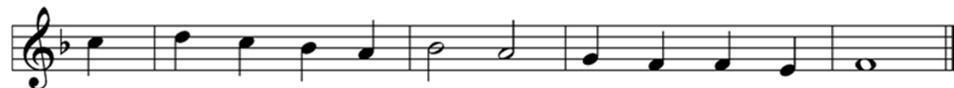
1 Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voices,
2 Oh, may this bounteous God Through all our life be near us,
△ 3 All praise and thanks to God The Father now be given,



Who wondrous things has done, In whom His world rejoices;
With ever joyful hearts And blessed peace to cheer us
The Son, and Him who reigns With them in highest heaven,



Who from our mothers' arms Has blest us on our way
And keep us in His grace And guide us when perplexed
The one eternal God, Whom earth and heav'n adore;



With countless gifts of love And still is ours to-day.
And free us from all ills In this world and the next!
For thus it was, is now, And shall be evermore.

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Silent Prayer

Acknowledgements

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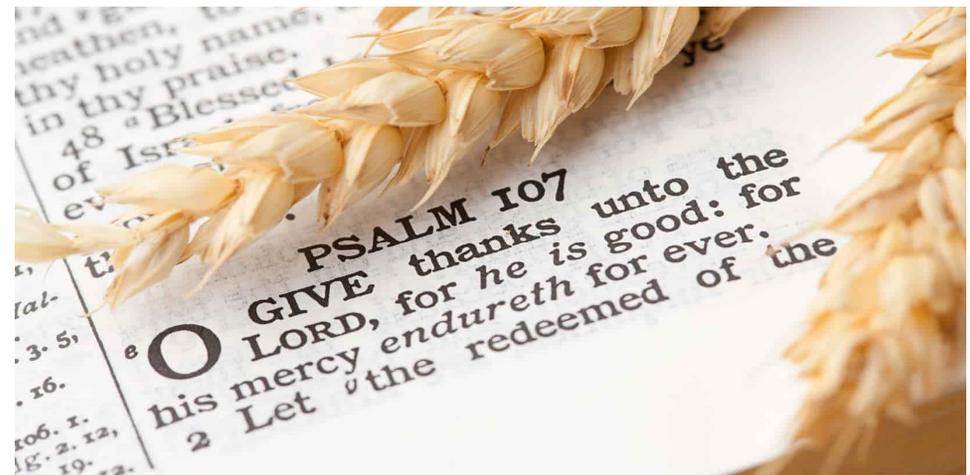
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Our Thanksgiving Offering will be given to **“Keeping Christ on Campus”**. Over the years, it has become harder to continue our ministry on these Universities in the Central Illinois District; University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois State University in Normal, Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, and Western Illinois University in Macomb.

Endowments created by Lutheran Legacy Foundation are key to the continued work. There are four endowments, one for each campus, which provides earnings used to support the ministry to students, faculty and staff members at each university.

Your contribution will enable a strong support of campus ministry and under the Lord’s blessing, will help to ensure Christ is proclaimed on our campuses for years to come.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES!



Day of Thanksgiving (Thanksgiving Eve)
November 25, 2020
Philippians 4:4, 6-20 (Epistle Readingⁱ)

“Rejoice in the Lord”

Grace to you and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

2020. We’ve had Covid-19. At its best, shortages of toilet paper and Clorox wipes. At its worst, lockdowns, online schooling, far less than satisfactory online worship, with some even choosing to not receive the Holy Communion, neither at church, nor even as a family with their pastor. Closed businesses, economic downturns, increased depression, and social ills. And, yes, serious illness; yes, death.

As if that wasn’t bad enough, we’ve endured a tumultuous and very acidic election as well as mob violence in the streets as cities have burned. We’re witnessing increasingly powerful and belligerent foes, China and Russia, as well as the ongoing insane saber-rattling in the Middle East, even as there is a general corresponding weakening in our own international friendships. Worse still, there’s a general weakening of our own national resolve, yes, a questioning of our basic understanding of who we even are as a nation as we endure a rewriting of American history with a whole new deceitful narrative designed to make us hate our homeland.

And now, even something as simple as our Thanksgiving holiday is affected, as plans have changed for many of us, whether our own traveling, or others coming to see us. No doubt more doom and gloom could be mentioned, but I’ll leave it with this, something I saw on a T-shirt. “2020: Not Recommended.” Simple, succinct and, sadly, seemingly all too true. And so I wonder, can we come here tonight to God’s own house as *thankful people*, as we sang just a little earlier?ⁱⁱ

The answer, my dearest Christian friends, is a solid “Yes, we can!” I am in no way denying the reality of all the negative things that I mentioned, as if they suddenly “go away.” They clearly do not; and if I said they did you would rightly quit listening to me and, probably equally rightly, help me into one of those special jackets where I can keep on hugging myself!

But *how* can we be thankful, joyful people in the midst of so much suffering and just general “bad”? The answer, dear friends in Christ, was revealed by St. Paul just two verses before our Epistle reading began. There he writes words that we have, no doubt, heard numerous times, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.”ⁱⁱⁱ He puts forth a positive command of continual rejoicing, a policy that Christians are to always follow.

When we hear these words, they might sound rather unreasonable. We might almost say, “Yeah right Paul, as if you did that. And if you did, I guess that’s just because you like “Super-Saint Man” which, I guess, I’m obviously not!” Yet, deep down, we know that we cannot just blow these off. For we know that they are not just Paul’s words, but they are *God’s Word* to each and every one of us. And this just makes it all the worse still. For on top of all the other issues we’re

facing, we now get the added burden of feeling guilty about being a pathetic Christian *who doesn't rejoice enough!* But is that a correct response?

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is true that the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, is commanding us to rejoice always. But in the very words He inspired, He gives the answer, truly, the power, to enable us to do it. It is found in those three little words, “Rejoice *in the Lord.*” Certainly, people who have things to be thankful for will rejoice. And even more certainly, we, the Lord’s people, have so much to be thankful for, yes, even in 2020.

First of all, under God’s providence, we do have to acknowledge that, as bad as things have been, they certainly could be much worse. Now that might not sound very uplifting, and it is not our primary point. But it is still *true*. As bad as things have been in our estimation, let us be sure to consider the many times that we have been spared further suffering of body and soul, further harm in property or livelihood, both for ourselves or for others. Thinking back, surely we can recall a time or two at least when prayers have been answered and harm averted, or at least lessened. Now, as faithful believers, ponder the many times that you never had to even utter a specific prayer, *because God already kept greater evil away from you*, His holy angels protecting you from harm and danger, all in response to you praying, “Give us this day our daily bread” and “Deliver us from evil”! For this manifold blessing, we are rightly thankful to our God!

But surely we must not stop there. For while the belts have been tightening for the majority of us in at least some manner, and certainly for some it has been a couple notches, how many of us are really just scraping by? St. Paul wrote, “But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.”^{iv} Dear Christians, how many of us are really at the level of only having some food in our stomach and clothes on our back? If we are to be content with such, then certainly our hearts *must be overflowing in thanksgiving* as God our Father has provided us with so much more, even allowing us to still enjoy hobbies, interests, and activities!

Truly, our heavenly Father continues to provide everything that we need for this body and life, and way more. Yet, He is doing something else right now as well. He is chastening us, disciplining us. It is painful. But make no mistake, it flows from a loving fatherly heart no less than our other blessings and, in fact, under His rule, may be a greater blessing still.

Dear believers, the self-reliant self is the greatest idol within us. Under God’s providence, a year like 2020 has gone a long way in striking at our idol of self-reliance, not merely chipping away at it, but like a wrecking-ball has crashed into the altar of self-reliance that we have constructed and to which we have bowed down. And with that chapel to self and Satan crushed, there is place in our heart once again for God’s throne to sit without competition, even as our we are reminded to have a focus that extends beyond this life to eternal matters! Yes, for this too we give sincere thanks to our God.

Even as Christians, our earthly life may not always go the way we want it to, in fact it quite often does not. But we know that God has never promised us that it would. Instead He has promised that He will care for us in our earthly lives, providing all that we need, even working everything together for the good of His people.^v And He continues to keep that promise and for that we cannot help but offer to Him our thanksgiving!

But we also know that, whatever the variables of this earthly life, it will, one day, come to an end, a day that may be sooner than we think. But our heavenly Father has given us a far greater blessing than daily bread and earthly protection. He has given us His most treasured possession, His only-begotten Son, to bear our doubts, our fears, and all the rest of our sins, dying the death that we deserve because of them upon the cross, and so winning for us forgiveness of our sins, reconciliation with God, and all the blessings of heaven. These our Father has given to us by His Holy Spirit through our Baptism into Christ. A Baptism which has a final promise from God to us: the promise of a resurrected body and eternal life in the new creation, where all doubts, isolation, social breakdowns, fear, and every other evil, even death itself, will be wiped away forever, as tears from our eyes.

Has 2020 been tough? Yes. Will 2021 be better? We certainly pray so and God is gracious so it might well be. But it might not be. We leave the future in God's almighty hands, and rightly so. But as His people, we can still thank, praise, serve and obey Him in 2020, 2021, and every day of our lives here on earth. For we rejoice in Him, *in the Lord*, our Triune God who gives us all good things now and forever.

Rejoice in the Lord always! Truly, we can do no less! May God bring such forth in us all. Amen!

ⁱ Technically the Epistle for this evening is simply verses 6-20, but verse 4 sets the stage for the rest of these verses.

ⁱⁱ "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come," *Lutheran Service Book*: 892.

ⁱⁱⁱ Philippians 4:4. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

^{iv} 1 Timothy 6:8.

^v Romans 8:28.