

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
A Family Connecting in Christ



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WELCOME VISITORS!

We hope you feel at home with us.

Masked

With the renewed mask mandate across Illinois, we now offer masked worship - Saturdays at 5 and Sundays at 9. If you have questions, please ask!

To Our Guests

- We pray that you receive a warm welcome and are blessed by the message of God's Word in our lessons and hymns. If you have questions, please ask!
- Our service is designed to focus us on Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Holy Spirit does that by exposing our need for Christ and by showing us the wonders of God's grace in Christ – forgiveness and peace, help, and hope for life in this world, and life forever with God in heaven.
- Please join us after Sunday service for fellowship and Family Bible Hour.

Our Communion Practice

We practice close communion, the Biblical and ancient practice of the church. We invite our congregation members and visitors from sister WELS or ELS congregations to join us, but ask Christians from other denominations to kindly respect our practice. Further explanation is in the pew racks or from our pastor.

We Care about Your Children

We love to have children with us in worship.

- Children's worship bulletins and "church bags" (with paper, colors, and Bible story books) are available in the Narthex Gathering Area.
- If your children are crying loudly, our nursery, Gathering Area (back of church), and downstairs Fellowship Hall are audio-equipped for you and your young children. When your children are ready, come back so we can worship together.

We Care about Your Special Needs

- **Large Print** Service Folders are available from an usher.
- **Hearing Assistance** for those with hearing aids is provided through our Hearing Loop or personal hearing devices available at the "sound table."
- A **wheelchair lift** is available for your assistance; please ask an usher.



Our Facilities

Restrooms are in our Fellowship Hall, downstairs and to the right of the kitchen.

Our Ministry

St. John offers an excellent preschool-8th grade school program. We are members of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) - www.wels.net.

THANKSGIVING 2021

WHEN YOU'RE LIVING ON THE EDGE ... GIVE THANKS

PSALM 107:1, 43

Give thanks to the LORD,
for he is good;
his love endures forever.

Whoever is wise,
let him heed these things
and consider the great love of the LORD.

OPENING HYMN

"Let All Things Now Living"
Hymn 260

GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 17:11-19

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

When he saw them he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samaritan.

Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

CONFESSION OF OUR SIN

P: O holy and merciful Father, you are the giver of all good things for this life and forever.

C: **We confess that we are unworthy of your love and blessing.**

P: On the hard days we forget your goodness.

C: **On the good days we forget *you* are the source of all good things.**

P: We focus on your blessings for this world.

C: **and overlook your greatest blessing for eternity.**

P: We focus on the gifts you give *to* us

C: **and overlook the gifts you want to give *through* us.**

P: You give us family and friends to bless us and encourage us,

C: **but we have frustrated your love with thanklessness.**

P: You give us family and friends so we can bless them and encourage them

C: **but we have frustrated your love by discouraging them.**

P: Father, we don't deserve your love and blessing;

C: **but we appeal to your unfailing mercy
and ask you to forgive us for Jesus' sake.**

HYMN

"Forgive Us, Lord"

Hymn 482

ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOD'S GRACE

P: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! He does not treat us as our sins deserve. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west so far has he removed our transgressions from us. In the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus, you are forgiven. In the plan and promise of our God, you are his children; he will bless you and take care of you; he will make all things work so that goodness and mercy will follow you all the days of your life and you will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

WHEN LIVING ON THE EDGE ... GIVE THANKS FOR YOUR SAFETY NET

“Peace. You are forgiven.” It can be easy to take those words for granted. When life is good and you’re surrounded by your favorite version of green pastures and quiet waters, when you have every thing you want, and your enemies, your troubles are far out of sight, out of reach, out of mind, when everything is going your way and the shepherd comes to you and says: “Peace” it can be easy to take that peace for granted, to think nothing special of it.

But when your troubles aren’t out of reach, out of sight, out of mind; when your favorite version of green pastures and quiet waters has turned into something more like an empty desert or a snake-infested swamp; when the voices in your head are shouting: “How long? What’s next? Why me?” and a voice inside answers back “You know why you have it coming.” And then the Good Shepherd reaches out to you and says: “Peace ... Your sins are forgiven” that means a bit more, doesn’t it? That hand, that promise of peace means a way out.

When we’re on the edge, on the edge between sickness and health, on the edge between working and not working, on the edge of broke, on the edge of alone ... Jesus’ promise “Your sins are forgiven” means more than just an empty slate, sin gone. Forgiven with Jesus, you have God’s heart and his hands for you. You have God’s hand to hold you, God’s hand to catch you, God’s hand to put a stop to the powers against you, God’s hand to work life right for you. Forgiven with Jesus, it’s like you have a safety net.

Living on the edge we don’t always remember that safety net. We get worried, stressed, angry and more. Some days we might think: “what do I have to be thankful for?” When you’re on that edge, step back and remember what these words mean: “Peace, your sins are forgiven you.” God could have swept us over the edge. Instead he gives us his safety net. Instead of living on the edge, we’re living in the palm of his hands. For that, we can never thank God enough.

LESSON

Romans 5:1-10

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

HYMN

"Day by Day"
Hymn 765 (CWS)



1 Day by day, your mer - cies, Lord, at - tend me,
 2 Day by day, I know you will pro - vide me
 3 Oh, what joy to know that you are near me



Bring - ing com - fort to my anx - ious soul.
 Strength to serve and wis - dom to o - bey;
 When my bur - dens grow too great to bear;



Day by day, the bless - ings, Lord, you send me
 I will seek your lov - ing will to guide me
 Oh, what joy to know that you will hear me



Draw me near - er to my heav'n - ly goal.
 O'er the paths I strug - gle day by day.
 When I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.



Love di - vine, be - yond all mor - tal meas - ure,
 I will fear no e - vil of the mor - row;
 Day by day, no mat - ter what be - tide me,



Brings to naught the bur - dens of my quest;
 I will trust in your en - dur - ing grace.
 You will hold me ev - er in your hand.



Sav - ior, lead me to the home I treas - ure,
 Sav - ior, help me bear life's pain and sor - row;
 Sav - ior, with your pres - ence here to guide me,



Where, at last, I'll find e - ter - nal rest.
 Till in glo - ry I be - hold your face.
 I will reach at last the prom - ised land.

WHEN LIVING ON THE EDGE ... FOCUS UP AND OUT

When you're walking on the edge, where do you look? Where do you focus? Do you ever find yourself stuck right there at the edge, obsessing on your troubles, so stuck on your troubles you can't think about anything else? Hard to be thankful at a time like that; hard to be anything but miserable. But have you ever watched a tight-rope walker? They don't stare down at their feet, on the edge, do they? They focus up and out.

That's what Paul did when he was a prisoner writing Philippians. Instead of focusing on being a prisoner, stuck on what he couldn't do, worrying over and over - would he live? would he die? what was going to happen ... Paul focused up - he was going to heaven; what did he have to worry about? At the same time, Paul focused out - he didn't have to be stuck on himself - he had people to help, people to encourage, people to care for, God had work for him to do. So instead of getting stuck on living on the edge, Paul looked up and out - up to heaven and out at the people God put in his life ... and what does he give us? A lesson on thankfulness. From chains, from the edge of execution, we have one of the most thankful, joyful books in the Bible.

LESSON

Philippians 1:20-30; 3:12-14

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved - and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

HYMN

“For the Fruit of His Creation”

Hymn 611

WHEN LIVING ON THE EDGE ... KEEP A CLEAR HEAD

In chains, living on the edge, how could Paul be so thankful? It could have been so easy to let fear, resentment, defeat overtake and overwhelm. While Paul was in chains for Christ and his church, news from back at church was of people running him down, others fighting against each other, still others forgetting him and forgetting Christ. With all that was going wrong for Paul, it could have been so easy for Paul to let all that pull him right over the edge.

Instead, we have Paul giving thanks! How? Part of the answer is: he kept a clear head. Instead of letting stuff build up and bring him down, he gave it to God. Instead of focusing on the bad and the ugly, he set his mind on the good and the right.

What a great lesson for us! Instead of letting the bad and ugly take control, give them to God. Instead of letting the bad and the ugly pull you down, set yourself to thinking the good and the right. Paul put it this way:

LESSON

Philippians 4:6-9

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is

admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

P: Give thanks to the Lord who is good.

C: **God's love is everlasting.**

P: Come, let us praise God joyfully.

C: **Let us come to God with thanksgiving.**

P: For the good world; for things great and small, beautiful and awesome; for seen and unseen splendors:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For human life; for talking and moving and thinking together; for common hopes and hardships shared from birth until our dying:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For work to do and strength to work; for the comradeship of labor; for exchanges of good humor and encouragement:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For marriage; for the mystery and joy of flesh made one; for mutual forgiveness and burdens shared; for secrets kept in love:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For family; for living together and eating together; for family amusements and family pleasures:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For children; for their energy and curiosity; for their brave play and startling frankness; for their sudden sympathies:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For the young; for their high hopes; for their candid criticism; for their search for freedom:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For growing up and growing old; for wisdom deepened by experience;
for rest in leisure; for time made precious by its passing:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For your help in times of doubt and sorrow; for healing our diseases;
for preserving us in temptation and danger:

C: **We thank you, O God.**

P: For the Church into which we have been called; for the good news we
receive by Word and sacrament; for our life together in the Lord:

C: **We praise you, O God.**

P: For your Holy Spirit, who guides our steps and brings us gifts of faith and
love, who prays in us and prompts our grateful worship:

C: **We praise you, O God.**

P: Above all, O God, for your Son, Jesus Christ, who lived and died and lives
again for our salvation; for our hope in him; and for the joy of serving him:

C: **We thank and praise you, eternal God, for all your goodness to us.**

P: Give thanks to the Lord, who is good.

C: **God's love is everlasting.**

WHEN LIVING ON THE EDGE ... STEP WITH CONFIDENCE

Are you ever amazed how the tight-rope walker can look so confident ... how the balance beam gymnast can flip and turn and jump? It's like they believe the rope will be there for them, that there's no way the beam would break, or move, or let them down.

We get to have that same confidence. The rope, the safety net, the hand of our Father will be there for us - to reach out for us, to steady us, to rescue us, to provide for us, to invite us, to carry us. When we're walking on the edge, we get to step with confidence. With Jesus we get to know that no matter how things look, the hand of our Father will be there for us.

LESSON

Philippians 4:11-13, 19

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength. And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

HYMN*"We Thank You for Your Blessings"***Hymn 615****WHEN LIVING ON THE EDGE ... GIVE THANKS EACH STEP OF THE WAY**

Have you ever thought: "It's too soon to thank God? I'm still on the edge. We're not out of the woods yet. Too many things could still go wrong." If the Pilgrims saved Thanksgiving for some time when all looked set and safe, we wouldn't have thanksgiving. If David saved Thanksgiving for some time when all looked set and safe for him, we wouldn't have psalm 34. David wrote Psalm 34 when he escaped from the Philistines. You might remember he went to the Philistines to escape Saul. Now escaping the Philistines, David would again have Saul's target on his back. But David doesn't think like he's in danger; he thanks like he's safe with God. What a great lesson! When living on the edge, don't wait until heaven to thank God. Instead, every step of the way thank God for another step. Every step of the way thank him and thank him and thank him some more.

LESSON

Psalm 34:1,2,4,6,17,18, & 22

I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.

My soul will boast in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.

This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.

The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The LORD redeems his servants;
no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom
and the power
and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

BLESSING

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"Now Thank We All Our God"
Hymn 610

OFFERING

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Now Thank We All Our God!

In 1617 Martin Rinkart, a Lutheran pastor, returned to his hometown of Eilenburg, Saxony, to serve as archdeacon—just as the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648) was about to begin. Since Eilenburg was a walled city, it became a haven for political and military refugees. Rinkart soon endured the horrors of quartering soldiers in his home and the frequent plundering of his meager household goods.

Things got worse. The Swedish army ringed the city to starve it, and the plague worsened. In 1637, eight thousand people in the city died—including the vast majority of the town council, many children, clergymen from the neighboring congregation, and Rinkart’s wife. Rinkart was left alone to do the work of all the clergy in the town. He performed 40 to 50 funerals per day—a total of 4,480.

Things got even worse. After the plague, famine gripped the town, and “30 or 40 people might be seen fighting in the streets for a dead cat or crow.” Rinkart sacrificed everything to help, keeping only the most meager rations for his own family. In time, he mortgaged his future salary to buy bread and clothes for his children.

In 1630 Rinkart penned the hymn, “Now Thank We All Our God.” . . . at a time you and I would likely label a waking nightmare!

Things got still worse. The Swedish army demanded a ransom of 30,000 thalers from the city. Rinkart risked his life by going to the Swedish general and begging for mercy. There was none. So he returned to town and said, “Come, my children, we can find no hearing, no mercy with men. Let us take refuge with God.” Rinkart fell to his knees and pleaded so earnestly in prayer that the Swedish general heard about it and lowered the ransom to 2,000 florins.

Despite all this, in 1630 Rinkart penned the hymn, “Now Thank We All Our God.”

Yes, you read that right. In 1630! At a time you and I would likely label a waking nightmare! Soon Lutheran families were singing Rinkart’s hymn as a table prayer. In 1648, the year in which the Thirty Years’ War ended, this hymn was sung at a national celebration of peace. In 1649, Martin Rinkart died.

As Thanksgiving approaches, are you as humbled by Rinkart’s story as I am? Why? Because this year I haven’t always been too excited about belting out another rousing chorus of “Now Thank We All Our God.” Too often I’ve felt more like muttering a verse of “I Walk in Danger All the Way.” Yet I have not seen mobs in grocery stores fighting for dead cats.

This Thanksgiving you and I will do far better to confess with the prophet Habakkuk, “The fig tree may have no buds. The vines may have no grapes. The olive tree may fail to produce. The fields may yield no food. The sheep may be cut off from their flock, and there may be no cattle in the barns, but I will delight in the Lord and rejoice in God who saves me” (3:17,18).

That’s what Martin Rinkart did when his world was falling apart around him! With his eyes fixed on eternity and his heart grounded on the Lord’s grace, he sang,

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom his world rejoices,
Who from our mother’s arms
Has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love

And still is ours today.
(*Christian Worship* 1993 610:1)

The Scripture references used in this article are from the Evangelical Heritage Version.

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