

(This online version of the newsletter has been edited for reasons of privacy)

**Pastor's Page
November 2011**

Thanksgiving Day

Ever since 1621 people in the new world have set aside one day each year to give thanks. If you think about it, setting aside one day to thank God for His many gifts is a bit insulting. Doesn't God take care of us each day, hour, minute, and second? Shouldn't we set aside more than one day a year to thank Him? Isn't it our duty to thank Him for our many blessings; like we are currently teaching our catechumens in Luther's explanation of the first article of The Creed?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to **thank** and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

In light of all that God does for us on a constant basis, setting aside one day to say thanks, as we eat too much turkey and watch football, seems silly. But wait a second. Thanksgiving Day isn't a Church holiday or festival. The world setting aside one day and telling people to count their blessings can't produce a grateful heart. The Law only shows us that we are ungrateful and has not power to change our heart. The way that the world and the Church approach being thankful, is quite different.

We, the Church, confess every week that we have been ungrateful children and have failed to thank the Lord for His blessings as we ought. We confess that even when we fail to say thank you that He still takes care of us without any merit or worthiness in us.

God doesn't take care of us because of how often we say thank you. In the second article of the creed we believe, teach, and confess that while we were yet ungrateful sinners God gave His Son for us, Who lived the perfect life in our place and was always grateful. Furthermore, we confess that He rescued us from the punishment for our ungratefulness with *His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death*. We also confess in the third article that the *Holy Spirit has called us by the Gospel, enlightened us with His gifts, sanctified and kept us in the true faith...In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all our sins...*

Because God does so much for us, from faith and not obligation, we do respond with thanksgiving. Notice that it is God through His gifts of Word and Sacraments, Who creates a clean and thankful heart in us. From this gift of faith, we sing in the *Gloria in Excelsis*, "...we give thanks to thee for thy great glory..." We respond to hearing the Word of the Lord with, "Thanks be to God." We sing in the *Preface*, "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God." We have the *Thanksgiving*, "O Give thanks unto the Lord for He is good." We conclude the *Benedicamus*

with, "Thanks be to God." These are just some of the few times that we thank the Lord for His Divine service to us each week, not too mention the times in our prayers, hymns, daily devotions, and the like. The Church has always gathered often to thank the Lord for His many blessings, way before it was the contemporary thing to do in 1621.

So ,live in the world and enjoy your turkey and football this Thanksgiving Day, knowing that a thankful heart doesn't come from setting aside one day to say thanks, but by the Lord creating and sustaining a grateful heart in you daily. Amen.

Let us Bless the Lord,

Pastor

ZION'S WOMEN'S SOCIETY

The Women's Society met on Thursday, October 13th. Twelve members, one guest and Pastor Stark attended. Arlene Hakes was hostess and served a choice of apple or green tomato pie with ice cream. It was a difficult choice as both were very good.

Pastor led us in devotions. We read from Isaiah 45:1-7. This was the Old Testament reading for the following Sunday, Oct. 16th. During our business meeting Rosa Blake and Joann Ehlers agreed to continue to serve another year as secretary and treasurer. There was also some discussion regarding the LWML Zone Rally being held at church on Saturday, Oct. 22. Several of the Women's Society members also belong to LWML. A few non LWML members volunteered to help in the kitchen that day. Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, Nov. 10 at 1:30 p.m. Millie Hunt will be the hostess.

Remember we meet every second Thursday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at church in the fellowship hall. All women of the congregation are cordially invited to join us.

BIBLE CLASSES

You are invited to attend our Bible studies on Sunday mornings following our worship service. In honor of our Lutheran heritage this reformation month, we will have a video series on lutheranism coming to America via Pastor Walther, the first president of the LCMS. Don't miss this great history.

Wednesday morning classes are at 9:30 a.m. Come early if you would like to talk with your fellow members.

Everyone is invited to attend one or both classes. You are most welcome!

REMINDERS

Please continue to save your Gordy's receipts and stamps. The stamps need to be trimmed about ¼ inch around the stamp. The monies received from these are sent to -missions. Thank you!

Our local food pantry is always in need of non-perishable food items – ESPECIALLY THIS TIME OF YEAR. There is a great need for food items in our community.

Needed: Non-Perishable food items such as boxed dinners, soup, canned vegetables, flour, sugar, cake mixes, soap, toilet paper, etc. There is a barrel in the back entrance or drop the items off at the Salvation Army .

Flowers and radio: If you would like to furnish altar flowers or sponsor a radio broadcast for a special occasion, please call the office. Altar flowers are \$30.00 and the radio broadcast is \$76.00.

Prayer requests: if you would like a prayer on Sunday morning, please contact one of the secretaries during the week. If it is a last minute, you can also catch pastor before service.

**HIGHER THINGS:
SUMMER 2012 HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH CONFERENCE
July 2-7, 2012**

Sign-up Deadline - High School Summer Trip! November 14th is the deadline to sign up for the "Higher Things" trip with Pastor. Don't miss out on this great opportunity!

THANKSGIVING

Our Thanksgiving Eve worship will be Wednesday, November 23rd at 6.30 p.m.

This is a special time of the year to give thanks to God for all that he has given to us and has done for us.

Invite your family and friends to join us in worship.

ADVENT

Advent begins Sunday, November 27th. “Advent” simply means “coming.” During this penitential season we focus on the 3 “comings” of Jesus for us sinners: 1. His Advent at Christmas, or incarnation. 2. His coming in Word and Sacraments. 3. His coming on the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. In addition to Sunday worship, we will also have midweek Wednesday services at 6:30 p.m. During Advent and Lent the church historically has focused on studying the catechism. Therefore, our Wednesday sermons will be drawn from Luther’s Small Catechism. Wednesday Schedule: Nov. 30, Dec. 7, Dec. 14, and Dec. 21.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

“Spirit of Christmas” of Chippewa County is a non-profit tax-exempt organization that receives and distributes Christmas gifts to families in Chippewa County who are in need. In 2010, with your help, 674 families and 1,548 children were served. SOC depends entirely on the generosity of the community for the donations of gifts and money to serve these families.

GIFT Donations: Unwrapped gifts preferred. Suggestion for gifts of new toys, books, puzzles, games, craft items, blankets and bedding, winter hat and mittens, clothing and shoes etc. Gifts can be dropped off at Central Lutheran Church, 28 E. Columbia St., Chippewa Falls – Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m.

Monetary donations can be given to purchase gifts for these families. Please make checks payable to: Spirit of Christmas, PO Box 831, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Volunteers are needed: The Spirit of Christmas has no paid staff and relies on volunteers to do a variety of activities such as selecting appropriate gifts as requesting on applications from donations received. If you can help in any way, please contact the SOC office at 715-726-0534 or 715-271-0256.

Your help is much appreciated by the struggling families in Chippewa County!

