



## *Thanksgiving Eve Service*

2023

*St. John's Lutheran Church*

**St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)**

**8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254**

**309-949-2516**

**November 22, 2022**

**Day of Thanksgiving  
(Thanksgiving Eve)**

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*Responsive Prayer 2 (Lutheran Service Book, p. 285)*

**Hymn of Invocation 892 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come**

**Opening Versicles (Common, p. 285)**

**Psalm 67**

<sup>1</sup>May God be gracious to us and bless us  
and make his face to shine upon us,

<sup>2</sup>**that your way may be known on earth,  
your saving power among all nations.**

<sup>3</sup>Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!

<sup>4</sup>**Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,  
for you judge the peoples with equity  
and guide the nations upon earth.**

<sup>5</sup>Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
let all the peoples praise you!

<sup>6</sup>**The earth has yielded its increase;  
God, our God, shall bless us.**

<sup>7</sup>God shall bless us;  
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Readings (on back of bulletin)**

**Office Hymn 894 For the Fruits of His Creation**

**Sermon**

**Catechism: The Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

*What does this mean?*

**God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our pray-  
ers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that**

**God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.**

*What is meant by daily bread?*

**Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.**

**Presentation of the Offering**

**Kyrie (p. 285)**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Apostles' Creed (p. 286)**

**Versicles**

**Collect of the Day**

- P** Let us pray.  
Almighty God, Your mercies are new every morning and You graciously provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your goodness, give thanks for Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience all our days; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- G** Amen.

**Prayer of the Church**

*After each petition:*

- P** Lord, in Your mercy,  
**G** hear our prayer.

*The prayers conclude:*

- P** ...one God, now and forever.  
**G** Amen.

**Evening Prayer (p. 287)**

**Prayer Before Travel**

**Benedicamus and Blessing**

**Closing Hymn 895 Now Thank We All Our God**

*Silent Prayer*

**Old Testament Reading: Deuteronomy 8:1–10**

<sup>1</sup>“The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. <sup>2</sup>And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. <sup>3</sup>And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>4</sup>Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. <sup>5</sup>Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you. <sup>6</sup>So you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. <sup>7</sup>For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, <sup>8</sup>a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, <sup>9</sup>a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. <sup>10</sup>And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.”

**Epistle: Philippians 4:6–20**

<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup>Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup>What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice

these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

<sup>10</sup>I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup>Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup>I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup>I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup>Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup>And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup>Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup>Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup>I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. <sup>19</sup>And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup>To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Holy Gospel: Luke 17:11–19**

<sup>11</sup>On the way to Jerusalem [Jesus] was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup>And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance <sup>13</sup>and lifted up their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” <sup>14</sup>When he saw them he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup>Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; <sup>16</sup>and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup>Then Jesus answered, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? <sup>18</sup>Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup>And he said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

Day of Thanksgiving (Thanksgiving Eve)

November 22, 2023

Texts: Deuteronomy 8:1-10 (Old Testament Reading); Philippians 4:6-20 (Epistle);

Luke 17:11-19 (Gospel Reading)

### **“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come!”**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

The combining of God’s Word with the believer’s response of faith to music is at least as old as the psalms, one of which, Psalm 90, goes back to the time of Moses around 1400 BC! Of course, the psalms are exceptional in the sense that they are God’s inspired Word. But despite that, or perhaps, *because of that*, they have been an example and guide to believers, especially after the Savior’s incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. For the Holy Spirit’s coming on that first Pentecost not only led to the inspiration of the New Testament which, with the Old Testament, is His foundational gift to the Church,<sup>i</sup> but He has also raised up many gifted writers who have taken His teachings in Holy Scripture and put them to music. And what a blessing this is since hymns help believers both to learn and remember these God’s Word and teachings even as they give to us the opportunity to offer our prayer and praise *at the same time*.

One example of this is a hymn which we sang this evening, “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come.”<sup>ii</sup> It was written by Henry Alford, an Anglican priest and theologian, and first appeared in his hymnal, *Psalms and Hymns*, published in 1844. Interestingly, he wanted to provide this hymnal to his church because of the need for hymns that had a stronger doctrinal content as an increasing number of the songs being used were too based upon emotional. In addition, the general sentiments expressed were regularly at variance with the baptismal state of a Christian, reflecting the errors that were prevalent in general Protestantism, a situation which we confessional Lutherans can well relate to in our own time with the doctrinal weaknesses and outright errors present in much of popular contemporary worship music.

So being a churchman, Alford’s hymnal was dedicated to providing solid teaching hymns for every Sunday of the liturgical year and for lesser festivals as well. And his hymn, “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come,” fell under the lesser festival of “After Harvest,” as it still does in our current hymnal being in the “Harvest and Thanksgiving” section. And what a solid hymn it is!

In the days when harvest festivals were generally frowned upon in England due to latent pagan aspects, Alford’s text proves that such erring and false influences need not be present. Truly, he provides a good example of “Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater!” Using agricultural language, this harvest hymn weaves in rich biblical imagery throughout.

Using the term “harvest home,” which can mean the gathering in of the final part of the year’s harvest as well as a festival marking the end of the harvest period, the first verse of the hymn expresses thankfulness to God for His provision for our earthly lives as we sing “Come, ye thankful people, come; Raise the song of harvest home...God, our maker, doth provide For our wants to be supplied.”<sup>iii</sup> This verse alone beautifully alludes to Holy Scripture reminding us of such texts as our dear Lord’s promise, “Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor

gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"<sup>iv</sup> And again, the psalm which states, "Those who seek the LORD lack no good thing."<sup>v</sup>

So singing this hymn tonight, we are reminded of the doctrine of God's providential care, His providing us with our daily bread which, as we confessed includes not just food and drink, but everything that has to do with the support and needs of our body. And more, singing this hymn tonight provided us with the opportunity to thank God for that very care which not only has supplied us everything we need, but His incredible generosity which has given us so much of what we want as well. Certainly singing this hymn is not merely in line with, but is a means of doing what St. Paul wrote in the epistle, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."<sup>vi</sup>

But even as we rightly give thanks to our God and Father for His many gifts to us on this Festival of Thanksgiving, the hymn keep us from simply giving thanks for our earthly blessings and stopping there. As a hymn containing rich and powerful doctrine, it takes us into an even greater reality, "All the world is God's own field, Fruit unto His praise to yield; Wheat and tares together sown, Unto joy or sorrow grown."<sup>vii</sup>

Following Jesus, the hymn uses the agricultural symbolism in the Lord's parables of both the Sower and the Weeds to express the reality that the world is God's field on which only two types of plants grow.<sup>viii</sup> There is the wheat, Christians who, saved by God's grace, forgiven through faith in the crucified and risen Jesus who paid for all their sins, now enjoy the blessed indwelling of God the Holy Spirit and so then bear the fruit of turning from sin, growing in good works and a holy life, witnessing of Christ Jesus in words and deeds, and in faith patiently enduring trials, suffering, and bearing the cross all to God's glory and the benefit of others. And then there are the tares, the weeds, unbelievers who, though also being under Christ's redemption reject it and Him, resisting God's call to repent, clinging to their sins and self-righteousness.

For the Lord, our God, shall come And shall take His harvest home, From His field shall in that day All offenses purge away, Give His angels charge at last In the fire the tares to cast, But the fruitful ears to store In His garner evermore.<sup>ix</sup>

It is an event of Divine Providence that our nation celebrates Thanksgiving in November which is very near the end of the church year calendar. For while we rightly celebrate God's gifts granted to us through this creation, the Festival of Thanksgiving, this hymn also reminds us that this creation shall end, an end this rapidly approaching, and all people shall be judged.

Dear Christians, to enjoy God's blessings and receive them with thankful hearts is both appropriate and right for us, His children. But as we say in the Communion liturgy, it is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to God especially for His spiritual and eternal blessings. For on the Last Day, only the faithful wheat, believers who spurned sin and endured suffering for Christ's sake, will survive when this world with all its offensive filth and evil is burned in the flames of God's wrath and the holy angels cast the unbelieving tares into eternal, unquenchable fire.

So brothers and sisters in Christ, let us be thankful unto God for His gifts of creation tonight, tomorrow at our tables as we gather with our family and truly, every day of our lives on this earth, offering to Him our thanks and praise. But let us never forget that our earthly lives are fleeting and this world is doomed to end, not by our hands, but by the almighty hands of He who first made it and the entire cosmos. Let us remember that in fear of His wrath, which we as sinners rightly deserve. But even more, let us remember that with thankful hearts for the salvation that we do not deserve which is freely given to us!

For God has done more than give us daily bread, for He has given us the Bread of Life, His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ who has taken the leprosy of our sins upon Himself that we might not die, but live with Him forever. Live not only in soul, but in a glorious resurrected body in the new creation where we shall be “free from sorrow, free from sin, There forever purified, In Thy garner to abide.”<sup>x</sup>

Until then, let us never forget all the blessings of body and soul we receive from our Heavenly Father’s hand and in faith dutifully and gladly respond by thanking, praising, serving, and obeying Him. And let us continually pray, “Even so, Lord, quickly come To Thy final harvest home; Gather Thou Thy People in... Come with all Thine angels, come, Raise the glorious harvest home.”<sup>xi</sup> Amen!

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<sup>i</sup> See Ephesians 2:20 where the Scriptures (the apostles and prophets) is the foundation of the Church.

<sup>ii</sup> *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB), 892.

<sup>iii</sup> LSB 892:1.

<sup>iv</sup> Matthew 6:25-26.

<sup>v</sup> Psalm 34:10. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.

<sup>vi</sup> Philippians 4:6.

<sup>vii</sup> LSB 892:2.

<sup>viii</sup> Matthew 13:1-9, 18-30, 36-43.

<sup>ix</sup> LSB 892:3.

<sup>x</sup> LSB 892:4.

<sup>xi</sup> LSB 892:4.

**Day of Thanksgiving**  
**23 November 2023**

**Presentation of the Offering**

The wealth of earth, of sky, of sea,/ the gold, the silver, sparkling gem/ the waving corn, the bending tree,/ Are Yours; to us You lend them.

And now on this festival day,/ Your bounteous hand confessing,/ Upon Your altar, Lord, we lay,/ The firstfruits of Your blessing.

By You the souls of men are fed/ With gifts of grace supernal;/ You freely give us earthly bread;/ Give us the Bread eternal. Amen.

**Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Gracious God, You give life to the seed, rain to the plant and fruit to the harvest. Receive our thanks for the rich bounty the earth has provided and for the daily bread that supplies all we need for this body and life. Teach us to be generous with Your gifts, willingly sharing with those in need. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, our God, since we do not live by bread alone but by every Word that comes out of Your mouth, bless those who proclaim Your Word, that we may hear it and live. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, be gracious to husbands and wives, parents and children. Bless them and make Your face shine upon them, that they may know Your saving power and make Your truth known on the earth to the coming generation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, bless Joseph and all who hold high positions among us, that we may lead peaceful and quiet lives, godly and dignified in every way. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Father, guard in Christ Jesus the hearts and minds of all who suffer in our midst. Grant them health in accord with Your perfect will, and give them Your peace that surpasses all understanding. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give You thanks, O God, for the saints who have gone before us, in whose lives Your great faithfulness is shown. Grant us faith like theirs, which trusts in Your enduring Word, that we also may be found faithful by the next generation of believers. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, teach us the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need, helping us to do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Hear us, heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Collect of the Day**

Almighty God, Your mercies are new every morning and You graciously provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may acknowledge Your goodness, give thanks for Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience all our days; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.