

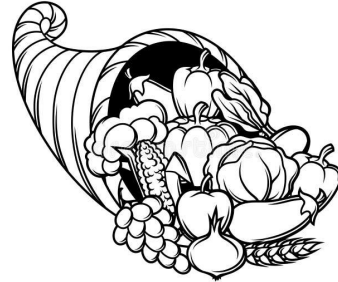
Agape

OCTOBER 2024

ST. MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH
111 years proclaiming Christ in Bridgeland!
By Rev. Markus Zeuch

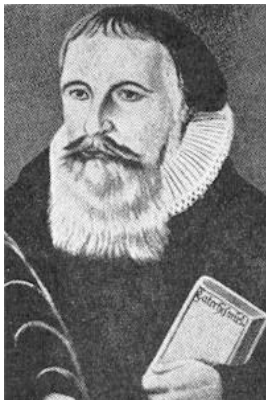
Greetings!

October 14th is the Canadian version of Thanksgiving. October 13th is Thanksgiving Sunday the day we gather at church to celebrate it and give thanks to the One who is the supreme giver of all blessings: our Lord God!



There's a hymn we love to sing on these occasions: we find it as number 895 in the Lutheran Service Book, our hymnal, also known as "the LSB". It is called: "Now Thank We All Our God", a translation from the German "Nun danket Alle Gott" written by Martin Rinckart (1586-1649). The melody comes from the composer Johan Crueger.

I want to share with you the history behind this hymn.



"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Martin Rinckart was the son of a poor coppersmith in Eilenburg. By hard work, thrift, and the use of his musical talents, he scraped together enough to pay his own way through the University of Leipzig. He studied theology, intending to become a pastor.

But when he applied for an open post as a deacon in 1610, he was turned down. He did not grumble, but took work in a Lutheran church school. On May 28, 1611, he undertook duties as a deacon of St. Anne's Church in Eisleben, a common step toward a pastorate.

Amid all his travelling and other duties, Rinckart found time to write. He wrote a series of seven dramas inspired by the hundred-year anniversary of the

Reformation. Three were published in 1613, 1618, and 1623, and we know at least two were performed publicly. He was also named poet laureate in 1614, and wrote a large number of books as well as hymns and cantatas. Some of his books have been lost; others survive only in a single copy.

Rinkart completed his Master's degree in Theology in 1616, and then his hometown Eilenburg offered the position of archdeacon in his home town in 1617. He would spend the rest of his life there.



The Thirty Years' War was a series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648. It was one of the longest and most destructive conflicts in European history, as well as the deadliest European religious war, resulting in eight million casualties.

The war came to involve the major powers of Europe, with Sweden, France, Spain and Austria all waging campaigns primarily on German soil.

The Thirty Years' War is still remembered to this day as the most destructive war ever fought in Germany, and that includes World Wars I and II. It featured gunpowder armies much larger than those seen in the pre-gunpowder world, and these armies tried to live off the land by plundering since there were no systems in place to supply and pay them. You can't have multiple armies plundering a territory for thirty years without it doing an unbelievable and nearly irrecoverable amount of damage.

The war began as a conflict over religion in the nearby kingdom of Bohemia, but rapidly drew in almost all the countries of Europe. In principal, it was primarily a battle between the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor and his allies, and the Lutheran princes in the Empire and their allies.

In 1617, shortly before the Thirty Years' War broke out, Rinkart became a full pastor. Eilenburg was a walled city, and as the war developed, refugees flooded in. Overcrowding led to food shortages. By 1637, the situation was so bad that refugees fought in the streets for dead cats and birds. Plague soon followed. Each of the city's four pastors held ten or more funerals a day. Overwhelmed, one ran away. The others died, leaving Rinkart to bury them. As the only pastor left, he often conducted services for as many as 40 to 50 persons a day—some 4,480 in all. In May of that year, his own wife died. By the end of the year, the refugees had to be buried in trenches without services.

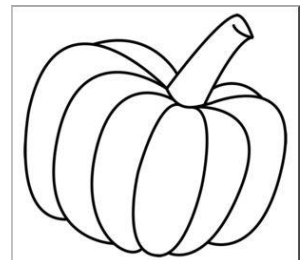
He survived the entire war, pouring himself out in charity, giving away all the food and clothing he had obtained, except just enough to preserve his own hungry family. After the Swedes had besieged the city for several months, they agreed to leave if an enormous ransom was paid. Rinkart pleaded for better terms, but the Swedish army was immovable. Knowing the sum could not be raised, Rinkart fell to his knees, praying so fervently that the Swedish captain was deeply moved and reduced the demand to a manageable amount.

Danke Shön!

Rinkart wrote a hymn of gratitude for his children to sing at the dinner table. "Nun danket alle Gott". It was written in 1636 in the middle of the war and later translated into English by Catherine Winkworth as "Now Thank We All Our God." Given the difficulties of his life, it is surprising that the hymns that Rinkart penned were full of praise and trust in God even when they were speaking of the troubles that afflicted Germany.

1. Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.

2. Oh, may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us
And keep us in his grace
And guide us when perplexed
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next!



3. All praise and thanks to God
 The Father now be given,
 The Son, and him who reigns
 With them is highest heaven,
 The one eternal God,
 Whom earth and heaven adore;
 For thus it was, is now,
 And shall be evermore.

NEWS FROM THE LCC

Lutheran Synod of Mexico president safe following kidnapping

by [Mathew Block](#) | Sep 17, 2024



MEXICO – Lutherans in Mexico are thanking God for the safe return of President Isaac Garcia of the Lutheran Synod of Mexico (*Sínodo Luterano de México* – SLM) and five other church workers after they were recently kidnapped.

On September 5, SLM President Garcia was travelling with another pastor and four deaconesses from Mexico City to Cacahoatán, Chiapas in the south of Mexico. “Our intention was to share a workshop with the brothers and sisters on Lutheran identity, to hold a class with the children, to conduct a medical and service brigade, and to finish with Divine Service,” President Garcia explains. “Unfortunately, about 750 kms from Mexico City and five hours from our destination, we were intercepted by two trucks with armed men. We quickly identified ourselves as pastors and told them the purpose of our trip, but they did not care.”

What followed was a harrowing experience. After stripping President Garcia and the others of their money, phones, and other belongings—including their rented van

and items that were intended for distribution in Cacahoatán—they were taken off the road to a place where about 24 other people had also been kidnaped. “We were held there for approximately six hours, kneeling, with our eyes closed and some of us blindfolded,” President Garcia says.

“Despite all this, God was with us,” President Garcia continues, “and we were able to feel peace in the midst of the situation, knowing that our lives were in God’s hands, literally living what St. Paul says: ‘For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.’”

After about six hours, they were finally released. “At that moment, I was able to lead a prayer with all those who had been kidnaped,” President Garcia recalls. “Our intention was to share God’s love in one way” that day, he says, but ultimately “we were able to do so in a different way.” The group eventually made their way safely home to Mexico City.

“After reflecting on the situation, we simply ask God to continue being with us as we know He is,” President Garcia says, “and to keep leading us to those who need to hear, repent, and come to Christ. We pray for all missionaries around the world, that God may watch over and protect them at all times.”

“We are deeply grateful that God safely delivered our brothers and sisters in Mexico from this serious situation,” said Rev. Dr. Klaus Detlev Schulz, General Secretary of the International Lutheran Council (ILC). “May God comfort them with His presence as they recover from this frightening ordeal and encourage them with the knowledge of His love and care for each of them. And may He continue to raise up courageous witnesses for Christ both in Mexico and throughout the entire world.”

The Lutheran Synod in Mexico is a member church of the ILC, a worldwide association of confessional Lutheran churches which proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the basis of an unconditional commitment to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.



SUNDAY SCHOOL: for children ages 5 - 10 at 11am every Sunday. Bring your children. Come learn about the many bible stories of God's love!!

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS: Our first get-together will be October 11th at 7 pm in the church basement.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES: We have 4 kids in confirmation classes: Esay Mulugieta Tekle, Lelti Yosief Kidane, Ogbarebi Sahle Ogbarebi, and Bruke Sahle Ogbarebi. They meet every Thursday on zoom. Please keep them in your prayers!

PROFESSION OF FAITH - The following adults will be received as new members at our church on October 20th:

Gustavo Behne Miro, from Brazil
 Dawson Tarnasky, from Calgary
 Selam Negga, from Eritrea, Africa
 Please welcome them into our fellowship

BIBLE STUDY: We continue our Bible studies on Tuesdays, at 7 pm via ZOOM. All are welcome!

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING: Our Fall Congregational Meeting will be held on **Sunday, October 27, 2024**. We will have a joint service at **10 am**, followed by a soup and sandwich luncheon and our congregational meeting. We ask our attending members to please bring a plate of sandwiches or dessert to share with your fellow members. Meeting packages for members will be available at the back of the church.

LUTHERAN BIBLE TRANSLATORS OF CANADA: We will welcome Rev. Mike Kuhn, from the LBTC on October 27th. He will be our guest speaker and will give us a presentation about this important ministry he is part of in Cameroon, Africa. His presentation will be right after the joint service and before our congregational meeting.



WHAT'S PLANNED FOR OCTOBER?

- Oct 1 (Tues):** Pastor leads worship at Bethany Riverview
- Oct 1 (Tues):** Bible Study (online) @ 7 p.m.
- Oct 3 (Thurs):** Board of Elders meeting @ 7 p.m. (online)
- Oct 5 (Sat):** Pastor invited to attend a "high Tea" at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in High River AB.
- Oct 6 (Sun):** Communion service in German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m.
- Oct 7 (Mon):** Pastor & elder to make a home visit
- Oct 8 (Tues):** Bible Study (online) @ 7 p.m.
- Oct 10 (Thurs):** Confirmation class (online) @ 7 p.m.
- Oct 11 (Fri):** Youth & Young Adults get-together
- Oct 13 (Sun): Thanksgiving Sunday.** Service in German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m.
- Oct 14 (Mon):** Thanksgiving Day. Office closed.
- Oct 15 (Tues):** Bible Study (online) @ 7 pm
- Oct 17 (Thurs):** Confirmation class (online) @ 7 pm
- Oct 19 (Sat):** Men's Breakfast @ 9 a.m.
- Oct 20 (Sun):** Communion service in German @ 9:30 a.m. In English @ 11 a.m.

Oct 20 (Sun): Bible study in Portuguese (online)

Oct 22 – 24: Pastor attends Alberta Church Worker's Conference in Edmonton AB

Oct 24 (Thurs): Parish Planning Council meeting @ 7 p.m. (online)

Oct 25 (Fri): Singing at Bethany Riverview senior Home @ 6:30 pm

Oct 27 (Sun): Joint service @ 10 a.m. Presentation by Rev. Mike Kuhn, Soup & sandwich lunch (potluck), congregational Meeting.

Oct 29 (Tues): Bible Study (online) @ 7 p.m.

Note: Pastor's days off are on Fridays and Saturdays, unless there's an emergency or an event taking place.



UNSERE DEUTSCHE ECKE

Gott nutzt gebrochene Dinge

Bibelstellen zum lesen: Psalm 51,19; Jesaja 42,3

„Die Opfer Gottes sind ein zerbrochener Geist; ein zerbrochenes und zerschlagenes Herz wirst du, Gott, nicht verachten“ (Ps 51,19).

„Das geknickte Rohr wird er nicht zerbrechen“ (Jes 42,3).

Irgendwann bringt jedes Kind mal dem Vater ein Spielzeug, das gerade kaputtgegangen ist. Wenn es unwiederbringlich und „unklebar“ durchgebrochen ist, wandert es in den Mülleimer – es ist nicht mehr zu gebrauchen.

Wie anders geht unser Herr mit gebrochenen Dingen um! Bei Ihm gibt es nie einen hoffnungslosen Fall, nie eine endgültige Disqualifikation. Ganz im Gegenteil arbeitet Gott lieber mit gebrochenen Dingen und Personen (als mit solchen, die zu viel auf sich selbst vertrauen).

Denken wir an einige Beispiele:

- Erst dann konnte Jakob richtig gesegnet werden, nachdem seine Hüfte und somit seine Kraft gebrochen war.
- Erst als Gideons Armee die Tonkrüge zerbrochen hatte, konnte das Licht leuchten und die Niederlage der Feinde einleiten.
- Erst als Maria das Alabasterfläschen zerbrochen hatte, konnte der wunderbare Duft das Haus füllen.

- Erst als der Herr die fünf Brote brach, konnte Er damit eine riesige Volksmenge sättigen.

Fühlst du dich innerlich zerbrochen? Der Herr möchte dich gerade in diesem Zustand zu sich ziehen und gebrauchen!

Alexander Schneider, aus bibelstudium.de



E-MAIL LIST: If you are not on our e-mail list yet, I recommend you to contact me (pastor) and give me your email address, so you can receive **the Agape** every month and other notifications or announcements that are important for members or friends of our congregation. You will also receive the invitation to participate on Sunday worship on zoom in case you are not able to make it to church, or forward it to someone you think would like to worship with us.

May God's amazing and unconditional love (*agape*) reach you and your family during this month.

In His service,
Rev. Markus Zeuch
Calgary, on October 5, 2024

