

November 2025



The Mountain Top Messenger

November 2025

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
All Saints Day Sunday 2nd	Veterans' Day Tuesday 11th		First Advent Sunday Sunday 30th			1
2 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service 9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP	3 10:00am Bible Study 7pm Dartball at Presbyterian	4 Apple Cider Day	5 6:30pm Worship Service	6 National Nacho Day	7	8 World Pianist Day
9 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service 9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study	10 10:00am Bible Study 7pm Dartball BYE	11 1:00pm Sewing Circle VETERANS *DAY*	12 6:30pm Worship Service	13 9:30am LFOJ Chaple	14	15 6:00pm LIFT
16 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service 9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study 2:00pm LGP	17 10:00am Bible Study 5:30 Council Mtg 7pm Dartball At Good Shepard	18	19 1:00pm Hospice Group- Gathering 6:30pm Worship Service	20 9:30am Winkel at Ashland	21 World Hello Day	22
23 8:45am Sunday School 9:00am Worship Service 9:30am Confirmation 10:15am Bible Study	24 10:00am Bible Study 7pm Dartball BYE	25 1:00pm Sewing Circle	26 1:30pm North- ern Lights 6:30pm Worship Service	27 God Bless You at Thanksgiving <i>Offices Closed</i>	25	29 Throw Out Your Left- overs Day
30 9:00am Worship Service 10:15am Bible Study	ELDERS November [12 Doug] [16 JohnS] [30 Doug] December	[2 Scott] [19 Randy] [3 Andy]	[5 JohnP] [23 JohnP]	[9 Andy] [26 Darryl]		
	Altar Guild – November	Paula Pruss 715-292-1898 JoAnn Honkala 715-292-0175				

November, the calendar continues ever onward, the year is almost spent. It seems a bit hard to believe we are sliding into winter already. Summer flew past; fall is in the rearview mirror already. I want to thank everyone who participated in, attended, and helped out at our Fall Harvest Dinner and Music review. It was a wonderful event and the food was amazing. A big thank you to John Pruss for the amazing roast beef and all the hours he put in preparing it, as well as all of those who brought dishes for the potluck portion, I feel confident in saying no one went home hungry. A big thank you to Tiffany for arranging all the musicians, for being and accompanist, and leading the choir. I am already looking forward to next year's edition. I don't know if you realize it or not, but Advent begins on November 30th this year, so we are less than 30 days to the start of the Christmas season and the beginning of the new church year. Just a reminder we are putting together the Christmas care packages for our students who are away from home and this year for any military members as well, so if you know anyone from our church family out there please let us know so we can include them, we are trying to get all the names together by the 15th of November. Please let Lynn or me know if you have a name and address.

Well here we are, at the end of our review of the 10 commandments through the eyes of Luther's Large Catechism. I think it has been an interesting journey and I know I have learned a few things and been refreshed on some others, I hope it has been interesting for you as well. I'm not sure what my target message will be for next year, and I am certainly open to suggestions for topics. If there is something that you would like me to dig into please let me know.

For now then, let's dig into the Commandments nine and ten. They are quite similar the directives in the commandments are the same only the subject of the command is different. One being your neighbor's living things, the other being his material goods. I found it interesting that in the Large Catechism Luther tells us that these two commands, while indeed are to be followed by us were exclusively directed to the Jews. He goes on to talk about how Jews felt they were keeping the commandments precisely when they followed the seventh commandment (Thou Shalt not Steal), and didn't think that coveting a neighbor's spouse or property, or desiring them in anyway was sinful and forbidden. As long as they didn't outright steal them they were ok. And that is where 9 and 10 come in. People understood the do not steal part, these commandments take it a couple of steps further, here in 9 and 10 it is forbidden to entice anything away from your neighbor, even though in the eyes of the world you could do it honorably, without accusation or blame for fraudulent gain, in the eyes of the world it is considered legitimate to make gain for yourself in at the expense of others.

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Luther puts it this way: *“We hunt for and think up clever tricks and shrewd tactics – better and better ones are being devised daily – under the guise of justice. We brazenly dare to boast of it and defiantly insist that it should not be called rascality but shrewdness and foresight. In this way we are abetted by jurists and lawyers who twist and stretch the law to suit their purpose, straining words and using them for pretexts, without regard for equity or for our neighbor’s plight. In short, whoever is sharpest and shrewdest in such matters gets most advantage out of the law, for as the saying has it, “The law favors the vigilant.””*

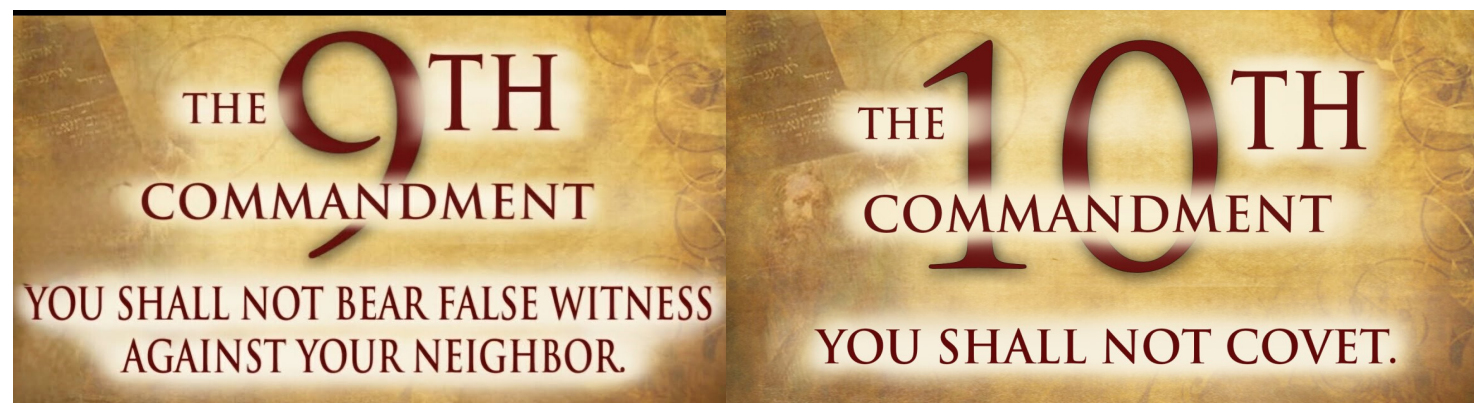
It sounds to me like things have only gotten worse since the 1500’s when Dr. Luther wrote this. I feel comfortable in saying that we see these things happening in our world today on a far too regular basis. Luther then points out who this commandment is aimed at when he states; *“This last commandment, therefore, is not addressed to those whom the world considers wicked rogues, but precisely to the most upright – to people who wish to be commended as honest and virtuous because they have not offended against the preceding commandments.”* Luther talks briefly how this commandment applies more often to those who are more “well to do” than the poor, as the poor when in need usually fall under the seventh commandment because they do not have the resources or the opportunity to acquire what they then need through deceit and cunning.

It boils not to this, God doesn’t want us to deprive our neighbors of anything that is theirs, He doesn’t want them to suffer loss while we satisfy our greed, even if in the eyes of world what we have done appears to be okay in their eyes, and we are only trying to “take care of ourselves.” Luther concludes it this way: *“This, then, is the common meaning of this commandment. First, we are commanded not to desire to harm our neighbors, nor to assist in doing harm nor to give occasion for it. Instead, we are gladly to let them have what is theirs and to promote and protect whatever may be profitable and serviceable to them, just as we wish others would do for us.”*

This concludes my series on the 10 commandments, I hope you have enjoyed it and found it worth your time. And again, if you have a topic you would like me to tackle next. please let me know. Thank you and God Bless and I will write to you all again next month.

The Lord Bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

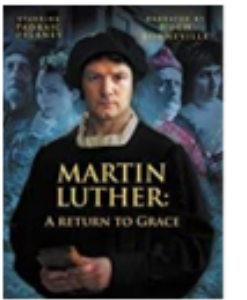
Pastor Rick



Check out our new DVD's. Inspiring Biblical answers to the tough questions? Sign-out sheet is in the library/meeting room.



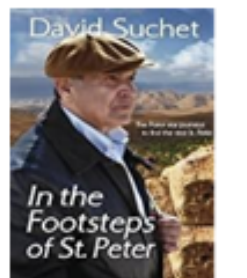
Martin Luther: A Return to Grace: The great drama of Martin Luther's life comes alive in this vivid portrayal of the penniless monk's quest for truth, a quest that would re-shape the church, and the world. 1 hr. 46 min. 2017, (13+ ages)



Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace : The story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German clergyman of great distinction, who actively opposed Hitler and the Nazis. His convictions cost him his life. 1 hr. 25 min. 2000 All ages.



In the Footsteps of St. Peter : Actor David Suchet goes on a documentary journey in search of Simon bar Jonah, better known as St. Peter. Follow this one-time fisherman turned leading disciple's, turbulent and miraculous life. 2 hr. 15 min. 2014 (13+ ages)



Pilgrims Progress: Journey to Heaven: A believer embarks on a journey from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. 1 hr. 45 min. 2008 (13+ age).



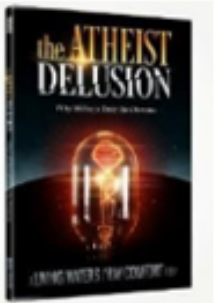
War Room: A compelling drama of a family on the brink. Told with humor and heart as it explores the power that prayer can have on every area of our lives. 2 hr. 2015 (PG)



The Passion of the Christ: Depicts the final twelve hours in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, on the day of his crucifixion in Jerusalem. 2 hr. 6 min. 2004 (R)



Evolution vs. God: Shaking the Foundations of Faith: Millions believe that Darwinian evolution is a scientific fact. This DVD exposes the cracks and contradictions in this not-so-scientific theory, by interviewing evolutionary scientists from UCL and USC, as well as biology majors. 35 min. 2013 (PG)



The Atheist Delusion: Why Millions Deny the Obvious: This DVD pulls back the curtain and reveals what is going on in the mind of those who deny the obvious. It introduces you to a number of atheists who you will follow as they go where the evidence leads. 1 hour 2 min. 2016 (PG)

Sewing Circle “Quilt Auction” in the Narthex. Four beautiful quilts are displayed on a table in the Narthex. It will be the sizes and current top bid amount. Money will be going toward the roof and elevator. Auction ends Sunday, November 23rd. Sue Spangle

LIFT—Lutherans In Fellowship Together— will be meeting at the church in the basement on Saturday, November 15th, for a fun night of games, talking and laughing. Bring your own beverages.



CAMP LUTHER

BUILDING UP ALL PEOPLE IN CHRIST FOR SERVICE AND WITNESS TO THE WORLD

HELLO FROM CAMP!



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
1111-11TH AVE WEST
ASHLAND, WI 54806

Sunday Worship Service 9:00am live streamed
Wednesday Evening Service 6:30pm
Sunday School - 1st - 7th grade Sunday 8:45am (Sept.-May)
Bible Studies
Sunday 10:15am Monday 10:00am (Sept.-May)

Upcoming Camp Luther Retreats

Marriage Retreat: November 6-9, 2025

Join us for a special weekend at Camp Luther and reconnect, reflect, and be renewed together!

Men's Retreat: February 5-8, 2026

It's time to step away from the everyday—whether you're looking to unwind, recharge, or seek adventure, come reconnect with God, your brothers in Christ, and yourself.



Visit campluther.com/adults to register and learn more about these Retreats!

Rent A Cottage

Rent one of our 17 cozy cottages this fall, winter, or spring and enjoy peace, refreshment, and joy surrounded by God's creation. Looking for a getaway? Our brand-new duplex, **The Bear Den**, is now complete and ready to welcome you!



Visit our website to learn more about our cottages! campluther.com/book-a-cottage

Giving Tuesday 2025

Giving Tuesday is coming—and we've got something exciting in the works. Stay tuned!

Summer Staff & JC Applications

Do you know someone who loves Jesus, loves kids, and wants to put their faith into action? Camp Luther is looking for passionate, Christ-centered individuals to apply for 2026 Summer Staff and Junior Counselors (JC)! Summer Staff applications open October 15, with JC applications opening November 1, 2025.



Visit campluther.com/why-serve to learn more about our Summer Staff & Junior Counselor Applications.

Bear Den Drawing - Summer 2026

Want a chance to spend an unforgettable week at Family Camp in Summer 2026? Join our Family Camp waitlist and you'll be eligible for our Bear Den drawing. Don't miss your chance at a week of Family Camp.

Visit campluther.com/summerfamily to learn more.

Prayer Requests For Camp Luther

- For the planning of Camp Luther's 80th anniversary celebration!
- That we continue to serve with endurance and joy for the remainder of the year.

Pastor Rick Williams - 715-209-0479

Office Hours: M /T/Th 9-5 Wed. 12-8 Fri. off

Please call ahead if you need to speak with Pastor.

Office Secretary Lynn Ladd 715-682-6075 Office Hours M/T/Wed 8:30-2:30

Days and times may change.

Church President: John Pruss 715-292-4825 **Head Elder:** Darryl Warren 715-492-0488

Little Friends of Jesus Child Care Center: 715-682-5185

LFOJ Administrator: 715-682-6075

Website www.zionashland.org **E-mail** secretary@zionlutheranashland.com

PRAYERS for Home-bound, Assisted Living, Nursing Home

Those who aren't able to attend common worship that they would find comfort knowing that the Lord is with them.

*Arlene Zimmerman
Violet Basina*

PRAYERS FOR PROTECTION

For our full-time troops and public servants, for travel, missionaries, and for peace and protection for families.

*David Wright
Jordan Thimm
Andrew Pruss*

PRAYERS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

For good test results, treatment, positive thinking, healing, and comfort during cancer treatments, for those suffering from addiction, mental illness and for healing, strength, comfort, and peace for family we pray for:

Brad Prill	Vi Basina	James Fletcher
Harold Larson	Linda Stenroos	Steve Key
Tim Erickson	Patty Hmielewski	Pam Ekholm
Don Pocernich	Jamie Klema	Keith Tveit
Rick Kallio	Cheryl Hildebrandt	Mary Dahl
Mike Trimble	Molly Colgrove	Linda Parrish
Chuck Sandor	Dwayne Lynch	Tom Anderson
Karl Wellnitz	Octavia Pearce	Don Pocernich
Larry Hildebrandt	Cindy Lazorik	Tracy Thompson
Clyde Sukanen	Kevin Heggie	Bonnie Jansehski
Camden & Brooks Balmer		
Karen	Wayne	Casey
Chuck	Betsy	Marsha

And those in our hearts

Dear Lord, "We come to You today with heavy hearts, as we lift up those who are in need of prayer. We ask that You would bring healing and restoration to their body, mind, and spirit" Amen.

came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51).

Of the Word The little tremor begins deep down inside and then grows into a full crescendo of nervous twitches and profuse sweating. You know what I'm talking about, the moments before stepping up on the scale so that the doctor can measure your weight.

After the last weigh-in, the doctor put me on the "no-white" diet. He said not to eat anything white, including one of my favorite things, bread. In the morning when seven-grain bread is being toasted to enjoy with butter and coffee, or when the smell of homemade flour tortillas drifts through the air, it is tough to be on this "no-white" thing!

There are so many things that are not good for us, but seem so "tasty and enjoyable." This can also be the case for our spiritual lives. We can become so addicted to the "food" of this world that when the Lord uses His scales to weigh our lives on the last day, nervous twitches and profuse sweating might come to our minds.

But wait! There is good news! Jesus came to be living bread. He came to suffer and die for all the times we have transgressed. He has given us bread to eat that is heavenly; bread that is good for us and strengthens us for life everlasting. This bread, given to us in the Lord's Supper, is Jesus' very own body. He commits this perfect food to energize the task of restoring us, especially when we fall off of our spiritual diets.

God has done all things necessary to restore a fallen world and a sinful humanity by giving His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross of Calvary to accomplish the task. But the story didn't end there. On Easter morning, there was Christ's resurrection. As John 6:51a says, *"I am the living bread that came down from heaven."* Feasting on the bread in the Lord's Supper, that is Christ, we receive life.

Walking with my Lord

Dear Lord, thank You that You are the Bread of Life who feeds and nourishes my soul. Keep my mind and heart away from the junk food of life that will only make my soul sick. Help me to daily feed on the Bread of Life, Your dear Son, Jesus — through whom You have given new life to Your creation and to all of us. Amen.

The swim-up suite

I wasn't allowed to bring my two pet turtles on a flight home to Wisconsin, so I drove them from California. We took photos at destinations like Route 66, Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon, and even stopped for turtle sundaes (with toppings that evoke Turtles candies: pecans, hot fudge and hot caramel). I set up a plastic kiddie pool in every motel we stayed in, filling it with water from the sink so they could splash around for a bit. One day, I got pulled over for speeding, and the officer said, "You should take your friends' advice back there and slow down." —*Joan Starich, Brookfield, Wisconsin*



Dad jokes

Honesty is great ... except when you're on the receiving end. One thing that takes some getting used to is just how uncensored young children are. A little girl is rifling through the family photo album. She stops turning pages and asks her mother, "Who's the good-looking guy on the beach standing with you with all the muscles and the curly hair?" "That's your father," the mother says. "Really?" asks the girl. "Then who's the old, fat, bald man who lives with us now?"



Be Still. God is at Work. : The Exodus Series Devotion

by [Blake Brockman](#) June 2025

In Exodus 14:1-14, we see the Sons of Israel cry out when they see the Egyptians. We see Moses' response: "Be still, the Lord will fight for you." When we endure, it starts with sitting with God and trusting in His promises – in this promise Moses gives.

Exodus 14:15-31 finishes the account of the Red Sea. We see God tell Moses to tell the Sons of Israel to keep moving. He tells Moses to raise his staff and

stretch out his hand to divide the sea before them. Moses does this, and miraculously the seas part. The Sons of Israel cross over the dry land to safety. This might seem totally different than sitting with God. It looks like an action move where Moses and the Sons of Israel are doing the work!

But look closely. Verses 19-20 show us that the angel of God – seen in the pillar of cloud and fire – goes behind the Sons of Israel, separating them from the Egyptians. Verse 21 shows us that when Moses stretches out his hands God is the one who drives back the sea. Verses 24-25 and verse 27 shows us that God confuses the Egyptian army and that He sweeps them into the sea.

God is the one who does all the work for Moses and the Sons of Israel. The Sons of Israel sit back and let God work for them – all they have to do is walk through the sea that He parted.

When we endure, even when we by sitting and trusting in God, we are tempted to think that we are doing all the work. But God is the one fighting on our behalf. Yes, He does give us direction and instruction – things to do, means to endure with. But God is the one who provides what we need to endure for us.

Go back and read verse 30. Let it remind you that God, out of His generous love, fights for and saves you. Sit with Him. Trust in His promise that He will always fight for His people.

Prayer Dear God, remind me when I face struggles, troubles, and adversity that You are always fighting for me. Help me slow down, take a deep breath, and sit in Your presence. Give me the strength to sit in and cling to Your promise to fight for Your people. In the name of Jesus, who endured all things for me, Amen. *by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty*



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|-------------|----------|---------------|-----------|
| CLIMB | HOUSE | POOR | SHORT |
| COLLECTOR | JERICO | REPENT | SINNER |
| CROWD | JESUS | RESTORE | SYCAMORE |
| FORGIVENESS | JOYFULLY | RICH | TAX |
| FOURFOLD | KINDNESS | RIGHTEOUSNESS | TREE |
| GIVE | LOOKED | SLAVATION | ZACCHAEUS |
| GUEST | LOST | SAVE | |
| HALF | MURMURED | SEEK | |



Speaking up For Life "In the fullness of time, our Lord was born for our sake. In the fullness of time, He will bring all the faithful into eternal fellowship with Him. In the fullness of time, He will dry every tear and fulfill His will for all mankind, as John the Evangelist witnessed in the Revelation God granted him." Deaconess Bethany Stoever, Director-at-Large, LFL of Kansas "For no one of those who are alive today knows where he was during the first two years, when he lived either in the womb ... Yet he lived at that time, and he was a body joined to a soul—a body adapted to all natural functions." Martin Luther "In spades the Lord has taught me—and prayerfully you also—that Psalm 23 is a thanksgiving psalm. He anoints our heads, which is the Old Testament way of saying He chooses us as kings. He makes us a part of His royal household! Man, are we blessed as His kids!" Pastor Keith Haberstock, guest speaker on "The Lutheran Hour"

God's Wonderfully Comforting Promises

by Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske

God's Word tells us that it is a blessing to grow to an old age (Job 12:12; Proverbs 16:31, 17:6). However, because of sin, growing old also comes with many challenges. For many, aging means having to deal with a weakening and aching body, forgetfulness, and the loss of independence, among many other frustrations. Unfortunately, the devil has convinced our culture to look to death as the solution to the suffering that comes with growing old. The story of Genesis 3 has been repeated over and over again as people elevate themselves to the place of God, who alone has authority over life and death. Ending one's own life through physician-assisted suicide or purposely hastening death by withholding necessary medications or treatments are violations of God's command to love and protect the lives He so wonderfully created. It is right for a Christian to feel compassion for those who suffer and to desire an end to their pain. But deliberately ending a life is not the answer. Christ alone provides the answer to our suffering by joining Himself to our suffering in His own life and death. For the sake of Christ, the heavenly Father leaves the aging with many wonderfully comforting promises. God will never leave us or forsake us, no matter how old we grow or how terribly we suffer (Isaiah 46:4; Psalm 138:9). He will use our suffering to strengthen our faith and bring us into His salvation (Romans 5:3-5, 8:28-30). And finally, by patiently enduring our suffering through the faith that He supplies, God will ultimately free us from all pain and suffering (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 2:10). May your faith be

increased so that in Christ our Lord, you are able both to see the sanctity that God places upon the lives of the aged and to entrust yourself into the loving care of our Father in heaven no matter what lies ahead, knowing that "even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save" (Isaiah 46:4).



THE STARFISH STORY



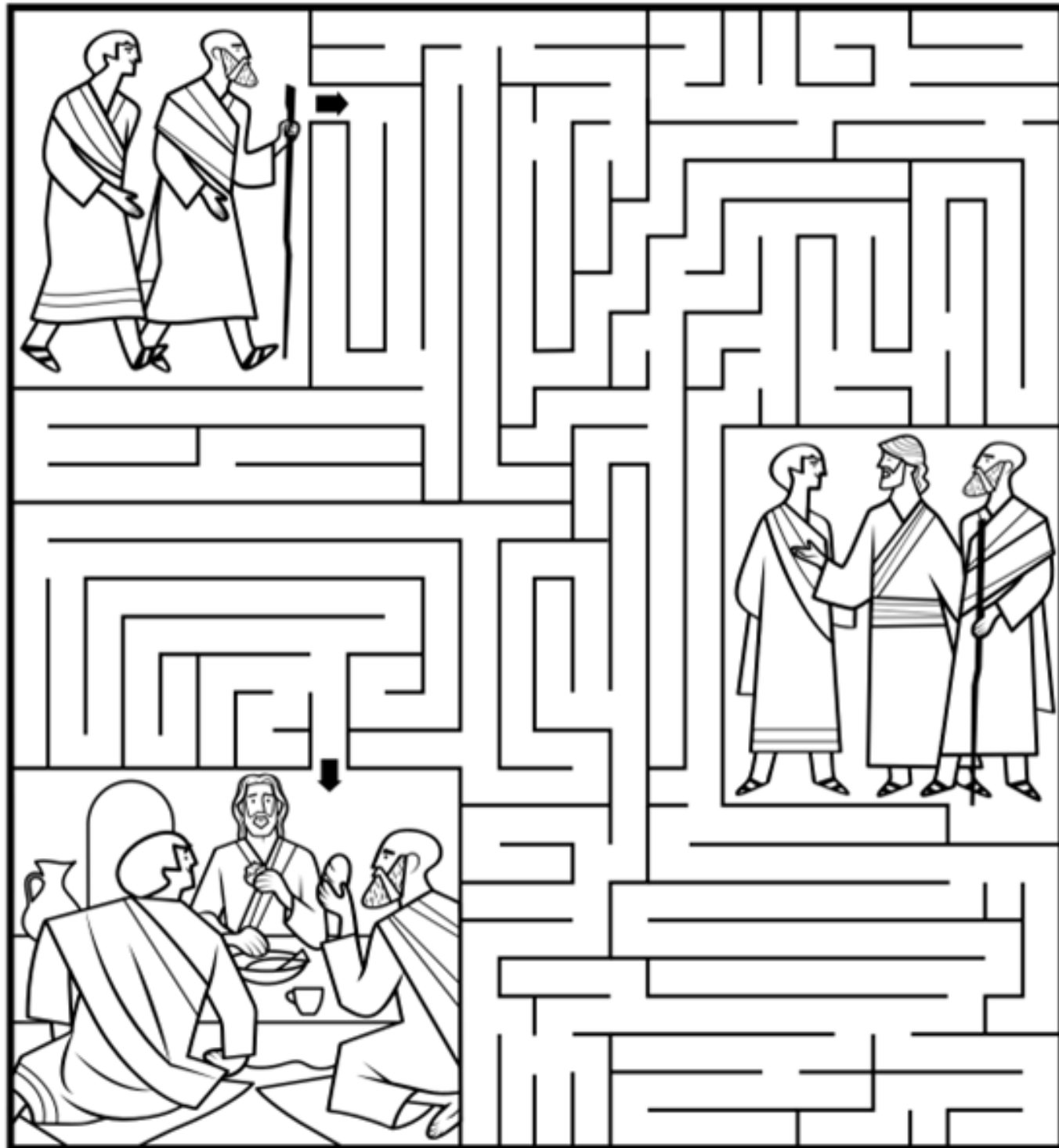
An old man walked across the beach until he came across a young boy throwing something into the breaking waves. Upon closer inspection, the old man could see that the boy was tossing stranded starfish from the sandy beach, back into the ocean.

"What are you doing, young man?" He asked.

"If the starfish are still on the beach when the sun rises, they will die," the boy answered.

"That is ridiculous. There are thousands of miles of beach and millions of starfish. It doesn't matter how many you throw in; you can't make a difference." "It matters to this one," the boy said as he threw another starfish into the waves. "And it matters to this one."

Two disciples (followers) were sad as they walked and **talked about Jesus's death.** Without telling them who He was, Jesus walked and ate with them. He comforted them and taught them from the scriptures. Follow the two disciples' path as they talk with Jesus.



Luke 24 (Mark 16; John 20)

🔍 How did the two disciples realize it was Jesus?

OCTOBER LFOJ NEWSLETTER

Dear parents, guardians, and Zion Members

TOTVILLE NEWS: Greetings from the Infant Room!

We've been working on identifying body parts and animal sounds.

The older kids are starting to eat at the table, learning to empty their plates and asking to be excused.

Happy birthday to Adalynn and Gabe! Both will be turning one this month

Every day that is 20 degrees or warmer we will be going outside (unless it is raining). Most days, some of the little ones are napping, so all the kids don't go out each day. Please have appropriate outside clothing for your child. We wish everyone a happy and safe Halloween!

Thank you to the Sexton family for the wonderful apples!

"The Lord has promised good things" Numbers 10:29

- Denise and Nikki

TODDLER TIDBITS: We have a class full of amazing kids and have had so much fun with our Halloween activities in October.

We are going to be working on more fall and winter crafts and activities. Since winter is coming and it's getting colder out, we're going to continue going outside everyday. Please make sure your child has a hat and gloves for school (extra is always best). Try your best to label them and we will try our best to make sure they get returned to their cubbies after we come inside.

We're working on the kids having some independence which includes taking their cold gear off when they come in and putting it in their cubbies on their own. This means they may get into the wrong bin from time to time. We will try to go through their things after lunch and return them to the correct cubbies, but we may miss something. We have such a wonderful class and we are excited for November!

- Ms Jane, Ms Lael and Ms Michelle

COOK'S CORNER

Fall Protein Oatmeal Bake

Ingredients: 2 cups old-fashioned oats, 1 and ½ cups milk of any kind, ½ cup plain greek yogurt, 2 ripe bananas or ½ cup unsweetened applesauce, 2 eggs, 1 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp vanilla extract, pinch of salt, Optional: 2-3 tbsp maple syrup or honey, Optional mix-ins: ½ cup blueberries, diced apples, chopped nuts, or dark chocolate chips

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
In a large bowl, mash bananas and whisk in eggs, milk, yogurt, vanilla, and sweetener if using. Stir in oats, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt until fully combined.
Fold in any mix-ins.
Pour mixture into the baking dish and spread evenly
Bake for 35-40 min until the top is golden brown and set in the middle.

LFOJ WISH LIST/NEEDS

Monthly:

Regular paper towel and/or Tri Fold paper towel
Toilet Paper
Fragrance Free Baby Wipes
Kleenex (facial tissue)
Hand soap (unscented, antibacterial)
Great value brand canned fruits in juice (not syrup)
Natural peanut butter
Parent's choice gentle baby formula (must be iron-fortified)
Ragu spaghetti sauce
Prego alfredo sauce

All natural ketchup (no high fructose corn syrup)
Tomato soup
Graham crackers
Vanilla wafers
Elbow noodles
Foam Tumbling mats
Quart Double Ziplock bags
Gallon Double Ziplock bags
Goldfish, Whale, or Penguin crackers
Think Pretzel sticks

ZACCHAEUS MEETS JESUS

Spot 8 differences between the two pictures.



Q G Y Q T Q C P C O U Y S E
 A T O N E S V O T I V Y S O R E H
 T T E S T I M O N Y E L S C A E
 D E C E I V E D L U P E K E G
 S O N H Q W W G M K E D S D
 X V A I O L U O E A T S E E F
 S M R M S F G T U C U R N Y U M
 N O E A N A F Q C O P I G O G O M
 O D V F N Y H E N V T I R A G D
 S G E Y I T S E R J D S T L S
 I N S U R R E C T I O N S P I S
 R I R A E V D E F E N S E H W I S
 P K E P O N A T I O N G S D J H O W
 H J P G T E A C H E R K S L H O W

votive
deceived
kingdom
plagues
synagogues
testimony
adversaries
secure

stones
Teacher
nation
famines
persecute
governors
wisdom
perseverance

temple
offerings
insurrections
earthquakes
signs
prisons
defense
destroyed

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED (LUKE 23:26-43) November 23rd "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." ISAIAH 53:5

FILL IN THE BLANK:

1. "Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, _____ a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus." LUKE 23:26

TRUE OR FALSE:

2. There were also eight others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. LUKE 23:32

TRUE OR FALSE

3 "And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left." LUKE 23:33

FILL IN THE BLANK:

4. "Then Jesus said, 'Father, _____ them, for they do not know what they do' ..." LUKE 23:34

TRUE OR FALSE:

5. "...And they divided His garments and cast lots." LUKE 23:34 TRUE OR FALSE

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

6. "And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them _____, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.'" LUKE 23:35

7. "And the soldiers also _____ Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.'" LUKE 23:36-37

UNDERLINE THE CORRECT ANSWER:

8. "Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, _____.'" LUKE 23:40-41

- a. Save Yourself and us.
- b. Tell them to bring me some sour wine too.

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

9. "But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward for our deeds; but this Man has done _____ wrong.'" LUKE 23:40-41

10. "Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, _____ me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in _____.'" LUKE 23:42-43

That dog'll hunt

I was away one Easter and left my husband and our toy poodle, Duke, home alone. My husband celebrated by filling plastic Easter eggs with dog treats and hiding them around the house. Duke was delighted. When he found one, he would crush the egg with his paw to get the treat inside. A tradition was born, and we now hold an outside doggy Easter egg hunt each year in our yard for all our pups and grandpups. —*Jeanette Sukhu, Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina*

Primped and pawlished

My chocolate Labrador, Doc, loved an adventure in the woods around my home. Upon return, I'd run a vacuum with an upholstery attachment all over him to get the ticks off. To my surprise, he loved it—and it worked. He was so relaxed, he'd go into a comfort coma during our "spa session." If he felt he'd been given a shortened treatment, he'd slap me with his paw. —*Donna Anderson, Sun City Center, Florida*

An art reflection by Liv Booth on the hymn "Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" (LSB 892).

This is one installment of a series providing reflections on works of art and music from a Lutheran perspective. Pumpkins, candlelight, evenings of earlier dark ... Autumn is the best time of year. Do not argue; I will not listen. My blood runs pumpkin spice. Once November has really settled over the world, and we're almost ready for Advent, we Americans pause on a Thursday to thank the Lord for His provision so far and in anticipation of future blessings. Although Thanksgiving is not technically part of the liturgical Church Year, *Lutheran Service Book* indulges us with a small selection of "harvest and thanksgiving" hymns. At my childhood church (Our Savior in Westminster, Mass.), the Thanksgiving Eve service was one of my favorites. A cornucopia spilled squashes and the best apples all over the altar; the sanctuary was bright and happy while outside the bare maples and oaks were creaking in the cold. My mother always had those little electric candles lit in the parsonage windows so that we came home to warmth and welcome. The hymns that evening were all about provision, the good earth, God's bounty, and His joy in the physical world.

This hymn has that feeling, but it says far more than I ever understood as a child. In fact, I misunderstood some of the vocabulary for years! You'll laugh, but there was a town called "Gardner" nearby, and somehow, I thought that's where God would store us all up evermore. Also, of course, "ears"? I've made some vocabulary notes just to clear up any confusion before we get started.

Spend a minute in this hymn with me; I hope singing it this Thanksgiving will be a richer experience for you!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Vocabulary help

- **Harvest Home** — This hymn, from pre-Industrial-Revolution England, refers to the rich Fall community celebration the agrarian British called "Harvest Home." Think State Fair with all the fun, friends, food and pride!
- **ere** — before

"Come, Ye Thankful People, Come" *LSB 892*; text in the public domain. Some punctuation lightly edited. *LSB* notes these accompanying texts: *Matthew 13:24–30*; *Revelation 22:7, 12, and 20*; *Isaiah 9:3*.

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 to 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.

- **tares** — weeds, specifically "false wheat" or "darnel," that is very hard to tell apart from wheat until just before harvest, or even as the grain is being sorted.
- **blade, ear, corn** — stages of wheat: sprout, closed head, fully developed grain
- **garner** — safe storehouse (like a silo)

3. For the Lord, our God, shall come and shall take His harvest home,

From the 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.

Reflection:

Stanza 1

Every sweet Fall Festival reminds us that everything we love and everything that supports us comes from the Lord! He made the earth and everything that it bears.

"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen" (*Rom. 11:36*).

I picture Jesus kneeling in the new dirt on the third day of creation, sinking His fingers into the earth and causing lush grass to spring out of it. Then the trees rise up, bursting into leaf and fruit; vines tumble over the ground and bear melons, squash or grapes. Our little fairs and feasts remind us that the Lord of

Creation cares even for us, in our little human needs, creating provision that delights our eyes and senses.

Rushing to church together in gratitude is the best way to start our festival!

"Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Eph. 5: 18–20*).

Stanza 2

A farmer plants a field, and the Lord planted the church. I want church to be a haven from the world, but even in church, while I'm thanking God for all the things on earth that bring me joy and pleasure, I know that it's not

heaven yet. It's not even an earthly utopia. In fact, it's not even entirely a gathering of God's saints. Just as in the rest of my life, my church home is a mix of "wheat and tares."

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness'" (*Matt. 7:21–23*).

Not everyone wants Jesus to love them. I myself resist His love. Sometimes I don't want Him to tend me, to feed me, to guide my growth. I fear that I'm resisting harder than He can love me. Where am I headed?

"Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment" (*John 5:28–29*).

Here's the hard reality: Although He died for everyone, some don't want Him. It's a terrible truth we must trust Him through.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit" (*Matt. 7:15–17*).

I used to hear the line about blade/ear/corn very wrongly. The tune there is mounting and sounds triumphant, cheerful, grateful — but it describes the development of little shoots into either good wheat or bad tares. And the prognosis is not good for tares.

"Then do you want us to go and gather [the weeds]?" But he said, "No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, 'Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn'" (*Matt 13:28–30*).

Dear God, let me not be a tare! Grow me into wheat! This hymn is more serious than you thought, isn't it?

Stanza 3

Out of this scary reality, our strong Lord promises to rescue us! He is patient, waiting in His love and wisdom until His prize-winning harvest is ready. He leaves the tares alone for the moment for the sake of the tender shoots who are growing slowly, looking forward to heaven and the new creation — the great Harvest Home celebration — not won by our merits, but by the blood of Jesus that was spilled into His field, flooding us with His divine life in our Baptism.

"And if you call on Him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable

things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (*1 Peter 1:17–19*).

Only He can get us ready for Harvest Home. And He will come for us. He will gather us all up and shake out any of the uncertainties we've suffered under: the disappointments of failed human love, the fear that comes with our real and imagined inadequacies, the yearning of our hearts. Even in the midst of His overflowing blessings here on earth, we cry: how long, O Lord? How long until You make it all right? How long until you make it Eden again? Not a field, but a garden — safe and beautiful.

"They cried out with a loud voice, 'O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?'" (*Rev 6:10*).

The day of harvest will not be not safe or beautiful for tares. It means the revelation of their true identity; it means a bonfire.

"Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops" (*Luke 12:2–3*).

"[Jesus] answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear'" (*Matt. 13: 37–38*).

Preserve us, O Lord, and rescue those most in need of Your mercy.

Stanza 4

So come quickly, Lord Jesus! There is joy ahead; You'll catch us all up in Your joyful Harvest Home, rejoicing over us with singing, feasting, and pride over Your great reward: Me! Us! Your children! Your church! The angels, the saints before us, the whole crowd of family and friends that has been waiting until the right time will join together in You. Our burdens, fears and uncertainties will drop away as we rise, free and innocent at last, to our real home. Oh, bring Your harvest home!

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also" (*John 14:1–3*).