

# DAY OF THANKSGIVING

November 24, 2021 (observed) – 7 p.m.

## AS WE GATHER

As we gather on this Thanksgiving, we give thanks for the land in which we live, where we can freely exercise our religious beliefs. We also take time to remember the land God gave Adam and Eve—a land that was perfect before their fall into sin. There's also the Promised Land that God led the Israelites to after releasing them from slavery and the land of our religious forefathers in Germany, the land of the Reformation. This was a land our forefathers left to find religious freedom in America. We are thankful for this freedom as we celebrate the freedom that is ours because Jesus rescued us from our slavery to sin through His atoning sacrifice on the cross.

**PRELUDE** “God Bless Our Native Land” -set. J. Wayne Kerr  
“Simple Gifts” -arr. J. Wayne Kerr

## HYMN “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” *LSB* 892

1        Come, ye thankful people, come;  
Raise the song of harvest home.  
All be safely gathered in  
Ere the winter storms begin;  
God, our maker, doth provide  
For our wants to be supplied.  
Come to God's own temple, come;  
Raise the song of harvest home.

2        All the world is God's own field,  
Fruit unto His praise to yield;  
Wheat and tares together sown,  
Unto joy or sorrow grown.  
First the blade and then the ear,  
Then the full corn shall appear.  
Lord of harvest, grant that we  
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

3        For the Lord, our God, shall come  
And shall take His harvest home,  
From His field shall in that day  
All offenses purge away,  
Give His angels charge at last  
In the fire the tares to cast,  
But the fruitful ears to store  
In His garner evermore.

4        Even so, Lord, quickly come  
To Thy final harvest home;  
Gather Thou Thy people in,  
Free from sorrow, free from sin,  
There, forever purified,  
In Thy garner to abide:  
Come with all Thine angels, come,  
Raise the glorious harvest home.    Text: Public domain

## INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

## OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 104:24, 27–28, 30, 33*

Pastor: O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom have You made them all; the earth is full of Your creatures.

**People: These all look to You, to give them their food in due season.**

Pastor: When You give it to them, they gather it up;

**People: when You open Your hand, they are filled with good things.**

Pastor: When You send forth Your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the ground.

**People: I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;**

Pastor: I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: As we gather in this land on Thanksgiving Eve, we confess to God how we struggle to be thankful with our thoughts, words, and actions. Creator God, You made Adam and Eve in Your image and placed them in the Garden of Eden, giving them dominion over every living thing. In their rebellion, they were banished from the garden. Though we have been re-created through the waters of Baptism, our rebellious sinful nature still leads us away from Your way. Forgive us, Lord.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Redeeming God, You freed the children of Israel from slavery to Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. You have freed us from our slavery to sin, yet like the Israelites, we struggle to live in that freedom and instead fall back into being slaves to our sinful nature. Forgive us, Lord.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Gracious Lord, You led our forefathers to this land, where they could enjoy being able to worship You freely. As we live here today, there are times when we do not choose to enjoy this freedom. We neglect Your Word and Your Sacraments, the Means by which You grant us Your grace. Forgive us, Lord.

**People: Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: God's grace is at work among us as we gather this day. Because of Jesus, God graciously forgives us all our sins. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

## KYRIE

Pastor: O Lord,

**People: have mercy.**

Pastor: O Christ,

**People: have mercy.**

Pastor: O Lord,

**People: have mercy.**

## HYMN OF PRAISE “Gloria in Excelsis” *LSB p. 204*

1 To God on high be glory

And peace to all the earth;

Goodwill from God in heaven

Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!

We praise and bless You, Father;

Your holy name, we sing—

Our thanks for Your great glory,

Lord God, our heav'nly King.

2 To You, O sole-begotten,  
The Father's Son, we pray;  
O Lamb of God, our Savior,  
You take our sins away.  
Have mercy on us, Jesus;  
Receive our heartfelt cry,  
Where You in pow'r are seated  
At God's right hand on high—

3 For You alone are holy;  
You only are the Lord.  
Forever and forever,  
Be worshiped and adored;  
You with the Holy Spirit  
Alone are Lord Most High,  
In God the Father's glory.  
“Amen!” our glad reply.

### **SALUTATION**

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, You provide us all we need for our bodies and lives. Lead us by Your Holy Spirit to see and be thankful for all of the blessings You give us, thanking You with our lips and our lives; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT READING** *Deuteronomy 8:1–10* (God's instructions for His people as they prepare to enter the Promised Land) “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM** *Psalm 67; antiphon: v. 7*

God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him! May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him! **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.** God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

**GRADUAL** *Psalm 145:15–16; 118:1*

Pastor: The eyes of all look to You, O Lord, and You give them their food in due season.

**People: You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.**

Pastor: Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;

**People: His steadfast love endures forever.**

**EPISTLE** *1 Timothy 2:1–4* (Give thanks for all.) First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**VERSE** *Psalm 136:1*

Pastor: Alleluia.

**People: Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.**

Pastor: Alleluia.

**HOLY GOSPEL** *Luke 17:11–19* (Jesus healed ten lepers, and only one thanked Him.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the seventeenth chapter.

**People: Glory to You, O Lord.**

On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**People: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**HYMN OF THE DAY** “Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven” *LSB 793*

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;

To His feet your tribute bring;

Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,

Evermore His praises sing:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise the everlasting King.

2       Praise Him for His grace and favor  
      To His people in distress;  
Praise Him still the same as ever,  
      Slow to chide and swift to bless:  
      Alleluia, alleluia!  
      Glorious in His faithfulness.

3       Fatherlike He tends and spares us;  
      Well our feeble frame He knows;  
In His hand He gently bears us,  
      Rescues us from all our foes.  
      Alleluia, alleluia!  
      Widely yet His mercy flows.

4       Angels, help us to adore Him;  
      You behold Him face to face;  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,  
      All who dwell in time and space.  
      Alleluia, alleluia!  
      Praise with us the God of grace.  
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## SERMON

Willowtree figurines are small, carved sculptures, that are often given as gifts. The sculptures often depict common sights in life, like a sitting family, hugging couple, a child reading, an adult thinking, or a grandparent holding a child. These sculptures are painted by hand, and are made through a cast of the original, made by artist Susan Lordi. What makes these sculptures unique, though, is that they don't have faces. The people don't have ears, eyes, noses, or mouths. Their clothes have no design, and are often one color. Expression, mood, and feelings are revealed through gestures only. It can be the tilt of a head, a turn of the body, or the placement of the hand. The unique thing about this feature is that it allows you to see yourself in the sculpture. It invites you in to be part of the moment, or to recall it in your own life.

As Luke tells us about the lepers this evening, we find blank faces. We have no physical descriptions (besides the fact that they have leprosy), and no names of these people. We don't even know the gender, or any back story. Luke takes a page of Susan Lordi's book, and presents to us a group of people that are like Willowtree figurines. He leaves out the details to let us into the story, and to see how we would respond. This evening, I want to put you into that band of lepers. I want you to hear the story, and I want to you reflect on what you would do in their place. As you do this, I hope it helps you to reflect on what God has done and given to you, as well as to create a spirit of thanks, like that of the Samaritan.

Before we can reflect on what we would do, and who we are in the text, we need to hear it, right? Luke tells us that Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, and as He is, He passes along between Samaria and Galilee. As He approaches a village, He is greeted by 10 lepers, who stood at a distance. According to the Law of Moses, those with leprosy were to keep their distance so that they wouldn't spread it. They were to live outside of the cities and town, and away from the community. Can you imagine life like that? The stigma of being unclean? How wouldn't that mentally weigh on you? Could you imagine the shame and embarrassment of it all? When I tested positive for Covid-19, one of the first things I felt was shame and embarrassment. Fortunately, Covid-19 goes away much quicker than leprosy! Can you imagine the loneliness these people must have felt, being driven away from their families, friends, homes, synagogue, and the community? Or the pain of a constant skin irritation? Or the sting of missed opportunities? Leprosy affected these people socially, emotionally, physically, economically and spiritually. You have to feel bad for their pitiful estate!

As they keep their distance from Jesus, they cry out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" They must have heard about Jesus' other miracles, like His healing of the blind, sick, deaf, and lame. Perhaps they heard about the man that Jesus healed in chapter 5 who had leprosy. They cry out to Jesus with the cry of faith: Lord,

have mercy! They have nothing to offer and so they fling themselves on His mercy and grace. Maybe, just maybe, Jesus would heal them, too.

And He does, but not right away. Jesus tells them to go show themselves to the priest so that they can be readmitted into society, and to offer the appropriate sacrifices. But, at that point, they *aren't healed*. Can you imagine the faith that would take? To take that first step to Jerusalem *without* being healed? Could you take the first dusty step to Jerusalem, with the dry scabs, open wounds, and green crust still on your skin? They do.

As they are on their way there, one of them realizes what has happened. His skin is healed. The scabs are gone, the wounds closed up, and the green crust gone. He is how he used to be, again. He can see his family once more, and give them the tightest hug he has ever given. He can worship at synagogue, or at the temple, again, and can hear God's Word, and sing His praises with the fellow saints, there. He can work, and be with people once more. He gets his life back, and it is within reach. The day he has hoped for is finally here! Instead of hurrying to the temple to hasten that moment, he stops. He turns around, and heads back to town.

As he heads back, he praises God on his way, making a huge commotion of praise and proclamation. The man has to find Jesus to thank Him. He can't start this new life without giving thanks to the One Who gave it to Him. As the man finds Jesus, he falls on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks.

When the man looks up, Jesus asks him a question: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" You can sense the frustration in Jesus' voice. You can hear His pain and disappointment. You can picture His sigh. Outside of salvation itself, He gave them the very thing they needed, and wanted. However, the others are nowhere to be found. They got what they wanted, and never returned. A simple word of thanks is never uttered, or given. A deep ingratitude follows the faith they had just expressed. Jesus, though, commends the man for his faith. He tells him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well (or, literally, has saved you)." Jesus commends and acknowledges the man, his faith, and his thankfulness.

At this point, I want to return to my opening question and goal: who are you in the story? Where do you see yourself? What would you do in their place? I don't want to tell you to give thanks. That wouldn't be sincere, genuine, or heartfelt thanks. On top of that, that would be Law, something we are to do, and that wouldn't work. The Law doesn't give us the power to do what it says. Only the Gospel can, and does. I want to do what Jesus does here, which is to give the Gospel, and see what God does through His Word. Jesus healed the lepers, showing them His mercy and grace, and the Samaritan responded with thanks. In turn, I want to tell you the Gospel, what God does for you, and let God work thanks in us through His Word. To do so, I want to use the Apostles' Creed and Luther's explanation of it, which highlights the work of each person of the Trinity.

When we confess that we believe in "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth", we confess all that God does for the care of His creation. We confess all that God does for *us*. Hear how well God cares for you: "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 members, my reason 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." Isn't this care amazing? All encompassing? Generous? Overwhelming? Too much to remember, realize, or respond to? This is just the first article of the Creed.

In the second article, we hear about our redemption. When we confess "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord..." we confess all that Jesus has done in securing our salvation, and what it entails. Luther says, "What does this mean? I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, *is my Lord*, who has redeemed *me*, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won *me* from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that *I* may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns to all eternity." Jesus has purchased us from every sin, defeated death for us, and released us from the power of the devil with His Holy precious blood. We have a spot in His kingdom, and are

blessed to live our lives under Him in His grace, love, and care. What a Lord and Master we have and live under! What a Lord we have been given.

In the third article, we hear about our sanctification, how God is making us like Jesus by the power of His Spirit. When we confess “I believe in the Holy Spirit...”, we confess all that God does for our faith life. Luther writes, “What does this mean? I believe that *I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him*; but *the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel*, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus in the one true faith. In this Christian church *He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers*. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.” Not only does God sustain our physical bodies. Not only does He complete our salvation and give it freely. He also does everything for us in our faith lives. He brings us to faith, keeps us in the faith, and sustains our faith. He daily and richly forgives our sins. Every part of our lives falls under His care and blessing, both physical, and spiritual, and He is exceedingly generous in both.

And so, after experiencing what the lepers did in our text, receiving God’s abundant grace and mercy, who are you? Where do you see yourself? What would you do in their place? As we gather to give thanks tonight, may the Holy Spirit work in you through His Word to create a heart of thanks for all that God does for you in body, and in soul, tonight, and always. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

## **APOSTLES’ CREED**

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

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

### **LORD’S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

### **BENEDICTION** *Psalms 67:1; Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: May God be gracious to us and bless us

**People: and make His face to shine upon us.**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN** “Now Thank We All Our God” *LSB* 895

1        Now thank we all our God  
          With hearts and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things has done,  
          In whom His world rejoices;  
Who from our mothers’ arms  
          Has blest us on our way  
With countless gifts of love  
          And still is ours today.

2        Oh, may this bounteous God  
          Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
          And blessed peace to cheer us  
And keep us in His grace  
          And guide us when perplexed  
And free us from all ills  
          In this world and the next!

△ 3    All praise and thanks to God  
          The Father now be given,  
The Son, and Him who reigns  
          With them in highest heaven,  
The one eternal God,  
          Whom earth and heav’n adore;  
For thus it was, is now,  
          And shall be evermore.  
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**POSTLUDE** “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” -arr. Albin C. Whitworth

*(Offerings can be placed in the plates at the back entrance doors as you leave the sanctuary.)*

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**EMMAUS GENERATIONS:** Please join us on Tuesday, November 30th at 11:30 in the Social Hall. We will start with a brief devotion and prayer by Pastor Kooi, have a festival of soups for lunch, hear from Aaron Hoska about the positive impact of care packages for deployed troops, and fill Christmas stockings through Soldiers’ Angels to send to a deployed Chaplain to distribute to those in his care over the holidays. Supplies for filling the stockings will be provided by a Thrivent Action Grant.

**CHRISTMAS DECORATION DONATIONS:** Sanctuary Christmas decoration donation slips will be included in Sunday’s bulletin. Please indicate your willingness to help defray decoration costs by using the donation slip. Place in the offering plate, hand to an usher or leave it on Maria’s desk. Donation slips will be available in the narthex through December 25.



**CHRISTMAS DECORATING:** Saturday, December 11th, 2:30-5 p.m. Hear Christmas music, put the trees together, hang Chrismons on the big tree, arrange the manger scene, hang banners, garlands and wreaths, arrange poinsettias, have a sneak preview of the lights on in a dark sanctuary... Great fun for the whole family!

**WE ARE COLLECTING TOYS!** This year the Emmaus Social Ministries Committee is collecting new, unwrapped toys to help with the Salvation Army Toy Shop. The toys are then made available to families in our area that need a little help at Christmas time. Our collection will begin on Sunday, November 21st and go through Sunday, December 5th. Toys for all ages are needed – check the wall in the hallway for ideas. We have received a Thrivent Action Grant to allow us to purchase additional toys. Any questions can be directed to Marie G. Thank you!