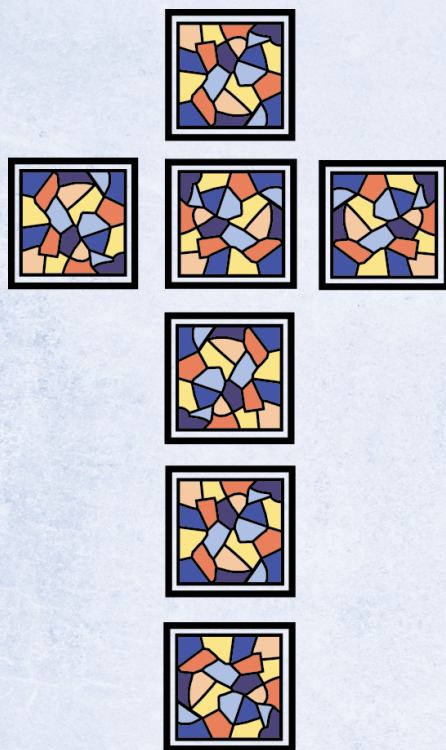


Together

Daily Devotional



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN

Church and School

Learn, Live, Share...Christ

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we take the next big step as a church and school ministry, we realize the great spiritual impact this can have on us. In fact, the TOGETHER Capital Campaign is simultaneously our Fall Spiritual Growth Campaign. Why is that? Because when it comes to matters of generosity, stewardship, tithing, and supporting the Kingdom of God, these are all ultimately matters of the heart. The challenge of stewardship and giving is one that challenges our priorities, our values, and our idols. It even gets us a little uncomfortable so that God can help us see more clearly how we truly rely on Him to provide for all our needs of body and soul. I am confident that the Lord will work mightily in our hearts, our homes, and our church and school family as TOGETHER we step out in faith!

This devotion booklet is to help us keep it all grounded in the Word of God. We want all that we do as a congregation to be grounded in the truth of God's Word, bathed in prayer, and motivated by the Holy Spirit's calling on our lives.

I hope that all of us can do these devotions TOGETHER in a spirit of openness, prayerfulness, and trust that asks God to work mighty things in us and through us in the coming days.

May He receive all the glory and honor and praise!
And may you be blessed by this time in His word.

In Joyful Service to Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Wangelin". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.

Pastor Wangelin <><

Kick-Off Sunday, October 6

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive TOGETHER with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:2-4

The Gospel of Jesus Christ brings us TOGETHER under God's grace. Jesus is uniting people in a way that nothing else in the world can. It brings us into a restored relationship with God and links us with brothers and sisters in Christ around the world and throughout the ages. Wow! That's quite a connection.

The first step of this is being made alive TOGETHER with Christ. In Baptism, we are joined with Christ in a mysterious yet wonderful way. His death becomes our death – our sins are paid for! And His resurrection becomes our resurrection – we will live with Him! We have Jesus' great promise throughout our life – "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:20.

As Our Savior Lutheran Church and School takes a bold step forward in our mission and ministry, let's begin by realizing that all we do is because of Jesus and with Jesus. It's His mission. It's His church. And we have the privilege of being God's children because of what Christ has done for us. He is Immanuel – God with us. In these coming days, our prayer is that God would strengthen our relationship with Him, first and foremost, and see how that blesses and strengthens our relationships with each other as a church family, so that TOGETHER, we can continue to Learn, Live and Share Christ.

Gracious God, You came to us when we were unworthy, undeserving, and dead in our trespasses and sins. Thank You for making us alive with Christ, so that we can live for You. May all we do bring You the glory and praise. Bless us in these coming days as we journey TOGETHER towards greater love and faithfulness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Monday, October 7

"All the believers were TOGETHER and had everything in common." Acts 2:44

In the book of Acts, we see how the Spirit of Jesus was bringing people TOGETHER around the saving message of Jesus. Acts 1:14 says, "They all joined TOGETHER constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." Acts 2:1, "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all TOGETHER in one place." Acts 2:46, "Every day they continued to meet TOGETHER in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate TOGETHER with glad and sincere hearts."

As the church grew, believers experienced that togetherness in individual congregations. We are truly blessed to bring over 1,200 people TOGETHER as a congregation to Learn, Live and Share Christ through worship, witness, and Christian Education. Take a moment to jot down or discuss with those near you the blessings of doing life TOGETHER as a church family. How does a church family make us stronger in faith, and how do we get to live out that faith TOGETHER?

Heavenly Father, we thank You for placing us in Your family, as Your beloved sons and daughters. We thank You for placing us in a church family like Our Savior Lutheran Church and School. May You be glorified in all that we do, and unite our hearts to serve You faithfully. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Tuesday, October 8

"And in Him, you too are being built TOGETHER to become a dwelling place in which God lives by His Spirit." Ephesians 2:22

The Holy Spirit loves to build. Just like kids enjoy putting Lego pieces together in creative and different ways to make something really cool, the Holy Spirit loves bringing people together – each unique, each special – and linking them together in such a way as to build a church – not of bricks and stone, but of people. Ephesians 1:21 says, "In Him [Christ] the whole building is joined TOGETHER and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord."

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School is blessed with a wonderful facility, great property, ideal location, and well-kept grounds. Yet we are not a building. If it were all gone tomorrow, we would still be the church. We would still carry out our mission. We would still Learn, Live and Share Christ. The church is the people of God. And we are brought together by the Spirit to do the amazing ministry that takes place in our building and on our grounds that expands and stretches out into our community and beyond.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for being an expert builder, and chief architect of our church family. You have given us each a place, and connected us with one another in Christian fellowship. Thank you for our unique gifts and abilities that we can use to build up the church and point people to Jesus, like You do. In His holy name. Amen.

Wednesday, October 9

"And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all TOGETHER in perfect unity." Colossians 3:14

Are you sick of fighting yet? In his book, *Love Your Enemies: How Descent People Can Save America From the Culture of Contempt*, author Arthur C. Brooks presents research that shows nearly everyone is exhausted of the polarized, antagonistic, and contemptuous climate of discourse in our nation. He argues from research and data that contempt and disdain for others is unhealthy, harmful, and an addiction like those to drugs or alcohol. People on both sides are so fed up, yet they don't know what to do about it. Brooks' proposed solution is one that harkens back to Jesus' basic teachings. He offers the tactic of "warm-heartedness" towards those we disagree with. To approach all people with friendliness and kindness, regardless of our difference of opinions.

"Engagement with love is a human endeavor, and requires us to be, and deal with, real people – not disembodied messages," he writes. Jesus' command to "Love your enemies" in Matthew 5:44 would go a long way in how we treat others of opposing viewpoints.

That love for our enemies can only truly come from our connection with Christ. Jesus is the One who loved His enemies – us (Romans 5:10, Colossians 1:21), so much that He gave His life for us. Jesus is the One who can ultimately bring TOGETHER people in a spirit of love, forgiveness, grace, truth, and righteousness. Let's continue to pray that Jesus would do His unifying work in our nation, in our communities, and in our congregation!

Lord Jesus, Your love is amazing, steady, and unchanging. Your love is a mountain, underneath my feet. Your love is a mystery, how You gently lift me. When I am surrounded, Your love carries me. Hallelujah!

Together **Note**

The first Ministry Forum will be held on Thursday, October 10, at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Other opportunities to participate in a forum include Sunday, October 13, at 9:30, and Monday, October 14, at 7:00 p.m.

At least one member of each household is asked to participate in whichever forum works best for your schedule.

Thursday, October 10

"If one member suffers, all suffer TOGETHER; if one member is honored, all rejoice TOGETHER." 1 Corinthians 12:26

Everyone loves a great party. Celebrating with other people brings us around a common source of joy, and it magnifies it. A wedding, a birthday, a retirement, or graduation. There are special events in our lives where we invite others to share in the joy with us, to rejoice with us. With our church family, we get to "do life together" in Christ, and celebrate not only the milestones in our lives, but also the milestones in the life of our Savior, Jesus, as we celebrate His birth, baptism, miracles, and resurrection.

In a similar way, when we are hurting, we do not hurt alone. Our church family comes around us with empathy, support, prayers, and comfort. Whether it's the loss of a job, a relationship struggle, or the death of a loved one – we all suffer together as we look to Christ, our suffering Savior who overcame it all for us. TOGETHER, we then go through the ups and downs, the joys and challenges of life, all in light of the cross and empty tomb.

How could you magnify someone's celebration soon? Who might be hurting that could use a word of comfort or encouragement. Let's take the time to do the little things that help our church family share the love of Christ, as we do life TOGETHER in Him.

Gracious Father, all things are under Your watchful eye and caring heart. Even the pain and suffering that we experience does not go unnoticed or ignored by You, and even those You work out for our good. Help us to rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn, as we always look to You and Your steadfast love and faithfulness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Friday, October 11

"Let us not give up meeting TOGETHER, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Hebrews 10:24-25

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, writes, "The Christ in my heart is weaker than the Christ in that of my brother."

What he means by this, is that we always need the encouragement of others. When it comes to our faith, our faith would seem much weaker if we were left to ourselves, or trying to muster faith on our own. But when someone else speaks a word of Scripture, of encouragement, of prayer, it has a profound effect. We are strengthened more by the words of our brother or sister in Christ than we are if left on our own. Whose words have encouraged you lately? Who around you needs your words of encouragement?

God's design is that His people would worship regularly ("Honor the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy"). The Gospel – Good News – has to come from outside of ourselves. We need to hear it from someone, receive it from someone. It is also encouraged by someone who speaks God's Word to us, and who joins together in our prayers and worship. Do you realize what an encouragement you are to your church family, simply by showing up for worship? Even if you don't say anything to them, you are a blessing and an encouragement simply by being there. We need to be meeting TOGETHER all the more as we see the Day of the Lord approaching. We praise God for the blessing of worshipping TOGETHER with our church family each week.

Lord God, we give to You a time of worship each week. We admit that we have not always been faithful or had our hearts fully focused on You. Please forgive us. Draw us closer to You and to each other so that we might not give up meeting TOGETHER but do so more and more, as You knit us together as Your people. Help us to be an encouragement to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, October 12

"Bring an offering and come before Him; worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness." 1 Chronicles 16:29

King David's great desire was to build a temple to the Lord. Nathan, the prophet, agreed with him that he had made a noble pursuit in mind. However, God spoke to Nathan, declaring that David's plan was not His plan. David's son, Solomon, was the one chosen by God to build the Temple, but that did not preclude David from having a part in it. Seeing that Solomon was "young and inexperienced," David "made extensive preparations before his death." (1 Chronicles 22:5) Here was another act of worship as David brought the wealth of his kingdom to use in the construction of the Temple and urged the leaders of Israel to help Solomon in this endeavor. And they did!

Not only did they support him in this work, they brought their offerings of gold, and silver, and all things needed. This was their act of worship, and David praised God for Who He is and for what He had done for them: "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?" (1 Chronicles 29:14).

Worshiping God involves more than going to church on Sunday. It also includes prayer and praise and the giving of offerings. Let's heed David's words: "Bring an offering and come before Him!"

Almighty God, everything we have belongs to You. Help us to use our possessions and income in a way that honors You and serves Your Kingdom. Help us to joyfully bring our offerings to Your house and worship You by giving You are first and our best. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

Sunday, October 13

"On the first day of the week we came TOGETHER to break bread. Paul spoke to the people..." Acts 20:7

Christians have been gathering around the presence of the risen Christ on the first day of the week – Sunday – since their first encounter with Jesus on that first Easter morning. What a day! And what a way to start our week. The greatest expression of our TOGETHERness is our assembly as the body of Christ in worship each week, and our gathering at the table of the Lord to break bread TOGETHER on our knees. We hear the apostolic teaching about Christ and the saving message of the Gospel. We sing, pray, and receive God's gifts of grace. Worship is such a blessing! Whether it's early service, late service, Hmong service, or via LiveStream, we want people to come TOGETHER around the saving word of Christ to receive grace and strength.

We are blessed with the worship space, the preaching, the music, and the fellowship of believers that we get to experience at Our Savior each week. Do we sometimes take it for granted? Of course we do. But then we have those moments where we experience the presence of God, and are uplifted by the encouragement of so many brothers and sisters in Christ, and we realize what was meant by the Scripture verse for the dedication of our church in 2008, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven!" Genesis 28:17. What do you love most about worshiping at Our Savior?

Lord Jesus, when we gather in Your presence, You sustain us and uplift us by Your grace and tender mercy. Thank You for Your promise that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am with them." (Matthew 18:20) May Your name be lifted high as we worship You, Jesus! Amen.

Monday, October 14

"As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain." 2 Corinthians 6:1

God's grace is poured out on us daily and abundantly. Daily we rejoice in our baptisms through which God's grace makes us His children. Sunday after Sunday we celebrate the Easter message of God's grace made available to us through the suffering and victory of His Son. His grace is given to our physical as well as our spiritual beings as He provides "our daily bread," including "everything needed to sustain this body and life" (Martin Luther).

How is it possible that we could receive this grace in vain? When we ignore the Giver of the gift, and use His gifts for our own good rather than in service to others. When we attribute our gifts, our abilities, our success to ourselves, then we receive God's grace in vain.

We are meant to love God and to love others, and to use God's gifts to that end. The life of a good steward cannot be accomplished on our own. Such an attempt is doomed to failure, and demonstrates "receiving God's gifts in vain." Stewardship that pleases God results when we, in response to His grace in our lives, use all the gifts He has given us to serve Him by serving others. Let it be our prayer that we will be ever grateful for the grace of God and respond in loving service and generous giving to glorify Him!

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father. There is no shadow of turning with Thee. Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not. As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be. Great is Thy Faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning, new mercies I see. All I have needed, Thy hand hath provided. Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me. Amen.

Together **Note**

Did you make it to a ministry forum yet?

Tonight is your last opportunity.

Join us at 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
as we share God-sightings and the impact our
ministry is having on our community.

Tuesday, October 15

"Honor the Lord with your wealth..." Proverbs 3:9

In the church service, the offering is an important part of our worship of God. Notice how the pastor doesn't say, "Let's take an intermission while we collect our offering." Or, "Let's take a break from our service, collect an offering, then get back to it!" Instead, he most often says, "We continue worshiping the Lord by giving to Him our tithes and our offerings." The offering is not a break from worship – it is a significant part of our worship. Because our money represents our God-given time, inspiration, energy, and perspiration, we are giving ourselves. It is as if we are putting ourselves into the offering plate.

When we give to God because of Who He is and what He has done for us, He is pleased. The focus of our giving is on God, rather than simply supporting institutions or people. To illustrate this point, a certain church was having a capital campaign and on commitment Sunday, they brought their pledges forward to place on the altar. One of them was a young handicapped woman who had a very meager income. The congregation had come to love and admire her over the years. As she reached the altar, she placed in the basket a ring that had been given to her by her mother. After the worship service was over, the elders decided that the ring was too precious and valuable, so they went to her apartment to return it. They said, "Because of your financial condition, we decided to give you back your ring." The young lady started crying and gave the ring back, saying, "This ring was not given to you; I gave it to Jesus!"

Heavenly Father, we worship and praise You for all that You have done for us, and for Your steadfast love and faithfulness. Help us to honor You with our offerings, and to give You our first and our best. May our giving be truly an act of worship, acknowledging Your place in our life, and seeking to glorify Your name in this world. May the name of Jesus be lifted high among us! In His most holy name, Amen.

Wednesday, October 16

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

During the month of October, we celebrate the great Reformation event. It began with a pious, troubled monk, who, having had the Scriptures opened up to him at last, found the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Gospel which says that we are saved by grace, through faith, not by our works, but as a gift of God. What freedom this brought to a man – and to so many people – who had been striving to do works that would please God, works that would earn him a place in heaven.

The Reformation helps those in bondage to see that "we have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:18). Through baptism, we were buried with Christ so that, now, "through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4). How glorious is this new life! We are united with Christ! We can serve Him joyfully and humbly, imitating our Lord. We can give, not under compulsion, but generously and cheerfully because God makes His grace abound in us who are redeemed, "so that in all things at all times, having all that we need, we will abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8). Of course, like our hero of faith, Martin Luther, we will be compelled by Christ's love (2 Corinthians 5:14) to spread the freeing Gospel that Christ came to save us sinners and gives us life to the fullest (John 10:10).

Gracious God, You have done everything for our salvation. We acknowledge that it is a free gift from You! May we praise You with our lives, glorify You in all we do, and participate in the mission of Your Son, Jesus Christ, so that more people may know the powerful Good News of Your salvation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Together **Note**

Join with other Lutherans at the Lansing area
Reformation Service on
Sunday, October 20, 4:00pm,
at Martin Luther High School, 2001 E. Grand
River Ave., Lansing.

Music provided by area choirs and the
Concordia University Choir from Ann Arbor.
Pastor Khumalo is the preacher, and tours of
the high school will be available.

Thursday, October 17

*"You may say to yourself, 'My power and strength of my hands have produced wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He Who gives you the ability to produce wealth."
Deuteronomy 8:18*

We are totally dependent upon the Lord for everything we have and everything we get to do. In this sense, we have a very unequal partnership when it comes to working in God's creation to fulfill His purpose for our lives. The partnership is like the wind and a sailboat. The sailor gets the boat ready, positions the sails, and sets the rigging. The preparation of the boat is essential. And yet, with all that effort, the boat is going nowhere without the power of the wind.

The wind is like the power of God in our life. We cannot go forward in faith and life without God. God is our power supply. Unfortunately, we often take credit for our own accomplishments, and God receives only small thanks, if any. In Deuteronomy 8:18, Moses warns the people to remember that God is the One who gives us the intelligence, hands, eyes, resources, education, etc., and prepares our minds for His service. Contrast that with what King Nebuchadnezzar says in Daniel 4:30, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" Jesus followers, on the other hand, follow the teachings of 1 Peter 5:6, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time." We are only the vessel through whom God works. He makes all things possible. He is our power supply!

Holy Spirit, we cannot live and breathe and have our being without You. Thank You for being our power supply, and sustaining our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. Help us to be faithful partners in our stewardship, and to acknowledge You in all things. Amen.

Friday, October 18

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33

A bumper sticker said, "Money isn't everything, but it's right up there with air and water!" We live in a money-driven culture that often associates a person's value by how much he or she earns and possesses. In order to be labeled a success, many are driven to possess more and more. Gaining wealth is often an obsession. The Apostle Paul warns us, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).

Our obsession with money can interfere with a relationship with Christ. Our challenge is to keep money in its proper perspective and learn to be content. With contentment, the poor man is rich and without it, the rich man is poor. There are two ways we can strive to have enough. We can try to accumulate more, or we can learn to be satisfied with less. If we pursue the first way, accumulating more, we will discover that money won't buy lasting satisfaction, because more is never enough. As hard as it is, we need to curb our desire for more by concentrating on the blessings we do have. Being satisfied with less and using what we have in God-pleasing ways contributes to our contentment. Those who have less and are content are better off than those who have much and always want more. Jesus' words bring God's wisdom to us – to seek first His Kingdom, and find our identity and purpose first and foremost in Him.

Good and gracious Heavenly Father, You are the creator and owner of all things. I am privileged that You have granted me the opportunity to be a steward of Your creation. I know by nature that I am selfish and greedy. Help me to be thankful and content with all that You have entrusted me. Help me to seek first Your Kingdom and join Jesus on His mission. In Christ's name, Amen.

Saturday, October 19

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Galatians 6:10

We are truly blessed with a wonderful church family at Our Savior. We certainly share our blessings with those outside our congregation, through our Food Bank ministry, the Friendship House, and South Africa Missions. We open up our building and grounds to our community. But we especially see a great love and care for fellow church members. This is a reflection of Galatians 6:10, where it says to do good to all people, but especially to those who belong to our church family. Whether it's through our meals ministry, Stephen Ministry, funeral luncheons or our Small Groups, we are blessed to have a church family like Our Savior. No church is perfect, and we will have our shortcomings, but we strive to bless the family of believers as we have opportunity.

Our offerings are another way that we do good to all people, especially to the family of believers. To maintain our facility, ministry staff, and programs is a privilege. To have an overflow of our offerings support missions at home and abroad is a way that we do good to all. When we give our offerings, we give first and foremost to God. But we ask that God would use those gifts to do good to all people, especially our family of believers. Hebrews 13:16 says, "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."

Almighty Father, use the gifts we bring to Your house to bring earthly and eternal good to all people, especially our family of faith. May the resources that our church gathers be used for the work of Your Kingdom, as we desire more people to Learn, Live and Share Christ. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Sunday, October 20

"Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, people will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the Gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else." 2 Corinthians 9:13

Scripture is full of instances where God has used ordinary people like you to accomplish extraordinary things. He chose a stammering Moses to lead His people out of bondage, an inexperienced youth named Jeremiah to be a prophet to kings. A doubtful elderly woman named Sarah was chosen to be the mother of a great nation. He chose self-serving fishermen, James and John, to lead His Church and spread the Gospel, impulsive Peter's confession on which to build that church, and Paul, who spoke of a thorn in his flesh, to be the first great missionary of the Christian Church.

God uses imperfect people, those whom the world considers weak and flawed, to extend His kingdom. When you allow yourself to be used by God in whatever way He chooses, He takes your meager talents and blesses them, making you an example for others around you. You are not perfect, nor do you know all there is to know about God's Word. Yet, you, like Moses, Sarah, James, John, Peter, and Paul, are privileged by God's grace to participate in the work of His Kingdom. Are you open to the possibilities before you? Are you willing to explore and grow? God will always equip you for the task He gives you to do. With God's help, you can find ways that your gifts can make a difference, and you will hear God's words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:21)

Heavenly Father, You know me inside and out, and all my insecurities. And yet You have claimed me as Your child and called me into Your service. Give me the confidence to step out in faith, where You are leading me, to do Your will and give glory to You. You go with me all the way! Thank You, Lord. Amen.

Monday, October 21

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12:15

Decisions on what to buy and own don't have to be made solely based on their affordability. Our needs don't have to expand to the amount of income that we receive. However, what happens in most households is that, when income increases, so do expenditures. We make more, so we spend more. We give into our tendency to want to accumulate, and begin to think that we need many things. It's a powerful tug on our life. Do we really need the newest clothes, or latest phone, or upgraded service? How many "luxuries" do we no longer recognize as such, but simply expect? Often it doesn't take too long before those "luxuries" are no longer satisfying and we crave something else or something more.

Jesus knows the struggle is real. He warns us. He says, "Watch out! Be on your guard!" How vigilant are we? Every time we give to church or other charitable organization – basically, anytime we give our money and stuff away – we are taking a step back from the need for "more" and freeing ourselves to be generous with our possessions. Getting more stuff is not what life is about! Life consists in knowing God's love and grace in Jesus Christ, and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Only in a right relationship with God and others through Jesus can we truly find the meaning of life, and the abundance of spiritual blessings that make us truly rich indeed!

Gracious Father, You know our proclivity to want more and more. Please forgive us for all that we have wasted or purchased needlessly. Help us to take a step back from the pull that stuff has on our lives, and see how we can receive all our material blessings as gifts from You to be used in Your service and to the blessing of others. Grant us wisdom, grace, and Your Holy Spirit to that end, so we might experience the abundance of a full life with You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Tuesday, October 22

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then, your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." Matthew 6:3-4

These are the words of Jesus who was warning us to avoid a very common temptation – that of a desire for recognition. Some can handle the praise of others, but most of us probably cannot.

In Acts 4:36-37, it says that Barnabas (whose name means Son of Encouragement), "sold a field he owned and brought the money and placed it at the apostles' feet." We would all recognize that as a great example of generosity. And in the very next verse, it mentions Ananias and Sapphira, who wanted to be recognized like Barnabas was. They also sold a field, and placed a portion of it at the apostles' feet, but told everyone that they donated the whole thing. It was a lie intended to make them look good.

They became an example, alright, but not what they had hoped. God made a stern example out of them by taking their life from them as they lied to the apostles. It is a serious thing to lie to the Lord. (Acts 5:4)

Jesus followers may from time to time be recognized for our generosity, but we never seek it out. We rather live by Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6, that we should not let our right hand know what our left hand is doing, lest we succumb to the desire for recognition.

To You, O Lord, be all glory and honor and praise! We admit that we often seek recognition to feed our pride, rather than letting You have all the glory. Help us to glorify and honor You in all that we say and do, so that the Name of Jesus would be lifted high among us! In His holy name we pray, Amen.

Wednesday, October 23

"But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth." 2 Thessalonians 2:13

In Psalm 51, David's great psalm of repentance, he confesses, "Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight" (Psalm 51:4). So it is with us. We sin daily. We sin egregiously. There is nothing else for us to do, for we are sinners. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5), David declares. This is the state of all humankind since the Fall in the Garden of Eden.

Yet our gracious God chooses us to be His own! We cannot understand this. There is nothing we can do to be accepted by God and nothing we can do to receive His salvation. Jesus said, "... I told you that no one can come unto Me unless the Father has enabled him." (John 6:65)

In spite of our sinfulness, we are called saints! Paul, writing to the Philippians and to the Ephesians, greets them, "To all the saints..." (Philippians 1:1). That's you! That is I! This concept of saint and sinner is one that Luther grasped and explained. We are sinners, but we are righteous at the same time because Christ has imputed His righteousness to us. By Christ's blood we are declared righteous and by the work of His Spirit through Word and Sacrament, we are daily being sanctified until in Heaven we no longer have this struggle with our sinful nature.

Oh, Lord God, truly You are mighty and powerful – yet You care for me! You created the world and all that is in it – and You created me! I sin against You, but You forgive, redeem, and restore me to Yourself. In fact, You came to me when I needed You most – when I was "dead in my trespasses and sins" – and You became like me so that I will one day be like You! Thank you, dear Jesus. Let Your Holy Spirit continue His work of sanctification in me that I may serve and praise and worship You all the days of my Life. Through Christ, I pray. Amen.

Thursday, October 24

"Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6

Time, as well as other areas of life, is affected by God's principle of sowing and reaping. If you spend your time unproductively, you will not reap the rewards in the same way had you invested your time wisely. If you sow much, you will reap much. If you want to be proficient at tennis, golf, or playing the piano, you must commit the time and effort to practice in order to develop the necessary skills.

Our Lord really knows how to multiply. Whatever we give, whatever we bring to God, will be multiplied into countless blessings by Him. When we offer our time, our talents, and treasures to the Lord, God works through those gifts to bring spiritual blessings and an eternal return on our investment. Look at how the Lord used the fish and bread that the boy offered the disciples at the feeding of the 5,000. Or how Jesus praised the woman who gave two small copper coins to the Lord – all she had. Jesus said, "Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken TOGETHER and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." Let's sow generously at Our Savior Lutheran Church and School and see how the blessings abound!

Lord God, if we only know all that You do with our gifts of time, talents and treasure! Open our eyes to see the countless blessings that You work through the gifts of Your people, and help us to be generous on every occasion so that we can participate in those blessings and reap a generous harvest for You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Friday, October 25

"As He looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' he said. 'This poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'" Luke 21:1-4

Of all the giving referenced in the Bible, the widow's mite may be the most familiar. The widow had so much faith and trust in the Lord that she was willing to give all she had. It was not the amount that mattered. It was given from the heart, and it was given in love and trust. The rich gave large gifts, but their giving had no effect on their style of living. They gave for personal recognition. The only person who noticed the widow's offering was Jesus, and He commended her for her sacrificial giving. From a trusting, grateful heart, she gave her only two coins as a thank offering. How generous to give away her entire income! However, she trusted that God would provide. "And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). Her giving glorified God. This makes us look at our giving and see if it reflects our trust and love in the Lord, or if it doesn't affect our style of living. To truly put God first in our lives, we want to demonstrate that His Kingdom is our top priority.

The first generation of members at Our Savior Lutheran Church and School took a big leap of faith when they launched a church and school. Many of them gave a tithe and a half (15%) or even a double tithe (20%) for years. They gave tremendous sacrifices to lay the foundations for our ministry today. Now it is our time to step out in faith, and to bring our gifts to the Lord's house as a response for all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. We ask the Lord to bless our gifts and to meet all our needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. May God be glorified as we step out in faith TOGETHER in Christ, with hope, and for the next generation!

Gracious Father, we want to put You first and foremost in our lives. We know that You can provide for all our needs of body and soul. Thank You for the ways You have provided for our church and school family throughout the years. May You be honored and glorified with our giving, now and always. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, October 26

"When they heard this, they raised their voices TOGETHER in prayer to God..." Acts 4:24

What a blessing it is to pray with and for each other, as the body of Christ! Throughout this TOGETHER Campaign, we have been praying that God would work mighty things in our hearts and lives, in our homes and in our church and in our school. Prayer opens us up to God's work in us and through us. Prayer acknowledges God's gracious hand and mighty power. When we get to pray TOGETHER we get to encourage each other in faith and hope. When was the last time you prayed for someone, out loud, in their presence?

So many times we often say the words, "I'll pray for you!" and we sincerely mean that. Many times we follow through, although sometimes we go through our day and forget what or who we said we would keep in our prayers. One sure way to remember is to not put it off, but say, "Can I pray about that right now?" By "praying on the spot" we not only remember to actually pray, but we bless the person we are praying with as we bring that petition to the Lord TOGETHER.

All day long today, members of Our Savior are joining in a prayer vigil – either at home, online, or at church. Prayer is bringing us together today. It culminates in a service of prayer and song at 7 p.m. this evening. Our prayer is that on Commitment Sunday, the Holy Spirit would do a mighty work to bring a great response to our campaign, as we move forward TOGETHER, in Christ, with Hope, and for the Next Generation!

**What a Friend we have in Jesus! All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! Oh, what
grief we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear. All
because we do not carry everything to God in prayer. Thank
You, Father, for the privilege to pray to you, and the blessing it
is to join with brothers and sisters in Christ in bringing our
petitions and praises to you. We know You hear us for Jesus'
sake, as we pray in His name. Amen.**

Together **Note**

Today's prayer vigil is happening at home,
online, or at church from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a 45 minute
service of prayer and songs at 7 p.m. to ask for
God's mighty hand to stir us up to greater
generosity, faith, and trust as we lift up
Commitment Sunday.

Commitment Sunday, October 27

"O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old – what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done."
Psalms 78:1-4

On this Reformation Sunday, we remember the things our fathers taught us, what faithful mothers and grandmothers have passed down, what countless teachers and pastors have instilled. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the great treasure of the Church. We know that there are times when it is obscured, muddled, doubted, or rejected. We are always an imperfect church. But we are a church and school committed to boldly and faithfully professing the Gospel and the teachings of Sacred Scriptures so that the next generation might know the wonderful works of the Lord.

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School exists for the next generation. We are so committed to raising up the next generation of Jesus followers. We have a long standing tradition of faith formation that is grounded in Scriptures and seeks a real, passionate, and dynamic faith life. We have amazing and gifted staff and an outstanding facility. Yet in all of it, the Gospel is at the heart and center.

Let's come TOGETHER today to worship God, to offer our prayers, our praises, and our pledges. On this Commitment Sunday, let's worship TOGETHER, and celebrate TOGETHER the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done, so that the next generation can Learn, Live and Share Christ!

Continued on Next Page

Gracious God, all that we are and all that we have comes from You. May You be honored and glorified in our worship today. Bless the prayers, praises, and pledges of Your people. Be at the center of our celebration, as we thank You for the generations before us and pray for those yet to come. To You, be all glory and honor and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen and Amen!

Together **Note**

Remember there is ONE SERVICE today
at 9:30 a.m.

Get there early if you want a good seat!

And stick around after worship for cider,
doughnuts, and refreshments as we
announce the grand total of our
Commitment Sunday pledges.

Notes:

Notes:

**Imagine what God can do through us
when we come**

Together...

Young and Old
New Christians and Life-Long Followers
Those who have Much and Those who have Little
New Members and Long-Time Members
Church Ministries and School Families
Urban, Suburban, and Rural
All Nations, All Generations
All of Us, TOGETHER.



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN

Church and School

7910 E. St. Joe Highway
Lansing, MI 48917

**OurSaviorLansing.org/Together
517.882.8665**