



**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
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Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

## OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

NOVEMBER 2018

### HISTORY AND YOU

History has lost a lot of its attraction in recent decades. I have met teenagers who did not know why we celebrate the Fourth of July. I've met people who didn't know who were the warring parties in WWI or WWII. I've met others who couldn't name five presidents from before they were born. George Santayana (1863-1952) once wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Assuming Santayana is correct, there are many people today who are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.

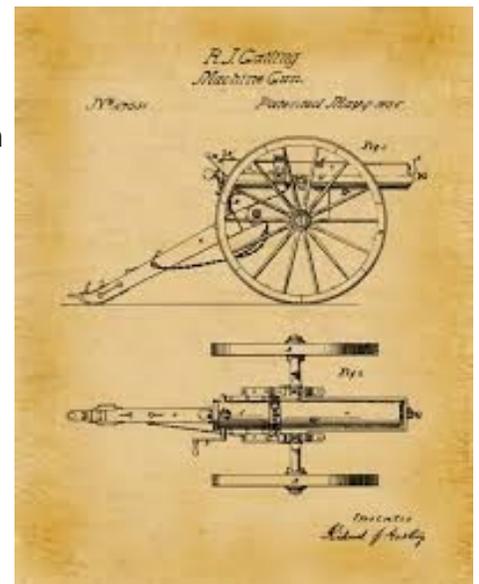
Of course, not all history is of equal value. Not knowing that November 4th is the wedding anniversary of Abraham Lincoln is probably not going to affect much of a change in a person's life. Knowing that, twenty years later on the same date, Richard Gatling patented his first rapid-fire gun, probably will not improve your life much. Also, some history is more important to certain slices of people in the world than others. For example, if you live in Israel you might remember that, on November 4, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated. If you live in Iran or the USA, you might remember that on November 4, 500 young Iranian militants took over the U.S. Embassy in Teheran.

Naturally, lots of other things happened on other dates in November. For example, in November the Bolsheviks overthrew the Russian government and Lenin became the leader of Russia. In this month the EU was founded. In this month, Germany and Italy signed a treaty which brought them into WWII on the same side. In November FDR was elected to his fourth term as president. Cortes conquered Mexico in November. X-rays were discovered. The Berlin Wall was opened up after standing for 28 years as a symbol of the Cold War. The US Marine Corps was founded in November. And the list goes on.

Knowing one's history enables a person to know where they came from. Knowing where you came from informs you in the direction you are going. This, I believe, is why so much history is obscured and distorted. In the case of America, there are powerful forces that do not like the connection between the Christian faith and the history of America. Therefore, great effort is made to obscure or distort that relationship. Once we are cut free from the mooring of our history, we can drift in any direction.

I suppose that is why the Christian Church has always valued history. Shoot, the first five books of the New Testament could be called history books. The Church also valued the history books of the Old Testament, keeping them as Sacred Scripture. History, though, didn't stop with the completion of the New Testament. So the Church developed the Christian Year with special dates to remind us of people and events that happened before we were born, people and events that shaped our history as the Church. That calendar is continually being modified as more time goes by, though some dates, like Easter, will always be on them.

For many years, the only calendar people used was the Church calendar. However, over time, national holi-



days crept into the calendars of nations around the world. So, for example, we celebrate Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday of November in America. Other American holiday's, like Independence Day, are celebrated in other months. Still, the Church calendar remains in use by many. These days keep us grounded in our past. They give us heroes worthy of remembering. Most importantly, these dates point us to Jesus, who was the Lord of those on our calendar. These saints and events give us reasons to thank our Lord Jesus. The following people are remembered in November on our Church calendar: (8) Johannes von Staupitz, Luther's Father Confessor; (9) Martin Chemnitz (birth), Pastor and Confessor; (10) Martin Luther's birthday (1483); (11) Martin of Tours, Pastor [also the day Martin Luther was baptized]; (14) Emperor Justinian, Christian Ruler and Confessor of Christ; (19) Elizabeth of Hungary; (23) Clement of Rome, Pastor; (29) Noah; (30) St. Andrew, Apostle. If you don't know who these people are and why they are worth remembering I can recommend William Weedon's book, *Celebrating the Saints*, available from Concordia Publish House. (Back in 2016 I posted a review of the book. You can find it at: <http://ourredeemernewark.org/celebrating-the-saints-book-review/>). There are, of course, many other good books on the subject.



One date not mentioned above is November 1. That is All Saints' Day. It is a day set aside to remember all the saints who have gone before us but, for whatever reason, do not have a special day set aside for them. This would include your Christian ancestors. The November holiday is Thanksgiving. We will have a Thanksgiving Eve worship service (7:00 PM) so I'll not say much here. I will say that the very word "holiday" shows the connection between our secular and church calendar. The word "holiday" is a shortening of "holy day."

As we enter the festival half of the Church Year, may the Lord of time grant you joy and peace in Christ Jesus.

Pastor

## Digging In The Nicene Creed First Article, Part 6

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*



We now turn our thoughts to the Creed's confession of the Father as the "maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." For a sharp student of the Bible, this might be surprising. After all, in speaking of our Lord Jesus, John 1:3 reads: "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." This thought is echoed in passages like Colossians 1:16 "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him." That same sharp student of Scripture might recall Genesis 1:2, where we read, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." This passage clearly places the Spirit as part of the creation process. This is echoed in a passage like Psalm 33:6: "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host." All one has to do is remember the word "breath" and "spirit" are the same word in Hebrew.

The Nicene Fathers were not unaware of this. Augustine wrote "The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one beginning with respect to the created order, for they are but one Creator and one God." This Trinitarian approach to creation is actually revealed in the Psalm 33:6 passage quoted above for the Father is



speaking, the "word of the LORD" is a reference to Jesus (as revealed in John's Gospel prologue), and the "breath" of his mouth is referencing the Holy Spirit. But the Father is identified as the Creator in the Creed because he is the source of all things. So the Son is "begotten" of the Father and the Spirit "proceeds" from the Father and the Son. This "begetting" and "proceeding" DOES NOT mean there was a time when the Son and/or the Spirit didn't exist, that they had a beginning point in time, or that there was a time when the Father existed by himself, alone. The "begetting" and "proceeding" are from all eternity. There never was a time when the eternal Son and the eternal Spirit did not exist. Think about it. "Father" is a relationship

word. One cannot be a "Father" unless one has a child, in this case, the "Son." Therefore, for the Father to be eternally the Father, the Son must also have been from all eternity. One could also point out that God is unchanging: "For I the LORD do not change" (Malachi 3:6). Therefore, he must be eternally Father, Son, and Spirit. To be "only" God one minute, then "Father and Son" the next minute, and finally "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" after that, would mean that God was changing in a most profound way.

The words "begotten" and "proceeding" describe the relationship within the Trinity. As I said, the Father is the source, which is why there is no similar word used for Him. On the other hand, the words "Father" and "Son" are also relationship words. So the Trinity is revealed to us as an eternal and unfathomable relationship.

Within this relationship none is "before" the other, none is more "God" than the other, none is more "eternal" than the other, etc. Therefore, when we speak of the Father as "Creator" it in NO WAY denies the Son or the Spirit as Creator. They are Three Divine Persons in One Divine Essence. Again this is a mystery. We may pierce it a bit, thanks to Divine revelation, but ultimately it is beyond human understanding.

In the Creed we confess God as the "maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." In other words, he is the source, the origin, the shaper, of all things. There are lots of questions this confession does not address. How did God create all things? When did God create all things? For what purpose did God create all things? We will, of course, tend to freight this confession with how we personally answer such questions. So, for example, if you are a fan of Bishop James Ussher's (1581-1656) chronology, then you would date the "when" to 4004 BC. Most today find flaws in Ussher's methodology and believe the earth is older than Ussher's date suggests. The point I'm making here is that the Creed does not say "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, who in 4004 BC was the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." You may be part of the minority group of Christians throughout the ages that hold to Ussher's date. You may do so and still confess "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." On the other hand, if you believe the creation is older or younger than Ussher suggests, you can still confess the first article with firm conviction. One thing is sure; the Nicene Fathers did not instruct us to hold to Ussher's chronology. This chronology didn't come about for a thousand years.

We will continue with our consideration of God as Creator next month. Until then, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.



**LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES** Excerpts of Sermon by Klaus From LHM:  
*Psalm 107:1 - Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!*

No question -- Thanksgiving Day, at least in America, everybody ought to be thanking God. They ought to be, but many won't. Why?

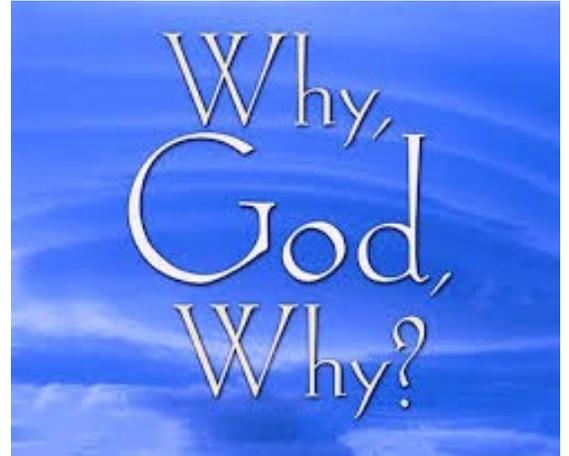
It's not that we don't know how to give thanks. When we were young, we were taught to say, "thank you" for all the gifts we received, even the ones we didn't like. You remember, mom would say, "Honey, don't forget to thank auntie for your monogrammed knee socks." And if you hesitated, she gave you the look which said, "Say thank you, or you're going to have a time-out that is going to take you into your Social Security years."

No, we all teach our children to give thanks.

So, what is the problem this Thanksgiving Day? Why do people hesitate? Let's look at our verse again: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good." Maybe that's the problem. Maybe we don't believe the Lord is good. I mean, listen to the crowds after a calamity. "Why, God? Why?" is what you will hear. Do people believe the Lord is good? Many do not. Most prefer to blame Him for every problem and pain, every disappointment, distress, dissatisfaction, disenchantment, and disaster.

They may not have changed the oil in their car for 20,000 miles, but when their engine blows up, it's "Why God? Why?" Time and again, God gets the blame. He's the fall guy; the divine scapegoat.

If you, this Thanksgiving Day, feel that God is gunning for you, then I'm here to say you are wrong. You can give thanks to the Lord, because the Lord is good. He is very good. It's part of His make-up. God couldn't be bad if you paid Him.



The problem is God is good, but we sinners aren't always able to see it.

Let me ask those of you who drive a car: how many times have you had a close call? Did you congratulate yourself for your cat-like reflexes, for your brilliance under pressure, or did you thank the Lord who is good?

O give  
*thanks*  
unto the LORD, for he is good;  
*for his mercy endures forever.*  
Pslam 107:1 (KJV)

Those of you who have been healthy this year, were you glad your parents gave you such healthy genes? Did you congratulate yourself on the fact that you keep yourself in grand shape? Did you think of yourself a superman, or superwoman, who was stronger than all the viruses, bacteria, and other creepy crawlies? Or did you give thanks unto the Lord who is good?

Those of you who haven't been healthy, did you thank God because things weren't worse, or because things aren't always this way?

Do you want me to go on? I can. Those of you who will be eating turkey leftovers a week from now, will you thank God for the leftovers? Or will you be complaining at having turkey one more time? O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good.

And if you're still not sure about His goodness, look to the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb.

THE PRAYER: Dear Lord, I wonder how many times a day You hear people on earth suggest they could do a

better job of running the world than You do. Forgive us. Let us realize that all good gifts we have come from You, including the best gift of all, our Savior, in whose Name we pray. Amen.

In Christ I remain His servant and yours,

Rev Ken Klaus  
Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

### THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW



#### **November Concludes Pentecost:**

And includes All Saints Day, when we remember those who have been called home by the Lord and it includes Thanksgiving Day. Putting these two holidays together may be a reminder that our life and faith are critical for where we are destined to go.

The first Sunday in November opens on All Saints Sunday and reminds us of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount and the

Beatitudes. *"Blessed are the ..."* These are familiar words.

November continues the study of Mark for the Gospel lessons. These lessons show us the power of the Lord by the many miracles He performed and His harsh words for the scribes in their self-promotion and hypocrisy.

In Mark 13 we have what is called the Olivet Discourse, which is the Lord's warning about the coming end of time and the activities that will occur at that time.

Jesus says that; *"And the Gospel must first be preached to all the nations."*

The Thanksgiving lesson is from Luke 17 where Jesus heals ten lepers and only one comes to thank and worship Him. A fitting reminder that we should daily thank the Lord for all the blessings we receive at His hand.

*Take advantage of the worship services in November to refresh your faith and further your understanding of the Lord's message to each one of us.*

Arlen D. Besel – Worship

### **Neighborhood Garden Dedication & Groundbreaking November 4th!**

We are so excited! Invitations have been sent to our neighbors, city and state representatives, and more! Please stay after worship on All Saints' Sunday (11/4) to help us partnership and celebrate with our neighbors and community as we work together on this garden.

What a great opportunity we have here to connect with our neighborhood and create opportunities to show them the love of God in Christ Jesus. Who knows were this might lead—maybe more children in Sunday School; maybe more people won to faith and eternal



life; maybe a happier, friendlier neighborhood; maybe we have no clue what great things God has in store for us as we are faithful witnesses of His in this place!

We have the two people from the neighborhood on our steering committee; we still need two people from the congregation to help us make this happen—be one of those people! Let me know that you will help us grow together with our neighbors with this garden.

Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair



### **Build-A-Bag (BAB) Begins Again**

Bonnie says "Thank You" to everyone who helped with sleeping bags in October! Please continue to work in this ongoing ministry—Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm; bring a lunch. & a friend!



### **Bulletin & Newsletter Information Dates**

Please have all information for the bulletin into the office no later than Tuesday of each week. Newsletter info is due no later than the 20th of each month to ensure its inclusion. Thanks!

### **All Saints' Sunday**

There is a signup sheet posted in the narthex for names of loved ones to be remembered during the service; please print clearly.

### **Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service**

All are invited to our Thanksgiving Eve Worship Service on Wednesday, Nov 21st, at 7 pm. Bring a friend!



*Happy  
Birthday*

### **November Birthdays**

3 Dennis Boon  
17 Mitzi Steltz

## November Bible Readings

1	Exodus 15:1-18 Hosea 8-10	16	Psalm 136 Malachi
2	Psalm 122 Hosea 11-14	17	Psalm 137 Matthew 1-2
3	Psalm 123 Joel	18	Psalm 138 Matthew 3-4
4	Psalm 124 Amos 1-5	19	Psalm 139 Matthew 5-6
5	Psalm 125 Amos 6-9	20	Psalm 140 Matthew 7-8
6	Psalm 126 Obadiah, Jonah	21	Psalm 141 Matthew 9-10
7	Psalm 127 Micah 1-3	22	Psalm 142 Matthew 11-12
8	Psalm 128 Micah 4-7	23	Psalm 143 Matthew 13-14
9	Psalm 129 Nahum	24	Psalm 144 Matthew 15-16
10	Psalm 130 Habakkuk	25	Psalm 145 Matthew 17-18
11	Psalm 131 Zephaniah	26	Psalm 146 Matthew 19-20
12	Psalm 132 Haggai	27	Psalm 147 Matthew 21-22
13	Psalm 133 Zechariah 1-5	28	Psalm 148 Matthew 23-24
14	Psalm 134 Zechariah 6-10	29	Psalm 149-150 Matthew 25-26
15	Psalm 135 Zechariah 11-14	30	Exodus 15:1-18 Matthew 27-28

