



The Evangel

Vol. 37, Edition 11

November 2020

**Our Saviour
Lutheran Church**
is a congregation of the
Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America.

We welcome all
to share in life with Christ
as a community
of faith in mission.

OSLC's Vision & Mission

God calls us to be a community of
discipleship for all, making Christ's
love real in our daily lives.

Grow in faith and Christian calling
Love and serve God and neighbor
Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Worship Online

10:00 A.M. on Sundays

Join the Zoom Meeting or watch
live on OSLC's facebook page.

Email Sandra (sandra@osluth.org)
and she'll send you a bulletin
and a Zoom invite.



Randy Schroeder, Pastor

Give Thanks in All Circumstances

Thankfulness, studies show, has multiple physical, mental and emotional benefits. Psychologist Robert Emmons calls gratitude “fertilizer for the mind” because of its powerful effects.



He admits gratitude isn't always easy — especially when life throws us curveballs (see the year 2020) — but says it can be most helpful during and after difficulties. Emmons suggests reframing challenges using thankfulness-based language. Ask, for example: Though I wasn't grateful for the experience at the time, how can I be now? What lessons did I learn, and how did I grow as a person?

Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul reframes his extensive sufferings and urges us to do the same. “Give thanks in all circumstances,” he writes, “for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV).

A meaningful month

Consumerism can prevent us from noticing needs, writes Walter Brueggemann (*The Prophetic Imagination*). A culture steeped in materialism and greed can “block out the cries of the denied ones ... so that no one discerns misery alive in the heart of God.”

In November, we celebrate All Saints, Thanksgiving, Christ the King Sunday and the start of Advent. What does it mean that Christ is our King? How can we truly give God thanks and prepare for Jesus' coming? It's a good time to ponder what hurts God's heart — and how we can help.

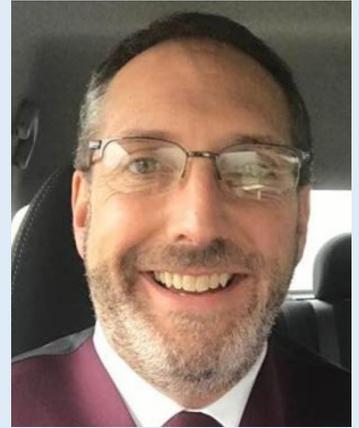
If someone is lonely, perhaps we can invite them to Thanksgiving dinner. If we sense inequality saddening God, we might advocate for fair policies. If God is in pain because some of his children have too little, we can share our resources. In so doing, we welcome Christ the King among us, and give him meaningful thanks.

“I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.” —G.K. Chesterton

God Is a Safe Place to Hide

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. ⁶ The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; God utters God's voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. ¹⁰ "Be still, and know that I am God!"



I am encouraged by Psalm 46, especially in this time. We heard this as our Psalm reading during our service on Sunday the 25th of October. God is our refuge and strength indeed. In Eugene Peterson's "The Message," his interpretation of this verse is "God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need God." We need to remember and hold on to God as we find safety and hide from COVID-19; but not from our call to love one another. Though the earth and our context change, God is in the midst of the city, ready to help us and shall not be moved. The Lord of hosts is with us.

Take a moment...

Still yourself... and know...

God is with us.

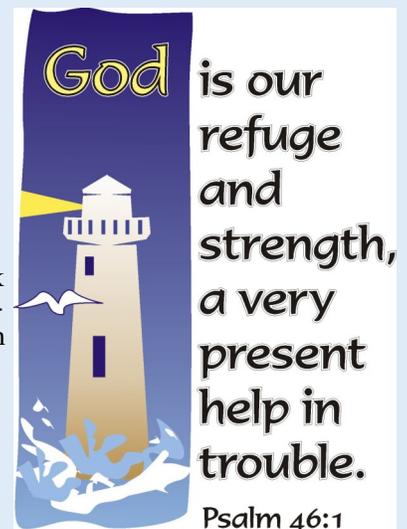
In September, the OSLC council voted to create a Special Task Force appointed to research when and how OSLC will re-open for in-person worship. This Special Task Force consists of Cindy Modlin Adams, Carol Grady, Kathy Heise and me. At the October Council Meeting the recommendation that OSLC should not resume in-person worship for the rest of 2020 and reevaluate in January 2021 was unanimously approved.

This was a difficult decision as we miss the interaction of Sunday mornings of worship and gathering before as well as after worship. Yet as we studied the information from: the ELCA, our State and Local Health Departments, the general opinion of the members of OSLC and as we witness the rise of cases in Tippecanoe County: we believe waiting until the beginning of the year will lower our risk of spreading COVID-19 and show love for one another.

The next step for the Task Force is to prepare a safety plan for when in-person worship does resume. We are pouring over the vast amount of information and safety procedures to organize the safest and best plan forward for OSLC.

We will continue our online services and encourage you to view every Sunday on Zoom or via Facebook and invite others! We will continue to challenge Ole and Sven, as we attempt to be more creative in online worship, staying true to our Lutheran roots yet welcoming the ever-changing Spirit of God in today's context. The staff of OSLC will be in the office more often in the next weeks. If you are coming by, please remember your mask and help us all stay healthy. We shall not fear as we continue our discernment over gathering in-person, knowing as the COVID mountains shake and the waters of political division roar, God is our very refuge.

Peace,
Pastor Randy



Treasure the present

Patience asks us to live the moment to the fullest ... to taste the here and now, to be where we are. When we are impatient, we try to get away from where we are. We behave as if the real thing will happen tomorrow, later, and somewhere else. Let's be patient and trust that the treasure we look for is hidden in the ground on which we stand.

—Henri Nouwen

News & Notes

Council Highlights October 14, 2020

- Motion that we not meet in person until 2021; seconded; passed.
- We are dreaming of a plan for a design for the area by the bus stop.
- Pastor Randy will have office hours 1-3pm on Wednesdays; and Sandra will be at OSLC on Tuesdays and Fridays, 11-3
- Sunday Zoom attendance has been steady, with a lot of facebook hits as well.



Thanks to those who ordered blank photo greeting cards and Christmas bells in support of Family Promise. I have sent Family Promise a check for \$206, all from the sale of these items. If you have deleted your catalogue and would like another copy, please let me know. I take card orders at any time, but if you want Christmas Bells in time for the holiday, you should get those to me by the end of November.

Thanks so much!!!

Vera

Assisting in November

Nov 1: Dale Buettner

Nov 8: Kathy Heise

Nov 15: Beth Dana

Nov 22: Julie Huetteman

Nov 29: Robert & Dee

Hershberger

Third Quarter Financial Report

For the first nine months of 2020, the church received \$252,631.72 in contributions and spent \$262,974.53 on expenses for a deficit of \$10,342.81. Offerings for the three quarters were 102.7% of our projected income. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Our income figure above does not include the PPP loan of \$24,175.49. We have applied to PFCU to have the PPP loan forgiven, but they are waiting for guidance from the US Treasury before they process any PPP loan cancellations.

Thank you for your contributions to support the mission of our church and for sending your pledge for 2021.

— Finance Ministry Team

Stewardship Column November 2020 Stewardship at OSLC

It is hard to believe that it is already November and time to count our blessings and give thanks! I have many things to give thanks for this November: all of my immediate family members are employed and have not lost their jobs due to COVID, everybody is healthy, we have plenty of food to eat, and we are all able to pay our bills.

Sadly, this is not true for many of the families with children in the Greater Lafayette Community and especially in 2020! Our Saviour Lutheran Church has participated in Jubilee Christmas for many years being a wonderful host site where many of us have volunteered and seen the joy on the parents faces as they pick out toys for their children and wrap them!

Fortunately, Jubilee Christmas is happening this year but unfortunately not in the format we are used to. We will provide everything we typically do for each family but the parents will drive up to our church door the morning of Dec. 12 where we will put their bundle of toys and goodies in their vehicle and they will drive off. Even though our interactions with the parents will be less this year, we will still have the satisfaction knowing we provided Christmas for 10 families and shared the true meaning of the season!

As you think of your many blessings this month, please remember those families that are less fortunate than you and donate to Jubilee Christmas either by buying toys, donating money to be used for Jubilee Christmas, or volunteering where needed.

I am so grateful for the generosity of OSLC members and I know that 2020 will be no different!

God's Blessings to All of You!

Beth Dana

Our
Shepherd
Leading with
Courage

NOVEMBER UPDATES



- **Pints with a Pastor (Monday Nights):** Grab your favorite beverage and join the Zoom discussion of current events led by Pastor Randy on **November 9th and 23rd**. Zoom link and questions are sent before each event.
- **Virtual Game Night (November 17th at 7 P.M.)**– Join Molly and Christian Webb on the 3rd Tuesday of the month for some fellowship and fun, Zoom style. Sign-up link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H7P7BB6>.
- **Youth Justice Series:** High Schoolers! Keep an eye out for emails concerning the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Youth Justice Series for November and December. We will primarily be focusing on and discussing issues of justice for the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Adult Forum has returned by Zoom:** While Our Saviour continues to worship remotely, an on-line of Adult Forum discussions will be available after a short coffee hour. More information will be in the bulletin each week.

Adult Forum Topics:

⇒ **November 8th: *Cindy Modlin Adams, Advanced Healthcare Directives Part 2 with Q&A Session**

Other Resources

- **Facebook**–“Like” OSLC’s page for Sunday Worship streamed live, updates and upcoming events: <https://www.facebook.com/osluth/>
- **RightNow Media** (bible studies, devotions, video resources for individuals & families)-**FREE** OSLC membership:
<https://www.righnowmedia.org/account/invite/OurSaviour>



rightnow MEDIA

What does God look like?

A little girl was busily drawing a picture. When her mother asked what she was drawing, the girl replied, “I’m drawing a picture of God.”

“But, honey, no one knows what God looks like,” said the mother.

“Well, they will when I get through!”



A Note from Dale Buettner

My first month here at Our Saviour has been such a joyful experience. I’ve enjoyed getting to meet so many of you and am looking forward to meeting more of you, hopefully face to face before too long! Thanks again.

Dale

November Book Discussion

We’ll meet via Zoom on **November 8 & 22 at 5 P.M.** The book for November is *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes. Email Sandra (sandra@osluth.org) for an invite.



Virtual Christmas Carol Invitation



You are warmly invited to submit a recording to be included in the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians **Virtual Christmas Carol**, *Angels We Have Heard on High*, arranged by Anne Krentz Organ. The carol will be made available December 1 for all churches to freely use in Christmas services and programs with all copyright restrictions waived. It will be similar to the **Pentecost virtual hymn** many of you participated in last May.

Please visit **ALCM Virtual Christmas Carol** and follow the instructions to submit your vocal and/or instrumental video between now and **Sunday, November 8**.

Know there are melody only parts for those who prefer singing melody from the pew. EVERYONE everywhere is invited to participate. Help us gather the whole people of God to join in this virtual Christmas carol during the pandemic.

Check **ALCM Virtual Christmas Carol** for YouTube, MP4 and other links to the completed Christmas carol beginning December 1.

Family Promise

Our last scheduled 2020 hosting at Family Promise is the week of November 9. Julie Huettelman will be in contact with Nakeshia Hendricks, Executive Director, in the next few weeks to determine the actions we will complete for these families. **Please watch for announcements as the week gets closer.**

Looking ahead, here are 2021 dates for OSLC and UU. You may mark your calendars:

February 1—7

June 7—13

August 23—29

October 4—10



Donations are always welcome:

online at <http://www.fpglinc.org/>

in the OSLC offering.

You may also place donations/items in the Fellowship Hall, and Julie will deliver them for you.

Please contact Julie Huettelman juliehuettelman@gmail.com, 765-491-7819, if you have any questions.

Surreptitious Saints

One of the most gracious dispensations of God concerning his saints is their lovely unawareness of sanctity. The nearer they move to him, the more conscious are they of sin. If it were impossible at times not to note their own growth in grace, it were impossible also to forget that it was all by his power. If they could be persuaded to admit their progress and talk of it at all, the language of their heart would be this: "If God could do this in me, he could do it in anyone."

—W.E. Sangster

As sinners we may not be able to change the world, but as saints we may be able to change our communities.

As sinners we may not be able to change our communities, but as saints we may be able to change our neighborhoods.

As sinners we may not be able to change our neighborhoods, but as saints we may be able to change our homes.

As sinners we may not be able to change our homes, but as saints we may be able to change ourselves.

As sinners we may not be able to change ourselves, but as saints we may offer ourselves up to the grace of God and experience nothing less than a changed world.

—*Homiletics*

Social Justice Opportunities

**Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.**

Dear Friend,

One in five. That's how many Lutherans were left homeless in Europe after World War II. It was in response to this burgeoning humanitarian crisis that Lutherans in the United States came together to form Lutheran World Relief.

And in the decades that followed, you — and so many other compassionate Lutherans — were relentless. Wherever a need arose, you were there, providing help and hope to countless families struggling under the gripping weight of poverty. In this special video, we take a look back at our beginnings and what this ministry has become because of compassionate people just like you.

Your support of this mission and ministry begins with love. Starting with the love of God through Christ, you reach those with the very least with the lifesaving support they need.

Now, as the world copes with the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has never been more apparent how crucial your love is to your neighbors in need around the world. In places where handwashing water is scarce, medical care inaccessible, and where staying at home can quite literally mean going to bed hungry, your love — right here, right now, in this moment — is a light shining in the darkness.

That's why, even as this pandemic continues to rage, we must take pause and give thanks to God for this mission we share and all that it has accomplished so far.

And so I write to you today to say thank you. Thank you for being a part of the great cloud of witnesses. Thank you for not becoming weary — day after day, generation after generation. Thank you for keeping this ministry going strong for 75 years.

But I'm also writing to implore you. The needs are still so great and there are still so many suffering families we haven't yet reached. Please don't stop. Please persist — until your love reaches every neighbor.



In Faith,

Daniel Speckhard

P.S. In honor of the work you have done, and the work that is left to do, I pray you can [make a commemorative anniversary gift of \\$75 or more](#) that will keep us on the ground providing food, water, medicine, masks and other lifesaving assistance to see families past this pandemic and toward a future free of poverty.

Social Justice Opportunities

Lafayette Urban Ministry

Port of Hope 2020 – Fun Ways to Support The LUM Immigration Clinic

Port of Hope Virtual Experience, Thursday, November 5 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., is an opportunity to sit back at home and enjoy music and interviews while learning about the Immigration Clinic and its impact on our community.

Who's That Masked Donor? a social media campaign from **NOW until November 5. How to participate:**

- Don your favorite mask or one that you create. Have fun & get creative!
- Make a sign that supports immigrants — along the lines of “*I support LUM Immigration Clinic*”
- Take a Photo & post it on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram using #LUMPOH
- Encourage others to do the same
- **Text LUMPOH to 41444** to donate

Two Thanksgiving Day LUM Events Need You!

Thursday, November 26—Community Thanksgiving Feast: Due to COVID-19, this will be a carry-out only event. The director is still planning to serve more than **800 meals**, and she'd love to have you get involved in some way. You may bake pies, prepare casseroles, donate money, volunteer and donate other food items and supplies. Details:

Date: Thursday, November 26

Time: Noon – 2 p.m.

Place: Central Presbyterian Church, 31 N 7th St., Lafayette

Admission: FREE – All are welcome

To Donate, Volunteer or Find more info : go to lumserve.org/thanksgiving

Turkey Trot 5K Run, Thursday, November 26: the most festive 5K run of the year is open to runners of all ages and abilities and welcomes runners, walkers, dogs, strollers, wagons, turkey hats and more — and participants will be able to choose between being a "**Live Runner**" or a "**Virtual Runner**."

Live Runners (\$50) will each have a "staggered" check-in and start-time to maintain social distancing and run on the scenic **Cattail Trail Loop** in the **Celery Bog Nature Center** in West Lafayette on Thanksgiving morning.

Virtual Runners (\$35/\$10) will be able to run on Thanksgiving morning -OR- at a time and location of their choice.

To make donations to LUM: <https://www.lumserve.org/donate/wish-list/>

Food Finders

Volunteers are needed to help make sure people in our community have fresh fruits, veggies and frozen meat for their families. Consider signing up for a shift today!

The following shifts are available:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays

12:45 pm - 3:45 pm & 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Fridays

12:45 pm - 3 pm & 2:45 pm - 5 pm

Saturdays

9:45 am - 12 pm & 11:45 am - 2 pm

Other Ways to Support Food Finders:

Gott for Good: We are proud to partner with our friends at Joel Gott Wines to provide meals for our neighbors this holiday season. From November 1 - December 31, all sales of Joel Gott Wine in our service area will generate donations to the food bank! Purchase this wine at Target, Kroger, Walmart, Amazon or Sam's Club.

Now through January 2, 2021, purchase a **\$10 donation card** at the **West Lafayette Meijer** during the *Simply Give* campaign and 30 meals will be provided to Food Finders Food Bank!

Pampered Chef: *Serve Up a Little Kindness* - for each Silicone and Wood Utensil set sold, 10 meals will be donated to Feeding America.

Making a Medical Plan During COVID-19

We are all in this together. You can do your part by making a medical plan. This plan can help you, your family, friends, and your medical providers

Plan for Medications:

- Make a list of your medications and keep it on hand
- Look ahead and call your clinic or hospital if you need a refill
- Call your pharmacy to see if your medicines can be sent to your home



Plan for a Hospital Visit / Pack a 'Go Bag':

Bring what you may need from home. Family and friends may not be able to visit.

- **Papers and information:**
 - Phone numbers for your medical decision maker
 - Write it down in case medical providers cannot access your contacts
 - List of medications (or better yet, your pill bottles)
 - Your advance directive or medical wishes
 - Plans for your pets or bills while you are away
- **Equipment:**

If you use any of the following, plan to bring them with you:

 - Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, mobility devices
 - These are often lost in hospitals, so guard them
 - Phone, tablet and/or computer and their chargers
 - This can help you stay connected to family and friends
 - Ear plugs, sleep mask, toothbrush, books, or clothes from home
 - Bring food, water, and medication you may need for a long wait



Plan for Your Medical Wishes: Keep this information on hand

1. Choose a medical decision maker

- This person will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself
 - They can make sure your doctors know about the care you want
 - Keep their phone number on hand
 - If able, choose a back-up medical decision maker
- A good medical decision maker is someone who:
 - Can talk to the doctors for you in person or by phone
 - You trust to follow your wishes and what is best for you
- Let your medical decision maker know they were chosen
 - This website can show you how: prepareforyourcare.org



2. Share Your Wishes: **This is MOST important**

- What is most important in your life? Family, pets, hobbies, etc.?
- If you know what you want for your medical care, share this now



Resources shared by Cindy Modlin Adams from: <https://prepareforyourcare.org/covid-19> She encourages folks to review this prior to the discussion in the November 8 Adult Forum.

- Talk with your family, friends, and medical providers about the care you want
 - This website can show you how: prepareforyourcare.org
- You can share what you want by phone and/or a selfie video
 - You can also talk to others by video call: [https://bit.ly/ videocall](https://bit.ly/videocall)

3. Consider an advance directive. This form allows you to name your decision maker and write down what you want for your medical care.

- If you have an advance directive, find it, review it, and share it
- To get a form go here: <https://prepareforyourcare.org/advance-directive>
 - It is OK if you can't sign it or get witnesses right now
 - Reading it can still help you learn a lot about your wishes
 - Filling out parts of it can still help your family and providers
 - You can scan/fax (the most secure), email, or even send pictures of the form from your cell phone to those you trust

Plan for Your Pets:

- Choose someone who could take care of your pets if needed
- Call your pet store as they may deliver pet food and supplies to your home
- If you have questions about your pets or need help, call your local animal shelter.



Plan for Your Money and Bills:

- Choose someone who could help with your money and bills if needed
- To make sure this is safe, you can call for legal help at 1-800-474-1116 or visit lawhelp.org
 - Lawyers can also help if you do not have someone to help with bills
 - Some of these legal services may be free
 - Beware of scams: Do not pay for services your doctor did not order
 - Do not give strangers information about your money
 - If you get Social Security, your money will still come.
 - To learn more, visit https://bit.ly/ssa_covid

COVID-19 planning may be different from other planning you are used to:

- You may not be able to talk to your regular doctor in person, only by phone
- Many people are getting very sick and going to the hospital
- If you need to go to the hospital:
 - Your family may not be allowed to visit you. Remember your phone and charger.
 - You may be taken to a different hospital than where you get your care
- People with COVID-19 may get so sick they need a breathing machine (https://bit.ly/cocc_ventilator) for many weeks in the ICU. They cannot talk when on the machine.
 - Even with a breathing machine, many people will not survive
 - For people who survive, their health and quality of life may never be the same

To learn about COVID: Go to the CDC website: https://bit.ly/cdc_covid or watch this video: <https://bit.ly/acpvideo>

To learn about medical decisions, such as a breathing machine or CPR go here: https://bit.ly/covid_tools

To learn about help for food, shelter, or bills go to this national resources: <https://bit.ly/COVIDnational>



Saints & Sinners:

Can We Believe We Are Both?

By Anna Madsen

This article is from the November 2020 issue of Gather. It is reprinted here by permission.

The word “Saint” has this refreshing thing going for it: It defines a person based on the best of who they are rather than the worst.

And who, I ask you, doesn’t want to be known for what we do right instead of what we do wrong? If, for one, like the ring of “Saint Anna” *far* better than “Sinner Anna.”

While I’m at it, I also prefer imagining myself with a halo over my head instead of horns. But that’s probably because, not so deep down, I know I’d have a far easier time listing my qualifications for the “sinner” designation than for the “saint” one.

Yet the sound of “Saint Anna” actually feels foreign to me. Awkward. Maybe a bit . . . pretentious. Perhaps even brazen. Quite possible hollow.

“THIS OLD THING?”

Isn’t it interesting how we tend to identify ourselves readily by our failures, shortcomings and faults, be they moral, financial, personal, vocational or even avocational? We see this tendency surface even in subtle ways. For example, I know very few people, especially women, who can take a compliment with grace instead of with apologetic or demure protestations.

Compliment: “I love your dress!” Response: What, this old thing?”

Compliment: “Great job!” Response: Well, but really I did no more than anyone else.”

Compliment: “You’re a fantastic cook!” Response: “Oh, I’ve just made this dish forever!”

Some of this is gender-related stuff, of course: I’ve mentioned in *Gather* before the theologian Valerie Saiving Goldstein, who as a female grad student in theology in the ‘60s wrote a blockbuster paper about sin. In it, she rejected the long-standing, still-often-maintained notion that sin, in all its forms and expressions, stems from pride: Think “Pride goeth before a fall.” She argued that,

sure, while pride might be the primary source of sin for *men*, for *women* sin instead tends to stem from humility. Pride surfaces in the form of a desire for power and a tendency toward violence, arrogance and a lack of concern for others. But these profiles in sin, said Saiving Goldstein, are evidenced more in men than in women.

In contrast, feminine sin shows forth in opposite ways, including lack of self-worth, passivity and difficulty pursuing a dream.

So as women, with all the weight of past and present cultural and familial forces bearing down on us, we tend to be uncomfortable with seeing our gifts and stewarding them with confidence, let alone saying a robust “Thank you!” when we’re acknowledged for doing something well.

We might answer the compliment “You are amazing!” in the same way we do a compliment about that dress of ours: “What, this old thing?” We are humble to a fault. So our dis-ease with considering ourselves “Saint So-and-so” rather than “Sinner So-and-so” is partly driven by external, and internalized, gender expectations, roles and ways.

But gender habits aren’t the only piece that might make women uncomfortable with the notion of themselves as saints. I’m convinced that a hefty number of Lutherans (yes, even cradle Lutherans) are of the mind that whatever horrible things we may have done or not done have more weight before the throne of God than does grace.

Despite all the Lutheran talk about grace, we still tend to think about scales and to consider our good deeds as pebbles and our bad ones as boulders.

We fear—and perhaps even believe—that our misdeeds are actually very much stacked against us.

AT THE SAME TIME

Martin Luther grasped this existential fear about sinfulness. He knew it in his bones. Ultimately, he wrestled with it, like Jacob with the angel.

Yet even though (or perhaps because?) the struggle bruised him, Luther morphed his fear into a theological revolution. We are sinful, he determined, and we are also bestowed with grace by which we as sinners are transformed into saints. He even came up with a Latin phrase for it, one that was so catchy that today you can easily find T-shirts and tattoos emblazoned with the words *simul iustus et peccator*.

We discover the phrase first used in Luther’s commentary on Paul’s letter to the Galatians (*Luther’s Works* 26:232), in his

All Saints Day is an occasion to recall that Luther was right (as was Paul, of course): We have spots, we have wrinkles...and we are holy.

musings on Galatians 3:6-7. In this passage, Paul wrote: “Just as Abraham ‘believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,’ so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham.”

Luther (who loved Galatians so much he called it his “Katie von Bora”) said about this text, “Thus a Christian is righteous and a sinner at the same time [*simul iustus et peccator*], holy and profane, an enemy of God and a child of God. None of the sophists will admit this paradox, because they do not understand the true meaning of justification.... We, on the other hand, teach and comfort an afflicted sinner this way: ‘...it is impossible for you to become so righteous in this life that your body is as clear and spotless as the sun. You still have spots and wrinkles (Eph. 5:27), and yet you are holy.’”

All Saints Day is an occasion to recall that Luther was right (as was Paul, of course): We have spots, we have wrinkles...and we are holy.

Simul iustus et peccator.

FOR ALL THE SAINTS

It is a beautiful thing that All Saints Day offers us an opportunity to recall those who have died. In a culture deeply ambivalent about death, it is good, it is holy, to set aside time beyond

funeral rituals to remember and give thanks for those who have gone before us and paved numerous ways for us.

But too often, the import of Christian faith is pitched toward the future, thrown beyond the grave, the point of faith being made mostly relevant after we die.

Instead, though, Jesus was eminently practical and present in the moment. “Today,” he said—not tomorrow, not after you die, but today—“salvation has come to you.”

So perhaps All Saints Day can be an opportunity not just to give thanks for those who are no longer with us, but to give thanks for those who are still with us—and, for that matter, to give thanks for ourselves, precisely as saints!

Now, it’s true that people typically considered saints—both those who have died and those who are here among us yet—seem to have “done” something to get that designation. Lutheran sensibilities might raise our hackles because the whole point of Luther’s “simultaneously saint and sinner” insight was that there is nothing we can *do* to be justified. We can only be the *recipient* of grace, and only thereby be declared just, be declared a saint.

And yet, while this is indeed true, having been declared a saint not by humans but by God, we are freed to embrace the grace bestowed on us in our sainthood.

God has deemed that we sinners are saints, and then has called us to steward—with confidence, even—our sinful proclivities, whatever those gifts and proclivities may be.

Inserting the title “Saint” before your name—yes, even yours! - is nothing other than claiming a baptismal identity bestowed on you by God, “Saint” isn’t a term, referring to what we do. Instead, “saint” refers to who God declares us to be.

With that in hand, we are freed to act out of our sainthood and, in spite of (to spite?) our sinfulness, to claim, honor and extend our God-given gifts to and for all the saints—and the sinners too.



News items for the December *Evangel* are due to Sandra Vana (sandra@osluth.org) by 11/25/2020. Please type "Evangel" in the subject line.

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The Evangel

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