



When It’s Hard to Give Thanks

As I write the lead for the November newsletter, it is Tuesday, October 15, 2024. Our newsletter editor is always pleased when all the articles due are submitted by the 18th of each month.

Having two major hurricanes affect our area within 3 weeks of each other, and since this article is for November where many people focus on the things for which to give thanks, it seems obvious that the focus would be on thanking God for His protection and provision during the last two hurricanes.

But not everyone may be so willing to do so, especially if someone close to them died as a result of Helene or Milton. There are those who not only do not want to thank God, but perhaps are experiencing intense anger for what is perceived as a lack of protection and provision. God where are you? God why did you let this happen? Don’t you love me? Are you punishing me?

As believers we too struggle with these questions regarding our loving God. But the answer should not be focused on God, but on us and our understanding of the God we follow and worship.

Why do we assume that as followers of God, our lives will be without problem, or at least with minimal problems, or again with problems that have quick and easy solutions? Why do we forget these passages?

Matthew 16:24

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Isaiah 55:8-9

⁸ “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.

⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Inside this issue

- Pastor’s Notes 1-2
- Happenings & Dates..... 3
- Stewardship..... 4-5
- Prayers..... 5
- Bible Studies..... 6
- School/Child Care 7-8
- Coloring Page..... 9
- Inspiration.....10

(Continued on page 2)

1 Peter 5:10

¹⁰ And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Pain is part of the process of growth. None of us remember the pain of our first teeth coming in. But our parents do. Indeed, there was a lot of pain. But it was necessary in order for us to grow stronger. The pain process of tooth eruption allowed us to go from liquid mush type foods to foods that we could sink our teeth into. Couple that with a growing appetite and we grew stronger as we aged.

Pain discourages us. It can make us feel worried, anxious or even angry. But remember this:

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 5:3-5

³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

God will use all things, even difficulty, even struggles, even pain in order to develop our spiritual maturity.

People want mountain top experiences, emotional and spiritual highs. They make us feel good. But we can't get from mountain top to mountain top without going through the valleys. And that is what makes those mountain top experiences so joyful. It's because we have left the valley and began the hard, demanding climb up the mountain.

These two recent back to back hurricanes have reminded me that there are others around me who had a much more difficult time with these storms than I did. And not all of them understand God the way I do. They are struggling. They are angry. They may even walk away from the God they have worshipped for years.

What can we as believers and disciples continue to do in the recovery, especially for those who don't believe, but also for the current believer who is struggling, trying to understand God and make sense of it all?

What do we do? We love. With our words. With our actions. But also by our quiet presence, just sitting with them and holding their hands.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Craig Mathews

Here are some advanced happenings and dates
to place on your calendar now!

Saturday, November 9
Fall Harvest Festival



2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Event Highlights:

Chili Cook-Off
Family-friendly games
Arts & Crafts
Activities for kids
Book Fair
Hot Dogs

Saturday, November 30
Hanging of the Greens - Getting Ready for Christmas

starting at 9:00 am

Meet in the Church Sanctuary

Wednesday, December 4 - 1st Advent worship
Family Get-together

5:00 pm Meet in Fellowship Hall

Quick, light meal followed by brief family style worship, as well as making a craft that will hang from the ceilings in the entryway to the worship center in preparation for the School Christmas Program.

School and Church families are invited to participate

Wednesday, December 11 - 2nd Advent worship
Vesper Worship Service

4:30 pm in Sanctuary (Worship Center)

Wednesday, December 18 - 3rd Advent worship
School Christmas Program

4:00 pm in Sanctuary (Worship Center)

The consequences of shallow thankfulness

Can you imagine a Thanksgiving dinner without turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and pumpkin pie? I know I can't! To not have these on the menu, or worse, to run out of them with the family around the table, would be a culinary sin of epic proportions. An attempt to serve bratwurst and hamburgers in place of the standard fare would ring hollow and seem totally inappropriate and out of place. It isn't that the food would be bad; brats and burgers are pretty tasty. But not for Thanksgiving — they just don't go together!

This month, as we continue to walk through the stewardship hymn, "Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness" (*LSB* 788), we turn our attention to verse three. Here, William Watkins Reid, Sr., the man who penned this text, draws attention to some things that do not go along with faithful, thankful stewardship.

Forgive us, Lord, for selfish thanks and praise ...

We see this often with small children. They greedily snatch the candy out of a grandparent's hand, savagely destroy the wrapper, and attempt to stuff the entire delicacy in their mouth in one bite, only to have a parent say, "Tell grandma thank you." This is followed by the pro forma thanks that is uttered between chocolate chews. It isn't really thankfulness; it is simply checking a box to keep mom or dad off their backs.

We never really outgrow this either. Our shallow thankfulness takes the form of feigned humility when praise is being offered. We are thankful that our admirers noticed and called us out: "Look at me! Aren't I special?" No thought at all is given to the fact that the Lord was the One who gave us the ability and opportunity for accomplishment. Our false blush is really only masking our selfish, credit-seeking gain. Once again, we find ourselves idolatrously thanking ourselves.

For words that speak at variance with deeds ...

What carries more weight: words or action? The steward who gives voice to the Gospel in the Divine Service but then lives like a pagan in the world does great damage, not only to others but to the Gospel itself! This is the consequence of failed stewardship. It is idolatry that separates the steward from the Lord.

Worse yet, it also impacts others negatively. When the failed steward is the reference point outside the Christian community, there are those who want no part of being Christian or following the Christ they claim. We see this play out in the impact of overt political activity among Christians based on governing policy as opposed to fidelity to the Word of God. When our lips and our lives are out of sync, like what used to happen with old movie projectors, the impact isn't funny — it obscures the Gospel!

*Forgive our thanks for walking pleasant ways
unmindful of a broken brother's need ...*

Our creature comforts often become an obstacle to faithful stewardship. This is true of both

individual and corporate stewardship. Financial stewardship is often limited by our desire to be comfortable and have the latest toys and gadgets. Congregational stewardship is often limited by the desire to focus on what is best for the congregation as opposed to how resources might be best stewarded to reach the community with the Gospel.

When we see someone in need, or broken by the world, we often look at them as freeloaders. We admonish them to get a job. We insist that they learn our language, learn our customs, and make them their own. But this gets in the way of seeing every human being the way that Jesus sees them. Remember, that broken person is one for whom Jesus went to the cross to die and rise. When we are unmindful of these needs, our shallow thankfulness also stands in the way of the Gospel.

This stanza reminds us of the challenge we face. Our hearts are master idol-makers. Our shallow thankfulness threatens our souls and hinders others from seeing Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Stewardship is serious business. It is a task for which we were created. In our sinful failings, we are never relieved of these duties. In our Baptism, we are restored to be stewards of the Gospel. Our faithful stewardship is all about that Gospel.

Forgive us when our thanks are shallow, O Lord! In this month of Thanksgiving, grant us the grace to offer heaping helpings of this stewardship so that others may see Jesus!

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Prayer Requests



Healing for Members: Ed & Jan DeTrow, Don & Lana Garay, Judy Guastella, Jane Harty, Steven Horvath, Kitty Hill, Joyce Krug, Jerry Lindberg, Chuck & Elaine Malecki, Lillian Miles, Mike Nagel, Tom & Sue Poyer, Jim & Bonnie Schluentz, Bob Varone, and Pauline Vickey.

School & Child Care staff & families: Brandi Fordham (Child Care staff), Karis Russell.

Friends and relatives: Charlie Finkenbine, Glenn Galway, Barbara George, Mikayla Hack-sunda, Michelle Cote, Jesus Mathews, Dave McMullan, Esther Murphy, Becky Rurade, family & friends of Dorothy Sinowetski, and Wava Zeitlow.

~~TREASURER'S
REPORT~~

Financial information is available to
all members upon request.

Bible Studies



Sunday Morning Bible Study: Please join us after the morning service (and after a cup of coffee – approximately 10:30 a.m.). We are working through the book *Behavioral Covenants for Christian Communities* by Gilbert R. Rendle. As your Interim Pastor, I feel this is valuable for ALL members of Redeemer to participate in. Although it is not a Bible study as most people are familiar with, it will provide you with the understanding, skills, and abilities to confidently conduct this ministry entrusted to you from God as you move forward into the future. It will also help everyone learn how this community of believers is better able to live out: Romans 12:1-2; Proverbs 4:23; Proverbs 21:2; Ezekiel 11:17-19; Romans 12:4-18; Ephesians 5:21; and John 15:5.

There are study notes/packets available on the Coffee Table and Visitor’s Desk in the narthex.

Table Talk: Table talk is a very informal Bible study held on Thursday mornings at 9:30 AM, immediately after the 8:45 school chapel service. Participants come with any sort of question. We work to answer those questions from God’s Word and from our Lutheran Confessions. In doing that we all learn more about God’s Word and its application in our lives. We are currently focusing on the book of Acts. One way or another there is always friendly and interesting discussion. All are welcome and encouraged to come early to attend the chapel service. Who can’t be cheered by the sound of the children’s voices? There is always coffee and usually doughnuts. Please consider joining us! **Pastor Mathews** is leading the discussion.

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Choir Director

Newsletter Pat Finkenbine

School Admin Wendy Horvath

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GROUPS/GUILDS

Altar Guild Catalina Bakas

Coffee Hour Joyce Krug

***The deadline for the December 2024 Newsletter is November 18th.
PLEASE have all your submissions sent to patchas123@gmail.com
OR drop them off at the church office by the date indicated above. Thank You!***

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus. Hebrews 12:1-3

K-1 Kindergarten and 1st grade have completed their first semester. They have been working on building their social and emotional skills by daily circle time where they can openly discuss their thoughts. During their academic time we have been working on a variety of skills like patterning, adding and subtracting, sight words and reading comprehension. During our Bible class they have been learning about Joseph in the book of Genesis and how he forgave his brothers for their jealousy. We look forward to teaching them about Moses during the weeks to come. Ms. Pam and Ms. Lacey

2nd & 3rd The Second and Third graders are continuing to benefit from the spiral design of basic math skills in the Abeka curriculum. Our daily practice of such skills as borrowing and carrying for addition and subtraction, telling time to the minute, geometry, measurement, solving story problems and place value strengthens higher level thinking. The Second graders are learning multiplication facts as they listen to the Third graders practice 2s, 3s and 4s times tables to the tunes of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, Freres Jacques and Row Row Row Your Boat. Our class has targeted discussions about how we treat one another. When unkind words or deeds occur, we have begun to consider how God wants us to use what we write and say to encourage others. Ms. Donna

4th & 5th We have completed Genesis Chapters 1- 8. Our students have memorized Psalm 23 and are now reading Genesis Chapters 9-11 and memorizing I Corinthians 13:1-7. The students already call it the love chapter. In Arithmetic 4th grade is conquering division problems and unknown number solutions. Multiplication will always be in review. In Language, students are learning past, present and future tense for helping and action verbs in sentences. Spelling has a new challenge with an online game called spelling training.com. This has helped them enjoy learning 20 words and 10 vocabulary words a week. Reading for Fourth Grade is practicing reading aloud like you are talking instead of like a robot. They seem to enjoy using more expressions in their oral readings. Fifth grade is reading a chapter book with deep convictions. Discussions from each chapter are pricking their consciences and helping them make decisions based on God's word not being pressured by others. Science has been fun with my science experiments. Some work, some don't. But we are learning pitch and volume with sounds. Hopefully, they understand that being too loud hurts their ears from the vibrations of sound. History has been about ancient civilizations for 5th grade and 4th grade is learning how our 13 colonies organized a government to rule themselves. Penmanship is slower than I expected. Many new students have never been exposed to it. But they are taking on the challenge with better results every day. Please keep our students in prayer while they repair their homes after these hurricanes. Some have had to be displaced while they are being restored. Ms. Fran

6th & 7th Hello all, the past month has been a busy one. In class they have been working on, in 6th for Math they've almost completed fractions and decimals. In 7th they have been working on finding Percentages and finding out how to calculate how much do they save with coupons. In Bible both classes have been working on The Exodus out of Egypt led by Moses. And the Israelites passage through the desert. In Language both classes have been working on descriptive stories and paragraphs. In Science they have been studying the Solar System and observing

(Continued on page 8)

SCHOOL (CONTINUED) / CHILD CARE

the Harvest Moon and the Comet that only comes by every 18,000 years. In History 6th and 7th grade has been learning about Plymouth Plantations and the first Thanksgiving. We have also started a prayer wall in class for any student or parent who is in need of extra prayers. We hope and pray that everyone is safe and sound from the Hurricanes this month. Have a Blessed Day. Coach Don

Upcoming events:

November 5 Hurricane Make-Up Day

November 9 Child Care and School Fall Festival 2-5pm

November 25-29 Thanksgiving Break



CHILD CARE



Letters of the month: P,N,C

Number of the month: 5

Shape of the month: Triangle

Color of the month: Yellow

Bible Lesson: God's People Worship in God's House

Bible Words : I am with you always. Matthew 28:20

This month we are learning about : We all give thanks

VPK- we are studying How trees grow , types of trees and how and what we use them for.

Letters of the month; F, G, L, O

Fall Harvest Festival & Chili Cook –Off on November 9



"Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things." **Psalm 107:8-9**

Thank You Prayer

Father Lord,

I come before you this day with a heart full of gratitude. Thank you for this beautiful day.

Thank you for all your blessings and your goodness in everything I do.

It is by your kindness and grace that I'm able to go through each and everyday and do what I have to do everyday.

I give you all the glory.

I give you all the honor and adoration.

Thank you for forgiving me my sins and loving me.

For all that you do in my life, I want to say thank you Lord.

I am grateful for your works in my life. Thank you for being my guide and helping me to make the right decisions.

Thank you for everything that you allow to happen in my life. Even when times are hard, I trust that You are at work and You always carry me through.

Words cannot express how thankful I am for all that you do.

Bless your Holy Name Oh merciful Father.

In Jesus' name

Amen

**REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH,
SCHOOL & CHILD CARE**

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REDEEMER REPORTER

Published monthly for members, associate members and visitors of Redeemer Lutheran Church. Redeemer is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. (LCMS).

WORSHIP SERVICES:

Divine Service: 9:15 am

Bible Study: 10:30 am



The Redeemer Lutheran Church, School & Child Care Family are called into the service of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by His command (Matthew 28:18-20) to:

- ◆ *Disciple all nations, that is, all people;*
- ◆ *Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit;*
- ◆ *Proclaim the Gospel and teach His Word in its truth and purity; and*
- ◆ *Never be ashamed of the Gospel—it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16)*