

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
December 30, 2012 1st Sunday after
Christmas**

Psalm 111 v.2,3,4,7,9,10

² Great are the works of the LORD;
they are pondered by all who delight in them.

³ Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.

⁴ He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

⁹ He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever –
holy and awesome is his name.

¹⁰ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.



People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell
by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

For many people another Christmas is over! There are
already small Christmas trees on the curb – a little tinsel still stuck
on the branches – too many needles off the tree and stuck in the
carpet! The recycle bins will overflow this week with cardboard
from toys – the almost impossible zip-ties snipped – huge
bunches of wrapping paper torn to shreds. People have eaten so
many Christmas cookies – that they groan and push back if you
try to get them to eat one more – please?! Toys have been

opened – some impossible assembly required – batteries not included! People have stayed up too late watching the movies they wanted to badly to see. Little children have played with some boxes – more than the expensive toys they contained. Teenagers and college students have played video games for so many hours their eyes and their thumbs are tired. People have become frustrated with their new smart phones and I-pads and I-pods. Some are spending even more time – all by themselves – more interested in their newest high-tech devices than the people around them. In just a few days it will be “Happy New Year!” People will eat a whole bunch of new snacks – watch a whole bunch of football. And then you will hear again and again, “Boy, I’m glad that’s over with for another year!” Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! That was hard and that was expensive! And so? This morning – not as many people as Christmas Eve – will gather in God’s House – so few days after Christmas – to thank Him again for His amazing gift – the Christ child! Today God’s Word reminds us:

Praise the Great I AM

1. He provides for us

2. He redeems us

Context! There are 150 Psalms in God’s Word – 150. There is method to the Book of Psalms. Psalm 111 and Psalm 112 go together. They are what’s called one line acrostics! That means each line begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet! How neat is that? It would help with memorization – and so? Can’t remember the next line? What letter does it begin with? Oh, there – now I remember! Psalms 111 and 112 introduce a whole section of Psalms – that ends with Psalm 119. Psalm 111 is about the works and word of God. Kind of like when we introduce the Gospel reading and I say, “We stand out of respect for the word and works of the Lord Jesus! Psalm 111 is about the works and

word of the LORD – the Great I AM! Psalm 112 and following talk about how a believer in Jesus acts – in light of the word and works of God.

Practice what you preach! That’s the point of the Psalms after the one we are concentrating on today – practice what you preach! We need to come to Church – week after week – to hear God’s Word – read and applied. It’s good to come to Bible class – to hear God’s Word – and to ask questions if we have them. It’s good to talk about God’s Word. We need to read our Bible at home. For many years I bought my Dad a Bible for Christmas. And month after month – when I would come home from college – before they invented post-it notes – he would put little recipe cards in places where he had a question that I would try to answer! Every year – by the time Christmas time came – he had read his last Bible cover to cover and he was ready for a new one! Read your Bible and take to heart what it says – and your faith will grow stronger. You will be stronger in your role as child, student, young person – single or divorced or married or widowed – whatever. You will be reassured again and again that the sins and painful failures of the past are all forgiven – covered by the blood of the very Lamb of God. Every day is a new beginning – by grace alone!

Psalm 111 says, **“² Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them.”** Great are the works of the LORD – great are His works. Dr. Brug – who wrote the People’s Bible Commentary on Psalms actually wrote two volume – there is so much in the Psalms it filled more than 2 books! The works of the LORD include – works of creation; works of preservation; works of redemption. Great are the works of the LORD – all that he created! God has made big things – for one! **The hypothesis that the large-scale Universe is homogeneous and isotropic is known as the cosmological principle which is**

supported by astronomical observations. Do you understand that? For the longest time people were convinced that the earth was the center of the universe – since this is where people were – it was assumed that everything revolved around us! Eventually people realized we live in a solar system – going around the sun – on a journey that takes about a year to finish – with that whole leap year thing. There are seasons – that have and will remain constant. The LORD told Noah – “**As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.**” Genesis 8:22 Of all people Christians ought to be concerned about the planet – about plants and animals – about clean air and pure water – as we are caretakers of the earth God has given us. It is also important to remember who is in charge! Our Heavenly Father is the Creator of the Universe! He decides when and where it will snow. When as last week the Schultz~es’ electricity was out through the night and well into the next day – it was not for us to grumble nor complain bitterly – what is going on? It was for us to take the refrigerator stuff and put it out in the cold garage – to take the freezer stuff and put it in a boxes on the deck – until the lights and heat came back on! Thank Jesus for all the sweaters and sweatshirts and hoodies and long-johns and socks and slippers and scarves and stocking hats – and the fire-place. Thank Jesus that you have all that food to take care of. Don’t grumble and don’t complain! Remember Jesus always takes care very good care of his people.

Great are the works of the LORD – works of creation – works of preservation – works of redemption. Works of redemption! There are few Bible words more misunderstood and misused than redemption. Redemption – on our chef – cooking a dish in 30 minutes using 4 mystery ingredients from a little picnic basket – along with spices and ingredients from the pantry and fridge! The

other day there was a chef – who was kicked out of high school – because he was so impossible – angry and bitter and dishonest and violent! For 17 years after that – 17 years after that – he was still bitter and angry. He hoped by winning this cooking contest to finally let go of his anger – to find redemption! Redemption? By making three plates of food that impossible to please judges would judge on the basis of taste – presentation and creativity? By making three plates of food better than three other chefs? Redemption is not a matter of saving yourself! You can't redeem your self – earn salvation and rescue by doing something so extra-ordinarily good – it more than makes up for all the bad things you did? It's not going to happen! Jesus redeemed us – died to wash away all our sins. We are forgiven! We are heirs of Heaven. We are fellow redeemed!

⁷ The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. All his precepts are trustworthy. Like what? Like—husbands love your wife like Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her. We have had a bunch of weddings in our family lately. That verse—**husbands love your wife like Christ loved the Church**—is part of the service. It's built in. You read it every time! If you read much—there are forever articles about how to have a happier marriage—a happier family—a happier life—especially around the stress-ful holidays! I heard the other day—one way to do this is—to make a very real and concentrated effort the first 4 minutes of every morning—to only say positive and encouraging things—the first 4 minutes—only good and happy and cheerful and encouraging things. The idea is—as my piano teacher Mrs. Pendell used to say—if you begin well and finish strong—people will forgive a mistake or two in the middle.” So begin well. Could you do that? If you love your wife like Christ loved the Church—could you make the first 4 minutes of every day happy—or is that asking too much?! Where are my clean clothes? Who drank the last cup of coffee? Who left that little ring of OJ? Who finished the milk? How am I supposed to have cold cereal with no milk? Stuff like that? Husbands love your wife like Christ loved the

Church...wives encourage and build up your husband. Fathers do not exasperate your children—but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the LORD! Make your family strong by hearing and reading and studying and talking about God’s Word. Then when you have family gatherings and people say and do things that—truth be told—are sometimes thoughtless and inconsiderate—and sometimes even painfully hurtful. When people criticize how you look and how you cook and how you clean and how you raise your children—you will know to forgive them for Jesus’ sake. Imagine how wonderful that will be—when we take the hurtful things people do against us—and forgive them and forget them. Then we can pray—forgive us our sins—our trespasses—even as we forgive those who sin/trespass against us!

To him belongs eternal praise. The phone rang the other day. Aunt Harriet died. Aunt Harriet was the one—a couple of years ago—there was a terrible snow storm—a blizzard. The snow was coming down fast and furious—blowing sideways—white out conditions. The temperature was around 0°! Many of the relatives lived on farms—all in a row—down the country road. You could see your relative/neighbor’s house out your kitchen window. You looked out for each other. In the storm—it was hard to tell—but it looked like the lights had gone out by Aunt Dorothy. So Aunt Harriet thought—they would just jump in the pick-up truck and check on her. It wasn’t that far—just over there. Well they started out—and just like that they got stuck! The wheels just went around and around—you know—that vzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz sound! What to do? They would just get out and walk that last little way. They could do that! Well they couldn’t! They tried—but it was no use! Get back in the truck! But by then—the snow was blowing so hard—into the truck—they couldn’t get the door shut. There they sat—hopeless and helpless! Jesus sent a county snow plow—who picked them up and took them to the hospital—terrible frost bite on Aunt Dorothy’s fingers! She could have died! But at just the right time—Jesus sent rescue! Jesus is rescue from death and the grave itself! Today we give thanks and praise to the LORD—the Great I AM—for rescuing us from all our sins. We praise him in Church and in our homes—until we join to praise him forever—because the Christ child came to save us. Amen!

God bless us everyone!



Rev. Anthony E. Schwartz