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# The Zion Messenger

November 2020

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Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November . . . but only November has Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving brings to mind many images. Perhaps it's an image of Pilgrims and Native Americans gathered around bountiful tables of food – the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock – Puritans and Miles Standish and so on. Or maybe your image is of our national holiday forged in time of war. It was during the American Revolution that George Washington issued the first proclamation of a day of national thanksgiving. Seventy years later in 1863, with our nation engaged in civil war, at a time when many felt little for which to be thankful, President Abraham Lincoln established the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day for America. On the other hand, for many Americans today, the image likely pictures a well-browned turkey on table and football on TV.

Whatever image comes to mind, these words best accompany: “*O Give Thanks to the Lord, for He is Good.*” In a time now past when people were more connected to the land, in sowing and harvest, it was about saying thank you to God for seed, soil, rain, sunshine and good crops. Even more so today our thankfulness expands to include all those who supply our supermarkets, along with all of the amazing ‘conveniences’ we enjoy.

But take care not to limit your Thanksgiving. Fundamentally thank God for yourself and for all people. Thank God for His gifts, our bodies, mind, senses, intellect, and abilities as the Psalmist praises God, “*For You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful I know that full well.*” Thank God for those placed in our lives who minister life to us; all who help, nurture, support, and encourage us and our neighbor in our physical and mental needs! Give thanks for family, friends, neighbors, including fellow citizens around the world – though in this life we will never meet, one day we shall gather with them in heaven. Thank God for all the beauty of the earth: for rivers, mountains, deserts, coastlines, cities and towns. Thank God for good government and industry and security and all who serve to keep us safe – “*that we may live a quiet and peaceful life.*”

Keeping a thankful mind and heart is good for you and good for your neighbor. Not long ago a Harvard health report observed that “thankfulness carries more punch than just the good vibes it is associated with.” Solomon the wise said, “*A cheerful (thankful) heart is good medicine.*” Be cheerful – keep an attitude of gratitude – give thanks on all occasions! Give thanks for what you are and what you have, for what others do for you and what you do for others. After all, “*We are His workmanship created (to do) good works that He has already prepared and given for us to do.*” Ephesians 2.10 Different abilities, different

gifts, freely given by God yet to be discovered and deployed by us. And never allow yourself to think that your work is finished. There are many amazing stories of people discovering and developing their gifts right up to the day we leave this earth. One such gift, given to us to be used on behalf of others, is the gift of generosity. This is an amazing thing – there are those who give and give and give some more, not just to get a ‘pat on the back’. We love because He first loved us – We give because He first gave to us – and for us that we might give to others. Truly it’s about being thankful and generous, especially in the stewardship of our lives as people of God. So we may give of our lives; our time, talent, and treasures . . .but *not unto us, but unto ‘Thy Name’ be glory given!* Psalm 115.1

You may have heard the phrase, ‘Blessed to be a blessing.’ Origination of that quote? Genesis 12, God told Abraham, *‘I will bless you . . . and through you all nations will be blessed.’* Here’s a story to illustrate. Once upon a time there was boy who was given a pocket knife for his birthday. He thought the knife was for throwing and for sticking in to the ground or into trees. He even tossed it at his cat! Fortunately, he missed. Grandpa had been watching his grandson. “Let me show you what you can do with that knife.” Grandpa took some wood and with the knife he began to whittle, cut, and shave. The boy watched with keen interest. Before long the boy was staring at a smiling bearded faced little man. “How about that?” grandpa asked the boy. “And that’s not all. Let me show you what else you can do.” He went to the refrigerator and took out two bottles of soda. Using the knife, he removed the caps and handed one to his grandson. “There . . . you can see there are a lot of good things you can do with this knife.” Simple point of story: The boy didn’t realize the potential of his knife.

Our lives, our talents, our resources are like that knife. To each of us God has given things which can do a lot of good. God has placed talents in our lives as His stewards. But just having a gift does not mean we really know the full potential of the gift. Like the boy with his knife, when God gives us a skill or an ability, He gives the gift for a purpose. Our response is to receive with thankfulness and then get to work. The same poet who wrote the words to Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You also wrote, “Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best.”

The greatest gift of all is our Savior, given by the Father for the life of the world. Jesus died and rose again to rescue us from sin, death, and the devil – so that all might live with Him in in His kingdom forever. Into His death and resurrection, we were baptized, that we might have this new life. Christ rescued us from sin, death, and the devil . . . He rescued us as well from selfishness and carelessness.

O Give Thanks to the Lord, for the daily opportunity to serve and bless others with our gifts and resources – Ultimately that by acts of service flowing from our thankful hearts, others may receive the greatest gift of eternal life in Christ.

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”* Jeremiah 1.5

So . . . where will the holiday of ‘Thanksgiving’ find you this year? Many (likely most) Americans will gather for a couple of hours in their home, or the home of loved ones. Yet a greater gathering will take place before God’s altar. What a feast it will be!

## **LWML Sunday**

LWML Sunday is the weekend of November 14 & 15. A free will donation will be collected to support Lutheran World Relief. Thank you to all of our LWML and Ladies Aid members who serve God's mission here at Zion and beyond. Thank you also to Zion members for your contributions and support.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is the official women's auxiliary of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. For over 65 years, the LWML has focused on affirming each woman's relationship with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global missions.

### **Primary Targets**

- **GROWING** in the Lord. Women of today find guidance for their lives, encouragement for their walk, and inspiration for joyful service through intentional study of the Word.
- **VALUING** all women. Women of all ages, stages of life, races, locations, and cultures are welcomed, mentored, and encouraged to be active partners in the shared mission of LWML.
- **LIVING** the mission. As the "Face of LWML," women will be engaged in opportunities to use their gifts to impact the world for Christ in their daily lives.

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## **Operation Christmas Child**

This year Zion Youth Group is collecting items for Operation Christmas Child. The Samaritan's Purse project [Operation Christmas Child](#) collects shoebox gifts-filled with fun toys, school supplies and hygiene items—and delivers them to children in need around the world to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way. For many of these children, the gift-filled shoebox is the first gift they have ever received. Please help us fill empty shoeboxes with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys, such as dolls or soccer balls. National Collection Week is Nov. 16–23, 2020. Do NOT include candy; toothpaste; used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; seeds; chocolate or food; liquids or lotions; medications or vitamins; breakable items, such as snow globes or glass containers; or aerosol cans. Please drop off any donations in the church narthex or school office. Please contact Rachel Seelbach (618-604-2443) with any questions.

## **What is going on at Zion!**

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Last week, the staff were blessed with the time to meet....as a staff! 2020 has sure shown us the little things in life that we took for granted. Before the pandemic, fellowshipping at lunch or during our morning meeting with fellow staff members was something I looked forward to. However, staff being able to meet during the day isn't something easy to do this school year. Students start walking in our classrooms at 7:45. The staff are with students until they load the cars in the afternoon. This doesn't leave much time for staff to discuss all the items that need to be discussed to keep our school on track. However, the blessing of in-person learning far outweighs any negatives.

So last week the staff were able to meet...in-person! We were able to start looking at a possible math curriculum, discuss current Covid guidelines, and plan and write the Christmas program! Which is where you come in....we have the ideas and the plan, but not the know how and the time to record and edit the Christmas program video. Do you know someone who could help us out? We would really like to be able to keep with the tradition of the Christmas program, even if it needs to be virtual.

Mrs. Jamie Crouch

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## **Alumni & Friends Update-**

Great News--The ZLS front door has been ordered and is scheduled to be installed during the Christmas break. Many thanks to everyone for your support of the door replacement. Zion is truly blessed!

The next Alumni and Friends meeting will be Thursday, Dec. 3 at 7 pm in the Parish Center instead of the 4th Thursday of the month, due to Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. Everyone is welcome to attend as we will be making plans for 2021. Please check out Zion Alumni and Friends Facebook page and be sure and "Like" our page or email any questions to [Zion.Alumni.Friends@gmail.com](mailto:Zion.Alumni.Friends@gmail.com)

# November

# 2020

## Zion Lutheran Church

Staunton, Illinois

| Sunday   | Monday | Tuesday                    | Wednesday   | Thursday   | Friday                  | Saturday  |
|--|--------|----------------------------|---|--|-------------------------|---|
| 1<br>8am Worship w/C<br>9:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Worship w/C<br><br>Daylight Savings Ends                     | 2      | 3                          | 4<br>8:30am virtual Chapel<br>9am Lydia Circle<br>6:30pm Confess/Sacrament  | 5<br>9am Bible Study<br>6pm Stewardship<br>7:30pm Men's Club | 6                       | 7<br>5pm Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor Kirby                              |
| 8<br>8am Worship w/C<br>9:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor Kirby                              | 9      | 10                         | 11<br>8:30am virtual Chapel<br>9am Lydia Circle<br>6:30pm Confess/Sacrament | 12<br>9am Bible Study  | 13                      | 14<br>LWML Sunday<br>5pm Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor <del>Mitteis</del> |
| 15<br>LWML Sunday<br>8am Worship w/C<br>9:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor <del>Mitteis</del> | 16     | 17<br>7pm Elders           | 18<br>8:30am virtual Chapel<br>9am Lydia Circle<br>6:30pm Confess/Sacrament | 19<br>9am Bible Study  | 20                      | 21<br>5pm Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor <del>Mitteis</del>                |
| 22<br>8am Worship w/C<br>9:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor <del>Mitteis</del>                | 23     | 24<br>7pm Parish Education | 25<br>8:30am virtual Chapel<br>9am Lydia Circle<br>7 pm Worship w/C         | 26<br><br>Thanksgiving Day                                   | 27<br><br>Office Closed | 28<br>5pm Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor <del>Girardin</del>               |
| 29<br>8am Worship w/C<br>9:15am Sunday School<br>10:30am Worship w/C<br><br>Pastor <del>Girardin</del>               | 30     |                            |   |  |                         |   |