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Resurrection

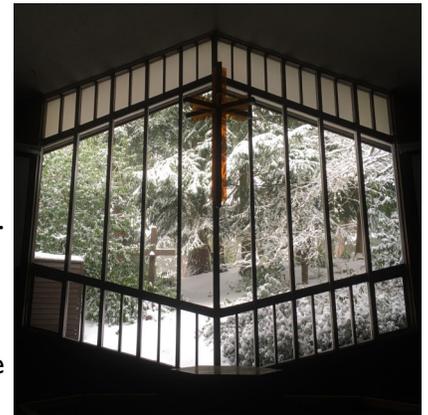
LUTHERAN CHURCH



October, 2021

A CHANGE OF SEASONS

For each change of seasons, I try to include a seasonal prayer during service. I believe this is important as it reminds us of Yahweh’s faithfulness through every season of life. In this Fall season we are reminded of how God provides our bounty, the harvest of life, and how we can respond with Thanksgiving. With winter we can give thanks that the Lord endures through cold hard times, and we see this most clearly with Christmas. Our Lord dwells with us when the sunlight is slim, and the days are short. Then I have confidence spring will come again, and with-it life. The new life of Spring is such a joy. We see this encapsulated with Easter, where the new life of Resurrection blossoms forth. The eternal springs of the river of life in Jesus Christ are the most precious gift we can have. Then finally summer reminds us how things continue to grow. We in the church pray that the Lord would continue to grow not only our church, but all churches in his Gospel truth.



As we give thanks for the seasons one of the greatest reminders of God’s faithfulness in all seasons is right in our sanctuary. I remember the first time I ever entered RLC, how the window behind the altar took my breath away. While many churches have stained glass or projection walls behind the altar, to have God’s creation as our ever-changing stained glasses is such a blessing. It is obvious, but I wanted to share, the image I am using for this article is of the church window after a snowfall. It truly is one of the most beautiful settings for a church service. I mean just being able to look up and see that pure white snowy landscape is a visual reminder of how the Lord washes us whiter than snow.

Not only does it provide beauty each season, but it reminds us of the creation and animals God calls us to care for. Continue to read on in this newsletter for another article by Chad Bird that reminds us to care for our animals. As you read it ponder all the different animals you might have seen out that window and how the Lord created each one of them. Furthermore, then ponder all the people you have seen walk past our church as service has been on going. Jesus loves each one of those people so much he gave his life for them. So as our view goes up the hillside let us always remember what is up beyond it. There is our community, our neighbors, and God’s creation all needing care and love.

With every change of season, let us be reminded of God’s faithfulness. Then with images of the church window on our hearts and minds, let us go forth to share Yahweh’s faithfulness with all the people we interact with not just seasonally, but daily. And then to close I want to share with you a prayer written by Rev. Doug Leonhardt for the change of seasons to Autumn. May it set your hearts on the Lord this day.

“God of all seasons, we thank you for Autumn. We thank you for the touch of coolness in the air that gives us a new burst of energy, for the coloring of trees that shows the creativity of the Divine Artist, for the falling leaves that reveal the strength of the branches, for the hues of fields that bring peace to our souls, for the smiles on pumpkins that bring joy to children, for the fall harvest which that brings us gratitude for the bounty of our land, for this change of seasons that reveals the circle of life. God of all seasons, as you transform the earth, transform us by your Spirit. Amen.”

In the Name of our Steadfast Lord,
Pastor Matt

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE ANIMALS by Chad Bird

<https://www.1517.org/articles/for-god-so-loved-the-animals>



Adam's first action was not to build a house, plant a garden, or even worship God. His first responsibility was to interact with animals. God formed ravens and eagles, elephants and dogs, every living creature, paraded them before Adam and gave him the authority to name them. On the day of his creation, before he ate and drank, before he found a mate, before everything else, man cared for animals. They stood before him not in fear, but in communion and community. He was like their mother and father all rolled into one, giving them their names when they emerged from the womb of the earth into this bright and beautiful new world.

It was not just a dog who was man's best friend. Dung beetles and alligators, sparrows and giraffes, they all looked Adam in the eye and saw in him their father, their loving king. I've heard thousands of sermons over my lifetime. Some of them dealt with the most esoteric of themes, subjects over which the Bible has little if anything to say explicitly. What is strange is that not one of them addressed a theme that reverberates from Genesis to Revelation: As God loves and cares for animals, so we who are his image-bearers in this world, are called to love and care for

them, too.

Faithful, God-Fearing Animals

Have you ever noticed that God's concern for animals is smack dab in the middle of one of the most well-known portions of Scripture—the Ten Commandments? Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. But also remember that the Sabbath is not only for you but for your animals. "The seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall do no work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you" (Exodus 20:11). Sabbath is not only for humans but for animals as well.

In fact, I suspect the only creatures who were willingly obedient to the Sabbath command were the animals. Over and over in the biblical story, birds and beasts prove far more faithful to God than we do. Isaiah suggests this when he writes, "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand" (1:3).

For instance, as the Flood approached, Noah didn't have to trap and net and herd the animals into the ark. While almost the entire human population scoffed at God's warning and refused his call to repent, the animals came quite willingly (Gen. 7:8-9). So there weren't just eight believers on the ark, for in the heart of all the animals too, there was an implicit trust in their Creator. As if to honor them, after the flood, God makes a covenant not only with humanity but with the animals, too (9:16). And that's just one story. The Bible is full of them. Here are but three examples.

1. While Jonah disobediently fled from God's calling, the fish obediently answered the divine call to swallow the unfaithful prophet (1:17).

2. When Balaam was on his way to curse Israel, blind to anything but his own will, his donkey saw the angel of the Lord and saved his master's life (Numbers 22). God even opened the donkey's mouth to rebuke Balaam. On the donkey's back sat a recalcitrant, cruel, man of lies, while the beast was true, faithful, merciful, and honest. This animal proved a far better preacher than Balaam.

3. In Elijah's day, while those created in the image and likeness of God were worshiping idols, murdering people, and trampling underfoot the word of the Lord, the ravens remained faithful to the divine will as they brought Elijah food in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:4-6).

You get the point. I suspect that if animals could preach, they'd soon have all the human clergy on the unemployment line.

The Gospel Is for All Creation

This is not to say, of course, that animals remain unaffected by human sin and evil. All creation stands downwind from our rebellion against God. The whole world, Paul says, is in slavery, groans and suffers, because of us. We are the reason volcanoes erupt, hurricanes drown, snakes strike, ants sting, dogs bite.

We, the fathers and mothers of creation, the kings and queens of this world, are the fountainhead of all corruption and evil that permeates creation. So don't ever point your finger at nature and blame it; we, not it, are the guilty party. For us, the guilty party, God himself was crucified. Yet I find it most interesting, that in the psalm that describes, in prophetic detail, what happens on that cross, animal metaphors are all over the place. "Many bulls have surrounded me," the crucified Messiah prays (Ps 22:12). His enemies are like "a ravening and roaring lion," (v. 13). He goes on to say, "Dogs have surrounded me," (v. 16).

Bulls, lions, dogs. Why all these metaphors from the animal kingdom to describe humanity as it encircles the crucified Savior? I suspect I know why. Because the man on the cross, God incarnate, is there for all creation, not just humanity. The death and resurrection of Christ are for us and for all creation. He dies for our sin, yes, but he also rises to usher in a new world, which we await in hope. The Gospel is also good news to dogs and cows and lions and fish and birds. It's good news to trees and mountains, rivers and oceans, dirt and rocks. When Christ returns to form a new heavens and a new earth, all creation will be set free from its slavery to corruption and brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God (Rom 8:21). Good Friday and Easter are for the animal kingdom, too.

What is the upshot of all this? We who are God's stewards, the earthly fathers and mothers of creation, have some work to do. We need to relearn what it means to care for animals, not exploit them. To recapture what it means to love and protect animals. To see in them not just a tool, a thing for us to use or abuse, but as those with whom we will share the new creation to come.

In that new creation, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den" (Isa. 11:6-8). In other words, in the new heavens and new earth, one glimpse at the concord in the animal world will reveal that the work of the Last Adam has come to fulfillment. In the time of resurrection, we humans will rejoice, together with the animals, that God has indeed done all things well.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

Chad Bird is a Scholar in Residence at I517. He has served as a pastor, professor, and guest lecturer in Old Testament and Hebrew. He holds master's degrees from Concordia Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College. He has contributed articles to Christianity Today, The Gospel Coalition, Modern Reformation, The Federalist, Lutheran Forum, and other journals and websites. He is also the author of several books, including *Night Driving & Your God Is Too Glorious*.

You might remember that October is Pastor's Appreciation Month, but the following article reminds to thank, not only pastors, but all church workers.

CELEBRATE CHURCH WORKER APPRECIATION MONTH IN OCTOBER

by the Reporter Staff reporter.lcms.org/2021/celebrate-church-worker-appreciation-month-in-october/



October has traditionally been designated as Pastor Appreciation Month — an opportunity for congregations to express, in various ways, their thankfulness to the shepherds who care for them. Starting this year, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) will be encouraging congregations and school communities to use the month of October to demonstrate appreciation not only for their pastors, but for all workers in the parish and school — pastors, commissioned ministers, business managers, administrative assistants, teacher aides, custodians, cafeteria workers and everyone in between.

“These church workers are vital in our Christian faith and life, each according to their vocation,” said the Rev. Dr. James A. Baneck, executive director of the LCMS Office of Pastoral Education. “The pastor teaches us the Word of God for our eternal salvation. Teachers and commissioned workers assist him in specialized ways in the classroom, through youth ministry, music ministry and more. And all servants in the church are worthy of our deep appreciation and encouragement for serving us, the baptized children of God, and for their love for Christ’s church.”

As the LCMS observes Church Worker Appreciation Month in 2021, it also begins the rollout of the Church Worker Recruitment Initiative, which was approved by the 2019 Synod convention. That initiative now has a name: Set Apart to Serve. Set Apart to Serve is a long-term commitment to church work formation and recruitment aimed at encouraging young people to consider church work as a life vocation of serving God and neighbor. Those who are the primary influencers of youth — pastors, other church workers, parents and congregations — will be equipped with resources for engaging boys and girls in conversations about the opportunities that exist for serving in the church. Those opportunities include the pastoral office as well as commissioned roles such as Lutheran school teachers, deaconesses and directors of various ministries, including parish music, Christian education, family life and outreach. The conversations that grow out of Set Apart to Serve aim to show potential church workers how they can serve both their Lord and the church by pursuing church work as a formal, professional and lifelong calling.

To better reach young people — and those who care for and influence them — during their most formative years, three subject-matter expert groups are currently writing materials about how to communicate with and inspire specific age groups, along with the church workers, families and congregations that influence them. The writing team consists of 20 church workers, each of whom has expertise in one of three age groups: infant Baptism through 6th grade, 7th and 8th grade, and 9th through 12th grade. Those resources will be made available on the soon-to-come Set Apart to Serve website.

For now, in addition to continuing to encourage the young people you know to consider church work, you can thank those in your midst — pastors as well as commissioned and non-commissioned workers — who are already serving.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Eleanor Griffith	10-2	Aleyne Bergman	10-4
Jim Pagenkopf	10-7	Martin Lindeke	10-8
Bonnie Stranlund	10-20	Leah Anderson	10-23

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Martin & Kathy Lindeke	10-6	44 years
Pat & Noreen Walsh	10-16	50 years

See below for a comparison of where we ended 2020 and where we are as of August 31 this year.

RLC Account Summary 12/31/2020

Code	Account title	Balance
<u>Assets</u>		
<u>Current Assets</u>		
A1	<u>Checking Account</u>	\$45,320.06
A2	<u>Savings Account</u>	\$21,480.14
A3	<u>Facilities Account</u>	\$3,230.33
A4	<u>PayPal</u>	\$3,558.15
	Total <u>Current Assets</u>	\$73,588.68
<u>Investments</u>		
A5	<u>LCEF Steward Account</u>	\$96,250.67
A6	<u>LCEF Supplemental</u>	\$5,503.14
A7	<u>Schwab Account</u>	\$0.10
A8	<u>LCMS Endowment Fund</u>	\$49,883.45
	Total <u>Investments</u>	\$151,637.36
	Total <u>Assets</u>	\$225,226.04

Balance Sheet 08/31/2021

Assets			
Assets			\$246,787.71
Current Assets		\$95,150.35	
Checking Account	\$66,270.82		
Savings Account	\$21,487.27		
Facilities Account	\$3,401.92		
PayPal	\$3,990.34		
Investments		\$151,637.36	
LCEF Steward Account	\$96,250.67		
LCEF Supplemental	\$5,503.14		
Schwab Account	\$0.10		
LCMS Endowment Fund	\$49,883.45		
Imbalance-USD			\$0.00
Total Assets			\$246,787.71

LCMS STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY OCTOBER 2021

Why do we give? Is it simply because God commands us to? Or is there more to it? To be sure, the Word and instruction of God in the Bible says we should give, and this is sufficient to encourage us to give (Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 6:6).

But there's more to it than just obligation. We're not just trying to fulfill a work of the law. We are bearing fruits of the Spirit given to us by our Father in heaven through His Son our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we're not just doing what our Father said, we're also doing what He did.

Children emulate their parents. When they grow up, they often carry many of the same mannerisms and characteristics as their parents. But there is more to it than that. Children copy their parents even on a more mundane level. They watch how their parents cross their legs, how they fold their hands, how they stand and sit and walk, and how they do and say most everything. Then children try to copy it.

This can be quite humorous when caught in the act. They do this even when parents don't want them to. Everyone has been in the uncomfortable – and embarrassing situation – where a child does or says something one of their parents have done or said that is less than polite. Sitcoms thrive on these. It only works because of the truth that children emulate their parents, and they do it because they want to be like them.

We are the children of God – by grace through faith. In Holy Baptism, God the Father declares of us what He declared of Jesus at His Baptism in the Jordan, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” God the Father claims us as His own. He takes away all our sins. In exchange, He gives us His righteousness, His purity, His holiness, and His Spirit – by which we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

We are born again – born from above, born of water and the Spirit – to a new life in Christ as His children. We are sons of God in Christ through Baptism. Since we are sons, we are heirs who share in the glory of the Son of God. The inheritance is ours because of the Father's grace, mercy, and generosity in sending His Son in time to save us for all eternity.

This is why we give generously of our income to the work of the church. We want to be like our heavenly Father. We want to emulate His generosity by being generous ourselves. We give to the work of the church because we have witnessed the generous giving of our Father in heaven.

More than that, we are recipients of it. It is because we have received our Father's gifts that we desire to give ourselves. His gifts are not just spiritual. They are temporal and earthly as well. As Luther's Small Catechism teaches in the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer:

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean? God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread? Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

In other words, He gives us everything that we need for the care of both body and soul. His generosity knows no bounds.

Therefore, we sit down at the beginning of the year, the beginning of the month, or the beginning of the week and set aside a generous portion of God's daily bread for His work in the church. This is not done because He has commanded us so to do but rather because we, as His children by grace, want to emulate His generosity in our own lives. He is our Father; we are His children. And children want to be like their parents.





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Happy



Fall!