



HERALD

wheat ridge evangelical lutheran church
lutheran church-missouri synod
8600 west 38th avenue, wheat ridge co 80033
303-424-3161 www.wrlutheran.org
kent a. peck, pastor
hayden folks, vicar

JANUARY 2018

- Page 1 Vicar's letter
- Page 2 Pastor's Notes, Stewardship
- Page 3 LWML
- Page 4 Epiphany
- Page 5 Devotions based on hymns of Martin Luther

THANKSGIVING

With the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of the New Year, I thought it would be appropriate to reflect on thankfulness. In the Church, there is a danger of always talking about gratitude in terms of the Law (are you thankful enough for all the things God has given you? Obviously, no.) This is most dangerous when we turn God's merciful work of salvation in Jesus Christ into another burden laid upon our conscience instead of comfort for sinners. Instead of receiving God's forgiveness, we immediately question whether we are thankful enough for what Jesus has done.

In my Thanksgiving sermon I made the statement, "Jesus takes all our half thanks, and ingratitude. He purifies it, he sanctifies it, and offers it up to the Father as pure thanks." Not only are we saved by Christ's incarnation, death, and resurrection, but he also makes our gratitude acceptable to the Father.

Without Christ, we are completely unable to show gratitude to God. The non-Christian can obey the commandments of the Second Table of the Law (commandments 4-10) in a partial and exterior way. You don't need the Holy Spirit or faith to obey your parents' curfew or refrain from stealing your neighbors TV. However, it is impossible for the non-Christian to obey the First Table of the Law at all (commandments 1-3) (1 Cor 2:14). Gratitude falls under the Second Commandment: "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God," (Ex 20:7) which Luther explains saying, "We should fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks" (SC I.2). How can the unbeliever pray to the one they don't trust, praise the one they don't love, or give thanks to the one they don't know?

This isn't true for you, however; you are a Christian. You know Jesus and in him the Father is fully revealed (Jn 14:7). You know that God is gracious to you because "when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, [you] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Eph 1:13). You have been reborn as a new creation in Baptism (Titus 3:5) and clothed in Christ's righteousness (Gal 3:27). The Holy Spirit dwells in you, sustaining faith and pointing you to Christ who comes to you in Word and Sacrament.

The Holy Spirit creates in you a new will that truly desires to give thanks to God, and also the faith to abide in Christ's word. It is impossible to do any truly good work apart from Christ, but in Christ we abound in good works such as gratitude. Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5).

Nevertheless, we shouldn't imagine that even after being reborn our thankfulness in and of itself is any more than half thanks. Our sinful nature continues to cling to us, suppresses our new grateful hearts, and turns our praise towards ourselves or our idols (Rom 7:14-20). The Lutheran Reformer Philip Melancthon helpfully explains, "We ought to understand, people regenerated through faith not only receive the Holy Spirit, and have motives that agree with God's Law, but we ought also to realize that they are far distant from the Law's perfection."

Yet Christ does more than forgive us our imperfect thanks. Genesis 4 records that Cain and Abel both presented sacrifices of thanksgiving to the Lord: "And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard" (Gen 4:5-6). The author of Hebrews explains, "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts" (Heb 11:4). Abel's thanksgiving was commended and accepted as pure and holy according to his faith. Just like it is impossible to do any truly good work apart from Christ, it is impossible for a Christian's works not to be good because "in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal 3:26-27). You are righteous on account of Christ's work. You are clothed in Christ. And any work you do is a work done by a child of God, so it is acceptable to the Father. He looks upon you and sees Christ. So give thanks to the God of your salvation, and know that he hears you.

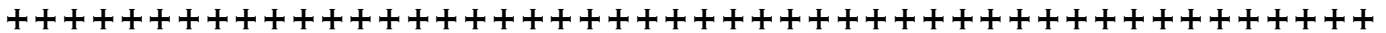


NOTES FROM PASTOR
(BE SURE TO CHECK YOUR CHURCH CALENDAR)

- 1. We will have an **Epiphany Service on Saturday evening, Jan 6**. We will have a **Gentile potluck dinner** (pork or seafood) prior to the service at 5:30 pm, and the Divine Service at 6:30 pm. Once again, Rev. Neustel from Faith Lutheran will lead us on the organ.
- 2. Bishop Lytkin and Rev. Dan Johnson will once again be visiting us this month to update us on the Siberian Lutheran Church. We will have a **Vespers Service at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan 23** with a reception afterward. The Bishop's son will once again be traveling with his father and just might entertain us again with his guitar and singing. Their church organist Natalia will also be accompanying them.

Also if possible, it would be great if we could have some folks volunteer to host them overnight. They will get here on the afternoon of the 23rd and leave early the next morning. They do not all have to stay in one home; but your assistance in this would be greatly appreciated.

- 3. Our **Book Club** will have our first meeting on Sunday, Jan. 28 at 3 p.m. On the agenda will be to set meeting times (they don't have to be on Sunday afternoons) and we will have read and will be discussing C.F.W. Walther's essay on Confessional Subscription...answering why we Lutherans unconditionally subscribe to the Book of Concord, and really what that even means. Please see Pastor for copies of essay.
- 4. Pastor will be out of town Jan. 13-19 attending the **Symposia in Ft. Wayne, IN, and also participating in the annual Board of Directors meeting of the Siberian Lutheran Mission Society**. Vicar will be conducting a Matins Service for Sunday, Jan. 14th (no communion), and leading the Adult Bible Class, as well as the Tuesday Bible Study.

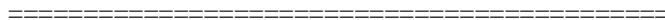


STEWARDSHIP TODAY

To describe stewardship, the correct preposition is not TO nor is it FROM; instead it is **THROUGH!** As one reads the Bible, the idea of “steward as a conduit” is one that is easily seen. The working and keeping of the steward was never for self. It was always a forward and outward movement which are directions of the Gospel. Yes, this does include financial stewardship, but it is also so much more. We are led by the Holy Spirit to be the hands and feet of Jesus for your neighbor so that they too might see the Gospel at work among the community.

It is time for us to move to a stewardship understanding that is **THROUGH** God working in and through His stewards for the sake of the kingdom. (StewardCAST – LCMS)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. (James 1:17)



A big thank you to those who gifted me with gifts, yummy treats, cards, and financial gifts this Christmas. You are such a loving congregation! It's my pleasure to serve you. May God bless your New Year!

Janet Krogh



Welcome to all women of the congregation!

“Serve the Lord with gladness” Psalm 100:4

Mission Statement

The mission of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary league is to assist each woman of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in affirming her relationship with the Triune God so that she is enabled to use her gifts in ministry to the people of the world.

Thank you very much for your continued support of our LWML mission grants both in the Rocky Mountain District and National levels

We are greatly anticipating the next **Rocky Mountain District LWML Convention** to be held **June 8-10, 2018 in Boulder, CO at the Millenium Harvest House!** The District Conventions held every other year are always a wonderful time to get together with our fellow sisters in Christ throughout our District.

May God continue to bless our Mites.

YOU have been a big part of the ministry outreach through your contributions on Mite Sundays each month this past year. **THANK YOU!**

MISSION GRANT – \$25,000

Funds requested by Tanzanian Sewing Center will be used to build classrooms with a 50 student capacity, along with a dormitory. Within one year of training, their sewing skills enable women to have pocket money, purchase a sewing machine, and buy materials to create sewn items to sell for income.

Please continue to bring your Mite Boxes and Mites --- **MITE SUNDAY---** **January 14, 2018**



The **Cookie Walk** on December 10th was also well supported, with many cookies being donated, and then returning to fill your cookie tins. If you would like to see a 12th Annual Cookie Walk, please return your cookie tins to the church kitchen.

With the funds raised throughout the year, we disbursed monies to support Missionary Pastor DeGroot in Albuquerque, Wheat Ridge Feed the Future Backpack Program, LCMS Lutheran World Disaster Relief (Florida and Texas), and Gethsemane Lutheran School. Christmas baskets were delivered to shut-in members.

Your support helps assist us in our mission to reach out to individuals and groups.

NEXT LWML MEETING is Saturday, January 13th at 9:00 am
All women of the congregation are invited to join us.

EPIPHANY –

Saturday - January 6

Gentile Potluck

Pork or Seafood

5:30 p.m.

Service with Communion

6:30 p.m.



The Christian Church has observed the season of Epiphany since the third century, A.D. The day of Epiphany always falls on January 6th—12 days after Christmas—but is generally celebrated on the first Sunday of the new year.

As Christmas marks the appearance of God to the human family in the person of Jesus Christ, the presence of the foreign Magi is symbolic that the one whom they sought as ‘King of the Jews’ was ‘King of the Gentiles’ as well. The visit of the Wise Men clearly indicates that it was the Gentiles who were ultimately to receive the gospel.

Little is written in Scripture about the Magi. The only account of their visit can be found in the second chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. However, much tradition has surrounded them. Matthew does not give us their names and does not even specify how many there were. The number three has evolved because they bore three gifts.

It took some time for the early church to accept the fact that Jesus was not sent to the Jews exclusively. But once the church, at Paul’s urging, understood the universal intention of God, it set into motion a mighty missionary effort which reached throughout the Roman Empire. The Good News which we share with the Magi also extends to people of all nations, languages, and colors.

In the midst of yet another Epiphany season, we are made starkly aware that the missionary task of the church remains unfinished. Despite centuries of history, there are people near and far who still await the bright light of Jesus Christ to break the darkness of their lives.

That is our mission—to bring that light of Jesus Christ to all nations.