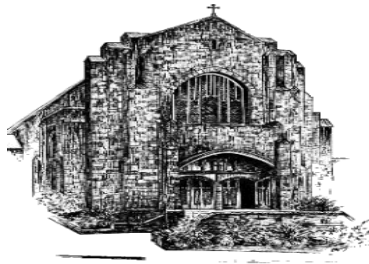


First Lutheran Church  
92 W. Walnut Street  
Washington, PA 15301



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ICH-THUS

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior

### Pastoral Perspectives for November 2019

Grace and peace to you from God the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

At the end of our service on October 13<sup>th</sup> Kimberly and I were wished a, “*Happy Thanksgiving*” from our Brother in Christ Jesus, Kyle. Canadian Thanksgiving was the following day; this always reminds us that we were married the Thanksgiving long weekend in Canada on October 10<sup>th</sup> now 27 years ago.

Thanksgiving here in the US comes much later on November 28<sup>th</sup> and it is at this time of year that we can reflect upon giving thanks for the year we have had.

Our Sister in Christ Joanne Reck sent us a card with the beautiful verse:

***“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him, bless His name!”*** (Psalm 100:4)

Did you know that Thanksgiving Day is now the most traveled holiday in the United States of America? Thanksgiving isn't really a holy-day but rather it is a secular day off. The word holiday originally comes from the word “*holy day*” but was changed over time. It is a time where families travel both far and near to feast and to watch endless hours of football.

And yet, I think our Sister in Christ's card really pointed toward what it truly means to give thanks and it must be always directed to the Lord our God!

Each Sunday we do this by entering His holy sanctuary and giving thanks to God for all He has done for us and for our families and well for our community, state, country and for the world! We praise God with voice and song each Sunday and give thanks to Him for all He has done for us! We bless His holy name for the time that we gather together to worship, or to study whether we Students in Sunday school, Confirmation class or in adult Sunday school, our FLC women's meetings, adult catechism class or in youth group! The people of God who gather here always praise Him and give thanks to God for what He has done for us.

What are you thankful for this year?

We will have a chance to give our thanks to God at our Thank offering Sunday on Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> on cards that will be distributed during the service and brought up to the altar. May we **always** enter into His holy house with thanksgiving and praise God for all He has done and may we always bless His name; now and forever amen!

Happy Thanksgiving in Christ Jesus, Rev. Robert & Kimberly Grewe, Jule (Pippa and Abbey)

1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 16:34

***“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever”***

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:15

***“All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God”***

**Mid-North Mission District Meeting**  
**October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019**  
**Annual Convocation at St. Paul's in Sarver Pa.**

The meeting was based on the text Romans 12:2 ***Transformed and Renewed*** and these are quick notes of the presentation by the Bishop.

With only 12 “*official*” days as our new bishop in the NALC; Bishop Dan Selbo graced us in his very first meeting with our little mission district. We are currently over 430 churches strong and there are even more looking to join the NALC from the ELCA, the ELCIC and the LCMC. Our new Bishop explained that there currently are no changes in the staff until the end of year (if need be) with all the knowledge and experience the staff has, it currently benefits Bishop Dan. The central focus will remain that Christ will be at the center of all that NALC does and the call to follow and serve Christ will continue. The Bishop stated that we are always able to grow and learn in our faith; he too continues to grow in his faith through daily readings, prayers and call as our new Bishop. We need to remember we are called to follow Christ and it is not now, and never will be, a job for the clergy and this is also true for the laity; it is a call from God and not from man that we answer.

The vision from our former Bishop John will continue; to be a disciple-making centered church. This is based on the call in the Great Commission in St. Matthew 28 which calls each one of us! Looking forward and not dwelling in the past was a statement from our Bishop in the afternoon Q and A session. Sitting beside me was a guest named Larry, he is struggling with the politics of the ELCA and came to the convocation looking for answers, and after the sermon by Bishop Dan; Larry turned to me and said, “I now have all the answers I was looking for!”

If there is to be any restructuring in the NALC it will look to be in the area of the use of modern technology, where we can better connect worldwide and through education and training by use of the internet and other means of technology. The mission district budget was balanced and passed and growth continues in the churches of our mission district.

The NALC will continue to move forward but there will be no radical changes and we will continue working with the churches that we are currently involved with but the need to call a new president for our North American Lutheran Seminary is a top priority, and crucial to the future of the NALC as a whole, since many of our clergy will be retiring within the next 10 years. Those who are currently in the adult catechism class and were in class on October 15<sup>th</sup> will appreciate the vision Bishop Dan has for the future of the NALC as a church looking at the bigger picture of being in mission for Christ and disciples of Jesus much like the great Swedish Pastor Nathan Soderblom.

I am encouraged with the vision of Bishop Dan and will support our bishop in his new position.

Submitted October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

## Youth Group & Young Adults Group?

Recently, I have noticed that some of our original youth group members have outgrown our youth group in age. I am wondering if there is interest in beginning a monthly get together for older teens (15 yrs—18 yrs).

Please let the pastor know if you are interested so that we can start up as soon as possible.

Blessings in Christ Jesus

Pr Rob : )

## Change for Change's Sake?

The opera "Don Giovanni", by W. A. Mozart, was performed at the Benedum Center in Pittsburgh in mid October; the new vision staged in the genre of "film noir". The orchestra, sets, lighting and the performers all did a wonderful job on October 12<sup>th</sup> but sadly the ending of this classic opera was changed so dramatically that the moral of the story was completely lost on the audience and to those who were unfamiliar with the opera itself!

This was confirmed by a conversation I had with a couple in the parkade elevator and our exchange student who saw the opera for the first time.

Why would a pastor bring an opera to the church newsletter? The reason is the massive liberties people feel they can always take with Mozart's works, more than any other artist, left this masterpiece failing in its central message to the audience: the consequences for the unrepentant!

The Don is a rich, powerful Casanova who loves and leaves women and his only goal is to add another name to his little black book (the size of a telephone book) and he cares for no one: not the women he hurts, nor his faithful servant. He is a cad and can be compared to a sexual predator in many ways in today's world. The Don even warns the father of one of the women he has seduced to "back off" or suffer the consequences of defending the honour of his daughter; the tragic result is that the Don kills this woman's father.

Don Giovanni adds murder to his list of many sins. This man is a sinner and is offered more than one chance to repent for his actions. One of the women who loves him is willing to help him to change his ways and marry him but he refuses this offer. Near the end of the opera the murdered father returns (as a ghost) from the grave to offer the Don another chance at repentance. This is a powerful exchange: the ghost pleading for the Don to change and repeatedly asking him to repent before it is too late. Don Giovanni chooses to remain unrepentant and, in doing so, is condemned to hell and dragged down by demons while hellfire erupts from the stage accompanied by screams of agony!

Well, at least that was what was **supposed** to happen. Instead the director decided to have the Don and his servant struggle and fight over a loaded gun, the gun fires and the Don is killed and the curtain came down. End of the opera!

The lack of what was waiting for the unrepentant sinner, the Don, in the opera meant that the director completely missed the point that Mozart and Da Ponte were making; it is what a pastor finds just as critical, in life, in death and more importantly what happens after death!

If we are truly repentant for our sins, no matter how big or small, God will forgive us our sins. The Don had the opportunity to be forgiven by God for his sin and crimes but chose not to repent and, in the original opera, paid dearly for his decision and was condemned to eternal hell.

The modern take the Pittsburgh Opera performed missed the entire point of the opera! Our lives don't end at death; it is just another part of our journey! We return and must stand before God the Father. We are held accountable for what we have done and for what we have left undone and are judged by God. The choice is either heaven or hell for eternity! How this important central theme was overlooked by the director is mind blowing!

Mozart and Da Ponte knew their Bible and wanted this operatic masterpiece to reflect good and evil, sin and forgiveness and repentance or the consequences of being unrepentant!

After all, for the Christian, it is not only a matter of life and death but also the matter of eternal life!

Rev. Robert B. Grewe

**First Lutheran Church opportunities to grow in your faith and church participation all are welcome**

**Mondays: Confirmation Classes from 6-8 pm**

**Tuesdays: Adult Catechism Classes from 11 -12 noon & 7-8 pm**

**Weds: Monthly Council Meeting 7 pm (2nd Weds of the month)**

**Thursdays: Bell Choir 7-8 pm. Women's Circle check for dates and times once a month.**

**Fridays: (last of the month) Youth Group 7-9 pm**

**Sundays: Choir practice at 9:15 am**

**Adult Bible study at 9:45 am. Youth Bible study at 9:45 am.**

**Movie and a meal last Sunday of the month after the service (Christian based films) 11 am**

**Children's Sunday school before the sermon during the service.**

**Special events will also take place on Sundays after the services so watch the FLC calendar.**

The Gideon's have a new program that they are starting called, **"Take Back our Community for Christ- Sowers of the Seed Striving Side by Side for the Faith of the Gospel"**.

Most common concerns;

Moral condition of their community

Non-responsive congregations

Need to reach the 80% plus lost and unchurched in their neighborhoods

Lack of Evangelism and Discipleship in their community

Spiritual apathy in their congregation

God has made available a NEW OPPURTUNITY for the Gideon's International to work side by side with pastors to equip and encourage your congregation to be actively engaged in reaching the lost and unchurched for Christ in your local community, across your city, and around the world.

Focus on sharing the gospel – by providing training, tools, and opportunity for the church body to pray together then go together into their community on church prayer walks led by the Holy Spirit to engage people where they live, loving them to Christ, praying with them into the church family and presenting the Gospel.

Leadership comes from the Pastor – based on the book of Nehemiah Chapter 2 and Nehemiah 3:1. Spiritual leaders were first to start, first to lead and first to set the example.

Assistance from Gideon Ministry – Based on Philippians 1:27, THE Gideon's International (Sole mission to reach the lost of Christ) is committed to "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side (with the pastors and the church body) for the faith of the gospel." A Gideon Ministry Team will assist the pastor in preparing the church body for the evangelistic outreach then go "ON MISSION" with the church body into the neighborhood.

Dick Dennis gave us the Gideon message about spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. That Sunday after church, a homeless woman approached the pastor on the sidewalk as he was leaving. She started asking about our church and the conversation kept going from there. Pastor Rob gave her a bible and took her to lunch (with his friend from the FD) and talked to her for over 2 hours, then drove her back into town. This is the action that Christ wants us to do. This action is what Pastor Rob does over and over again. Remember God's word shall not return void.



“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,  
And do not return there,  
But water the earth,  
And make it bring forth and bud.  
That it may give seed to the sower  
And bread to the eater,  
So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;  
It shall not return to Me void,  
But it shall accomplish what I please,  
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”  
Isaiah Chapter 55:10-11

Dennis Schmidt

## **WNALC—November, 2019**

The WNALC Board meeting will be held Tuesday, Nov. 5th at noon in the lounge.

Thank Offering Sunday will be held Nov. 24th.

Circle meeting will be held Thursday, Nov 21st at noon in the lounge. Leader will be Linda Nickles and hostesses will be Joyce Streater and Sonie Rea.

## CONDENSED FINANCIAL REPORT (Melanie)

January 1—October 23, 2019

Income            \$141,937.45

Expense           \$138,378.12

Net                \$   3,559.33

Average monthly attendance      94

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### TREASURER'S REPORT

The proposed budget was presented at October's Council Meeting and many changes were recommended for it to be approved by the council. There will be modifications made regarding income and expenses so that the council can approve of it by next month's council meeting.

Thanks,

Erik Maust

## Le Chambon: A Village Takes a Stand

All over Europe, a small number of individuals tried to save Jews. But in Le Chambon, a village in southern France, the entire community became involved in rescue. Le Chambon was a Protestant village in a predominantly Roman Catholic region, which before and even during the war was a center of tourism. Now its residents turned their tiny mountain village into a hiding place for Jews from every part of Europe. Between 1940 and 1944, Le Chambon and other nearby villages provided refuge for more than 5,000 people fleeing Nazi persecution, about 3,500 of who were Jews.

Almost everyone in the community of 5,000 took part in the effort. Even the children were involved. When a Nazi official tried to organize a Hitler Youth camp in the village, the students told him that they, “make no distinction between Jews and non-Jews. It is contrary to Gospel teaching.”

The majority of the Jewish refugees were children. The villagers provided them with food, shelter, and fake identity papers. They also made sure that those they sheltered were involved as much as possible in the life of the town, in part to avoid arousing suspicion from other visitors. Whenever residents of Le Chambon learned of an upcoming police raid, they hid those they were protecting in the surrounding countryside. The values of the village were perhaps expressed best by its minister, André Trocmé, who concluded his sermons with the words, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind and with all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself. Go practice it.”

He knew it all came down to 2 questions;

1. “Do you think we are all brothers or not?”
2. “Do you think it is unjust to help the Jews or not?”

He believed the answer to the 2 questions was a resounding yes and conclude; “Let us try to help!”

In February 1943, the police arrested André Trocmé and his assistant, Edouard Theis. Although they were released after 28 days, the Gestapo continued to monitor their activities. In summer 1943, the Gestapo offered a reward for André Trocmé’s

capture, forcing him into hiding for ten months. Many knew where he was, but no one turned him in.

Historian Marianne Ruel Robins notes: The fact that an entire community participated (or watched and said nothing) is remarkable indeed. The silence observed by the people of the Plateau was an important condition for its success, not simply because it sheltered Jews from external threats, but also because it minimized internal dissent. To refrain from talking meant that one would not shame one's neighbor for his lack of participation; it also meant that different rationales for behavior would not conflict with another, be they commitment to pacifism, nationalism, Christian charity or judeophilia. Silence did not necessarily imply that everyone implicitly agreed on the reasons for hiding Jews, but rather that most people came to agree that something ought to be done.

The rescuers of Le Chambon also drew support from people in other places. There was an extensive network of sympathizers throughout the region who could be called upon for help with communication and organization. Jewish rescue organizations brought Jewish children to the area for protection. Church groups, both Protestant and Catholic, helped fund their efforts. So did the World Council of Churches. Also, a group known as the Cimade led hundreds of Jews across the Alps to safety in Switzerland.

When Magda Trocmé reflected on her choices years after the war, she said, "When people read this story, I want them to know that I tried to open my door. I tried to tell people, 'Come in, come in.' In the end I would like to say to people, 'Remember that in your life there will be lots of circumstances where you will need a kind of courage, a kind of decision on your own, not about other people but about yourself.' I would not say more."

May we demonstrate the same faith and integrity in our lives as the brave villagers of Le Chambon and the surrounding villages.

Sincerely,

Donna Bassi

\* To learn more see The Weapons of the Spirit documentary by Pierre Sauvage

## **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

A request has been received by the Church Council to consider changing the starting time of our Christmas Eve Service to 7 PM.

Starting the service at 10:30 PM has been a long standing tradition. Is it time to Change?

This is a decision that must be made by the entire congregation. We each have our own reasons for the time we would choose.

Please pray about this, and come to the Congregational Meeting, November 10, and cast your vote.

**COME AND VOTE!!!**

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### **MUSIC NOTES FROM BOBBI HEASTINGS**

**It's not too late to be a part of the Advent/Christmas choir. If you enjoy singing with a great group of people, there is no better time to join than during this special season. We meet on Sunday mornings at 9:15 to 10:30 to rehearse. Would love to have you with us.**

### **Nov. Lay Readers**

- 3 Lisa Maust
- 10 Lisa Hager
- 17 Dennis Schmidt
- 24 Kris Briggs

### **Nov. Altar Flowers**

- 3 Helen Baker
- 10 Quedenfeld
- 17 Maust
- 24 Cindy Linville

### **Nov. Acolytes**

- 3 C. Quedenfeld, C. Berry, E. Buel
- 10 W. Black, H. Walsh
- 17 L. Clark, E. Clark
- 24 B. Berry, L. Berry, C. Johnson

### **Nov. Counters**

- 3 V. Group, Williams,
- 10 Coleman , Rea, Sabol
- 17 Bassi, Fritz, Sten
- 24 Briggs, C. Group, Ulanich

### **Nov. Ushers**

- 3 A. Serbak, J. Sarver,
- 10 K. Behrens, D. Looman, E. Oliver, H. Snyder
- 17 J. Hoffer, C. Krcil, R. Williams, N. & L. Williams
- 24 J. Luketich, S. Ringer, D. Schmidt, Z. Mason, M. Verderber

### **Nov. Altar Team**

Lisa Hager and Kathy Black

## NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Jennifer Cottrill	16	Bridget Ringer
2	Carl Group, Jr. Joyce Schrader Gloria Morgan	17	Byron Schrader
		18	
3	Kimberly Grewe Matthew Walsh	19	Diana Berry Wayne Streater Nikolai Williams
4	Julie Tracht		Bailey DeWalt
5	Lucy G. Sten Karen Adams	20	
6		21	Erik Maust
7		22	
8	Ryan Bittner	23	Irene Franz Alexander Chadwick
9		24	
10	Lisa Hager	25	
11	Lauren Sakerka	26	
12		27	Kathleen Black
13	Jay Chadwick Collin Berry Lyndsay Berry	28	
		29	George Salvucci
		30	Kyle Glozier
14			
15			