

Trinity Tribune

Trinity Lutheran Church ✦ Paola, Kansas

2014



Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

What are you thankful for? As we celebrate Thanksgiving Day we typically give thanks for blessings such as health, God's love, our church, home, and family. What do all these have in common? They are all good things. You see, it's easy to be thankful when we have good things, and the times are good. But, when bad times and bad things in our lives outweigh the good, it's harder to be thankful.

Applying this logic, you might think that the words of the familiar Thanksgiving hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" were written in good times, by a very happy, well-blessed, satisfied person, a person for whom life was going rather easily at the time:

*Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Has blest us on our way.
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.*

(Lutheran Service Book #895)

The author of this famous hymn was Martin Rinckart, who was born in 1586 and died in 1649. He was a Lutheran pastor in Eilenburg, in the region of Germany called Saxony, where Luther and Bach both lived. But, most of Rinckart's life and ministry came during a very devastating time for the Germans, the Thirty Years War, which started in 1618 and ended in 1648. In fact, the Thirty Years War stands out in the history of the German people as being as devastating, if not more devastating, than World War II.

This hymn was written around 1636, at which point in the Thirty Years War the town of Eilenburg had been sacked once by the Austrians and twice by the Swedes. And, as if the war was not bad enough, there was a severe famine, and the plague or "black death" was sweeping through Europe. Because of the plague,



Lutheran artist Albrecht Dürer's famous 1508 sketch of the Praying Hands was originally only a preliminary study for a large altarpiece. However, the altarpiece was destroyed by fire and this simple sketch has become one of Dürer's most well-known works.

Pastor Rinckart was conducting as many as 50 funerals per day, and during a particularly bad outbreak some 8,000 died. All around him there was nothing but devastation, disaster, and death.

Now, our temptation is to look at this hymn written in those circumstances and think, "Was this guy crazy? Giving thanks to God in such horrible circumstances?" But, the story is even more amazing. For, it seems one day in 1636 Pastor Rinckart went home and wrote this marvelous hymn of thanks after conducting the last of many funerals that day—the funeral of his own wife.

Considering those circumstances, we would expect that Pastor Rinckart's outlook on life would not only make it terribly difficult for him to be thankful, but that he would write a depressing, dismal dirge. We would expect something more like Luther's "From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee" (*Lutheran Service Book #607*), based on Psalm 130: "From depths of woe I cry to Thee, in trial and tribulation." But, somehow, Pastor Rinckart instead wrote:

*Oh, may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts,
And blessed peace to cheer us.*

How could Pastor Rinckart write such thankful, joy-filled words in the midst of such devastation, disaster, and death? I don't think I could. But, it reminds me of the Apostle Paul.

Paul recounts his own sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27: "I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in

danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked."

But, despite all his severe sufferings, Paul reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: *"Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* How could Paul—or Pastor Rinckart—be so thankful in the midst of their misery?

The Sacrament we Lutherans usually call Holy Communion or Lord's Supper is also known as the "Eucharist." That word "eucharist" is Greek for "give thanks," and this name for the Sacrament is based upon the Words of Institution which tell us: *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples . . . In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them . . ."* (1 Corinthians 11:23-25, Matthew 26:26-27). That is why Paul calls the Sacrament, *"the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks"* (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Trinity Tribune

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So, Holy Communion was really the original "thanksgiving" feast. Yet, when it was given, the One who gave it to us was facing the worst night of His life. Indeed, He was facing the last night of His life on earth. Jesus took that bread and took cup and gave thanks, knowing that one of His own twelve disciples had plotted to betray Him. He took that bread and cup and gave thanks knowing that the other disciples were going to flee when He was arrested. He took that bread and cup and gave thanks even though He knew He must endure an excruciating torture and shameful humiliation, culminating in His execution by being nailed to a cross. He took that bread and cup and gave thanks knowing that in less than 24 hours He would be crucified, dead, and buried.

Hebrews 12:2 tells us how Jesus could "give thanks" even in such circumstances: *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

When traveling through eastern Colorado, at first the Rocky Mountains look just like blips on the horizon. But, when you get up close they are massive and overwhelming. It is a matter of perspective. In the same way, our problems can seem massive and overwhelming until we step back and look at the big picture, of God's love for us in Christ, His forgiveness for all our sin, His pledge never to leave us or forsake us, His promise to take us to dwell with Him in the house of the Lord forever, and His assurance that He is somehow, in His wisdom, working all things—even difficult and painful things—together for our good. From that perspective, our problems are only blips on the horizon of eternity.

That is how Pastor Rinckart could write "Now Thank We All Our God" even when surrounded by devastation, disaster, and death, even after just having conducted the funeral of his own wife. Because, like Christ Himself, Pastor Rinckart put his sufferings in the

perspective of eternity: *"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

That was also the perspective of St. Paul: *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are preparing us for an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal"* (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

The perspective that Pastor Rinckart had is reflected in his famous hymn:

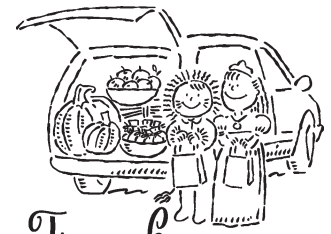
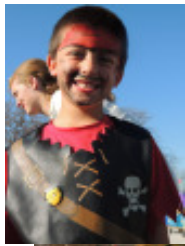
*And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills,
In this world and the next.*

With these words, Pastor Rinckart tells us that his field of vision goes far beyond this life. It goes far beyond the suffering and death of his parishioners, even his own grief over the death of his wife, into the eternity of heaven.

Because Pastor Rinckart was blessed with a far-reaching vision of God's goodness in the midst of the horrors of his day, we are blessed with his lovely, comforting hymn, to remind us of God's goodness in all the circumstances of life. This is not wishful thinking, or sugar coating the very real sufferings you may endure in this life. It was also at the Last Supper that Jesus beautifully expressed the paradox of His followers' joy, even in the midst of suffering: *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

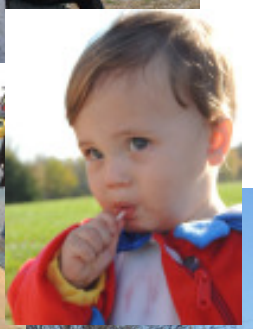
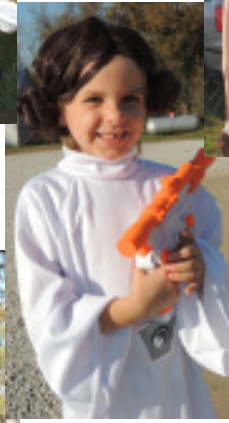
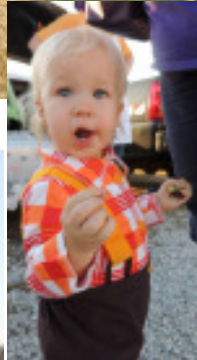
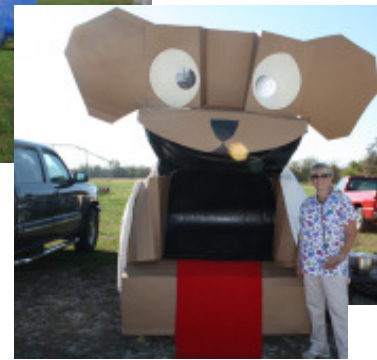
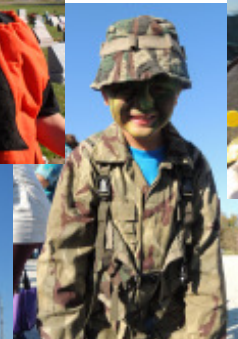
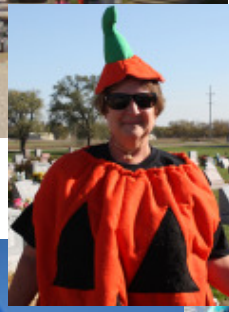
With this perspective that Pastor Rinckart, the Apostle Paul, and Christ Himself all had in the midst of their suffering, we too can *"give thanks in all circumstances."*

Pastor Kevin Vogts



Trunk or Treat

Thank you to everyone who helped make our annual Trunk or Treat on October 25 another big success!



Lots more photos online at www.trinitylcms.org/photos.



Extra Communion Sundays

In response to requests from members, the Board of Elders and Church Council have decided to offer Holy Communion twice during the months of November thru February, due to the potential for severe weather during the winter months which may prevent some from attending on some Sundays. During those months we will have Holy Communion on both the 1st and 3rd Sundays.

Special Gifts from Congregation

The Endowment Committee was given the task by the Voters Assembly of distributing the money from our school fire set aside for outreach beyond our congregation. One request was granted at our last Endowment Committee meeting of \$5,000 for St. John Lutheran Church in Pilger, Nebraska, to help after the devastating tornados which destroyed their church and many members' homes and farms.

The Committee would like to have a list of other suggestions from congregation members that could receive our gifts, such as Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Hour, LCMS Missions, individual student grants, and any other organization. Application forms are in the Church Office in the Endowment Committee mail slot and any member can make application for funds by filling



Thanksgiving Day Service

Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate Thanksgiving
at Trinity, Thursday, November 27, 10:00am

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

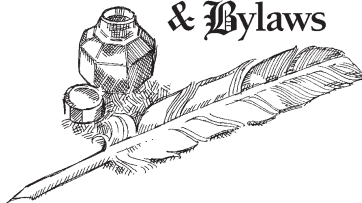
O Give Thanks unto the LORD, for He is Good

out a form and returning it to the mail slot or to Endowment Committee Chairman Ken Debrick, whom you can contact if you have any questions.

God has blessed our congregation—
let's glorify God with this money!

Under the procedure specified in the Bylaws, amendments will be proposed by the committee at the quarterly meeting of the Voters' Assembly in January, and must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the Voters' Assembly at the quarterly meeting in April.

Church Constitution & Bylaws



Constitution and Bylaws Amendments

Copies of amendments to Trinity's Constitution and Bylaws, as revised by the constitution and bylaw committee on October 20, are available on the counter in the church office. All congregational members are encouraged to review these and submit comments to chairman Greg Winder.



Acolytes

November 2 Karlie McMullin
November 9 Olivia Mitchell
November 16 Luke Elkinton
November 23 Evan Kettler
November 27 (Thanksgiving) ... Luke Elkinton
November 30 Lance Elliott



Snack Hosts Needed for November & December

Could you—individual, family, or group—serve snacks sometime after worship the final months of this year? There is a sign-up sheet for the rest of the year on the table with the snacks—three Sundays this month and all of December is open!

Our Generations group has generously agreed to provide and prepare the coffee and juice each week! So those signing up are only asked to provide some treat. Consider signing up for special occasions such as birthdays or anniversaries.

Thank you to all those providing snacks for Coffee Hour!

November 2

Greg & Karen Windler

November 9

Jan Cook

November 16, 23, 30

Need Volunteers



Our congregation helps support these missionaries sent out by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod through our mission contributions. Each month we



Advent–Christmas Sermon Series

November 30

1st Sunday in Advent

Patience

December 7

2nd Sunday in Advent

Faithfulness

December 14

3rd Sunday in Advent

Salvation

December 21

4th Sunday in Advent

*Song: Festival of
Readings and Carols*

December 24

Christmas Eve

Goodwill

December 25

Christmas Day

Love and Joy

December 28

First Sunday after Christmas

Kindness and Goodness

January 1

New Year's Day

Gentleness and Self-Control

January 4

Second Sunday after Christmas

Peace

remember in prayer in our worship services—and you are encouraged to remember in your personal prayers—specific missionaries around the world who are supported in this way by our congregation.

November 2

Kristin Matasovsky

South Africa

November 9

Rev. Rex & Linda Rinne

Czech Republic

November 16

Tyler McMiller

Mexico

November 23

Rev. Carl & Chenhsi Hanson

Hong Kong

November 30

Deaconess Gail Ludvigson

Dominican Republic



November Birthdays & Anniversaries

We list birthdays and anniversaries in the newsletter each month and the bulletin each week. However, our records may not be complete. If your information is missing or inaccurate, please accept our apologies and notify the Church Office at 849-3344 or email Church Secretary Stacey Elkinton at blocktlc@midwest-connections.com.

Christopher England.....November 1
Patty Peckman.....November 1
Steve Debrick.....November 2
Peyton Mitchell.....November 4
Sara Prothe.....November 5
Erin England.....November 8
Leonard Windler.....November 8
Greg Windler.....November 9
Brad Ashley.....November 9
Lana Kettler.....November 11
Chylar Jones.....November 11
Jack Alpert.....November 12
Dennis Ohlmeier.....November 13
Doris Rodewald.....November 13
Elena Smithhisler.....November 14
Frances Minter.....November 15
JoAnn Vaughn.....November 15
Sacred Davis.....November 16
Elaine Bocker.....November 19
Kreston Debrick.....November 19
Kathy Peckman.....November 19
Alexis Belsanti.....November 20
Luke Elkinton.....November 20
Randy Maisch.....November 20
Jim Prothe.....November 21
Megan Tesar.....November 20
Whitney Shoemaker.....November 22
Burl Peckman.....November 22
Jason Peterson.....November 22
Lindsey Lester.....November 24
Carolyn Isenhower.....November 25
Courtney Belsanti.....November 25
Dana Hall.....November 25
Alan Hutchison.....November 30

Ken & Karla Debrick
November 3 (28 years)

Darrell & Barb Brandt
November 18 (42 years)

Harry & Gay Stubbs
November 20 (38 years)

Brad & Susan Ashley
November 22 (9 years)

Vernon & Donna Prothe
November 23 (59 years)

Webb & Virginia Oberheide
November 29 (28 years)

Brett & Becky Stutzman
November 29 (45 years)



Sermons for November

November 2

"Who From Their Labors Rest"
Revelation 7:9-17

November 9

"The Parable of the Ten Virgins"
Matthew 25:1-13

November 16

"Behold, I Am Coming Soon"
Revelation 22:12

November 23

*"The Sheep and the Goats—
Which One Are You?"*
Matthew 25:31-46

November 27 (Thanksgiving Day)

"Don't Forget God!"
Deuteronomy 8:11

November 30
*"The Twelve Blessings
of Christmas: Patience"*
Luke 1:5-25



Sunday School Topics for November

November 2—This week in Sunday School students will study, "Abraham's Visitors from Heaven." While Abraham received his visitors graciously, they brought more grace to him than he and Sarah could imagine.

As a family discuss, "How does God bring us more grace than we can imagine or expect?"

November 9—In Sunday School this week students will study the account of "Abraham and Isaac." By God's grace, Abraham didn't have to make his sacrifice, but God did. He sacrificed His own Son so that we could have salvation.

Discuss, "How do the sacrifices we make compare with the sacrifice God made to save us from sin's punishment?"

November 16—Today in Sunday School, the children will study the efforts Abraham made to ensure that his son Isaac would marry a person who loved God in the account of "Isaac and Rebekah."

As a family discuss, "Why is it important to marry someone who shares your Christian faith? What are the blessings of sharing your beliefs with your spouse?"

November 23—The account of “Jacob and Esau” that our children will study in Sunday School today is a story of competition and bad feelings between brothers, parental favoritism, and family squabbling. Amidst this chaos, God acted with grace toward all of them—and to us.

Parents might ask, “How do these sins afflict every family? Why is forgiveness important in families?”

November 30—Our children will study “Jacob’s Dream” in Sunday School today, a story that shows God renewing His promise to bless all people through Jacob’s family. God kept His promise by giving Jesus to be our Savior.

Your family could discuss, “What reminders does God give us of His promises to us?”



Our Church Library includes two excellent, brief commentaries on the whole Bible compiled by theologians of our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Rev. Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann was an LCMS pastor and professor in the early part of the last century. Completed in 1924, his four-volume *Popular Commentary* is a monumental but also very practical work of Lutheran Biblical scholarship. A favorite for generations, due to popular demand it is now back in print from Concordia Publishing House, and the entire commentary is also available online at www.kretzmannproject.org.

The *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* is a shorter, one-volume commentary on the whole Bible, written by several LCMS scholars and published in 1979. These two commentaries are great resources for a conservative

Lutheran perspective on the meaning of the Bible.

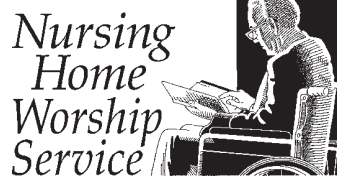
To check out a book from the Church Library just note your name and the book title and date borrowed on the check-out sheet on the clipboard which is on the library shelves.



Adult Bible Study

We are continuing our study in Adult Bible Class on *The Week that Changed the World*. In this fascinating study we are exploring the events of Holy Week, which are so central to our faith, using a booklet that shows side-by-side the accounts of these events from the four Gospels.

You are invited to join in on Sundays at 9:00am in the Overflow to grow in your faith, and your understanding of the real significance of Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection and *The Week That Changed the World*.



Nursing Home Services November 23

You are invited to help Trinity provide our final nursing home services for 2014 for residents of Country Club Estates and Vintage Park on November 23. The simple services are approximately 20 minutes in length at each home. We begin at 1:30pm at Country Club Estates and then go to Vintage Park for the second service.

The residents really enjoy these services, especially singing their favorite hymns. It’s great to have church members there to greet the residents and sing along. We have a faithful few members who help but we could use your help too!

MISSION NEWS

“Faith at Last”

This month’s Mission News was written by Hannah, an Indonesian high school student who was raised in a dysfunctional home. She was brought to faith in her Savior by the witness of our LCMS missionaries and Lutheran Hour Ministries in her country.

Indonesia is an archipelago of islands in Southeast Asia made up of more than 13,400 islands, which are home to more than 250 million people. It is also the largest Muslim country in the world—home to 13% of the world’s Muslims—but unlike most Muslim countries is still open to Christian missionaries.

The ministry center of Lutheran Hour Ministries, known locally as Anchor of Life, is located in the capital of Jakarta. It utilizes radio and television, mobile device messaging, print, and children’s and adult programs such as evangelism training, puppet shows, Sunday school teacher training, Bible correspondence courses, and holding sporting events and school programs, like the one which changed Hanna’s life.

My name is Hannah, and I am a junior in the Hati Suci School in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The story, my story, which I am going to tell you, is not pretty. On the other hand, it is honest as it speaks of how the Lord has given me a faith that has changed my eternity and my view of things.

Over the years I did not have a good relationship with my father. In truth, I

hated him because of his bad behavior, his rudeness, and because he had no idea on how to be a loving husband and father. Is that an exaggeration? You must decide that. I can tell you that he deserted us; he loved to hit us, abuse us, and was rarely at home when my family gathered together.

On the other hand, my mother always tried to be strong and counter all the physical and spiritual torment father gave. When I was little, she protected and defended me. As my family fell apart, she became my hero. True, there were times when I felt she should have been stronger and other times when I felt pity and sympathy for her, but she tried.

As for me, I became pretty unstable. I was always suspicious of others, refused to make friends, and kept my distance from everyone. My feelings of distrust about people's intentions made it very difficult for me to be close to or accept others. I did this all because I did not want to be hurt by anyone. I also grew up without ideals or any clear goals for the future.

And as for a faith? Well, I did not even know the Lord. For me God never existed. Yes, I heard people say, "The Lord was full of love, that Jesus was always reliable and wished to be a Friend for everyone." Me, I wanted to know where is the proof that would explain how a God of love would allow my family to fall apart and rob me of pleasure and peace. I seriously wondered if Jesus was God . . . or that He was with anybody.



Children in Indonesia learn about Jesus from LCMS sponsored missionaries.

But then the Lord changed me! During the academic year, our school had a three-day retreat. The main purpose of this event is to help the students see their abilities and talents. It is hoped



Bring Your Family and Guests to Celebrate
the Real "Reason for the Season"

Christmas Eve Service, Wednesday, December 24, 7:00pm

Featuring the 2014 Children's Christmas Program
"Light a Candle on the Altar" with Your Favorite
Christmas Carols Including "Silent Night" by Candlelight

Christmas Day Service, Thursday, December 25, 10:00am

All Invited — Everyone Welcome!

Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful!

they will then know how to organize their future, as well as prepare themselves to enter the "real world."

The speakers at the retreat came from Anchor of Life. During those three days we were given materials that were based on the Bible. They showed us many proofs of Jesus' love, of His compassion to humans—including me!

I was embarrassed at how ignorant I had been. I was shocked to realize the devil had blinded me to the Savior and the forgiveness He had won for me on the cross and at His empty tomb. At that time I realized that God has many ways of working with His children. If something bad happens in somebody's life that doesn't mean God should be blamed. On the contrary, the Lord always has good intentions for us.

Since those days my heart and my eyes have been opened to the knowledge that I am—with all my strengths and shortcomings—still loved by the Lord. Forgiven by God, I eventually accepted

myself, my family, and forgave my father, even though none of us know where he is.

Daily I give thanks there are many people who love me and care for me. Now I have a plan to organize my future and continue with higher education. Then, if God grants me the opportunity, I hope to make my life's work sharing the story of God's love with others.

I especially would like to share a passage the Lord used to touch me. It is a verse which has given me strength and hope. Maybe it will do the same for you.

The verse comes from Romans 5. There it says, "But we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

By God's grace may you know, as I do, that God loves you!