

Happenings at Hope

Fall Edition

Volume 1, Number 1



From the Pastor's Desk

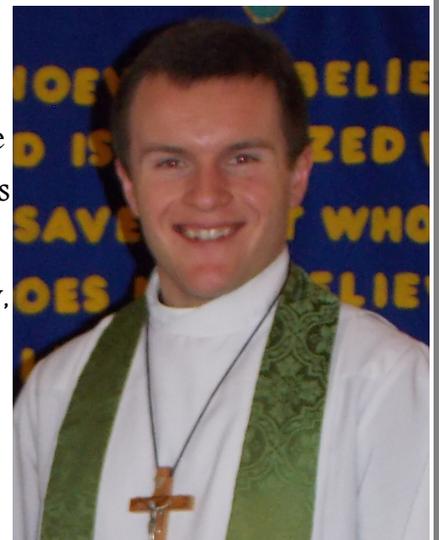
Greetings in the name of our ascended Lord. What you have in front of you is the first issue of the newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church. After you're done reading it, store it away. Put it in a vault. If a first edition comic book can fetch hundreds of dollars, who knows how valuable this will be some day.

Alas, I jest. I do not anticipate that this publication will ever be able to fetch great sums of money at auction. But, this newsletter will serve its purpose in "getting the word out" to the members and friends of Hope Lutheran Church. This "word" may simply be announcing upcoming events or sharing information about attendance and giving. Or, this "word," may be more substantial, taking the form of articles having to do with current events, upcoming holidays, what we believe, or how we worship. In this issue, for example, you will find an article on the liturgy (there will be one every issue) and also on the historical and present religious significance of Thanksgiving. But, above all else, the purpose of this newsletter will be to get the "Word" out. You may have noticed that the "W" became uppercase. That was because I am now

referring to the Word of God. Just as we capitalize "God," out of respect for God, so also we capitalize "Word" when referring to the saving truth of God's Word. This Word is what we need the most. As Jesus said to Mary and Martha in the 10th chapter of Luke's Gospel, it is the "one thing needful."

God's Word doesn't just apply to Sunday. Just as God "fills all and is in all," (Ephesians 1:23) so also His Word matters for us every day of our lives. We live in a sin-filled world, with its temptations, which means that we always need the strengthening and guidance which God gives us in his Word. And, because we live our lives surrounded by people who do not truly know God and His love through Christ, we always need

God's Word on the front of our minds and on the tip of our tongues so that, as we have opportunity, we can share the hope we have in Christ who don't
(cont. p. 5)



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the † Holy Spirit.

It is an entirely normal thing that we begin our services in the name of the Triune God. But, even though this is something we do every week (or at least every week that we are using rite II), we should never consider our invoking God's name to be mundane, or something to be taken for granted.

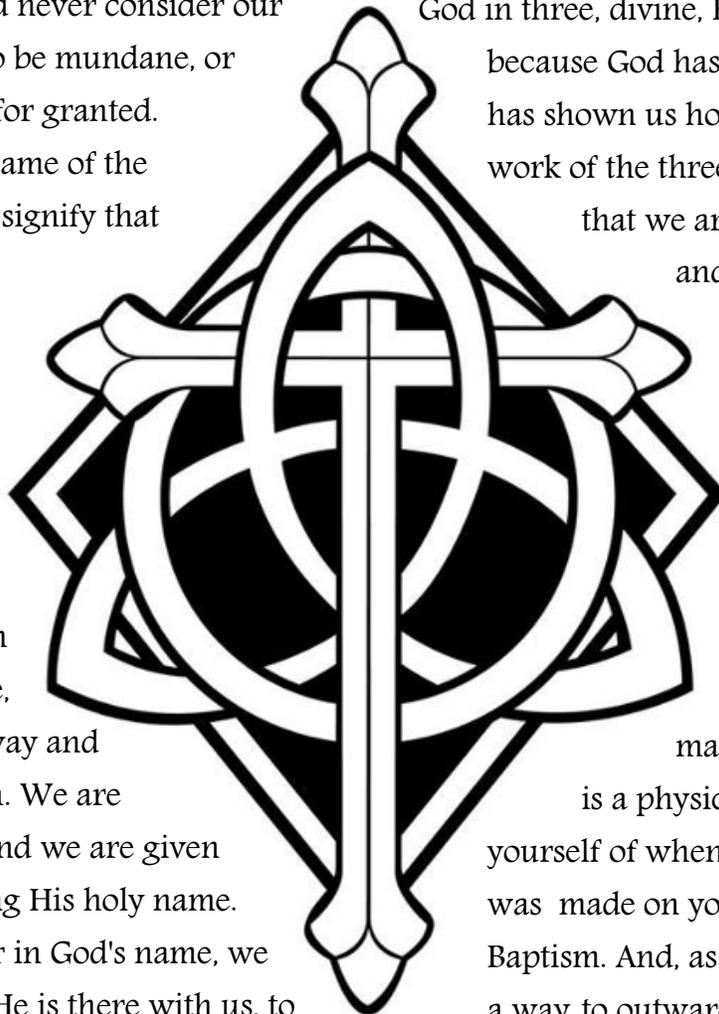
We invoke the name of the Triune God in order to signify that our worship of God is exclusively Christian.

We also do so in remembrance of our Baptisms, which were done in same name of the same God. Due to our having been Baptized in God's name, our sins are washed away and we are brought to Faith. We are made God's children, and we are given the privilege of invoking His holy name.

When we gather in God's name, we have His promise that He is there with us, to bless us and our worship of Him. We read this in Matthew 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them," and also in Deuteronomy 12:5, "The Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there."

Our invoking the name of the Triune

God is also a clear confession of our faith in God as He has revealed Himself to us. Not everyone who claims to believe in the God of the Bible, or in Jesus, believes that God is one God in three, divine, Persons. But we do, because God has both taught us this and has shown us how it is by the combined work of the three persons of the trinity that we are created, redeemed, and sanctified.



It is common practice to make the sign of the cross when we hear or invoke the name of the Triune God. This practice, while certainly not mandatory, is beneficial. It is a physical way of reminding yourself of when the sign of the cross was made on your forehead at your Baptism. And, as you do so in public, it is a way to outwardly confess your faith in the one, true, Triune God.

(This is the first in a series of articles on the different parts of the liturgy. The next issue will feature an article on the history and significance of Christian hymns)



IS THANKSGIVING A RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY?

Thanksgiving hasn't always been an official holiday in this country. It has always been observed by some people in certain parts of the country, but it wasn't an official holiday until it was designated as one by president Lincoln in 1863. And, even as an official national holiday, there is still some question as to what Thanksgiving signifies.

When the Pilgrims and the natives gathered for a joint feast in Plymouth in 1621, they came together because they were thankful. But, they were not thankful for the same thing. The natives, we would suppose, were celebrating the fact that the harvest had been good, and that there was peace and good relations between them and the Pilgrims.

The Pilgrims were thankful for the harvest too, but specifically in the sense that they, as Christians, knew that the harvest had been good because God had made it good. They were also celebrating the fact that God had preserved their lives. Yes, they were feasting now, but a year before about half their number had died from disease. So, in giving thanks as they did, even with their unbelieving neighbors, the Pilgrims were thanking God for both times of plenty and times of lacking.

Let's fast forward to today. There are so many things about Thanksgiving, and the

weekend that follows it, that have nothing at all to do with the Christian faith. But, just because some people feel compelled to go right from dinner to their local Best Buy to stand in line all night doesn't mean that we all have to. Thanksgiving, for us, is still about God, and thanking Him for all that he gives us to support our bodies and lives.

It really comes down to the 4th petition of the Lord's Prayer; "Give us this day our daily bread." As Luther explains it in the Small Catechism; "[Daily Bread is] Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like."

So as we join with our family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving this year, remember that to you, it is a religious holiday. Without God we would have nothing for which to be thankful, now or ever. But through faith in Christ, we have been given every reason to be thankful to God for all the ways in which he blesses us in body and soul now, and for all the ways in which we know we will be blessed in the life to come. The Pilgrims knew this when they gave thanks in 1621 and, by the grace of God, so do we as we give thanks 393 years later. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever."

GOOD NEWS OF JESUS

*"Superior, they said, never gives up her dead.
When the gales of November come early."*

And so goes the story of *"The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."* This is probably the most recognized ship disaster of the Great Lakes, due in large part to Gordon Lightfoot's 1975 ballad of the same name. Thirty-nine years ago, the *Edmund Fitzgerald*—with a crew of 29—sank into the freezing waters of Lake Superior.

Sadly, life is filled with tragedies, despite the fact that God never intended for disasters of any kind to be a part of His creation. God originally gave mankind a perfect world, body, and soul. But with Adam's disobedience long ago in Eden's Garden came the destruction of His perfect paradise: the influx of sin, a sinful nature, and death that infects the hearts of every human being. Sin brings trouble and death to all of us, (*"... the whole world is a prisoner of sin."*-Gal. 3:22) and left to ourselves, there is no escape. Like the doomed crew of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, we too would be lost forever if God had not given us His Word of Law and Gospel.

The Law crushes us by exposing our utter sinfulness and need for a Savior, but the Gospel

provides the **Life-Preserver** that rescues us from the deadly waters of our sin. It reveals the Good News that God has forgiven all our sins, through the perfect life, innocent death, and victorious resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.

As the Gospel assures us, (*"...that whoever believes in [Jesus] shall not perish, but have everlasting life."*-John 3:16) all who believe in

Jesus receive forgiveness, new life, and the certainty of life everlasting in God's heaven. Such Good News fills us with heartfelt thankfulness and becomes the motivation for our Christian living, and telling others the Good News of Jesus!

Good News!

This article was produced by the board for home outreach home outreach of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod



Continued from page 1 . . .yet have that hope. We have God's Word, but we're not the only ones who need it and what God gives to us through it.

This newsletter is a new publication, and there may be things about it that change and are added over time. If you have any suggestions for how this publication can be improved, or if you are willing to help improve it, please do not hesitate to speak up. God bless and keep you all this Fall season.

-Pastor Paul Webber

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Upcoming Events

◆ November

- 26th, Thanksgiving-Eve Service, 6:30pm
- 30th, Youth-group game night, 7-9pm

◆ December

- 3rd, 10th, 17th, Midweek Advent Service, 6:30pm
- 12th, Youth-group Activity, evening (more information coming)
- 20th, Utah County Bible Study at Provo Library
- 24th, Christmas-Eve Service, 6:30pm
- 25th, Christmas Day Service, 10:00am
- 31st, New Years-Eve Service, 6:30pm

