

Thanksgiving



November 23, 2011

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Thanksgiving Eve

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Good evening, and welcome to Zion's Thanksgiving Eve Service!

This evening we take time together to remember and give thanks for the many blessings we have received over the last year. From family and friends, house and home, income and possessions, health and happiness, we have been given much from the hand of a generous and gracious God! In this respect, our "thanksgiving" is nothing more than an expansion of Luther's explanation to the Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Luther writes: "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.... 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." We would be wise to give thanks for so much and to recognize that all of it comes to us from the hand and will of our heavenly Father.

The things that comprise our Daily Bread are things that all people can be thankful for. God causes the rain to fall on the righteous and unrighteous alike. But as Christians, what sets our Thanksgiving apart and makes it different is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ! Without Christ in our lives; without his forgiveness and promise of eternal life, all of the other blessings we have to be thankful for are nothing but causes of temporary amnesia, that help us forget the hopelessness of a frail life and the certainty of death. But WITH Christ in our lives; with his forgiveness and promise of eternal life, all of the other blessings we have to be thankful for are temporary glimpses of what our life in Christ will be like when he returns, raises the dead, removes sin from creation and causes us to live with him in glory for all eternity. Happy Thanksgiving!

-Pastor Duncan

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The Service of the Word

The Prelude

Introduction to Worship and Announcements

Sharing Our Thanks

Before our worship service begins, there will be a time for those in attendance to share with the congregation the things for which they are thankful.

Opening Hymn: Rejoice, O Pilgrim Throng

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The Invocation

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

People: Amen.

(Matthew 28:18-20)

Confession and Absolution

(Hebrews 10:22)

Pastor: As we come together to express our thanks to our heavenly Father for all He has given to us by His grace, without any merit or worthiness on our part, let us begin by admitting we have ignored opportunities to express our thanks in lives of joy and contentment. We have enjoyed what is evil and shunned the good given to us by our God. Taking credit for God's gifts as things we have somehow earned, we have committed the greatest sin of all: we have made ourselves God. Let us therefore confess our sins to God our Father.

People: **O most merciful God, you have given us everything we have by your grace. You have given us unique gifts and talents. You have loved us more in one day than anyone (or anything) will love us in a lifetime. Yet we have turned our backs on you. We have failed to be content. We have taken credit for what is yours. In your mercy, forgive our**

sins. Restore us to a right relationship with you. Give us hearts that long to give thanks.

(Luke 18:13)

The Absolution (spoken by the Pastor)

People: Amen.

(John 20:19-23)

The Prayer of the Church

Pastor: ... Lord, in your mercy.

People: Hear our prayer.

The Service of the Word

The Old Testament Lesson: Ezra 3:8-11

The Israelites express thankfulness when the temple is rebuilt.

Now in the second year after their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with the rest of their kinsmen, the priests and the Levites and all who had come to Jerusalem from captivity. They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to supervise the work of the house of the Lord. And Jeshua with his sons and his brothers, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together supervised the workmen in the house of God, along with the sons of Henadad and the Levites, their sons and brothers.

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the directions of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward

Israel.” And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

The New Testament Lesson: Philippians 4:4-7

The Apostle gives a reason why Christians can be thankful.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 18th Chapter.

People: **Glory be to Thee, O Lord!**

The Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Thankfulness manifests itself as forgiveness.

Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **(sing) Praise be to thee, O Christ!**

(Please be seated)

The Children's Message

The Sermon Hymn: Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness 788

Sermon

(Please stand)

The 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!

(Please be seated)

The Collection of the Offering

The Offertory: Give Thanks With A Grateful Heart 806

Benediction

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **Amen!**

The Recessional: Now Thank We All Our God 895

† *Service Participants* †

The Officiant:	The Rev. Duncan McLellan
The Organist:	Paula Gardner
The Elders:	John Gielarowski and Jay Anderson
The Acolyte:	Missy Radovich
The Greeters:	Michael & Deborah Sterba
The Ushers:	Carl Bauer, Gene Koop, Ron Meier, & Jack Oelschlager and Joe Gielarowski, Rachel Klemash, Steve Kovach, & Andy Weldon
Altar Guild:	Vickie Buzzelli, Kathleen Conn, & Shelly James

The **Altar Flowers** have been given to the Glory of God with Thanksgiving for God's Abundant Love by the Wayne and Barbara Oechslein.

