

# I-K Lutheran

## *Where God is doing new things*

November 2017

*Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. [Romans 16:3]*



Before reading any further, I encourage you to open a Bible to Romans 16 and slowly, mindfully read the first sixteen verses. Go ahead; I'll wait.

This passage is not included in the three-year lectionary rotation of readings for Sunday worship. It's not appointed for any holidays or commemorations. This is a bit of an obscure passage that might evoke the mind-numbing lists of people in places like Genesis 5 and 11, genealogies that begin with the exciting introduction, "These are the generations of..." But these sixteen verses are different; I find them to be inspiring and emotionally moving.

In the span of just a few verses the apostle Paul sends greetings to almost thirty people by name, plus a bunch of communities and families. In the naming, Paul signals how much each of them means to him and why: Prisca and Aquila risked their necks for him. Epaenetus was the first convert in Asia. Mary and Persis are hard workers. Andronicus and Junia were in prison with him. Ampliatus is Paul's beloved in Christ. Rufus's mother has also been a mother to Paul.

Person after person, community after community, Paul expresses deep gratitude and profound love for the long list of people who have impacted his life and have been partners with him in following and witnessing to Jesus. The tenderness and yearning with which he remembers each one is gathered up in his request that they all do for one another what he would do if he could be with them: Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Is your Bible still open? Read through this passage again, slowly, mindfully. Let the names of people long ago and far away bring to mind the names and faces of people and communities who have been or are companions on your long baptismal journey to this point. Who has risked their neck for you? Who sat in some prison with you? Who has been a mother or father or sister or brother to you? Who has worked hard in the Lord and been a witness of God's deep and abiding love for you and for the world? What communities have nurtured, or are nurturing, your faith?

All Saints Day (November 1) and All Saints Sunday (November 5 this year) often focus on "all the saints who from their labors rest." This is important and good, of course, as we give thanks for the lives and witness of those who have died and commend them to God's eternal care. This November, I hope you and your community of faith will also find ways to slowly, mindfully, and tenderly remember and give thanks for the Priscas and Aquilas, the Marys and Junias, of your life and find ways to greet each of them and each other with a holy kiss of gratitude and love.

The God of peace be with all of you. [Romans 15:33]

+Bishop Bill Gafkjen

## “God’s Work. Our Hands.” Sunday

“God’s work. Our Hands.” Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.

Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living daring confidence in God’s grace.

You work every day to make your community a better place. Let us continue doing this work together in 2018!

It was a blessing to read stories and see pictures of all the good work happening in and around the Indiana-Kentucky Synod! Below are a few of the stories and some photos. To see more photos and stories, please view the latest issue of the Synod *Weekly News*.

**St. Paul’s, Frankfort, IN** worshiped in Redmon Park, a park near many Latino residents in Frankfort and one that does not receive much TLC by the park department. After the service we weeded, picked up trash, and planted more perennials. We had 3 volunteers from the community help. At noon a free hot dog lunch was served, and during the afternoon many kids from the community participated in art projects led by St. Paul’s members while others finished the planting and mulching in the park!

**The ELCA churches in Evansville, IN** partnered with the Fresh Air Community Church, a non-denominational congregation, to do “God’s Work. Our Hands.” –*A full report is available in the Weekly News.*



**St. Thomas, Bloomington, IN** participated in “God’s Work. Our Hands.” We created 10 “Welcome Kits” for foster families. The kits consisted of tote bags decorated by our youth, a board game, a blanket, and a “getting to know you” game created by our youth. The intention of the kits is to help foster families with new foster children get to know one another and begin the bonding process. We received a small grant as a Thrivent Financial Action Team to help offset costs of supplies. The kits were then delivered to The Villages, which is an organization in Bloomington that works with foster and adoptive families.



**Pleasant View, Indianapolis, IN** baked cookies and made cards for our local first responders and then delivered them together to the fire stations. This is our second year doing this as an inter-generational activity. It was a great time working together to thank some important members of our community.

**Our Saviour, Princeton, IN** collected and made 42 LWR School Kit Backpacks as a service project. Our “Traveling Martin Luther” joined us to witness the event.

**Faith, Logansport, IN** washed windows at McKinney Place Assisted Living where we also worship once a month with the residents.



**Indiana-Kentucky Synod**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God’s work. Our hands.