

Life Thoughts in the Church Year – October-December 2026 – One-Year Lectionary

October 4 (Trinity XVIII) – To love God is to obey His commandments. “If you love Me, keep My commandments,” says our Lord. The commandments shape our love in how we live with one another. Therefore, love is not what I want, but what my neighbor needs. And what my neighbor needs for his or her body is care and protection, for “love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.” And God’s love for us is that “Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

October 11 (Trinity XIX) – What care and compassion are seen by the men who brought their paralyzed friend to Jesus! What burden they gladly bore to carry this man that he could be brought to Christ! They sought nothing for themselves, but only the welfare of their brother! What great compassion, therefore, does our Lord have for us? “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” And so, then, our Lord commands: “Therefore, go and do likewise.”

October 18 (St. Luke) – The Church remembers the evangelist St. Luke, physician, on October 18. A physician’s first and foremost duty is to provide healing and relief to a patient, not destruction or harm. While there may not always be a cure for a terminal disease, we must always give bodily care and spiritual comfort. When death is in the near future, we do not use our enemy (i.e., death/euthanasia) as the tool. Rather, we give the care and comfort of the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come promised us in our Holy Baptism.

October 25 (Reformation) – Luther said, “My conscience is captive to the Word of God.” The Word of God teaches clearly that God is our Maker: “You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.” The Word of God holds us captive to the truth that all human life is wonderfully made by God, and no laws, nor politicians, nor celebrities, nor councils, nor anything will sway us otherwise. We, too, are persuaded by the Word of God “that neither death nor life ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

November 1 – All Saints Day – Every believer (saint) lives a life of tribulation, being hated by the world and mourning the sin in their own heart and the sins of the world, like abortion, human trafficking and other such evils (Revelation 7:14; 1 John 3:1). Yet, God’s children live hopefully awaiting the day in which He will wipe every tear away from our eyes. When we find ourselves in that great, innumerable multitude, we will rejoice to be freed from all such evil and to greet all the saints washed in Christ’s blood, including many of the victims of our culture of death (Revelation 7:9, 14, 17).

November 8 – Trinity 23 – As the coin for the tax belonged to Caesar because it bore his likeness (Matthew 22:21), every single person belongs to God and is precious to Him because all are created in His image and likeness. For this reason, God has “sent redemption to His people” (Psalm 111:9), through Jesus Christ, who will restore the believers to His image on the Last Day (Philippians 3:21). As we wait for that day, Christians seek godly wisdom and righteousness, recognizing that “the fear of the Lord is hatred of evil” (Proverbs 8:13), which includes the wanton destruction of lives created in God’s image.

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November 15 – Trinity 24 – During His earthly ministry, Jesus showed compassion for the sick, dying, and mourning (Matthew 9:18-26). He not only healed their bodily ailments, He removed the underlying cause of these problems by transferring them from the “domain of darkness” into the kingdom of God and offering them everlasting life through the forgiveness of their sins (Colossians 1:13-14). As He has made this promise to all people, the redeemed of the Lord “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (Colossians 1:10) by following His example of caring for the bodily needs of our neighbors and sharing the Gospel with them.

November 22 – Last Sunday of the Church Year – We live in a world broken by sin, which unfortunately means it is common for infants and other children to die in their youth. Some of this death comes through intentionally sinful actions like abortion, abuse, and other forms of murder. Other times children die unintentionally because of miscarriages, accidents, or diseases. While we mourn every one of these deaths, we do not despair. Instead, we “encourage one another” (1Thessalonians 5:11), knowing that Christ has died for us and destined us for salvation (1Thessalonians 5:9-10), and that on the Last Day there will no longer be the “sound of weeping and the cry of distress” (Isaiah 65:19).

November 26 – Thanksgiving Day – God “graciously provides for all our needs of body and soul” (LSB collect for Day of Thanksgiving). For Christ’s sake, God cares about our earthly lives, providing our physical necessities and healing our diseases according to His will (Philippians 4:19), and He cleanses us from the leprosy of sin, that we might live eternally with Him. God’s continual provision requires not only our continual praise and thanks but serves as proof that God loves each life that He has created and desires that we would do the same.

November 29 – Advent 1 – “Love does no wrong to a neighbor” (Romans 13:10). Since abortion, abuse, neglect, and assisted suicide all seek to intentionally harm another person, they can never be called an act of love, regardless of the circumstances. True love, which is the fulfillment of God’s holy Law (Romans 13:10), always seeks the benefit of another, just as Christ our Lord came to us in humility (Matthew 21:5) to seek not His own good but the present and eternal good of the world through His death and resurrection.

December 6 – Advent 2 – Fathers are often the forgotten part of the abortion discussion. Sadly, many women are pressured into destroying the lives of their children by that child’s own father. In grace, our Heavenly Father sends us the greater Elijah, His Son Jesus, “who turns the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers” (Malachi 4:5) by destroying sin and showing us “God’s” truthfulness (Romans 15:8) through God’s Law and Gospel. In Christ, sinners not only have the hope of eternal life, but they are also transformed to “live in harmony with one another” (Romans 15:4-5).

December 13 – Advent 3 – Because of sin, our earthly lives quickly wither and fade like the grass of the field (Isaiah 40:6-7). Many life issues (abortion, human trafficking, assisted suicide, etc.) arise because of our feeble attempts to overcome frailty. Instead of seeing our neighbors as gifts from God, we “pronounce judgments” (1 Corinthians 4:5) and see them as obstacles to be overcome or as means to get what we want. Let us therefore repent and turn to the “One who was to come” (Matthew 11:3), our Lord, who forgives the iniquity of His people and covers all their sin (Psalm 85:2).

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December 20 – Advent 4 – The child in Elizabeth’s womb was clearly a person in every sense of the word. He heard Mary’s voice, felt joy, and leapt in response to stimuli (Luke 1:44). While the Bible is clear that each child is precious from the very moment of conception (Psalm 139:13), it also confirms that even according to modern scientific standards, children in the womb are true persons, worthy of love and dignity. Let us join in “prayer and supplication and with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6) that He would bring an end to abortion.

December 24/25 – The Nativity of our Lord – “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), and in Him is life (John 1:4)! This is the very heart of the For Life message. Our Lord Jesus Christ has sanctified our whole existence as human beings, from the first stage of human life and development until everlasting life. By His holy incarnation, being conceived in the Virgin Mary, growing in her womb, and being born as an ordinary man in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-6), Jesus has endowed every human life, from conception onward, with immeasurable worth.

December 27 – Christmas 1 – Simeon praised God and exclaimed that he was ready to depart this life because he had the privilege of seeing and holding his salvation in the infant Christ (Luke 2:29-30). We can have that same confident approach to death because, like Simeon, we are allowed to see and hold our Saviour and our salvation through the preaching of the Word and the reception of the Sacrament. We do not need to fear death, nor do we look to death as the answer to our suffering. Instead, as God’s adopted children (Galatians 4:5), we allow God to determine the hour of our departure.

Life Thoughts in the Church Year for October-December 2026 were written by Rev. Andrew Harris, Bear Creek, Wisconsin, and Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske, Executive Director of Lutherans For Life.