

# *Trinity Te Deum*

*The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church  
1207 West 45 Street Austin, Texas 78756  
Interim Pastor Brock Abbott – (512) 453-3835 Church  
Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM  
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## **When The Great Things Of God Don't Seem So Great**

Much of American Christianity likes to bill itself as the solution to every problem down here, as if Christianity is a cure for every personal and societal ailment imaginable. It is true that everything will be cured when we depart from this world and enter the new creation, but for as long as we live down here, things are not always going to go the way in which we want them to go. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. And the Lord doesn't issue to his people a blank check to be cashed at the first bank of this life (trust me, I've asked many times for a blank check and the answer is always "No!") Read the Scriptures and look intently at the lives of the children of God, and even though there are some amazingly high moments, they are also tossed this way and that way during their journey down here. I have found that any study about a believer in Scripture will help to take away the delusion about a guaranteed good life when you become a child of God.

Mary is a great example of this. It seems to me that if anyone should have had the easy life down here it should have been her, after all, she was chosen to be the mother of Christ. But just look at her. We know that she is in poverty. In pregnancy, she is uprooted and travels fully pregnant to the town of Bethlehem, and nothing is mentioned in Scripture of her riding on a donkey. No one will move out of the inn for this young woman who is about to give birth. And can you imagine having your first child with the lovely smell of animal feces and urine? Try to picture this new mother taking her baby boy and putting him in a place where animals put their

mouths and eat. How sanitary was that? And then, she finds herself visited by complete strangers - by lowly shepherds - certainly not the upper crust of society. How would our faith in God's goodness hold up in a situation like that? With the arrival of the wise men, the holy family gets to flee for their lives, as a tyrannical king is out to kill the child.

We look at this from our perspective and gasp, but God was doing great things. Everything that was happening to Mary was about God's care for her and the salvation of mankind. We learn much about the Savior in the circumstances revolving around His birth. And lest we forget, we can learn much from the example of Mary. She was a flesh and blood woman, a sinner like you and me, and still, she held up under the situation. Our text (Luke 2:19) remarkably says that she "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." These things were valuable to Mary – treasure - good memories to be carefully considered. There isn't any hint that she was filled with bitter resentment or grumbling against the Mighty God who had placed these things in her life. Still, she had the sinful flesh, and we know that wasn't perfect.

Anyway, the point is this: there are those times in our lives When the Great Things of God Don't Seem So Great. So, how do you react when you find that things are not going in the way in which you wanted them to go? What do you do when you find yourself being tossed this way and that way? How we answer those questions will say a lot about our relationship with God as saints and sinners. And so, it is important for us to consider the

ongoing struggle between contentment and resentment.

There are many examples in the Bible of what not to be, and we often see ourselves in them. The Israelites were expert grumblers, so it seems. At certain times and in various ways, God would demonstrate his awesome power to the people and deliver them in His great mercy. However, the Israelites would allow their tough situations to get the best of them. It was as if they discounted the love of God when things weren't going their way. They would reject God's Word and do their thing. They would set their hearts on evil, and rebel and test the Lord. They refused to believe that the great things of God were also to be found in adversity where we are taught to trust in Him and rely not on our own understanding.

For example, in Exodus fourteen they are miraculously crossing the sea. In the fifteenth chapter they grumble about not finding water to drink, as if the Lord had totally forgotten them. The Lord wonderfully makes bitter water sweet for them. By the sixteenth chapter they are grumbling against God about food, and just listen to what they say: "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death." He gives them manna and quail to eat. In the seventeenth chapter, they once again grumble about their lack of water. God then graciously causes water to come from a rock. This cycle goes on and on. Paul remarks in 1 Corinthians 10:5, "Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert."

Paul also states in six verses later (10:11) that "these things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come." It is a serious matter when we resent God for the life that we have down here. No doubt there are those moments When the Great Things of God Don't Seem So Great, and we struggle hard. The danger is that we forget how the Lord has loved us at the cross and empty tomb. He continues to love us in every time

of life and has one thing in mind for us: Our entrance into heaven. The love of God in Christ is designed to push back those times when we might become resentful of the things that the Lord has allowed. God forbid that in our resentment we set our hearts on evil things and test the Lord. May He forgive us for those moments when we have failed and bring us to a sure and certain truth of His unfailing love for us at the cross.

I don't know all that you may be going through in life right now. Things may be very difficult for you on account of a wide variety of reasons. God invites all of us to lean on His love for us in Christ, and by the power of the Spirit, to exercise our faith in these circumstances. He bids us to know and believe that He is always doing great things in our lives that are ultimately designed for our salvation. He really loves us in everything. Paul says in that familiar passage in Romans 8:28, "in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." It is a lot easier to quote this verse than to *really* live it. Nevertheless, we should always keep in mind that God has a plan for us, and it is a wonderful plan. All aspects of this plan lead us to heaven forever.

When the Great Things of God Don't Seem So Great we need to ask God to give us the same eyes of faith that Mary had during her adversities. By the grace of God, she was able to take the events of her life and place them in the proper context of God's purpose for her. She treasured the things of Christ in her heart. And what was God's purpose for her life? With the burden of carrying and raising the Messiah, God's purpose was her salvation from sin, death, and the devil. Consequently, she was able to look at all the upheaval and see it as something to be treasured. She pondered the happenings of her life in the context of God's holy Word and His forever plan for her. We will do well to learn this lesson and apply it to our own existence.

Why is it that your life isn't quite the life you wanted? Why is it that this and that is happening contrary to your hopes and dreams? Well, we may never be able to answer these questions with

complete detail in this lifetime, but we can take these things that are happening and place them in their proper context. And that proper context is always the cross at Calvary and the victory of our King. What was it that kept Mary from concluding that God might be against her? No doubt, she held on to that Word of promise that had been given to her by God through the angel Gabriel: “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end (Luke 1:30-33).”

The Son of the Most High came into this world to live a perfect life for us. He came to die for our sins. He is the truest expression of God’s love for us. All eyes are to look to Him for the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation. All those who believe in Him have every good gift from God. And since He reigns over the house of Jacob forever, everything must ultimately go well for those who are of the house of Jacob by faith. We are a part of that house of Jacob. What then, shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Paul reminds us in Romans (8:37), “we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” Yes, we are more than conquerors whether we have our children in a stable or in the most luxurious palace known to man. We are more than conquerors whether life is easy or difficult. It is this truth that keeps our perspective straight as we live each day of our lives.

The apostle Paul states in Philippians 4:12-13, “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through Him who gives me strength.” These are the words of a man who, by grace, was resigned to God’s design because he knew the design was always in the cross of forgiveness and the anticipation of heaven. In the same way, when Mary heard everything from the

angel she said: “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said (Luke 1:38).” We may say these things with them because of the blessed gift of faith that God has planted in us by his Spirit. Trusting in Christ for every good gift removes resentment. We have contentment in knowing that we are in the hands of a God who truly loves us and gives us every good thing. Being in His hands is the best place to be.

No matter how tangled the weave of our life may become, since we are in the hands of a loving God, we can be sure that His love for us will prevail. His purpose and plan for us is always good. The well-known Lutheran writer, who is now transferred to heaven by his confession, Dr. Herman W. Gockel once quoted a poem that I would like to pass on to you. The author of the poem is unknown, but it is obvious that this person had learned the secret of contentment [I have updated some of the wording].

My Life is but a weaving  
Between my Lord and me;  
I cannot choose the colors  
He [works] steadily.  
Oftentimes He [weaves] sorrow  
And I in foolish pride  
Forget He sees the “upper”  
And I the “under” side.

Not till the loom is silent  
And the shuttles cease to fly,  
[Will] God unroll the canvas  
And explain the reason why  
The dark threads are as needful  
In the Weaver’s skillful hand  
As the threads of gold and silver  
In the pattern HE has planned.<sup>1</sup>

1. Herman W. Gockel, *Answer to Anxiety*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965), 115-116.



# These are No Ordinary Times

Paul Batura  
focusonthefamily.com  
June 17, 2024

ABC Radio newsman, Paul Harvey, was best known for his daily broadcasts that featured his captivating storytelling. He was Twitter before the advent of the tweet. Snappy, succinct and showcasing an ability to write an entire paragraph in a single sentence, he ruled the radio for over 60 years.

Perspective was another intangible quality he brought to the airwaves, including this phrase he said regularly:

“In times like these, it’s important to remember there have always been times like these.”

A devout Christian believer, Harvey was echoing King Solomon, who wrote in Ecclesiastes: “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun” (1:9).

In difficult or challenging times, it can be comforting or even reassuring to recognize history’s long and seemingly repetitive arc. The names change but sin and vices do not. The quest for power, money, sex and fame manifests across all recorded time.

Yet, every day is unique and important, not to be dismissively waved away. It’s true there is nothing new under the sun, but that doesn’t mean new challenges surrounding old issues don’t manifest. Especially for the Christian believer, a “been there, done that” attitude can be a shortsighted and shallow response to the times. A dangerous one, too.

Apathy allows evil to take root, the abnormal to seem normal, and the unacceptable to eventually become acceptable. The Lord is sovereign, but He still uses us in significant and critical ways. When we ignore needs, we’re showing we don’t care. It was Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel who observed, “The opposite of love is not hate, it’s indifference.”

What we’re living through in 2024 is neither ordinary nor anything like our forefathers experienced.

Simply put, these are not ordinary times. It’s not time for business as usual. These are extraordinary times, and they demand an extraordinary response from followers of Jesus Christ.

Fundamental truths are being upended. Elites and radicals are questioning, challenging, and discarding multi-millennia beliefs in such things as the existence of two immutable genders. The exclusivity of one-man, one-woman marriage is considered a hate crime in some circles. The importance of mothers and fathers, including their rightful authority in the home and classroom has also somehow become controversial.

There’s been a debate raging for over a half-century regarding the legality of abortion, but many are counting on their support of the slaughter of innocent babies to get them either elected or reelected. They’re championing death and are proud of the association.

We’re living in a time where words are constantly being corrupted to say things that just aren’t true. “Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind,” warned George Orwell.

No, these are not ordinary times.

It’s not ordinary to kill babies as a means of “empowering women.” It’s not ordinary to sexually exploit children on social media or commodify them through surrogacy or fertility treatments that create children and then destroy the ones who don’t measure up. It’s not ordinary to brainwash children in the public school with radical propaganda.

These times demand boldness, courage and guts. They call for us to sacrifice our reputation for the sharing of truth – and maybe swallow our pride by loving and serving those who may despise us for our beliefs. I’m reminded of what a pastor friend

once told me: “I’m conservative in my theology, but liberal in my fellowship.”

Extraordinary times call for us to take action. Depending on where you are in life, this might mean praying in your home, or working or volunteering outside of it. It for sure means getting our own homes in order. Hypocrites are chronically ineffective.

Conviction is needed to stand up against the attacks from the radicals and the bullies. Patience is needed to withstand the delay of justice as we engage in our time but wait on the Lord.

Embrace the words of Joshua: “Have I not commanded you be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go” (1:9).

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## Concerning the Name “Lutheran”

*The following article (“Concerning the Name “Lutheran””) was written by C. F. W. Walther in “Der Lutheraner” 1 (1884): 2-4, 5-7, 9-12. The article was written 140 years ago and still answers questions that are asked by a new generation. It is in three parts. In each part, a question is raised regarding the name “Lutheran” and then answered. The questions are: 1) Is it wrong to use such a name? 2) What does it mean to be a Lutheran? and 3) Why do we keep this name? It was translated by Mark Nispel in June 2019 and is in the public domain. In this issue of Te Deum, we present the first question and answer.*

## Concerning the Name “Lutheran”

by C.F.W. Walther  
Translated by Mark Nispel

### PART I - September 1, 1844

#### A. Is it wrong to use such a name?

Isn’t it wrong to use the name “Lutheran?” We did not shy from giving our periodical the title *Der Lutheraner* (The Lutheran) and so we consider it our duty to give answer to those who might ask us

what this name means and why we would use it. There have been many people at all times, as we well know, that have been offended that the Lutheran Church should be named after Luther, or any man. ‘Why’, they ask, ‘can’t everyone see in light of this that this church could not be the true church of Christ but instead only the work of a man, a sect?’ ‘Indeed,’ says another, ‘you Lutherans should read what St. Paul says about such names of men. In 1 Corinthians 1 and 3 he says: “it has been reported to me that there is discord among you. I am speaking of the fact that among you one says: I am of Paul! And another, I am of Apollo! And a third, I am of Christ! How can this be? Is Christ divided? Has Paul been crucified for you? Or are you baptized in the name of Paul? — So, one says: I am of Paul! The other, I am of Apollo! Are you then not fleshly? Who is Paul and who is Apollo? They are servants through whom you believed.” Are you listening, Lutherans? It is cried out to us: Don’t you do the same thing the holy apostle condemns here in Corinthians when you name yourselves Lutherans? You continuously say that one should always follow the letter of the Scripture precisely, then why do you not do so here?’

There are not a few honest Lutherans who become quite embarrassed when this is said to them by our opponents. But this accusation is so fictitious that it will be shown to be without basis as soon as we consider the matter more closely. First, it is a mistake if it is believed that Lutherans took this name for themselves. History reports to us instead that they were first given this name by their opponents in order to insult them. Dr. Eck, who held that well known disputation with Luther in Leipzig, was the first to call those who held to Luther’s teaching by that name. We see clearly what Luther thought of this in a writing which he completed in 1522: Admonition Against Insurrection, in which he says among other things:

I ask that my name be left silent, and people not call themselves Lutheran, but rather Christians. Who is Luther? The doctrine is not mine. I have been crucified for no one. St. Paul in 1 Cor. 3:4-5 would not suffer that

the Christians should call themselves of Paul or of Peter, but Christian. How should I, a poor stinking bag of worms, become so that the children of Christ are named with my unholy name? It should not be dear friends. Let us extinguish all factious names and be called Christians whose doctrine we have. The pope's men rightly have a factious name because they are not satisfied with the doctrine and name of Christ and want to be with the pope, who is their master. I have not been and will not be a master. Along with the church I have the one general teaching of Christ who alone is our Master. (Matt. 23:8).

This judgment of Luther is as clear as the sun. He did not want, in any way, that the church should be named after him and even less did he want this to happen for his own glory.

Let no one imagine that in and of itself it is wrong when Christians let themselves be named after a man. This is shown undeniably by the fact that the church of the Old Testament was named by God himself after a man. What did He call them? - The Israelites. Didn't Christ himself say of Nathaniel: "See, a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false!" What was Israel? He was a man. Therefore, it is clear, it depends on the sense in which the children of God are named after a man. In that alone can there be sin?

In which sense and on what grounds did the Corinthians name themselves of Paul, of Apollo, of Cephas, of Christ? In this fashion, as we can read, they wanted to separate themselves from one another. Although Paul, Apollo, and Peter (or Cephas) taught one and the same thing, the Corinthians rejected the others when they chose one. They separated themselves from one another by taking on a name and setting up factions. The sin for which Paul rebukes the Corinthians exists not only in that they named themselves after a man, but instead that by doing this among those who had the same orthodox doctrine they wanted to establish divisions. Therefore, the apostle himself rejects the name "of Christ" as the name of a sect (which some

of them were using) when they wanted to establish division with it. Paul does this even though this last name is not taken from a man but from the Son of God himself.

Now true Lutherans have never named themselves after Luther in this forbidden sense. With this their name they have never wanted to depart or separate from other orthodox teachers. They declare their allegiance as Lutherans to Athanasius and all true teachers of the Gospel in all times and lands just as much as to Luther. Luther himself was far from wanting to be the only true teacher. He publicly writes among other things about a friend, the Württemberg theologian Brentius: "I value your books so highly that my books entirely stink when I compare them to your books and those like them. I am not mocking you here. I am not dreaming, and I am not saying something to insult you. I will not be deceived by my judgment, for I am not praising Brentius, but the Spirit that is in you is much friendlier, and full of love and joy than the Spirit in me." Certainly no one speaks this way if he is trying to lead a sect. But Luther speaks this way because he wants to be nothing more than a witness of the truth.

Therefore, we do not call ourselves Lutherans after him in the same way that we are called Christians on account of Christ. We are not called such because we believe in Luther. As highly as we treasure this vigorous witness, in our church we still do not accept so much as a word in matters of faith simply because Luther said it. Rather, we accept his words only in the instance that it can be shown written clearly in the Word of God. We do not accept him as any apostle or prophet but rather we know that he was subject to error and sin like other men. He is not the head of our church. He is not our pope. Therefore, whoever accepts everything in blind faith simply because Luther said it is separated from the true Lutheran church as far as earth is from heaven and day is from night.

In this manner then Luther wrote to Melancthon in 1530 who was at the Imperial Council in Augsburg [confessing the Lutheran faith to the Emperor and the Roman Catholic Church]: "It does not please me

in your letter that you write that you have me as the head of this matter and have followed it on account of my reputation. I do not want to direct or command anything, nor will I be called the author. And even if someone might find some kind of correct understanding in using that word, I do not want it. Isn't this matter likewise yours and does it not fit you as well as me, therefore one may not say that it is mine." Just as Luther refused any improper esteem in the church, so our church has not improperly honored him. Just as it says in the beginning of the Formula of Concord, which is one of the most important public confessions of the orthodox Lutherans:

We believe, teach, and confess that the one rule and guide, according to which all doctrine and teachers should be judged is the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and new Testaments alone. Other writings of old and new teachers whatever their name should not be considered equal to the Holy Scriptures, but rather all of them together one with another are subject to it and together are taken only as witnesses of how much and at which places after the time of the apostles such doctrine of the apostles and prophets were kept.

So finally, we ask ourselves, do we call ourselves Lutherans in order to show that we cling to a new doctrine which Luther first 300 years ago brought forward? And do we thereby show that we want to belong to a new church, which was instituted by itself? May that never be so! We name ourselves not as the Arians are named after Arius, or as the Dominicans after Dominicus. Luther did not preach any new doctrine but rather the ancient doctrine of the eternal Gospel. He did not stray from the ancient true church, which is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the Cornerstone. He only left, yes, actually was thrown out, of that church which had fallen and misused the name of the 'catholic' church in order to bind the conscience with their laws of men. To show this thoroughly is the very goal we had in mind when we started this publication. In the first place, we

refer our readers to only one witness of Luther himself, from which it is clear to see that he did not intend to spread his own human ideas but rather was driven by the Word of God. So, among other things he says at the close of his splendid Church postil:

Oh, that God would, that the explanation of God's Word by me and all teachers would perish, and each Christian would take up the nude Scriptures. You see from this my prattle, how unlike God's Word is compared to the word of all men, how no man is able to properly attain and illumine one of God's words by all of his own words. My and all other explanations of men would be nothing, yes, only a hindrance to him who can enter it without glosses and explanations. Therefore, go in, go in dear Christian. And leave my and all other explanations be a mere step unto the real building, so that we may cling to the nude clear Word of God itself, taste it and remain there, for God lives only in Zion.

Even Luther's most bitter enemy must agree that it was the holy Scriptures above all that he insisted upon and spread among the people. To prove this, I will bring forward only one quote from the writings of a Roman Catholic author, a certain Florenundus Raemundus, who otherwise wrote entirely against the Protestants and had taken part in the persecution of them. He said in his History of the Origin . . . of the Heresies of the 16th Century:

The common people concerned themselves (in Luther's time) mostly with the Bible, which was translated into the mother language. It was seen in the houses and lay upon the tables. The common worker had the Bible in his workplace and the women lay it upon their knees. The entire world busied itself with the reading of the Bible. The sects which were armed with these books, whenever they came upon a priest or someone from another spiritual order, immediately began an argument with these books. One demanded that he should be shown from Scripture the mass, another purgatory, another infant baptism, another

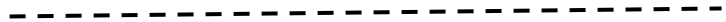
the Trinity. Finally, they wanted all articles of faith to be proven with express Words and rejected the unwritten Word of God and the apostolic precepts. For the arch heretic Luther had taught: The Scripture (and he authorized everyone to explain it) is alone the judge of all arguments in religion.

Who could have given a more delightful picture of the awakening of a new life through the old truth in the time of the Reformation and who could defend Luther better against the complaint that he brought forward new doctrine than this zealous follower of the people? Let us hear Luther himself as to whether Luther despised the true church and wanted to create a new church. He wrote among other things in 1532 Against Certain Mob Spirits:

I would rather allow the wisdom and laws not only of all mob spirits but also of all emperors, kings and princes to witness against me, than hear or see one iota or tittle of the entire Christian church against me. Indeed, one should not jest with articles of the faith, which were held in unison from the beginning wherever Christianity was found. That is not like jesting with the laws of the pope or the emperor, or other human traditions of the fathers or councils.

From this, one sees that Luther in no way despised the church as is so often said, but rather that he was

an obedient son of it. As little as Luther followed the reputation of any man, yet he did not want in any way to stand on his own feet on a false way in dark self-centeredness as so many have done. He believed that through all the centuries there had remained an orthodox church. He then asked above all how that church had taught at all times. The witness of the true church and agreement with it especially mattered to him. He considered her to be a pillar and foundation of the truth [1 Tim. 3:15] and wanted to follow it and be a member of the whole great army of the orthodox teachers of the church from the time of the Apostles until his time. That one must hear and obey the church (Matt. 18:7), was never denied by Luther. That is not the matter of contention which of old has been argued between the Lutheran and Roman churches. But the question is instead whether one must obey those who take the authority of the church as their own because they have the office of the church among them but use it to command something which is contrary to the Gospel. That is what Luther denied. He maintained that if one should not hear the voice of Christ, He would also not hear the voice of His bride, His true church. Instead, such a one would have the false prophets, who carry the name of the church as if in sheep's clothing under which they try to conceal the ravaging wolf. Luther departed from these false prophets, who would not allow a true reformation, but not form the Church.



Trinity Lutheran Church  
1207 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street, Austin, TX 78756  
512.453.3835  
[www.trinityaustin.com](http://www.trinityaustin.com)  
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## OCTOBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	14	15 SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING 7:00 PM	16	17	18	19
20 VICAR KILLION NO COMMUNION	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 VICAR KILLION NO COMMUNION REFORMATION DINNER 11:30	28	29	30	31		

## NOVEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 PASTOR KEISTMAN W/ HOLY COMMUNION	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 VICAR KILLION NO COMMUNION	11	12 VOTERS MEETING 7:00 PM	13	14	15	16
17 VICAR KILLION NO COMMUNION	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 PASTOR BROCK W/ HOLY COMMUNION	25	26	27 THANKSGIVING EVE W/ PASTOR ROTH 7:30 PM	28	29	30

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OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2024