

Thanks
be to God
for his
incredible
gift!
2 Corinthians 9:15

THE PILGRIM HERALD

November 2017

**PILGRIM EV. LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

462 Meadowbrook Dr.,
West Bend, WI 53090

(262) 334-0375

Rev. Joseph M. Fisher, Pastor
(262) 335-6736

Rev. Christopher Raffa, Pastor
(262) 388-8287

www.pilgrimlutheran-westbend

NOVEMBER: LORD HAVE MERCY

"So she catches Christ, the Lord, in his own words and with that wins not only the right of a dog, but also that of the children."

[Martin Luther]

You know the story. She is Canaanite woman. Her tribe had been ordered by God to be driven out of the land. Her tribe were the descendants of Canaan, son of Ham. They worshiped many false gods. Despite her corrupt, and sullied background she had a problem. Her daughter was severely oppressed by a demon. Knowing Jesus to be the long promised Messianic Son of David, she cries out, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David." It was all she knew. But it would be enough. Yet her immediate experience would seek to tell her otherwise. For as she begged and pleaded, Jesus remained silent. To add insult to injury the disciples of Jesus wanted to send her away, this wailing woman. As if non-existent, she listened with great consternation as Jesus explained to His disciples that He had only been sent to the house of Israel, not to the gentile world of dogs. She was well aware of her family's unclean roots. She was willing to confess that she was not entitled to God's help. She knew she was a dog, that is, a sinner, never deserving of God's mercy and grace. For even little dogs, even wretched people like herself, eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. And great is this faith. That although she experienced rejection, she nonetheless believed the word that Jesus is merciful and trusted in him as her only hope of deliverance. Or as Martin Luther would insightfully comment, "she catches the Christ, the Lord, in his own words."

"Lord have mercy." Often that is all we can say. In the face of inexplicable evil. When hate and death fall down from a Las Vegas hotel room. When life and whole villages a swept away by

hurricanes, wildfires, and tornadoes. When cancer ravages the bodies of our little children, our beloved spouses, our wise and weary parents. When such things happen, our lips fail to open for the heart and mind having nothing to say, nothing to bind up the broken hearted or salve the wounds of the sufferers, just the never-ending search to the question of "why?" And yet great is the faith of God's people whose lips are opened by His abiding nature of mercy, to put into our mouths, "Lord have mercy." And He does.

As you may well know, "Lord have mercy" [*The Kyrie*—Its Latin title comes from the first word of the hymn and means "Lord"] is one of the great pillars of the Divine Service. It's the ancient prayer of the church that God would have mercy upon us sinners for Jesus' sake in all our needs of body and soul. Friedrich Lochner, an early Lutheran missionary from Germany [sent to North America by Wilhelm Lohel], describe the Kyrie as the "humble confession of complete misery, the misery of a thousand plagues and great trials, which no mouth can adequately describe, and for the sake of which misery God's only Son was born...and greeted by the songs of praise of the angels. However, freed from this curse, the redeemed of the Lord shall sing of this misery until the fullness of redemption shall have come." The Kyrie represents our deepest spiritual longings and hopes, which can never be fully realized in this world. The Kyrie is the song of the church in her exile."

Even though she wasn't Jew, a descendent of Israel, she knew who the true Israel was, this Jesus, who would have mercy on her. Despite what she saw. Despite the fact that it was obvious she couldn't help her daughter or herself. Despite the reality of sin, brokenness and death. She knew of a greater reality, of a Lord who was and is the Redeemer of the world. Remember, "the little word Lord means simply the same as

Redeemer” [Luther]. That is, one who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. And so, she would catch this Redeemer, this Jesus who has mercy and who saves and restores all things unto a new heaven and a new earth, in His own merciful Word. She would catch Him in His mighty words, so that she would not be caught in her powerless words. And Jesus would joy to be caught in His words, in His mercy, for that is what gives Him the greatest joy. To have mercy, to rescue from captivity, the children He has bought with His own merciful blood, and to have them live forever with Him in kingdom which shall have no end.



Lord Have Mercy On Us,
Pastor Raffa

Come Join Us!!

Thanksgiving Potluck on Thursday, November 23, 2017 at 11:30 am. Hosted by the Raffa Family. Please see sign up sheet in the Narthex for more information.

Church Council Meeting Minutes

The Church Council September 11, 2017 meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. by President, Jerome Sommer, who opened the meeting with a prayer provided by Pastor Raffa. Others in attendance were Fred Leffin, Tanner Schmidt, Ron Virchow Jr., Mary Lehtimaki, and Judy Frank.

Minutes from the May meeting were approved at printed.

Elders Report

- With Christmas eve on Sunday this year, the Elders have established service times as follows:
 - Christmas Eve, Sunday December 24: 9 am, 6 pm. 10 pm
 - Christmas day, Monday December 25: 9am.
 - New Years eve, Sunday: 9 am, 6 pm.
 - New Years day, Monday January 1: 9 am.

Trustees Report

- Trying to find a low-cost way to dispose of some old televisions and printers that we have in storage.
- Looking into replacing two toilets in the ladies restroom that is closest to the office.

Treasurers Report

- Current Financial statement was presented to the Church Council.
- Everything is paid to date.
- 2018 budget was presented and approved by voice vote for presentation at the Octobers Voter's meeting.

October Elections

- Jerry Sommer discussed the list of positions up for election at the October 29, 2017 Voter's Meeting.

Anyone interested in holding one of these positions should contact a Pastor or a Council Member.

- Chairman
- Treasurer
- Elder (5 positions)
- Trustee
- Board of Education
- Church Council Representative
- Endowment Fund Committee (5 positions)

Pastor Raffa's Report

- Pastor Fisher is doing well recovering from his knee surgery.
- Catechism has started with 10 students in the 5 - 7th grade class and 3 in the 8th grade class.
- Is looking into what we could do at Pilgrim to celebrate the Reformations' 500th anniversary.
- Is conducting Bible Studies during the week.

Motion passed to end the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Behrens

JB/ss

Church Council October 9, 2017 Minutes

The Church Council October 9, 2017 meeting

was called to order at 7:00 pm by President, Jerome Sommers, who opened the meeting with a prayer provided by Pastor Fisher. Others in attendance were Pastor Raffa, Fred Leffin, Tanner Schmidt, Jim Behrens, Ron Virchow, Jr., Suzanne Stadelmayer, Mary Lehtimaki, and Judy Frank.

Minutes from the September meeting were approved as printed.

Elders Report

Updating of Pilgrim's website is in progress.

The Pilgrim Directory should be available in about a month.

With Christmas eve on Sunday this year, the Elders have established service times as follows:

Christmas eve, Sunday, December
24: 9 am, 6 pm, 10 pm

Christmas day, Monday, December
25: 9 am

New Year's eve, Sunday, December
31: 9 am, 6 pm

New Year's day, Monday, January 1:
9 am

Trustee Report

An old printer and old TV's have been disposed of through the Clean Sweep program.

Two new toilets in the ladies restroom that is closest to the office will be installed this week.

Diseased Ash trees will be taken down.

Will be scheduling preventative maintenance needed to heating and air conditioning systems.

Board of Education

- Tentative plans are for Christmas program practice to be mornings of Dec 2, 9, and 16, with the program at 4 pm on the 17th.

- Youth Night on October 20.

23 signed up for Ice Hockey event on October 21.

Treasurers Report

Current Financial statement was presented to the church council.

Everything is paid to date.

Pastor Raffa

- Will be taking vacation at the end of October to attend Grandmother's October 27 memorial service in Florida.

Catechism classes are going well.

Board of Elders Meeting Minutes, Pilgrim Ev. Lutheran Church 10/2/2017

The meeting began with prayer by Pr. Fisher at 6:32. Present at the meeting were Pr. Raffa, Dennis, Dave, Ron, Tanner, Brian, and John.

Schedules were made through Nov. 12th.

The website and other technological matters were discussed. A cable will be run soon to enable the live-streaming of our worship services. A camera for the same purpose has been ordered and is on hand now. The website developers have resumed their college studies, so progress there will be understandably tempered somewhat. Progress is being made, however.

The elders and Pr. Fisher would like to thank Pr. Raffa for his faithful service in Pr. Fisher's absence. On a related note, Pr. Fisher would like to express his thanks for all the

prayerful support and care he received through the course of his knee replacement!

The matter of a processional cross was considered:

First: regarding the funding, a correction: Contrary to what was last printed in the elder minutes, the cross is not yet entirely paid for (that is, the church has not entirely been reimbursed) by those who had offered to help pay the cost. As of this writing, not all funds are in. We ask those who indicated their desire so to do to please do so presently.

Second: the elders would like to note that the reason the church now owns the processional cross it does is simply due to the impressive deal (\$3600 down to \$600) we got on it. While there was a matter of miscommunication concerning the purchase within the church, all has been rectified and settled.

Third: the pastors and elders wish it made very clear that we have no intention of forcing such a change as this through, so to speak. The question of integrating processions into our worship on occasion is entirely in the hands of the congregation. The pastors and elders note the historic use of processional crosses in the Church (including the Lutheran churches throughout the world for centuries), and are happy to answer any questions that any may have, but we by no means intend to attempt to adapt this without the congregation's approval. The matter of music for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation was discussed. The elders and some in our church are somewhat disappointed by the lackadaisical response as to whether we might have some special music for the Reformation. We are happy to thank Mrs. Carol Heger for addressing the concerns head on, however. We further thank Mrs. Jane Rockrohr for her willingness to help in some capacities. We invite any who are interested and willing to sing or perform for the Reformation (either solo, duet, or together as a group) to please let her or one of

the pastors or elders know.

Contrary to a misleading address on a past bulletin, this year's silent auction will not be the last one; please disregard the announcement seemingly suggesting otherwise.

The church directory is proceeding forward. It will be ready for production in nearly a month, and we have selected a printer to produce it.

The sign on the north lawn (regarding bible study and sunday school) will be replaced soon as a gift to the church.

The elders express their sympathy toward Pr. Raffa over his grandmother's passing. Pr. Raffa will be out of state in the last weekend of October for her funeral.

Our book study was postponed owing to the time.

The meeting concluded with prayer by Pastor Raffa at 7:52.

Respectfully submitted,
Tanner Schmidt



Welcome

We welcome to the Pilgrim family, Phill and Jayne Gohr from St. John's Lutheran Church in Mayville, WI. Let us all make them welcome in their new Church home.

Thank You,

To the generous donor who provided the funds for two new toilets and installation of said toilets, in the Ladies room by the office. Your generosity is a true blessing to us at Pilgrim.

Help Wanted: Please prayerfully consider becoming an Office Volunteer. Duties are Once a month or so coming in and folding the Sunday bulletin and adding any inserts. This takes about 1/2 an hour to 45 minutes. This is a great volunteer opportunity for students who need volunteer hours. If you are interested, please contact the Church office. Duties would start with the New Year.

Come Join Us!!

Thanksgiving Potluck on Thursday, November 23, 2017 at 11:30 am. Hosted by the Raffa Family. Please see sign up sheet in the Narthex for more information.



We are now half way through the fall quarter. We have welcomed several new students. Average weekly attendance for the first six weeks was 26. We thank the parents who have informed us in advance of planned absences as our teaching team puts a lot of time into preparation each week.

We continue to enjoy our music time and singing some much loved hymns as well as some fun Sunday School songs. Money has been added to our birthday bank as we recognize birthdays each week.

As most of our teachers worship at the 8:00 a.m. service, we respectfully ask that children not be left in the Music Room until a teacher is present.

Our lessons for November include

Jeremiah and God's New Covenant (Jeremiah 1:4-10; 29:1-14; 31:31-34; 33:14-16), *The Three Men in the Fiery Furnace* (Daniel 3), *Daniel in the Lion's Den* (Daniel 6), *God's People Go Home* (Ezra 1:3; 7:11-28; Nehemiah 2:1-8; 12:27-43).

Mark your calendars: Our Christmas program *A "Sola" Christmas* scheduled for Sunday, December 17th at 4:00 p.m. Details will be announced next month. Rehearsals will be held on Saturdays, December 2, 9, and 16 in the morning. Students who would like to play an instrument, sing a solo, duet, trio, etc. need to notify Sunday School Superintendent Diane Swanson by Sunday, November 26th to be added to the program.



Ladies Guild/LWML

The LWML will meet on Tuesday, November 21, at noon. Our Hostess Beverly and Joyce, will provide desserts and beverages. All ladies of the congregation are invited to join us.

The following is information about our Cookie Sale that is held in December.

Cookies, Cookies, Cookies— Our Christmas cookie sale will soon take place. We are hoping that you will bake a double batch of your favorite Christmas cookies! Please bring your cookies to Church by 11:00 am. promptly on Saturday, December 9. We will sell the cookies in Sunday, December 10 after both services. We sell our 1 pound boxes for \$7.00 each. The money is going to support Rev. Micah Wildauer and family, who are serving as missionary in Togo, Africa. Thank you for baking, buying and enjoying the cookies. Ladies Guild /LWML



YEAR END/ANNUAL REPORTS

Please have your Year End/Annual Reports to the Church office by December 11. I would like to have them in the January Pilgrim Herald. Thank you.



CHRISTMAS SHOPPE: Now is the time to start planning for the annual Pilgrim Christmas Shoppe. You can start bringing in new or look like new items for the Shoppe. We will have a special table set up for hand made items that are being donated by the members of Pilgrim. If you are willing to donate hand made items that you have made please leave your name and the price you would like to have on the item. Baked goods and snack items are always appreciated. We will be setting up the Shoppe on Monday, November 20 at 6:00 pm. & Tuesday Nov. 25 at 8:00 am. Please let Sarah know if you can help. The Christmas Shoppe will be open Sunday, November 26—Sunday, December 17. If you are able to help with the Christmas Shoppe on Thursday evenings or for set up please contact the church office at 334-0375. Thank you.

St. John's Lutheran Church
presents
**Living
The Christian Life
&
Passing It On**

Presenter:
Rev. John Klirve

Full Breakfast
8:00 - 8:45

Registration
8:00 - 9:00

Sessions & Lunch
9:00 - 4:00

Mardi Gras Social
4:00 - 6:00

**SAT
FEB 3**
9am - 4pm

RSVP (262)-284-2131

Donation or \$25/family After Jan 21
Family limited to 50 Adults

St. John's Lutheran Church
217 N. Freeman Dr.
Port Washington, WI 53073

WWW.STJOHNS-PORT.COM

IN OUR COMMUNAL PRAYERS

All servicemen at home and deployed, especially Isaac Wirtz (son of Rev. Nick Wirtz) who is stationed in Baghdad.

Lord God of hosts, stretch forth Your almighty arm to strengthen and protect those who serve in the armed forces of our country. Support them in times of war, and in times of peace keep them from all evil, giving them courage and loyalty. Grant that in all things they may serve with integrity and with honor; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Father of all mercy, You never fail to help those who call on You for help. Give strength and confidence to Your [son/daughter] in [his/her] time of great need that [he/she] may know that You are near and that You uphold [him/her] with Your everlasting arms. Grant that, resting on Your protection, [he/she] may fear no evil, for You are with [him/her] to comfort and deliver [him/her]; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

For our Seminaries, especially the Ethiopian Lutheran Church and Seminary

O God, through Your Holy Spirit You illuminate the minds and sanctify the lives of those whom You call to the work of pastors and teachers. Look with favor upon this seminary for the instruction and formation of those who are to serve in the sacred ministry of Your Church. Bless those who teach and those who learn that they may apply themselves with ready diligence to the knowledge of Your Word, which alone is able to make us wise unto salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and

reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Note: After much consideration, we have decided to add a page in the newsletter that lists all of those struggling with health issues. (Not published on the website). Each month we will also have various petitions that you can pray at home for various needs all people in Christ, and especially those within our immediate church family here at Pilgrim. In the bulletin we will list those sick and infirm on the basis of need and emergency. In the event that you would like to have your name or your loved one's name removed from the prayer list, please let us know.



- 1- Joanne Haller
- 2- Joanne Klumb
Chloe LaFlash
- 3- Jim Schmidt
- 4- Cheryl Thill
Tom Greve
- 5- Justin Krueger
- 6- Ashley Chapman
- 7- Madden Smith
Andrew Virchow
- 8- Ian Janssen
- 9- Joy Buchholz
Jeremy Baerenwald
Ronald Virchow (Sr.)
Jasper Rios
Meredith Janssen
Laura Susnik
- 10- Brittany Virchow
Rev. John Wille
- 12- Ross Weber
- 13- Bernadine Faul
Muriel Magnus
- 14- Donna Tessar
Hannah Hand
Georgia Janssen
- 15- Bernard Doyle
Wendy Franke
- 17- Nicholas Brodzeller
Beth Brehm
- 18- Courtney Zehetner
Jillian Held
- 19- Janet Schellinger
Denise Spaeth

- 21- Brenda Fetting
Paul Henckel
- 22- Carol Shay
Carrie Mulvey
- 23- Michael Krueger
- 25- Joan Prine
Mary Schauland
McKenna Schulz
- 26- Scott Densow
Matthew Kemeny
- 28- Donald Meisenheimer
Beatrice Kiesow
- 29- Lucas Skrenty
- 30- Jeffrey Dahl
Thomas Dembski



- 1- Tom & Nicole Kabitzke
Robert & Susan Knuth
- 5- Jeff & Mallorie Held
- 14- Chris & Leighann Haas
- 15- Chris & Nicole Zehetner
- 28- James & Kathy Sullivan
- 30- Don & Cheryl Thill



Come Join the Fun! Sing with the Pilgrim Festival Choir!

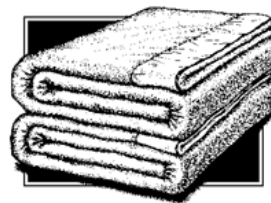
All ages & voices are welcome to join in the singing.

The Hymns being sung are all from the LSB Hymnal.

We are meeting on Tuesday, November 21 at 7:00 pm in the back of the Sanctuary.

For further information contact the Church office at 262-334-0375.

See you then! Come Sing and have Fun!!



YOUTH EVENT

Pass it On: Christmas Celebration & Service Project.— Anxiously humming your favorite Christmas tunes around the house or counting down the days til Christmas with holiday classics and chocolates? Join us on Saturday November 18 at 6:00 pm. as we once again celebrate the most wonderful time of the year. At this moment, we anticipate beginning our celebration with a service project. For this project we will be making fleece tie blankets for Concordia's street team ministry. Through this ministry, Concordia students reach out to the homeless and other individuals in Milwaukee's inner city. While our donation may not help all those in need, it will certainly help a few more people receive both spiritual and physical comfort this Christmas season. In addition to our service project, our celebration will include more traditional activities like tree dressing, white elephant gift exchange and an ugly sweater competition. Best "ugly" Christmas sweater will receive a gift card prize.



News from the Wildauer Family, serving the Lord in Togo and West Africa



The Lutheran Center for Theological Studies—2017-2018 Academic Year

A flurry of activity has once again commenced at the site of the Centre Luthérien d'Études Théologiques, or the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies, in Dapaong, Togo. New families have arrived from 5 different countries to join those already situated in the town. As the first week of studies drew to a close, we gathered together to take this year's family photo. At the center of the campus (and campus life) is the symbol of our faith, the cross. The mark of the Alpha and Omega is a common symbol used by the CLET as well as the local Lutheran church in Togo.

Rejoice with us at the commencement of the 2017-2018 Academic Year. The students have come from 8 different countries and represent 10 different church bodies. The countries represented, from west to east: Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. Among the students, 13 are returning for their second of three years and 16 students are beginning their three years of study. Among the families, 13 wives are here and attend the Ladies' School 3 times a week. As you can also see, there are plenty of children as well! Pray for their transition, health and well-being, for their assimilation into the community, and most of all, their continued growth in the Christian faith. Thank you for the generous prayer and support you have given to the proclamation of the Gospel through this theological institution and these future pastors, missionaries, and families.

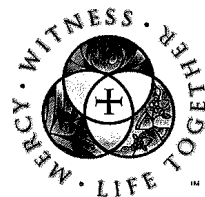
To financially support the Student Scholarship Fund, you may send a tax-deductible gift to:

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
P.O. Box 66861
St. Louis, MO 63166-6861

[OR]

Mission Central
40718 Highway E-16
Mapleton, IA 51034

Make checks payable to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (or "LCMS"). Please include "CLET Seminary Students A16156-20701-385" in the memo line. To give a gift over the phone, please call 1-888-930-4438.



Orphan Grain Train

Is helping out with relief efforts in Texas from the effects of Hurricane Harvey. The catastrophic effects of the storm are enormous. Bush Intercontinental Airport had water up to the fuselage on planes that were sitting there, the airport is about 50 miles from the coast. Hundreds of square miles of the metropolitan area are under water. This is a much wider area than when New Orleans was hit by Hurricane Katrina. Over 50 inches of rain fell in some areas, the devastation is incredible.

Please consider giving the largest gift you can to help out with the relief efforts. Thrivent Financial is offered to match gifts up to \$3,000,000 to 8 different organizations. Orphan Grain Train is one of the recipients chosen for this effort.

The moneys will be given to the to all eight organizations on a first come first served basis, those who se donors give first get the money first..

To qualify, gifts must be given through Thrivent .com. Gifts sent directly to Orphan Grain Train will not be matched. To take advantage of this match please follow these simple directions:

1. Go to www.thrivent.com
2. On the homepage click on "Help Now" on the left hand side.
3. Scroll down to "Personal Donations" and click on "Orphan Grain Train" a few paragraphs down.
4. Click on "Continue" and then fill in the information to make your gift.

Please note that the gifts that benefits the most is one made directly from a checking or savings account. Gifts made by credit card have a 2.75% fee deducted (3.5% for American Express).

You will receive a receipt from In Faith Community Foundation, the foundation is connected

to Thrivent. Orphan Grain Train will know you gave the gift, but will not know the amount of the gift. Each gift will be doubled until the entire \$3,000,000 has been met or December 31, 2017, which ever is first.

It is impossible to overemphasize the extent of this disaster. Orphan Grain Train will be involved in restoring this area for many years to come. The gifts of donors to Orphan Grain Train will ease the suffering of countless people, many of whom have lost much of what they have worked for their entire lives.



Don't miss the opportunity to see Tony Award winning, LUTHER, sponsored by the Thrivent Member Network!

This exciting play reveals the man beneath the cowl. Here, then is luther the man, monk and mind in all its doubts, honest and clarity of purpose lifting his book in his hand and saying, Here I stand.

Four Dates to Choose from:

Thursday, 11/9 at 7:30pm

Friday, 11/10 at 7:30pm

Saturday, 11/11 at 7:30pm

Sunday, 11/12 at 3:00pm

Tickets are \$20/per.

Thursday

Nov 9

Our Saviors

3022 W Wisconsin Avenue

Milwaukee, WI 53208

Join Us!

Make sure to check out our Facebook Page!

Thrivent Member Network-South Wisconsin Region

708 Heartland Trl Ste 2800

Madison, WI 53717

(608) 831-3339

SouthWisconsinTMN@thrivent.com

Puzzle!

This matching challenge involves words from stories in John's gospel. Draw lines to connect the pairs that best belong together.

| | |
|----------|----------------|
| ANDREW | WINE |
| DOVE | SIMON PETER |
| ELIJAH | JESUS |
| JOHN | CANA |
| LIGHT | MONEY CHANGERS |
| PHARISEE | NATHANAEAL |
| PHILIP | NICODEMUS |
| RABBI | DARKNESS |
| TEMPLE | TEACHER |
| WATER | THE BAPTIST |
| WEDDING | PROPHET |
| WORD | SPIRIT |

Answers: Andrew/dove/Simon Peter; wine; wedding/Cana; Word/Jesus; teacher; temple/money changers; water; Elijah/prophet; John/the Baptist; darkness; Rabbi/Nathanael; Philip/Nicodemus; Pharisee; light/darkness; money changers; water; wine; teacher; temple; wedding/Cana; Word/Jesus

Prayers of Thanks

The Bible's close connection between prayer and praise caused 19th-century preacher J.C. Ryle to proclaim, "I dare not call that true prayer in which thankfulness has no part." He points, for example, to Paul's words in Philippians 4:6 ("By prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God") and Colossians 4:2 ("Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful"), both NIV.

Whenever we speak to God, Ryle adds, thoughts of his mercy and the hope of heaven should be at the forefront of our minds. "Surely," he writes, "we should never open our lips in prayer without blessing God for that free grace by which we live, and for that lovingkindness which endures forever."

Thank you, Veterans!

On Veterans Day, we honor men and women who've served and sacrificed in one of America's armed services.

On November 11, 1918, America and her allies signed a truce with German leaders, ending World War I. In 1919, President Wilson decided the United States should remember with gratitude the end of that war and honor military members by marking Armistice Day, or "truce" day. In 1954, Congress changed the name to Veterans Day, honoring veterans of every era.

Veterans Day highlights our country's quest for peace, justice and freedom throughout the world. Followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, pray for unity among all nations and for the day when "nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4, NIV).

Everyday Saints

Everyday things, relationships with other people, daily work, love of our family — all these may breed saints.

Jesus of Nazareth taught us to live every hour of the day as saints. Every hour of the day is useful and may lead to divine inspiration, the will of the Father, the prayer of contemplation — holiness. Every hour of the day is holy. What matters is to live it as Jesus taught us.

And for this, one does not have to shut oneself in a monastery or fix strange and inhumane [regimens] for one's life. It is enough to accept the realities of life. Work is one of these realities; motherhood, the rearing of children, family life with all its obligations are others.

—Carlo Carretto, *Letters From the Desert*

Exercising Our Gratitude Muscles

Expressing gratitude isn't just a good thing to do; it also appears to be good for us! Indiana University researchers found that participants who performed gratitude-focused writing exercises felt uplifted, and were more likely to express gratefulness through generosity, even weeks later.

Furthermore, brain scans revealed increased gratitude-related activity even months down the road (*New York Magazine*).

Though the study was small, we seem to have a “gratitude muscle” that can be strengthened through exercise. If so, there may be more than we thought to the popularity of gratitude journals and Mom's insistence that we write thank-you notes. Not to mention the biblical call to “give thanks to the LORD, for he is good” (1 Chronicles 16:34, for example).

Might God have hardwired us for gratitude — not only at Thanksgiving but year round — because it's good for us as well as for those we thank? To that, we respond, “Thanks be to God!”

What's Your Rule?

J. Wilbur Chapman, a traveling evangelist in the late 19th century, practiced what he called a rule for Christian living: “Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps my prayer life, or makes Christian work difficult is wrong for me, and I must, as a Christian, turn away from it.”

St. Paul offers similar advice — presented in positive terms — for Christians: “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” (Philippians 4:8, ESV).

What guidelines do you follow in your daily walk with Jesus?

A Wake-up Call

The good God permits such small evils to befall us merely in order to arouse us snorers from our deep sleep and to make us recognize, on the other hand, the incomparable and innumerable benefits we still have. ...

With [our misfortunes], God gives us a light by which we may see and understand his goodness and kindness in countless other ways. Then we conclude that such small misfortunes are barely a drop of water on a big fire or a little spark in the ocean. Then we understand and love the words: “O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!”

—Martin Luther

Holiday PLACE MATS

Add fall décor to your family's Thanksgiving table by making these festive place mats.



What you need:

- Large pieces of paper
- Several large leaves
- Crayons (fall colors)
- Fine-tip permanent marker

What you do:

1. Working on a flat surface, place the leaves underneath the paper.
2. Peel the wrappers off the crayons. Rub crayons sideways over the paper so the details of the leaves become visible.
3. Use other crayons to add additional details, if desired. With the marker, list what you're thankful for and add a Bible verse about thankfulness.
4. Optional: Laminated the place mats so they're reusable.



GIVE THANKS TO GOD

God gives us many blessings every day. How can we thank him?

Directions: To complete the Bible verse below, follow the code and fill in the blanks.



A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F=6, G=7, H=8, I=9, J=10,
K=11, L=12, M=13, N=14, O=15, P=16, Q=17, R=18,
S=19, T=20, U=21, V=22, W=23, X=24, Y=25, Z=26.

" _____ will _____ 16 _____ 18 _____ 1 _____ 9 _____ 19 _____ 5 _____

_____ ' _____ name in _____ 19 _____ 15 _____ 14 _____ 7 _____

and _____ 7 _____ 12 _____ 15 _____ 18 _____ 9 _____ 6 _____ 25 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 13 _____ with

_____ 20 _____ 8 _____ 1 _____ 14 _____ 11 _____ 19 _____ 7 _____ 9 _____ 22 _____ 9 _____ 14 _____ 7 _____"