

Shepherd of the Mountains

Lutheran Church (LC-MS)

2035 S. Penrod Lane Pinetop, AZ 85935
(928) 367-1183 e-mail: shepherdpt@frontiernet.net
www.shepherdofthemountains.com

Ministers: Each and Every Member

Pastor: R. Wayne Morton

The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost

celebrating

All Saints' Sunday

November 5, 2017

Welcome

In the name of Jesus Christ, we warmly welcome you to God's house this morning. Especially if you are visiting, we pray that you will feel at home with us and discover God's blessing in this service.

The Distribution of the Lord's Supper

Following Holy Scripture, which speaks of the blessing of forgiveness (and therefore life and salvation) for those who discern the reality of Christ's bodily presence in the Supper (Mt. 26:28, e.g.), but warns of harm and judgment for those who don't (1 Cor. 11:27-30, e.g.), we urge all those baptized and catechized individuals (youth and adults) who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sin;
believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;
affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread & wine;
and desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.

If you have not previously communed here at Shepherd of the Mountains, please first introduce yourself to our Pastor, in order that all those who will commune together today - who will share the one bread and the one cup - may be assured that we share as well the same confession and understanding.

(Young) children who are not yet capable of such self-examination are nevertheless invited to come forward - not to receive the body and blood of our Savior, but rather, the blessing of our gracious God.

As We Gather

Life in this world has often been described as a "valley of tears." You've been there, haven't you? You shed tears when your body hurts due to an injury or when your heart hurts due to the death of one you love. You weep when you feel lonely or when your heart breaks out of sympathy for a friend. Life is filled with tears.

In His compassion for you, Jesus enters this "valley of tears" through His life, suffering, and death so that He may eternally embrace you. And, because He is risen from the dead, Jesus promises to wipe away every tear from your eyes, enabling you to share in His resurrection victory.

Today, as you celebrate those saints who have died in the faith, you may find yourself shedding tears, but you can do so with confidence that your risen and reigning Savior lives to wipe away the tears of all who trust in Him!

One of the Roman church practices that the Reformers objected to was "the cult of the saints" (*Augsburg Confession, Article XXI*). Their objection wasn't about simply remembering the saints; it was over the church teaching its members "to call on the saints or to ask the saints for help" (*Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, Concordia Publishing House, 2005, p. 70*).

In contrast, the churches of the Reformation "teach that the history of saints may be set before us so that we may follow the example of their faith and good works, according to our calling" (*The Augsburg Confession, Article XXI*). The New Testament uses the word "saints" in a different way. Six of St. Paul's letters are addressed to the *saints* who live in various cities of the Roman Empire. These letters reveal both virtue and sinfulness in these congregations. To the apostle, the word *saint* was a synonym for Christian, as, through water and the Word, each one of us was made a part of God's holy family at Baptism.

Many of our congregations have combined these two ideas in recent years, reading the names of those who have died to this life and been born to eternal life in the past twelve months, and thanking our God for the testimony of their lives. Today's service includes this commemoration.

As we think on the blessed state that saints from times long past as well as saints from more recent times now enjoy in the eternal presence of God in His heavenly kingdom, we rejoice that we, too, are among the blessed as we live out our daily lives as the baptized children of God in this time and place. By God's grace, we, too, are numbered with the saints!

(10:25 a.m.) **The Ringing of the Bell**

The Welcome

(The pastor may invite the saints to God's house by using the following greeting:

"The Lord be with you." **"And also with you."**)

The Entrance Hymn: #670 "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones"

(* In honor of our Triune God, we stand to sing the final Trinitarian verse, and remain standing for the confession of our sin.)

* (stand) The Invocation and Opening Versicles

Pastor: In the name of the Father,

People: who created us.

Pastor: In the name of the (+) Son,

People: who redeemed us.

Pastor: In the name of the Holy Spirit,

People: who sanctifies and keeps us in the one true faith. Amen.

Pastor: For all the saints who from their labors rest,

People: Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,

Pastor: Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.

People: Alleluia! Alleluia!

* (stand) The Confession and Absolution of Our Sin

Pastor: We are made saints by the blood of Jesus. We acknowledge, however, that we remain sinners in thought, word, and deed. Let us then confess our sins with the saints around us and before our forgiving God.

We take a moment of silence to reflect on our sins and our need for the Savior. (Silent reflection) Let us confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Holy God, You have called us to obey You in all things and to live according to Your commands. We have failed to be obedient, even though You have set us apart to be holy. We have been sinful in our thoughts, words, and actions. We confess our faults and seek Your cleansing forgiveness.

Pastor: Saints of God, know that even as you confess your sins, you are forgiven by our God, the Holy One who has called you to be holy. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, and in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I therefore now publicly forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Kyrie (the prayer for God's mercy.)

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

People: Amen.

* (stand) The Hymn of Praise (LSB, p. 155, "THIS IS THE FEAST")

* (stand) The Prayer of the Day

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, You knit together Your faithful people of all times and places into one holy communion, the mystical Body of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us the grace to live as those who have been made holy by the blood of the Lamb, that we may come to the unspeakable joys of heaven, where every tear shall be wiped away; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

The First Lesson: Revelation 7:9-17

(The white-robed multitude of saints worship before the throne of God.)

Rev 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. Rev 7:10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

^{Rev 7:11} All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ^{Rev 7:12} saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

^{Rev 7:13} Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?”

^{Rev 7:14} I answered, “Sir, you know.”

And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

^{Rev 7:15} Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. ^{Rev 7:16}

Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. ^{Rev 7:17} For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The Gradual (Rev. 7:14, Psalm 84:5)

Pastor: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

People: They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Pastor: Blessed are those whose strength is in You,

People: in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

The Second Lesson: 1 John 3:1-3

(The purified saints are God’s beloved children.)

^{1Jn 3:1} How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ^{1Jn 3:2} Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ^{1Jn 3:3} Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Reader: This is the word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God.

* (stand) **The Verse** (*Hebrews 12:1a, 2a*)

Pastor: Alleluia. Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,

People: let us look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. Alleluia.

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the fifth chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

* (stand) **The Holy Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12**

(*The saints of the Lord are already blessed!*)

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

The Hymn of the Day: #677 “For All the Saints” (vs. 1-8*)

(* In honor of our Triune God, we stand to sing the final Trinitarian verse, and remain standing for the announcement of the sermon text.)

The Sermon

* (stand) We Believe, Teach and Confess:

The Third Article of the Apostles Creed (LSB p. 323)

(Pastor: *What is the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed?*)

(People: **I believe in the Holy Spirit,**)

(Pastor: *What does this mean?*)

(People: **I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength**)

* (stand) The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed

Pastor: *“I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth.’ ‘Blessed indeed,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them’” (Rev. 14:13). Let us remember with thanksgiving those who have gone before us with the sign of faith, for they were created by God to offer Him praise and thanksgiving forever, and He gave them new life through His Son in Holy Baptism, and nourished them in the company of His people at His holy table, and in His mercy has summoned them to His nearer presence so that they may continue in joyful service of Him forever.*

(While the bell quietly tolls, worshipers are invited to lift aloud the names of those who this past “year” - since last All Saints’ Day - met their Lord and God face to face.)

Pastor: *Almighty God, we remember with thanksgiving those who loved and served You in Your Church on earth and who now rest from their labors. Keep us in fellowship with all Your saints, and bring us at last to the joy of Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever*

People: **Amen.**

* (stand) A Reading from the Book of Hebrews: 12:1-3

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

The Hymn: “For All Your Saints, O Lord”

(Tune: LSB # 649, Bolyston, “Blest Be the Tie that Binds”)

**For all your saints, O Lord, Who strove in you to live
Who followed you, obeyed, adored, Our grateful hymn we give.**

**For all your saints, O Lord, Who strove in you to die,
Who counted you their great reward, Accept our thankful cry.**

**They all in life and death, With you, their Lord in view,
Learned from your Holy Spirit’s breath To suffer and to do.**

**For this your name we bless, And humbly pray anew
That we like them in holiness May live and die in you.**

The Offering

(If you have not already done so, please register your attendance with the Friendship Form at this time and pass it down and back your pew.)

(After the ushers have left the altar area, our young children are invited to bring the food offerings from the narthex (entrance) to the basket at the altar.)

* (stand) The Offertory Song (LSB #805)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

* (stand) **The Responsive Prayer**

Pastor: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. (Hebrews 12:1a, 2a)

For the gift of God's peace to rest upon all His saints, that we may know the blessing of His forgiveness in the cross and resurrection of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Holy Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the holy Christian Church, which is the communion of saints, that the saving Gospel of Christ may be proclaimed both here and throughout the world, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Holy Lord, send forth Your saving Word.

Pastor: For all who are your saints today and those will be your saints tomorrow, that the lives of faithfulness and witness of those saints who have gone before us continue to shape our own in service to Your kingdom,

Pastor: Holy Lord, may we daily die to sin and rise to newness of life.

Pastor: For our native land, our local community, and for all who lead and govern us, that the saints of God may lead peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Holy Lord, grant Your favor to our land.

Pastor: For all those who are in need, for those who hunger both physically and spiritually, and for all those who feel lost and are without a home, that they may come to the Father's house of mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Holy Lord, guide us unto You.

Pastor: For those who are sick, hospitalized, and homebound, for those who are recovering from surgery and for those who await procedures in the coming days, that they may be consoled by the faithful care of the Great Physician, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Holy Lord, give healing and strength to all who are in need.

Pastor: For the pastors and parish professionals of the English District who serve your people in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Tucson and Phoenix, following their study and refreshment together one week ago in San Francisco.

(Here special intercessions may be made. Each petition concludes:
Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.)

Pastor: For these and all other concerns we have, that coming before our faithful Father, we may take refuge in His never-failing care for all His saints. Grant us, Father in heaven, all these things and whatever else You know that we need, for the sake of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave Himself into death for our trespasses and rose again for our justification that we might live together with all Your saints in Him, who with You and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns one God, now and forever.

People: Holy Lord, we give You thanks and praise; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

* (stand) **The Service of the Sacrament** (beginning on p. 208)

The Preface (LSB, p. 208)

The Sanctus (LSB, p. 208)

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (LSB, p. 209)

The Lord's Prayer (LSB, p. 209)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

The Words of our Lord (LSB, p. 209)

The Pax Domini (LSB, p. 209)

The Agnus Dei (LSB, p. 208)

The Distribution

(The white wine in each tray is “non-alcoholic” wine.

(Children coming forward for a blessing are asked to keep their hands below the communion rail in order to eliminate any confusion for those who are distributing.

(We encourage all those communicants who intend to come to the Sacrament today to prepare for receiving the Lord's gracious gifts with the Christian Questions found on page 329 of our worship and hymn book, *Lutheran Service Book*.

(Following Holy Scripture, we urge all those communicants who would come to the Lord's Table today to celebrate Holy Communion to examine your hearts to see that you:

repent of your sins;

believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord;

affirm the real presence of Christ's true body and blood in/with/under the bread and wine;

and, desire to live your life in accordance with the will of God.)

* (stand) The Common Dismissal (LSB, p. 210)

* (stand) The Post-Communion Collect (LSB, p. 211)

* (stand) The Benedicamus and Benediction (LSB, p. 212)

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

(Psalm 103:1)

People: Thanks be to God.

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

(Num. 6:24ff)

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and (+) give you peace.

People: Amen.

The Closing Hymn: #838

“The Saints in Christ Are One in Every Place”

(Tune: ELLERS, LSB #917 “Savior Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise”)

Parish Announcements

Organ Postludes

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MISSION MINUTE: Saints are those who have received the salvation God freely offers. They are those “*who have come out of the great tribulation*” that is life here in this world, and by repentance over their sins “*have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*” Since that blood of the Lamb is available to all - since Jesus died for all - everyone has the potential to be a saint. But first they have to hear the good news, don’t they? And that’s where you come in, exercising your “sainthood,” doing one of the many saint-ly things God empowers you to do by Word and Sacraments - sharing that good word with them.

AND SPEAKING OF MISSION, please take a few minutes to welcome those **VISITING WITH US AT SHEPHERD THE LAST FEW WEEKS** If you know them, be sure to let them know how glad you were to see them at worship. And if you don’t, make it a point to meet them, to invite them to worship again or to Sunday Bible Class or Ladies’ Bible Study or *LifeLight* Bible Study.

Ed Altaha - Hon Dah, AZ

Judith & Jack Shipp - Pinetop, AZ

Rick, Carla, Abby, Allie Gunn

CELEBRATIONS NEXT WEEK: Birthdays: 11/08 - Mark Theiss; 11/10 - Joe Russell, Martin Luther. Anniversaries: 11/9 - Levi & Deborah Slaughter.

“This is the week that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!”

Sun	11/05	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service - Holy Communion (All Saints Day) 11:55 a.m. - First Sunday of the Month Potluck Luncheon
Tues	11/07	5:00 p.m. - Youth Confirmation (?? serving dinner)
Wed	11/08	9:30 a.m. - Ladies' Bible Study 7:00 p.m. - <i>LifeLight</i> Bible Study
Sun	11/12	8:15 a.m. - Handbell Choir Practice 9:15 a.m. - Sunday School/Bible Class 10:30 a.m. - Divine Service - Holy Communion (2 nd Sunday) 11:55 a.m. - Dorcas Society “Mites for Missions” coffee fellowship

WE INCLUDE IN OUR PRAYERS TODAY:

White Mountain Bible Church - Show Low, AZ. Pastors Chris Fromm, Randy Walters,
Charles Fiore

Shepherd of the Mountains Lutheran Church - Pinetop, AZ. The Rev. Dr. R. Wayne Morton

Shepherd of the Pines Lutheran Church - Payson, AZ. Vacancy pastor Steve Resner

November SS/BC Mission Project - T.B.A.

SERVING IN GOD’S HOUSE THIS WEEK:

Organist: Maja Chadwick Elder in Charge: Kevin Dooley

Greeters: Carol Flodin Bulletins: The Ringelbergs

Project Keep-In-Touch Mailing: Donna, Jay & Corky

LIFE QUOTE OF THE DAY (from Lutherans For Life) “God calls us all to support widows and orphans, but that certainly does not mean every person is equipped to adopt a child. You can support a child in need without becoming his or her parent. Consider sponsoring a child overseas, going on a short-term mission trip to an orphanage, or financially supporting couples who adopt children through adoption grant-giving organizations. There are many ways to become involved” (Kim Laube, B.A., Lutheran Family Service, Urbandale, Iowa).

WHERE ARE OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL AND BIBLE CLASS OFFERINGS OFF TO THIS MONTH? As hurricanes continued to ravage new parts of our country, we decided to continue to try to help those in their path. This month, we’re sending our aid to victims of Hurricane Irma.

LIFE THOUGHTS IN THE CHURCH YEAR (by Lutherans for Life). “God’s people regard it as our privilege and delight to abstain from sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7). The eternal joys of godly relationships and bodily service to neighbors (1 Thessalonians 4:9) more than make up for whatever momentary gratification we forego. (Prayer: Heavenly Bridegroom, captivate our hearts by Your self-giving love that we desire in body and soul to receive Your blessings and serve Your kingdom. Amen.)

THIS MORNING IS POTLUCK SUNDAY. Every first Sunday of the month is! Think of it as a tailgate, without the tail or the gate. Think of it as a chance to extend the fellowship we have as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. Think of it as the best lunch in town, and at the hands-down best “price”! (Like all God’s gifts, it’s free!) The plan is a simple one; here’s how it works: We bring one of our family favorites to share with you, and you do the same. (What can you bring? You can bring a soup, salad, veggie, fruit, casserole, meat dish, entree, bread or dessert - whatever strikes you.) Then we lay them out on one long banquet table for all - members, friends and visitors - to enjoy. What if you forgot it was the first Sunday, or are just visiting? Don’t worry. Come anyway. We’ve brought plenty because we don’t want anyone to miss this chance to share together around the table in fellowship in the Lord. So when is all this goodness? Dinner is served as soon as we can get the food out from the refrigerators, oven, and microwaves.

WHAT WAS THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY? Christian Ed. - 22.
Sunday Worship - 50 (Members 42, Friends 7, Guests 1). How many were here because you invited them? How many will return because you welcomed them? How many might have been here, had you simply asked them?

THRIVENT CHOICE™! Don’t forget to be checking to see if you have Thrivent Choice™ to designate . . . here to Shepherd of the Mountains, or whatever other ministry the Lord lays on your heart. Often, Thrivent will give you a little nudge, by email, alerting to the fact that you’re among those whose investments and insurance purchases have earned them dollars under this program - dollars that if you don’t designate them will simply go back into the big benevolence pool.

IT'S NOT TOO SOON TO BE THINKING ABOUT THANKSGIVING DINNER. Have you given a thought to joining with your Shepherd of the Mountains family for a Thanksgiving potluck immediately after our Thanksgiving Day service? Well, if Thanksgiving will find you right here at home this year, or you don't have any place better to go, or you simply would enjoy Thanksgiving with your church family as much as with any other crowd, let Beth Morton (369-2987) know. Tradition has the Mortons arranging for the turkey and providing the dressing and gravy, and the rest of the "family" here signing up to bring the side dishes and desserts that will turn our dinner into a complete festive holiday meal. Please think about joining us - even if it's at the last minute. We'll have room for you, and - since you'll be bringing some - plenty of food!

NEXT SUNDAY IS "PURPLE PAPER" SUNDAY, . . . SO, WE'LL BE GATHERING UP THOSE PURPLE FIVE DOLLAR BILLS OF YOURS!"

Purple is the color of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, the missionary maids and maidens who are famous for collecting all those pennies and nickels and dimes and quarters in those purple "mite" boxes, and then funding millions of dollars of gospel outreach and service with them every year. We support the cause by collecting those purple five-dollar bills that *we* like to think Uncle Sam started printing just for the LWML. We do it four times a year - once each quarter - on one of the first Sundays of the month. Why then? Because the ladies miss the chance to collect your mission offerings every first Sunday of the month since that's our potluck luncheon and there is not "Mites for Missions" Coffee Fellowship. To make up, we bring the giant Mite Box out at offering time, and after the ushers have gathered up the regular offerings, we invite everyone to come forward to offer your "purple fives" - and bills and coins and checks - for the work of the LWML. .

LET'S JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER - right here in our own community! Through the early weeks of December we'll continue collecting non-perishable food. We could send it on to East Fork Lutheran School for their lunch program, or we could join in the Community Holiday Food drive (BRUSD, Rotary, Timber Mesa Fire, Tate's Auto, etc.) that makes boxes available at Thanksgiving and Christmas to some of our neediest neighbors. How do you participate? Simply leave your gifts on the little table in the narthex each week, and after the ushers

have cleared the altar area, we'll ask the children to bring them forward. What should you bring? For the school, it's anything you remember having in a school lunch. For the community, any nonperishable item is welcome, but given the season, so, too, are all those items that make up a festive holiday meal, as well as those that would be considered "staples" in a family's pantry - whether in cans, boxes, sacks, tins, cartons, paper or plastic.

For your convenience, and to teach our children that giving to others is giving to God, you may leave your food offerings on the table in the narthex, and we'll have our children bring them to the basket at God's altar at the time of the offering. (Cash and gift cards (Safeway, Basha's, or WalMart) are always welcome, too, as there are still many last minute purchases - including turkeys - to make for each gift box. Those gifts are best earmarked and placed directly in the plate with your regular offerings.)

IT'S NOT TOO LATE! YOU CAN STILL BE ONE OF THE 11 NEW INVESTORS WITH LCEF THAT WOULD QUALIFY US FOR THE MAXIMUM REBATE ON OUR NEW LCEF LOAN. The program is called Shared Blessings; for when *we* share our blessings with LCEF, *they'll* share them right back with SOTMLC! The loan rebate - a reduction in our interest rate - is all about the number of investors we have with LCEF. Right now - with 15 of our 73 members already LCEF investors - we already qualify for a 0.25% rebate on our loan! That alone would return us \$!47.28 in the first year, and \$682.39 over five years. However if we had 25% of our members (we'd need 4 more) invested in LCEF, we could earn a 0.375% return. And we would max out the Shared Blessings program out at a 0.500% rebate if we could reach the 35% member investor level. That last one would earn us \$294.53 the first 12 months and \$1364.78 over five! Undoubtedly the best investment for those who are *new* to the LCEF is ConnectPLUS, a two-year term note up to \$5,000 at an unheard-of-these-days 3.0%. For *all* investors - those not yet with LCEF and those who already are - there's a 5-year Fixed Term Note at 2.25%. (Both carry a \$500 minimum.)

But perhaps the easiest way to become an investor is - for a \$25 minimum - to open a custodial account for your children or grandchildren. That one's called the Y.I. ("Young Investors") Club. And it currently returns 3.5% on balances up to \$1000, with 1% on balances beyond that. Y.I. Club is more than just an account; as

the name implies,

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program is that not only the minor but also - as long as the custodian isn't an existing LCEF investor - the custodian count as investors. Do the math! That's one + one = two investors!

(Ask Beth, our LCEF Congregational Advocate, for more details or check out the LCEF bulletin board in the fellowship hall.)

HAS YOUR CHARITABLE GIVING INCREASED SINCE 1996? Do you have *earned* income in Arizona in 2016? Would you rather put some of the money you owe in the hands of ministries serving Arizona's working poor (technically now "Qualified Charitable Organizations" than the politicians in Phoenix? Then, here's a tax credit (not just a *deduction*)! Dollar for dollar! How do you qualify for the credit? All you have to do is make more charitable contributions this year (2016) than you did in 1996 (if you itemized deductions that year) or the first year you itemized *after* 1996. Living Hope Women's Center is a ministry that serves Arizona's working poor. So is White Mountain Meals on Wheels. So is Lutheran Social Services of the SW. So are many others. Your gift to any of them will earn you "singles" a credit of up to \$200 and you "doubles" (joint filers) a credit (not *deduction*!) of up to \$400 dollars against your AZ earned income. Arizona Tax Form 321 will tell you all you need to know.

WANNA' SAVE ON YOUR 2015 STATE TAXES BY SUPPORTING LOCAL SCHOOLS - BOTH PRIVATE (EVEN CHRISTIAN/LUTHERAN) AND PUBLIC? The Arizona Public and Private School Tuition Tax Credit program is your "ticket." Donate now to take advantage of the ARS laws that allow Arizona income taxpayers to receive a *dollar-for-dollar credit* for donations to qualified extracurricular programs at public schools and qualified school tuition organizations (STO's) at private and parochial schools. You give to the schools, you save that much on your State income taxes. Valley Lutheran High School has

just such an STO. So does East Fork Lutheran (WELS). And so do both Blue Ridge and Show Low. There *is* a limit to the savings that results from your generosity: for married couples filing jointly, the basic credit this year (2015) stops at \$1070 (private) and \$400 (public) but the Overflow/PLUS feature allows another \$1064 parochial. Single filers and heads of household may still contribute up to \$535 to parochial and private STO's (plus another \$532 on the Overflow/PLUS) and \$200 to public school extracurricular programs that charge students a fee/cost to participate. It couldn't be any easier: we've got the forms for you. ACSTO (the Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization) covers most of the Phoenix schools. And for all you Tucson-ites, SAFE (Southern Arizona Foundation for Education) covers Faith Lutheran's school. H.E.L.P. covers the Wisconsin Synod schools, notably East Fork (Whiteriver). And Blue Ridge and Show Low now both have their forms right on line. Make your donation today, and get a matching credit off your taxes, because while this "gift" is "revenue neutral" to *you* - it doesn't cost you a thing in the end - it certainly isn't to the schools, or to any of the students who get to go there thanks to your generosity. See Pastor or Beth with any questions, or if you have any doubts, see your tax advisor - or go to the Arizona Department of Revenue at AZDOR.GOV for all the mumbo jumbo and particulars.

HOW DO YOU SAY THANKSGIVING WITHOUT SAYING THANKS?

We don't know either. That's why every Thanksgiving around here includes a special Thanksgiving Day worship service (11/24) at which we can say proper thanks to the One who makes all our thanksgivings possible. Worship begins at 10:00 a.m., and, of course, includes the "Great Thanksgiving," the Eucharist (Greek *eucharisto*). Got friends or family in town? Feel free to bring them along. After all, *they're* on *your* list of things for which you want to thank God, anyway.

THINGS ARE FINALLY BEGINNING TO HEAT UP AROUND HERE AS THE TEMPERATURES START TO FALL, so please be a good steward. Our heaters are now on, so please be sure that any *unheated* areas (in particular, the sanctuary) are closed off whenever the heat is on in our meeting areas. And when it's time to go, please be sure that any thermostat (typically the fellowship hall ETS heaters) that has been turned up gets turned back down again. We'll all enjoy the savings.