

The Royal Messenger

From the desk of Pastor Olsen:

Doubling Down

The Cambridge Dictionary defines doubling down as, "to continue to do something in an even more determined way than before." What if you doubled down on something that is completely and utterly against everything else, everything that seems to make logical sense and everything in the world that is pointing that direction? Does it make sense in the Marketing world to double down on a strategy that is *not* in the direction of the consumer? Does it make sense in the world of entertainment, which is nearly everything, to double down on that which is *not* entertaining? Does it make sense in the financial world to double down on that which is *not* going to net you the greatest fiscal outcome? Is it logical to the sensibility of the human ego to double down on that which is focused *not* on self but on someone else, when the entire world revolves around self, when we are lost in what is called "Main Character Syndrome"?

Does it make sense to double down on that which does not feed the ego, is not entertaining, not consumer driven and is not going to bring in the big dollars? Does it make sense not to use psychological techniques that feed the ego, provide those dopamine hits and "get the feels and vibes" to draw people in? Surely the psychology of the human mind can be harnessed to entice people to what you are selling. Who wouldn't use these tips and tricks to get people in the door? Why double down on that which is old, from the past and not new, fresh or inventive? Our society tells us that we should have everything new, the latest, the fastest, the best money can buy, **and yet we double down on the exact opposite:** singing old hymns, using words that people no longer use, and God forbid, use a book instead of an electronic device! When everything is centered around technology, why would one double down on not having screens or videos but instead double down on listening and memorizing?

None of this makes sense to the world. We would call that the left-hand kingdom. But in an "organization" that is not governed by, controlled by or answers to the world, the left-hand kingdom, it makes complete sense. Here at Emmaus Lutheran, we are doubling down on Christ crucified. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ **but we preach Christ crucified**, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1Co 1:22-25 ESV)



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People nowadays demand to be entertained. They want to get vibes and the feels. Everything around them from their Spotify account, which allows you to choose your music, to YouTube and Tik Tok videos that target your person preferences, to streaming service on TVs, and phones that allow you to watch whatever you want, to social media that lets you say, post or record a video whatever you want to express. When everything around us is geared and focused toward self, why would a church decide to double down on the exact opposite? **It is like everyone wants to live off twinkies and pizza every day and we offer fruits and vegetables to your regular weekly diet.** Who wants that? It is "boring" because it is not entertaining. This is considered out of touch because it is not about me. That is considered old and useless because it is not new, creative, inventive and forward thinking.

Rather, we use hymnals with songs that are hundreds of years old. We embrace a liturgy that shows how unworthy and sinful we are; calling out Lord have mercy, a liturgy that uses repetition to reinforce and centers everything on someone who has been gone for nearly 2,000 years! There are no bands up front, no modern instrumentation, no screens showing waves breaking upon the shore while the words scroll in the foreground.

Ancient and holy things that look different than the modern world prevail in our space. Such as a pulpit where the Word of God is preached, only by men, rightly trained, examined and ordained by a certain set of rules ordered by God's Word, a Book that was compiled in 1580 and a confession of faith upon which that pastor has agreed to abide by that calls for unity over individuality.

There are no woman pastors here, no ranting against the patriarchy nor denying what God has created as male and female, each given to their own station and vocation. There are no genders here, only two sexes, male and female, that God has ordained from the beginning.

There are no new definitions of marriage, only that which Christ has declared between one man and one woman in a lifetime union as two become one flesh set apart by Christ as a picture of Him and His bride the Church. There are no men married to men or women married to women for that cannot reflect Christ and His bride. Marriage is an old idea, as old as our first parents who walked in the garden as God gave Eve to Adam and he she was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.

We double down on marriage, a sacred gift, as God has given it, not as the world desires it. "Love is love" is a fallacy born out of the Devil's desire to go against God's created order in nature as well as in His inerrant Word. If doubling down on this sets us apart from the world, from heterodox churches, then so be it, for we are called to love God first and love our neighbor second in which true love for either cannot go against His Word, nor reimagined to fit the desires of the flesh.



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There are no new creeds being written here such as the heretical "Sparkle Creed." We double down on the "old" creeds of the church, creeds which proclaim who the one true God is and what is necessary to believe if one is to be saved as outlined in those ancient creeds; Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian. **There is nothing new or innovative here, just the true faith being passed down to the next generation from those who lived and died so that we would have these "old and boring" truths so that we would not be led astray by false doctrines, teachers and those with "itching ears" wandering into myths** (2 Tim 4:3).

The pastoral clothing seems out-of-date for it covers the man and makes him stand out from everyone else, as if somehow this man is set apart in his vocation just for this thing: to bring God's Word and rightly administer His gifts through His Means, Baptism, Absolution and Christ's very body and blood, which He bestows forgiveness, life and salvation. Do we double down on this distinction in the Divine Service between he who is called and ordained or should he look like anyone on the street with no distinct difference in his office? The clothes do not make the pastor, but it does convey a message of what one believes, teaches and confesses regarding the Office this *man* holds.

An altar stands in the front, in the middle; not a band playing music, once again reminding all that the focus of this place is upon a sacrifice that was made once for all. The body and blood of the Savior of the World is given to those who are properly instructed, who confess that faith proclaimed from pulpit and altar in fellowship and know they are sinners needing what Jesus gives under the bread and wine, His true body and blood for their forgiveness. **The focus is on His gift to poor miserable sinners, who deserve nothing but temporal and eternal punishment.** Despair prevails, guilt builds a home, and sin enslaves for those who are not repentant, who do not receive the pardon and peace that can only come from the blood of Christ. There is nothing entertaining about this. There is nothing innovative or creative in this sacrament. It is simple bread and wine with the Word of God which brings new life from the One who lived, suffered and died for their sins. It is as true today as it was when Jesus gave of His body and blood to those gathered in the upper room on the night when He was betrayed.

It is as basic as it gets, listening to an ordained man from behind a pulpit who declares that you are a sinner in need of that which only Jesus can give, and He gives it freely and in huge amounts. There is nothing new and inventive as a baby, helpless in everything, is held over the font and simple water with the Word of God is poured upon his head in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit bringing forgiveness, life and salvation. There is nothing flashy as that pastor stands before those entrusted to His care and pronounces the forgiveness of sins as a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.



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At Emmaus, we double down on these things which the world does not understand and deems foolish, and holdfast to Christ who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ¹⁸ *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* (1Co 1:18 ESV) **This is the message that we proclaim and double down on.**

"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8 ESV) **This is the truth we double down on.**

⁸ *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* (Eph 2:8-10 ESV) **This is the grace we double down on.**

²⁶ *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, ²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."* (Mat 26:26-28 ESV) **This is the gift we double down on.** "

⁴ *But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* (Tit 3:4-7 ESV)

This is the promise we double down on.

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luk 24:46-47 ESV) **This is the preaching we double down on.**

None of this makes sense to the world we live in. None of the above goes along with the psychological games that could be played to "grow the church." None of this caters to the self-sensibilities of the ego. And certainly, none of this "vibes" with the entertainment culture that we live in. We are running against the grain, against the wisdom of the world to proclaim a message of Christ crucified — a foolish message to the world — but to those who are being saved, the power of God.

Over the next months you will start to see and hear Emmaus Lutheran double down on that which best proclaims Christ crucified. It will come in the form of a new logo for our church, school and preschool. It will come in the form of our strategic planning as we are in the beginning stages in our leadership now. It will come in our new website that is being created that we would double down on our doctrine and practice as a church that is scriptural, confessional and liturgical. Are any of these three entertaining? No. Are any of these three things popular? No. Are any of these three things innovative or creative? No. But I can tell you what they are. They are who the Church has been for hundreds of years confessing Christ crucified and risen. **Grace Alone. Faith Alone. Scripture Alone. Christ Alone. This is who we are!**

The marks of the Church are found here. The marks of the hands, feet and side of the only One who could redeem the world from the grasp of Sin and Satan are to be found here. The

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testimony of the those who have come before us confessing the faith from Holy Scripture is found here. It is not a new message. **It is the oldest message:** "...he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel," (Gen 3:15 ESV) — a promise made by God to Adam and Eve, a promise fulfilled in the Second Adam, in the God man Jesus Christ, whose full atoning work, whose merits alone crushed the work of Satan and He will return to restore mankind and all creation on the Last Day.

¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes,*" (Rom 1:16 ESV) **The faithful and pure proclamation of the Gospel is what we double down on.** Jesus Christ crucified, whose blood set us free, who justified us so that we would be free from our slavery to sin and the guilty verdict against us, so that we may have peace with God, hope for today and the promise of eternal life based upon the merits of the Son of God. We double down on the truth of Holy Scripture, not as that which *contains* the Word of God, but that which **IS** the Word of God; inspired, infallible and inerrant! We double down on the gift gifts given in the Sacraments, God's grace poured upon us in the waters of Baptism, the Absolution and the true body and blood of Christ for forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of our faith.

And we double down on a collection of documents collected and agreed upon in 1580 as the true exposition of the Word of God, the Book of Concord, that our Lutheran fathers passed down so that future generations would believe, teach and confess the Word of God in truth and purity. As written in the preface to the Book of Concord, and even today, we hold true to these words:

We most earnestly exhort that especially the young men who are being educated for the holy ministry of the churches and schools be instructed in this faithfully and diligently, in order that the pure doctrine and profession of our faith may, by the help of the Holy Ghost, be preserved and propagated also to our posterity, until the glorious advent of Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer and Savior....we should diligently care for the things which pertain to this life and the life to come, and that we should take pains, with the greatest earnestness and to our utmost ability, to attend to those matters which promote the extension of God's name and glory, the propagation of His Word, (from which alone we hope for salvation,) the peace and tranquility of churches and schools, and the instruction and consolation of disturbed consciences... (Book of Concord, Preface, 21, 22)

So yes, we unapologetically, unequivocally, and with one voice, double down on the Word of God and the teachings of those who have come before us as contained in the Book of Concord as a true exposition of the Word of God. It is not above the Word, but a good and necessary explanation of the doctrine of the Church as it has been handed down to us from those faithfully proclaiming God's Law and Gospel.



Title page from the 1580 German edition of the Book of Concord.

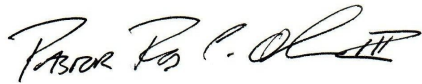
Indeed it makes no sense to the world to double down on, or as the dictionary states, "to continue to do something in an even more determined way than before," upon these ancient truths written in Word and on his grace abundantly given in the Sacraments from the One True God. **Our practice will continue to be that which reflects our doctrine and our doctrine shall continue to inform our practice so that all that we do will be, first and foremost, faithful and loving to Christ and secondly, in love toward our neighbor.**

If it doesn't produce numbers or growth according to the world's metrics, then so be it. God gives growth according to His will as we are reminded in Isaiah 55, ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." (Isa 55:10-11 ESV)

We will endeavor to trust God in all things, proclaim the full atoning work of His Son by His blood shed for us sinners and we shall not waver from the truth that has been painstakingly passed down to us from our faithful forefathers.

To Him alone be the glory is no simple phrase to those who are willing to believe, teach and confess according to the one and only true faith even to their own peril. My prayer is that to-day, every day and long after all of us are gone, Emmaus Lutheran may double down on Courageously Confessing Christ.

To Him Alone be the Glory,



Pastor Olsen



Letter from the Principal

Dear Emmaus Family in Christ,

The school year is off to a great start. Our teachers continue to blend rigorous academics with spiritual formation. We integrate faith into all subject areas, encouraging students to see God's hand at work in creation, math, literature, science, history, and beyond. **We want each child to grow not only in knowledge, but in character, compassion, and conviction.**

We know that some of life's richest lessons are learned outside the classroom walls. We have had some exciting field trips with others yet to come—local historical sites, nature centers, museums, farms, pumpkin patches, Star Base, and more—they reinforce classroom content and inspire wonder. These experiences will provide hands-on opportunities to connect curriculum with real life.

One of our favorite fall traditions is **Trunk or Treat on October 18th from 2-4 pm**. The event sponsored by the PTL is a safe afternoon of costumes, and community outreach. Families are invited to decorate vehicle trunks and hand out treats in a fun and friendly environment. It's a great way to invite neighbors, connect with families and enjoy the day.

Another highlight each year is our time at **Camp Lutherhaven**. Students will engage in worship, Bible study, team-building, and creation reflections. Away from everyday routines, they'll have space to listen, explore, and deepen their walk with Christ. More detailed information (dates, packing list, cost) will come soon.

The athletic teams and our volunteer coaches are off to a busy start. Sports provide wonderful opportunities to grow in discipline, teamwork, perseverance, and integrity. Families and students are encouraged to attend games, encourage one another, and show Christian sportsmanship. Volunteers are a blessing and blessed by their service; consider sharing your talents with our students.

Your involvement is a blessing. Whether by attending events, volunteering, or praying for students, teachers, and staff, your support fuels our mission. As we embark on this year together, my prayer is that our school—students, teachers, staff, and families—will grow in faith, love, wisdom, and boldness to answer Christ's call, *"Come, Follow Me"*, John 10:27.

May God richly bless this school year and guide us in every step.

In His Love,

Esther Spanos
Principal

News from Preschool

Good news! October 15 is the delivery of our new playground! We are very excited to have a new, safe place to play! We have one more expense for the playground — a fork lift to get it off the truck for the installer so we are having another [Andy's Knock-out Chicken dinner on Friday, October 10!](#) [Please pre-order](#) so that we can assure we have chicken when you arrive. Our last dinner we sold out by 5:00!

We had a great visit from the [Fort Wayne Art Museum](#) in September (see photos). One of their docents came and brought a sculpture and talked about patterns in art! Then each Prek student was able to design an ant with patterns! We love when visitors come and teach us new things! Thanks to a grant through the art museum this was a free in-house field trip for us!

The three PreK classes are heading to [Pumpkin School](#) on Tuesday, October 21. This is a long standing tradition in our preschool to go to Kurtz Pumpkin school. We will learn about the different kinds of pumpkins and then take a hayride to the pumpkin patch to pick pumpkins! Please pray for good weather and a safe trip that day!

Thank you for always supporting and praying for our Preschool. For many of our children this is the first place they learn about their Savior!

In Christ,
Joann Olsen
Preschool Director



Dates to Remember

Tuesday, October 7	1:00 pm Finance Board
Wednesday, October 8	7:00 Back to the Basics Class
Thursday, October 9	10:45 am Thirsty Thursday class 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Adult Choir
Friday, October 10	Andy's Knock-Out Chicken Fundraiser 2-6 pm
Monday, October 13	6:30 pm Elders
Tuesday, October 14	4:30 pm Christian Svc 6 pm Christian Ed 6 pm School Board 7 pm Council Mtg
Wednesday, October 15	7:00 Back to the Basics Class
Thursday, October 16	10:45 am Confessions @ Zion 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Adult Choir
Wednesday, October 22	7:00 Back to the Basics Class
Thursday, October 23	10:45 am Thirsty Thursday class 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Adult Choir
Sunday, October 26	Reformation Observed
Wednesday, October 29	7:00 Back to the Basics Class
Thursday, October 30	10:45 am Thirsty Thursday class 6:00 pm Handbells 7:00 pm Adult Choir

Finance Board Update

A quick financial update as we have officially closed out one fiscal year and have started into the new one. We ended fiscal year '24/'25 with positive margins of **\$59,182** which does not include the ERTC (COVID) refunds and the extra endowment funds. This compares to a loss of **\$238,778** for fiscal '23/'24 and **\$377,067** for '22/'23.

While it is too early to provide year-to-year comparisons for the new fiscal year, there are a couple of benchmarks we would like to share:

- ⇒ **First, the tithing.** Through the 12th Sunday of this fiscal year (Sept. 21) the Tithing Budget is \$91,956, the amount received is \$88,516 which leaves a shortfall of **\$3,440**. On the 12th Sunday of the last fiscal year the Tithing Budget was \$91,956, the amount received was \$70,985 which was a shortfall of **\$20,971**.
- ⇒ **Second, a comparison of our line-of-credit.** As of September 29th of this year, we have not had to borrow on our LCEF line-of-credit. While, on the same day a year ago, we had drawn down \$45,000.



We want to thank everyone for their efforts and contributions to improve our financial position from prior years and helping it continue into the new year. Please keep OUR Emmaus Lutheran Church, School and Preschool in your prayers as we continue to do God's work.

In His Service,

Gregg Kiess
Treasurer

Reminder

Daylight Saving Time ends on Saturday,
November 3.



Women's Guild Update

Thank you to all for a wonderful Church-School picnic. It was wonderful fellowship and great food.

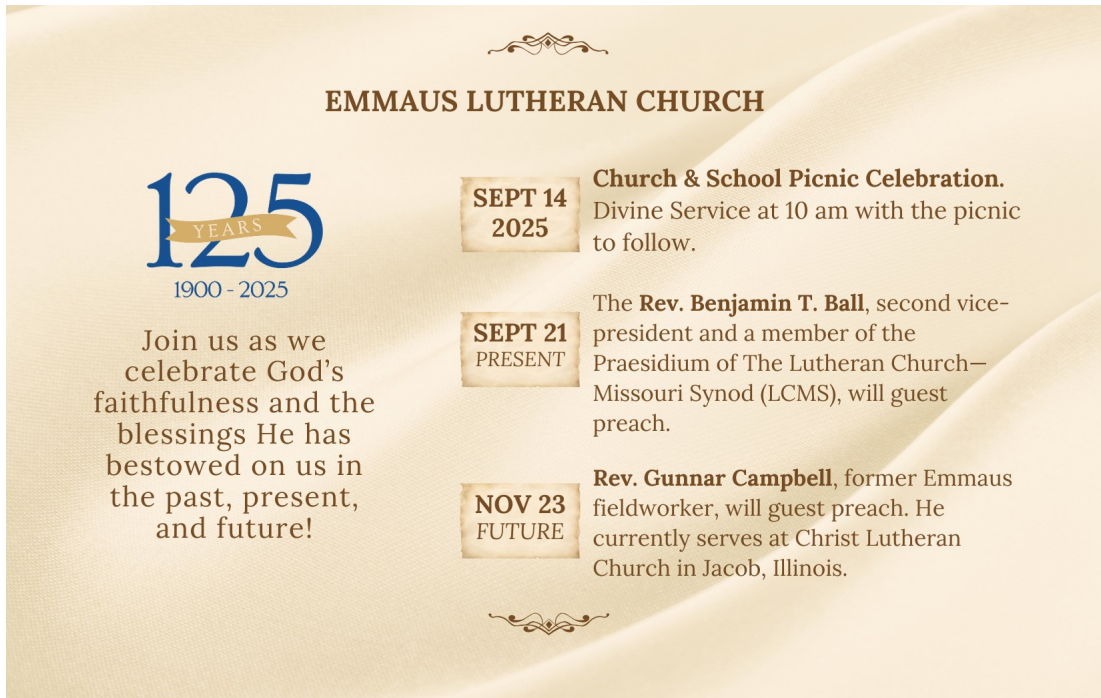
Now, we start planning for our annual **Cookie Fair!** Dust off your favorite holiday recipes and purchase the needed ingredients. The disposable cookie pans will be distributed in early December. All day Friday, Dec. 12 will be the cookie delivery day to the church office until 4:00pm. If that doesn't work for you, the cookies can be delivered on Saturday morning by 8:30am. The **sale will run on Saturday, Dec. 13 from 9:00am until noon.** Flyers will be included in News & Notes those two previous Sundays. Spread the word -- we need shoppers, too!

GUILD MEMBERS: Our next meeting will be Wednesday, **October 8 at 9:00 am.** Following that will be **Wednesday, November 12.**

Thanks for your help and dedication to our Emmaus family.

Blessing to all!

Barb Kanning
Secretary



EMMAUS LUTHERAN CHURCH

125
YEARS
1900 - 2025

Join us as we celebrate God's faithfulness and the blessings He has bestowed on us in the past, present, and future!

SEPT 14 2025	Church & School Picnic Celebration. Divine Service at 10 am with the picnic to follow.
SEPT 21 PRESENT	The Rev. Benjamin T. Ball , second vice-president and a member of the Praesidium of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), will guest preach.
NOV 23 FUTURE	Rev. Gunnar Campbell , former Emmaus fieldworker, will guest preach. He currently serves at Christ Lutheran Church in Jacob, Illinois.



was served at the first Thanksgiving!

Here's a special popcorn recipe to make.

You will need:

- 2 tablespoons of margarine
- 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 4 cups of popped popcorn
- 1 tablespoon of sweetened chocolate milk powder
- a large bowl
- a spoon
- a small pan or microwave bowl
- measuring cup and spoons



How to do:



- Melt margarine in pan or microwave. Mix in cinnamon. Heat together.
- Put popcorn in large bowl.
- Pour margarine mixture over it.
- Sprinkle with chocolate powder.
- Mix together and eat!!

Just for Kids

What are you thankful for?

In the Bible verses below, you will find the names of some things that we should be thankful for. The words that you find are hidden in the puzzle to the right. Circle them. They will be up, down, across and diagonal.

F	B	I	R	D	S	N	A	H
R	F	B	A	C	U	T	D	O
I	O	E	I	S	F	E	G	U
E	O	A	N	I	M	A	L	S
N	D	H	P	E	A	C	E	E
D	C	H	U	R	C	H	I	T
L	C	L	O	T	H	E	S	R
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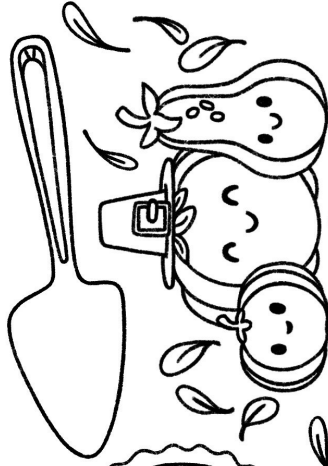
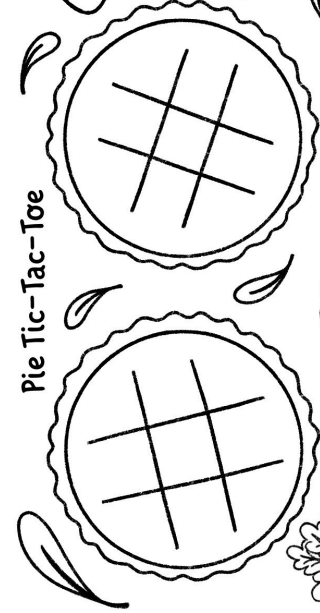
- F _____ (Ruth 1:6)
 S _____ (Joshua 10:12)
 L _____ (Acts 17:25)
 R _____ (Matthew 5:45)
 E _____ (Isaiah 66:1)
 L _____ (Matthew 22:37)
 H _____ (Isaiah 66:1)
 C _____ (Acts 8:1)
 B _____ (Romans 1:23)
 P _____ (Philippians 4:7)
 T _____ (Nehemiah 9:25)
 F _____ (Psalm 103:15)
 F _____ (Proverbs 17:17)
 T _____ (Galatians 6:6)
 A _____ (Leviticus 11:2)
 C _____ (Deuteronomy 8:4)



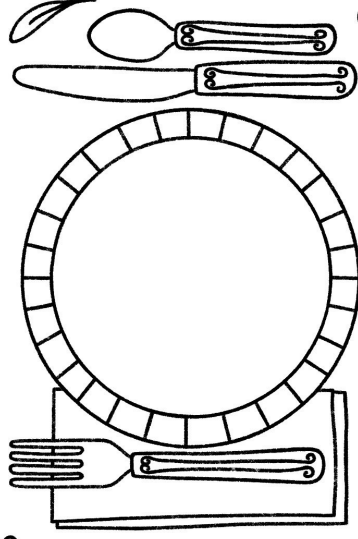
Answers:

food; sun; life; rain; earth; love; house; church; birds; peace; trees; flower; friend; teacher; animals; clothes

Pie Tic-Tac-Toe



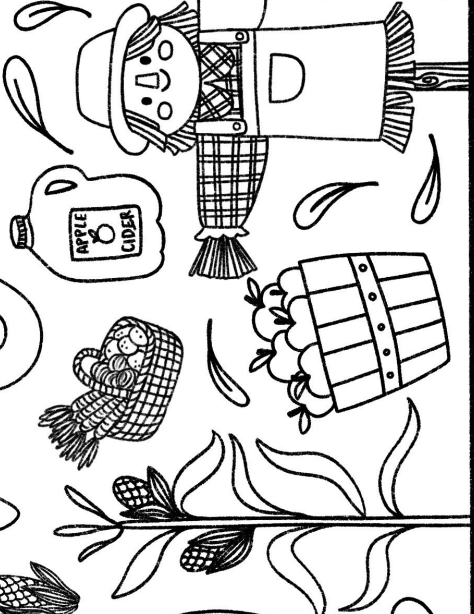
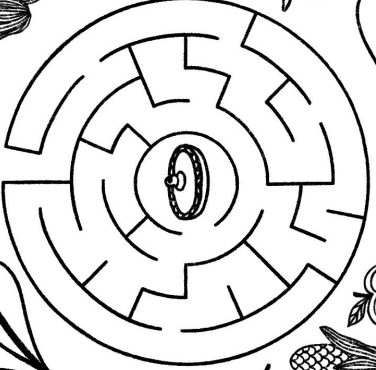
Draw your favorite Thanksgiving food:



GIVE THANKS

I am thankful for...

Turn the pumpkins into pie!



2025-2026 Officers, Board Chairmen & Head Elder of Emmaus Lutheran Church

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Paul Stockinger, Acting Chairman

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
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