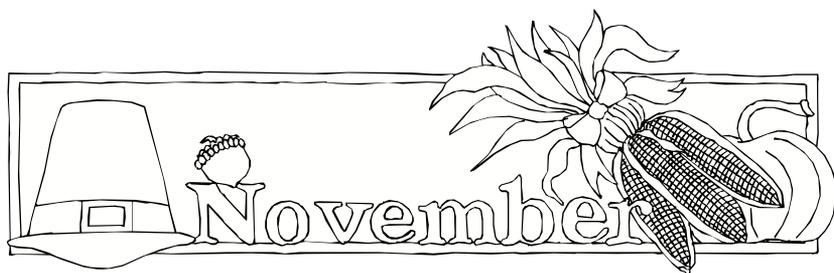


FROM THE MOUNT



Mount Calvary Lutheran Church

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH - MISSOURI SYNOD



2018

Church Office 210-824-8748

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www.mtcsa.org



Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever..

--Psalm 106:7

Dear Friends in Christ,

“Thanksgiving is drawing near. You know what that means... Lots of food, black Friday, Christmas shopping just around the corner, cooler weather (we hope), maybe snow (I know... it’s a long shot), and all the things the holidays bring to us.

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays because it leads me down the paths of memory over the past years in thankfulness for all that God has done for me. I remember many years ago about this time of year becoming concerned about how I would pay for my college education. It was 1987 and the new administration had adjusted student loan requirements and I no longer qualified. I thought I was going to have to take a year or two off to save money when on Christmas Eve the Mid-South district sent me a check with enough to cover my next semester. They had heard of my plight and took a chance that I was serious about becoming a pastor. God had provided.

I remember being in seminary and not having dated anyone for over a year and beginning to wonder if I’d find a woman to share my life with. I was scheduled to attend an evangelism clinic at a local church as part of our evangelism class and there I met a sweet pretty single lady who is now my wife and mother of my two children. God had provided.

Then in 2014 I found myself retired and offered a job at the VA as a chaplain. God had provided. But then God sent me down a different path, one to Mount Calvary. Here I found a church faithful to God’s Word, serious about proclaiming the Gospel to the world, and a church filled with wonderful people who are a joy to serve with. God had provided.

Every thanksgiving I am humbled by how good God has been to me and to my family. My family has been such a blessing to me. Being

Lutheran has been such a blessing for me. And being a pastor at Mount Calvary is the highlight of my ministry career. I am thankful to God for this path He has guided me along.

Of course that path has not always been easy. There was a car accident where a pedestrian walked into the path of my vehicle on a dark night and did not survive. There was having to watch as my mother died slowly from lung cancer. My father passed quicker but from the same disease in suffering. There was the weeks of having to wonder just what form of Leukemia I had and was it treatable. There was watching my military career come apart around me because of it. There were times we didn't have money to pay the bills and had to borrow. There were times when friends were killed in the line of duty.

The holidays can magnify our struggles if we are in the midst of them, especially if we are seeing others having a grand old time. I recently shared with someone who is having some difficult times that it is very hard to imagine fair winds and calm waters when you are in the midst of a raging storm. It is perhaps in those times we most need to cling to the anchors in our lives and remember how God has blessed us in the past. For God does not change. God's love is constant. This world changes. This world may at times throw everything it has at us. But God does not change. His love is present. He sees. He knows. He cares.

The calm waters will come.

Since it is thanksgiving I want to say thank you to the members of Mount Calvary who make our church all that it is. Thank you for your presence in worship and lifting your voices together. Thank you for your financial support to the church. Thank you for the gift of your time and abilities. We have together accomplished some pretty wonderful things and been a blessing to others in many ways and it is because God is providing ministry through you. Trunk or Treat was just one example. Thirty-one trunks with, we estimate, around 300 guests blessed, plus all the fun we had ourselves. God could have sent my family anywhere but I am thankful God sent us here.

So I pray the Lord will continue to bless you and provide all things needed for you. That God will grant you smooth seas and sunny days

but when the storms do come that God will hold you close until He brings you home. I pray the Lord will provide you with the sweet clear promise of His mercy found in the Gospel. And I thank God that He provides you mercy through your baptism and His body and blood present in Holy Communion. May you have a blessed Thanksgiving and Advent season!

Christ bless you richly and abundantly family of God.

Pastor David Reetz



You are invited to a special Thanksgiving worship on Wednesday, November 21st, at 7:00pm.

Memorials

In memory of:

Donna Dickert
Karl Mittwede

Walter Marks, Sr
Calvin & Eva Glaspy

Given by:

Peter Heide
Phil Glaspy, M/M Charles Koch, M/M Jim Koenig, M/M Marshall Leiber
M/M Jim Koenig
Phil Glaspy

ELDERS FOR NOVEMBER

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
November 4 (Communion)	Russell Maxwell Toby Elbert	Spenser Hasch Jim Koenig
November 11	Jim McNeel	Marshall Leiber
November 18 (Communion)	Russell Maxwell Brad Boeckner	Mike Wille Jim Koenig
November 25	John Smetzer	Walter Marks
Thanksgiving Eve November 21, 7:00 PM		Marshall Leiber

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
Ralph Domel	Rex Rheiner
Don Lundy	John Rheiner
Jon Fruendt	Jeff Rheiner
Ed Lingg	Carl Gross

ACOLYTES FOR NOVEMBER

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
November 4	Josh Smetzer	Jacob Wille
November 11	David Meissler	Daniel Morrison
November 18	Corben Perankovich	Joe Morrison
November 25	Josh Smetzer	Wyatt Wilson
Thanksgiving Eve	Joe Morrison	

GREETERS FOR NOVEMBER

	<u>8:30 a.m.</u>	<u>11:00 a.m.</u>
November 4	Sarah Hanson Leslie Smetzer	Deidra Thompson Randall Thompson
November 11	Denise LaBonté Bonnie Haumann	Sarah Paseur Judy Ganoza
November 18	Kim Hendrix Virginia Axtell	May Marks Debbie Reedy
November 25	Brenda Hoffmann Carol Wilson	Rexann George Sarah Paseur

MORNING CLASSES

- **Adult Bible Class** | This large, lecture-style class meets in the gym and is taught by Pastor Reedy.
- **Men's Bible Class** | lecture & discussion style | Led by Larry Laxson.
- **PreK through College** | Children and students in are divided into classes that teach the Bible in age-appropriate ways. We offer classes specific to: PreK-K (small gym classroom), 1st-2nd (room 210), 3rd-4th (room 206), 5th-6th (Pre-Confirmation, room 204), 7th-8th (Confirmation, room 208), High School & College (room 218), Special Education (room 112), and Nursery (room 117)

MIDWEEK CLASSES

- **Adult Information Class (AIC)** | *Wed* | 7:00pm | *Church library*
New to Lutheranism? Just want to brush up on the basics? This is the class for you! Each course is 10 sessions. Speak to Pastor Reedy if interested. Begins July 11th.
- **Tuesday Morning Bible Study** | *Every Tuesday* | 10:00-11:30 am | *Room 212 (upstairs)*
- **Men's Bible Study** | *1st & 3rd Saturdays* | 8:00-9:30 am | *Parish Hall*
Nothing starts the weekend off right like breakfast tacos, coffee, and Christian fellowship! This group is led by Jeff Harwood.
- **Triple F Men's Bible Study** | *Mon* | 6:30-pm | *Pompeii Italian Grill*
A new men's Bible study followed by fellowship/food.
- **Women's Bible Study** | *3rd Mondays* | 7:30-8:30 pm | *Meets at members' homes*
Talk to Shirley Wille for more information.
- **Mothers' ChristCare Small Group** | *2nd & 4th Mondays* | 6:30-8:00 pm | *Room 218 (upstairs)*
This group is led by Wanda Laxson and is a great way for moms to get to know one another and be encouraged for the coming week!
- **Night ChristCare Small Group** | *1st Thursdays* | 7:00-8:30 pm | *Miyauchi Home*
This group is led by Jan Miyauchi and meets at 2219 Peach Blossom.
- **Other** | *TBA*
Would you like to participate in a study but don't know where to begin? Contact the church office for more details about any of these classes or to let us know if a class at another time or in another location might be beneficial to you and a few friends. We'd love to provide support for starting a Bible study in your workplace, neighborhood, or school!



“Playing the Pharisee Card”

I have been called a Pharisee more times than I can remember. It goes with the territory. I host a conservative Christian radio talk show. I publicly defend the teachings and practices of the historic Church. I also publicly point out false teaching and practices in the Church today. For these reasons alone, some believe that I *deserve* to be called a Pharisee.

But I’m not alone. Today, the label “Pharisee” is applied to many Christians just like me—perhaps you’re one of them. We are Christians who cherish God’s Word, the Church’s historic Creeds, confessions and practices. ...

When we see the Church abandoning these things to follow the latest fads and entertainments, we lament. When we see the Gospel itself being left behind in the Church’s rush to mimic popular culture, we are grieved. And when we question the Church’s infatuation with the spirit of the age, we are labeled Pharisees.

The “race card” is a political term of art made famous during the 1988 presidential race between George H. W. Bush and Michael Dukakis. In today’s presidential politics, we also have the “gender card.” The Race and Gender Cards aren’t designed to raise the legitimate issues surrounding race or gender. Instead, both the Race and Gender Cards are political tactics that exploit racial and gender divisions among voters, and appeal to the worst racial and gender stereotypes. In American politics, the Race and Gender Cards are played to discredit someone by implying that he is racist or sexist.

Just as politicians and pundits play the Race Card or the Gender Card, many in the Church are playing the “Pharisee Card.”

Just like the Race or Gender Cards, the Pharisee Card is not designed to raise a legitimate issue of doctrine or practice. Rather, the Pharisee

Card is used to discredit someone by implying that he is narrow, rigid, and unloving—a Pharisee. Most often these days, the Pharisee Card is played to portray a fellow Christian as a “doctrinal purist,” resistant to change, and therefore, unconcerned for the lost.

The Pharisee Card is a powerful weapon. Most of its punch comes from the fact that, during His earthly ministry, Jesus did often condemn the Pharisees. The Pharisee Card is intended to be tantamount to the condemnation of Jesus Himself.

Why did Jesus so often condemn the Pharisees? Was it because (as those who play the Pharisee Card assume) the Pharisees were ultra-conservative doctrinal purists, with no love for the lost? No.

Were the Pharisees Concerned with Doctrinal Purity?

The Pharisee Card is played against Christians who are concerned with doctrinal purity. When used this way, the Pharisee Card is intended to discredit the doctrinal purist and silence any further questions about false teaching. It works beautifully. Those dealing the Pharisee Card know that many Christians would rather suffer silently under false teaching than speak up and risk being labeled a Pharisee.

The only problem is, Jesus never faulted the Pharisees for being doctrinal purists. He faulted them for being *false teachers* who abandoned the truth of God’s Word in favor of the erroneous word of man (Matthew 16:11–12; 15:1–9; Mark 7:6–13).

Jesus called Christians who demanded doctrinal purity “disciples,” not “Pharisees.” “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31–32) In fact, Christians who demand doctrinal purity are really following the example of Jesus, of Paul and the other Apostles (Matthew 7:15; see also Matthew 24:10–11; Mark 9:42; 2 Corinthians 15:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Timothy 4:16; 6:3–4; Titus 1:7–9; 2:1, 7–8; 1 John 4:1; 2 Peter 3:17).

Were the Pharisees Resistant to Change?

The Pharisee Card is also played in order to discredit Christians who refuse to abandon the historic practices of the Church in favor of the latest innovations. This too works beautifully. Those dealing the

Pharisee card know that, to avoid being labeled a Pharisee, many Christians will tolerate an endless succession of fads in worship, music, and ministry. But Jesus never faulted the Pharisees for resisting change. On the contrary, He faulted them for introducing their own innovations and methods in the place of God's Word.

Dealers of the Pharisee Card will cite Luke 5:36–39 in favor of their own innovations:

And He was also telling them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins."

Was Jesus calling for wholesale change, or warning against it? The new patch *ruins* the garment. The new wine *bursts* the wineskins. The context of the parable is a discussion of fasting. Rather than advocating the abandonment of this ancient practice, Jesus instead taught that ancient practices must now be understood and practiced in light of Him and His redemptive work.

Jesus didn't condemn the Pharisees for retaining ancient practices, or for resisting change; rather, Jesus concluded the parable by saying, "And no one, after drinking old wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good.'"

Were the Pharisees Unconcerned for the Lost?

Christians who demand doctrinal purity and resist compromising change are often accused of being Pharisees with no love for the lost. This is probably the most common use of the Pharisee card today. Those who like to play the Pharisee Card know that Christians will put up with almost anything in the name of missions and evangelism, in order to avoid being called Pharisees.

But Jesus never faulted the Pharisees for being unconcerned for the lost. On the contrary, He said:

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes

one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. (Matthew 23:15)

Jesus had no problem with the missionary zeal of the Pharisees—they were zealous enough; Jesus had a problem with the Pharisees' soul-damning message. Paul was of the same opinion:

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:2–3)

And Paul spoke from experience. As a former Pharisee, his missionary zeal took him far and wide as a persecutor of the first Christians (Acts 9:1–2; Philippians 3:6).

The Pharisees' error was not a lack of missionary zeal; it was that their false teaching (however zealously preached) damned rather than saved.

Moreover, contrary to everything the Pharisee Card is meant to imply, just because someone is concerned for doctrinal purity and resistant to theological innovation does **not** mean that he is unconcerned for the lost. On the contrary, departure from the pure Word, in doctrine and practice, does not help, but hinders the preaching of the Gospel, therefore impeding the mission of the Church. False teaching does not save sinners. Purity in doctrine and practice makes the preaching of the Gospel possible. Purity in doctrine and practice makes the preaching of the Gospel imperative.

The irony is that those most often called Pharisees in the Church today are those most concerned about the lost, and *therefore* preaching the pure Gospel to them.

The power of the Pharisee Card is based on the mistaken idea that those unwilling to compromise in doctrine and practice are the modern-day counterparts of the ancient Pharisees. This idea has no basis in fact.

Why Did Jesus *Really* Condemn the Pharisees?

So if Jesus never condemned the Pharisees for bring ultra-conservative doctrinal purists with no love for the lost, why **did** He condemn them?

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their apostasy. The Pharisees had abandoned the Old Testament faith and therefore they rejected Jesus Himself (Matthew 8:11–12; 21:42–46; 22:41–46; Luke 7:29–30; 13:28–30; John 5:39, 43–47; Acts 4:10–12; Romans 9:1—11:36; 1 Peter 2:7–8).

The Pharisees taught that salvation was the result of God’s mercy **plus** man’s obedience. They reduced the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to a system of do’s and don’t’s. In this sense, the Pharisees were the inventors of what we call today “rules for living,” and the first preachers of “how-to” sermons.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for softening the demands of the Law. Because they taught that human works contributed to salvation, the Pharisees had to make the Law more “user-friendly.” The Pharisees diluted the Law’s requirement of perfect obedience with manageable human rules that could be kept (Matthew 5:17–48).

A compromised Law meant a compromised Gospel. Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they abandoned God’s Word for the word of man. In this sense, the Pharisees were really the Liberals of their day.

Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and self-righteousness. This hypocrisy and self-righteousness was most often the subject of Jesus’ condemnations. But it was merely a symptom of the Pharisees’ false faith in their own obedience:

He also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself, ‘God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me, the sinner!’ I tell

you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.” (Luke 18:9–14)

The Pharisees trusted their own obedience and moral progress. In this sense, the Pharisees were the original proponents of the victorious life.

Jesus condemnation of the Pharisees had nothing to do with doctrinal purity, resistance to change, or lack of missionary zeal. It had everything to do with the false hope of human obedience.

The Real Pharisees?

Who are the real Pharisees today? You are. I am. You, me, and every sinner—but **not** in the way that the players of the Pharisee Card say we are.

All of us are more willing to trust our own obedience than trust the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. All of us soften the Law's perfect demands so that we can say we've kept them. All of us are therefore inclined to hypocrisy and self-righteousness. All of us are natural-born Pharisees.

Now, if someone wants to call me a Pharisee for **that** reason, I will gladly and repentantly be called a Pharisee.

But I will not be called a Pharisee for loving and defending pure doctrine. I will not be called a Pharisee for resisting the ill-conceived innovation and compromising change in the Church. I will not be called a Pharisee for demanding that the Gospel we preach to the lost be pure.

Some say that the pure Gospel is an impossible dream. I disagree. I hear it preached every week—more often than not by those Christians who are wrongly labeled Pharisees.

Those who play the Pharisee Card hope to dismiss Christians like you and me as ultra-conservative doctrinal purists with no love for the lost. But like a fifth Ace up the sleeve, the Pharisee Card is a cheat. Those who play it ignore the real errors of the real Pharisees. They wrongly apply the name to those who stand in the way of false

teaching, compromising change and a watered-down Gospel. In the end, the Pharisee Card amounts to nothing more than name-calling. And, like the Race or Gender Cards are in politics, in the Church, the Pharisee Card is always the sign of a losing hand.

Article Courtesy of "Issues Etc..."



Our mid-week Advent services are Wednesday, December 5th, 12th, and 19th. All three services will be preceded by a meal beginning at 5:30pm. If you are interested in planning and preparing a meal for the 12th or 19th, please let Susan know as soon as possible. Thank you.