

October
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Holy Cross Lutheran Church
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HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Words from the Cross

When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Matt.9:36-38 NIV

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Fall has traditionally been the time of the year when we in the Lutheran church would celebrate harvest and/or have mission festivals. The reason for this was that many of our members were farmers or worked in agriculture related jobs. They were reaping the fruits of their labors, and the festivals provided them an opportunity to thank and praise the "Lord of the Harvest" for His goodness to them. These mission festivals also provided opportunities to contribute toward the more important harvest of souls the church is to be reaping in each generation.

Today, far fewer people live and work on farms, so there is a disconnection between people and the land that makes it difficult for many to relate to the importance of harvest time. October seems like any other month of the year except for the inconvenience of having to rake leaves and winterize one's house. Despite the changes in our society and culture, I believe we should still celebrate the harvest not only because we are still dependent on the land and the workers of the land to feed us but because we need to be reminded of the work we are to be about as Christians, which is to share the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. We dare not ever shirk this joyful task of sharing the good news that Jesus has taken our sins upon the cross and risen from the dead to show us His victory over death. He has promised to return one day and raise up the dead and give those who believe in Him everlasting life.

Our loving Lord of the harvest still desires to have workers in His harvest field. This is why we must support mission work abroad and locally: we are to encourage, pray for, and financially support pastors, teachers, and missionaries. I recall that in the first congregation I was called to serve in Nebraska, it was often a challenge to make ends meet, but around harvest time God's people would bring our family freshly harvested corn and other produce from their gardens. One year a family even brought us half a freshly butchered and packaged hog. How thankful we were to them and to God for providing it.

How are you celebrating the harvest this year? May God grant you a good one in whatever you do and may He also move you to do something to assure that when Jesus returns, His granaries will be filled to overflowing as we sing in our hymn, *Come, Ye Thankful People Come*:

*Come, ye thankful people, come;
Raise the song of harvest home.
All is safely gathered in
Ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come!
Raise the song of harvest home.*

*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.*

*Even so, Lord, quickly come
To Thy final harvest home;
Gather Thou Thy people in,
Free from sorrow, free from sin,
There, forever purified,
In Thy garner to abide;
Come with all Thine angels, come,
Raise the glorious harvest home.*

(LSV 892:1,3,4)

In Christ's love,
Pastor Skelton