

First Impressions

“Connecting People to Jesus”

Volume 18 Issue 11

November 2011

THE GRACE OF RECEIVING

“What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?” - 1 Corinthians 4:7

Learning the grace of receiving will go a long way toward overcoming the *thoughtlessness* that seems to value neither the giver nor the gift. Often it shows that a person is focused on what he thinks he does not have instead of on what he has received.

A woman called her minister to her house one day. “I have some important matters to discuss with you,” she said. “I want you to hear about my troubles.” The minister settled down in a chair, pulled out his watch, and said, “I’ll allot thirty minutes to hearing your troubles, but first you must devote fifteen minutes to telling me about your blessings.” The woman was taken by surprise, but after thinking it over she proposed that they forget about the troubles. She told him, “It might take all forty-five minutes for my blessings.”

Maybe we should have Thanksgiving Day every week instead of only once a year - but don’t we? Isn’t one of the purposes of our worship on the Lord’s Day to give Him thanks and praise for His blessings? It’s why we recount the Good News of Jesus’ life and death and rising again so regularly, so we will not be thoughtless, but will learn the life-giving grace of receiving His forgiving love and all that goes with it. If that doesn’t move us to express our gratitude in word and in life, what will?

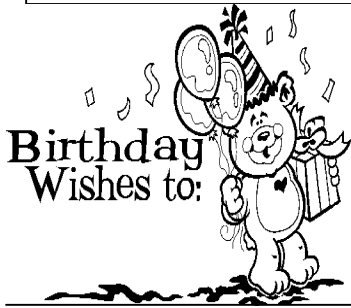
Graceful or grateful receiving blesses both the receiver and the Giver. The account of the boy Samuel serving in the tabernacle under Eli, the high priest, uses an interesting phrase. It says, “the young man Samuel was ministering to the LORD” (1 Samuel 3:1). Notice, it doesn’t say he was ministering to Eli, which he was doing; nor does it say he was ministering to the people, which was also part of his duties. It says he was ministering to the Lord. How does a person minister to God, to serve His needs, as it were?

St. Paul, in Galatians, speaks of not frustrating the grace of God. David, in Psalm 51, asks for inner cleansing, and says to God, “Then will You delight in right sacrifices” (v. 19). To an extent, of course, this is talking about God in human terms, but it suggests that those who reject or ignore His gift of grace in Christ are a frustration to Him, while those who learn the *grace of receiving* and offer Him the spiritual sacrifices of renewed attitudes and changed lives bring Him pleasure. What a blessing for us to think of our exercises of worship and praise as not only being good for us but also as ministering to the Lord and bringing pleasure to our heavenly Father!

It surely is true in human relationships. How the human spirit is fed by someone who has learned the grace of receiving and, as a result, knows how to say a sincere thank you!

A Blessed Day of “grace receiving” and Thanksgiving to you ... every day
- Pastor Tom

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. Paraphrased from “Focused on Christ” by Ken Behnken – Concordia Publishing House, 2010



1st Glen Thompson
 1st Dcs. Peg Anderson
 2nd Audree Mayhew
 4th Anne Allen
 4th Henry Hayes

6th Rachel Garrett
 10th Heather Lackey
 12th Larry Donaldson
 20th Derek Robinson
 24th Trent Shiflett

25th Henrietta Rivers
 26th Nicole Fortune
 26th Leslie Hayes
 27th Kathy Roberts
 30th Gail Pugh
 30th Gail Pugh

Nov. 4 - Robert & Gwen
 Regulus
 Nov. 11 - Stan & June Weir



ARE YOU READY TO DISCOVER, DEVELOP, AND USE YOUR SPIRITUAL GIFT?

Pastor Porter will be conducting a spiritual gift workshop on Saturday, November 5, 2011, beginning at 8:00 AM and ending with a chili lunch. A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board.



Daylight - Saving Time ends on Saturday, November 5, 2011 at midnight. That means set your clocks, watches, microwaves, coffee pots, VCRs, and all time-keepers **BACK** one (1) hour. Sleep in - you deserve it!

Thank you to our First family for all the prayers, concerns, visits, and cards during my recent two month health ordeal. It was such a blessing to know you all were praying for me and David when I was too sick to pray. God is good and we are blessed to know each of you.



Congratulations to Cynthia Brown, Robert Regulus, Nancy Clasby, Pastor Tom, Frances Robinson, and Ernestine Craig for answering October's trivia question. It

seems the editor was not very specific, therefore the answers are as follows: Luther originally asked his followers to call themselves Christians and then he and his followers called their churches Evangelical. We are awarding everyone Peace! Read on to find this month's question. The prize is Thanksgiving!



Attention!

First Lutheran Church will hold a Voters Meeting on Sunday, November 13, 2011 immediately following the 10:15 AM Worship Service. Approval for the 2012 budgets is

WORSHIP WORKERS



November

FIRST LUTHERAN

Children's Church –

- November 6 - Judy Drews
- November 13 - Kate Cahill
- November 20 - Carol Lackey
- November 27 - Pat Ryan

Readers:

- November 6 - Toby Cahill
- November 13 - Donna Speegle
- November 20 - Pat Thompson
- November 27 - Heather Lackey

Altar Guild: Rhoda Rivers

Candles: Carol Lackey

Communion Assistant: Toby Cahill

Ushers: Graham & Victoria Sisson,
Pat & David Ryan

Worship Assistant: Wilson Whittington

Nursery: Meg Callahan

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDIES

Galatians - Taught by Pastor Porter & Pastor Lackey.

Adult Bible Study - Lutheranism 101 study taught by Graham & Victoria Sisson.


Patriarchs: Study of Genesis 12-50 - taught by Donna Speegle.

Children's & Youth Sunday School Classes:

Pre-school - 2 - 5 years old. Taught by Lisa Whittington

Elementary - 1st - 5th grade. Taught by Wilson Whittington

Teenagers - 12 - 18 years old Gwen Regulus & Judy



Homebound/Assisted Care:
Charlene Seibert, Corrine Donahoo, Lucille Cooper, Hildegard Wesson, Dean Mizzell, Edward Royal, Dolores Goehler, Leona Boehme, Edna Grund, Charlotte Newell, Becky Jenkins, Evelyn Krueger, Norma Jefferson.

Recovering: Delores Goehler, Hildegard Wesson, Pat Ryan..

Illness: Dean Mizzell, Edward Royal, Alice Callsen, Ethan Melton, Norma Jefferson, Corrine Donahoo, Judy Drew's brother-in-law, Steve Norby, and Arnold Hardin.

Mourning: Estelle Hall

Intercession: For the people of Norway, Japan, Libya, Haiti, and the tornado and flood victims.

Missionaries: Bible Faith Lutheran Seminary (India).

Members who have lost their jobs.

Those Serving in the Military: Mike Golchert deployed in November.







11/13 - Stan & June Weir in honor of their Anniversary

11/20 - Nicole Fortune in memory of her fathers

11/27 - 01/01 - Poinsettias: Sign-up sheet is on the Altar Flower board.

NOVEMBER 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p> 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	31	1 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	2 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	3 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	4 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	5  8:00 AM @ Jktar/ G# M/W/Th/F/Sa/Su
<p>6 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	7 6:30 PM Church Council Meeting	8 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	9 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	10 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	11 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	12
<p>13 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Voters Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	14	15 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	16  Newsletter Deadline 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	17 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	18 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	19
<p>20 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	21	22 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	23 6:00 PM Gospel of John Bible Study	24 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	25 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM Nehemiah Small Group 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	26
<p>27 8:00 AM Choir Rehearsal 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Sunday School 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Deacon Meeting 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous</p>	28	29 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Women's Bible Study	30  Advent 5:30 PM Advent Dinner 6:30 PM Advent Worship Services	1 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	2 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM Alcoholics Anonymous	3

Readings: 11/6 = Rev. 7:9-17; Psalm 149; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12, 11/13 = Zeph. 1:7-16; Psalm 90:1-12; 1 Thess. 5:1-11; Matt. 25:14-30

11/20 = Ezek. 34:1-16; 20:24; Psalm 95:1-7; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; Matt. 25:31-46, 11/27 = Is. 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7; 1 Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 11:1-10 or 13:24-37.

First Impressions


 The logo features the words "Stewardship Emphasis" in a white, cursive-style font, set against a black oval background with a white border. Below the oval is a decorative white flourish.

November is a popular month for many Americans. In the farm belt most of the crops have been harvested and stored safely away. In other areas snow has already fallen and skiers are anxious to head for the hills to get an early start on the new ski season. Sports fans are treated to a large number of college and professional football games. But perhaps the best thing about November is **THANKSGIVING DAY**.

Christians love to join together with fellow Christians and sing hymns of harvest and thanksgiving like:

*“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.”* (TLH, 574, v 1)

Christians and Lutheran Christians, in particular, recall how Dr. Martin Luther explained the meaning of the petition *“Give us this day our daily bread.”* Luther said that *“God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all wicked people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.”* He then went on to explain what is meant by daily bread with these words: *“Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and wants 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.”*

That’s quite a list of things for which to be thankful. We enjoy these many blessings because two things that God delights in doing are *“loving and giving.”* This is stated so clearly in the well-known words of John 3:16 (NIV): *“God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

St. Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, penned these words in Romans 8:31-32 (NIV): *“He [God] who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?”*

A suggestion for Christians each morning is to pray, *“Thank You, Lord, for the gifts of life, health, work, family, friends, home, daily bread and this new day. Bless and protect us this day in all our activities, travels, work and play.”*

One of the best benefits that comes with *thanksgiving* is *thanksgiving* that shows up as we freely and joyfully manage all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes. That is Christian stewardship in the best sense of the word.

Happy Thanksgiving!

(Taken from LCMS website)

Visually Impaired Ministry

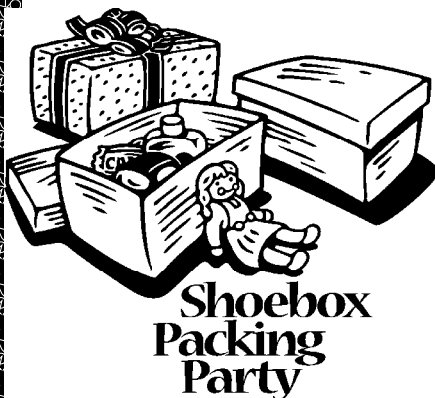


Luncheon and Program for the Blind and Visually Impaired

The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills will host a monthly luncheon and program for blind and visually impaired people on Thursday, November 10, from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The event will be held at the church: 201 South Montgomery Highway in Vestavia Hills (corner of Montgomery Highway and Shades Crest Road, half mile south of Brookwood Hospital).

There is no charge for the meal, but those who plan to attend are encouraged to call the church office at 823-1883 to make a reservation and indicate if there is a need for transportation. The church will make arrangements for transporting people to and from the luncheon.

Everyone who is blind or visually impaired is encouraged to come for this time of inspiration and encouragement.



Operation Christmas Child Shoebbox Packing Party
Please pack a shoebox or donate money and a Health Ministry Team member will be your personal shopper! We will have a shoe box packing party on Saturday, November 19. More fun details to follow!

Please contact Heidi Noon if you have questions.

Worship for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas
is as follows:



- Wednesday 11-23-11 6:00 PM = Thanksgiving Eve Service
- Wednesday 11-30-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily
- Wednesday 12-07-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily
- Wednesday 12-14-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily
- Wednesday 12-21-11 5:30 PM - 6:15 PM = Advent Dinner
6:30 PM = Evening Prayer with Homily
- Friday 12-16-11 6:00 PM - Pastor's Sing-a-long in Fellowship Hall
- Sunday 12-18-11 10:15 AM - Divine Service with Carols
- Saturday 12-24-11 6:00 PM = Christmas Eve Worship
- Sunday 12-25-11 10:15 AM = Christmas Day Worship with Holy Communion



The Board of Education needs help with Children's Church. If you are willing and able to serve, please contact Judy Drews.

In 1845, a small group of Lutherans under the leadership of Pastor F. A. Craemer was sent to Michigan by Pastor Loehe to establish a mission colony, which was called what?

Poinsettias

A sign up sheet for Poinsettias is posted on the Altar flower board, next to the Church office. Help us beautify the Sanctuary for the Advent of Christ's birth.





First Lutheran Church

8:00 AM Choir Practice
9:00 a.m. Sunday School for Children & Adults
10:15 a.m. Sunday Worship and Communion Service

Newsletter Deadline: 3rd Wednesday of the month

Bulletin Announcement Deadline: Tuesdays

First Lutheran Church

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