Dear Siblings in Christ,

This weekend at Emmanuel, we celebrate WELCA Thankoffering Weekend, giving thanks for the faithful witness, generosity, and ministry of the women of our congregation and throughout the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The tradition of Thankofferings stretches back more than a century. In 1889, Lutheran women gathered for their first Thankoffering service, collecting gifts to support the mission of the church. Many kept small offering boxes in their homes, adding coins whenever they recognized a blessing from God. What began with small acts of gratitude grew into a lasting tradition of generosity and service.

Our Scripture readings this weekend remind us that women have long played essential roles in God's unfolding story.

In Judges 4:4–10, we meet Deborah, a prophet and judge who leads God's people with wisdom and courage. In John 20:11–18, we encounter Mary Magdalene standing outside the empty tomb. Overwhelmed by grief, Mary hears the risen Jesus call her by name. Then Jesus sends her to share the good news with the disciples. Mary becomes the first witness to the resurrection, proclaiming, "I have seen the Lord!"

Two women. Two very different moments in history. Yet both remind us of something important: God calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things through faith.

That same Spirit continues to work through the women of our church today. Through their leadership, generosity, compassion, and service, they bear witness to the love of Christ in countless ways.

Thankofferings are more than an opportunity to give financially. They remind us that generosity is our response to God's grace. We don't give to earn God's blessings. We give because we have already been blessed.

This weekend, we give thanks for the women of Emmanuel and for all those whose faithful witness continues to strengthen Christ's church.

How is God calling us to turn gratitude into action?

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Will