

Hope Highlights

A publication of Hope Ev. Lutheran Church
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November 2024

"O Give Thanks Unto the Lord for He Is Good!"

It was early November 1929. A group of pastors had gathered to discuss how they should conduct their Thanksgiving worship services later that month. Things in our nation were about as bad as they could get, with no sign of relief. The bread lines were depressingly long, the stock market had plummeted, unemployment skyrocketed. Fear and depression gripped hearts and minds of young and old alike. The term *Great Depression* seemed an apt description for the mood of our country.

The pastors agreed they should only lightly touch upon the subject of Thanksgiving in light of the human misery all about them. After all, there was little to be thankful for. But one lone voice spoke up and rallied the forlorn group. This was NOT the time, he suggested, to give mere passing mention to Thanksgiving; just the opposite. This was the time for the nation to get matters in perspective and thank God for blessings always present, but too often taken for granted and suppressed by hardship.

I would suggest to you, my friends in Christ, that pastor was echoing the words of St. Paul to the Philippians: *"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 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 Christ who gives me strength**"* (4:12-13). Isn't it true that the most intense moments of thankfulness are **not** found in times of plenty, but rather when difficulties abound?

Think of the Pilgrims that first Thanksgiving. The pilgrims arrived off the wintry coast of Cape Cod in late fall of 1620. The winter of 1621 was a terrible winter. That year, of the 101 people who had arrived, 55 of them died, and every family was touched by suffering, hunger, sickness and death. Only 46 of them survived. And so that spring, with the kind help of Squanto and the native Indians, the 46 weary survivors planted their crops and prayed; how they prayed that spring and summer! And God blessed them, and they had an abundant harvest. In the fall of 1621, Governor Bradford sent this message to Chief Massasoit, "It is by the goodness of our great God that we are free from want. We invite you to be partakers of our plenty." The scant, surviving records of those early days in Plymouth

Colony, do not focus on matters of hardship, deprivation, suffering and death. It does relate what its writers thought was most important for following generations to understand – that it was an unshakable faith in God that sustained these pilgrims through unspeakable hardships and that their thankfulness and gratitude flowed from truly grateful hearts. You see, their gratitude was not for something, but rather for **SOMEONE** – their loving and caring God.

You may be experiencing your own personal “great depression,” be it illness, separation from loved ones and friends, loneliness and you wonder what do I have to be thankful for this Thanksgiving? **Days of adversity are always a true test of our faith and gratitude.** St. Paul’s secret can be ours as well: *“I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.”* And **in** and **with** and **through** the strength and assurance that is ours in Jesus Christ, we, too, have that peace of God which transcends all understanding, which guards our hearts and our minds and our lives in Jesus, our Savior and our Lord. Thanks be to our God because He is the Giver and the Forgiver. For the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ, who sacrificed His life for every one of us, God gives and God forgives. In that forgiveness of His there is life and salvation. In Jesus Christ, we have it all – and that includes the faith to live with courage, optimism and hope – even in difficult times. Thanks be to our great God!

Almighty and Gracious God, we thank You for Your fatherly care and provision; for our daily bread and the nourishing fruits of the earth; and for all the good things with which You, O Lord, abundantly bless us. We ask You, grant us grace to treasure these blessings of Your gracious heart and bounteous hand, using them with thankfulness and care, so that we may serve our children and the needs of the poor with Your good gifts, and ever thank and praise You, the Giver all good, Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, throughout all eternity. Amen.

Gratefully remembering the abundance of our blessings and the Giver of those blessings, you and I will know how to give genuine, heartfelt thanks and praise this Thanksgiving! From my heart to yours, a truly blessed Thanksgiving!

Pastor Albert



"Come, You Thankful People, Come!"

Wednesday, November 27

4:00 PM

Weekday School & Confirmation Instruction Classes will NOT meet on Wednesday, November 27th. Classes will resume on Wednesday, December 4th.



Hope Congregation Thanksgiving Luncheon
Sunday, November 24 - During Fellowship

If you would be willing to provide a food item for this meal, a sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board in the Narthex.

Sacred Music from *Lutheran Public Radio*

Lutheran Public Radio streams *Sacred Music for the World*, 24/7, following the course of the Church Year. Listen anytime, anywhere. Check it out: lutheranpublicradio.org

November Birthdays & Wedding Anniversaries

Birthdays . . .

2 Gary Steffen
3 Gage Testini
14 Jill James
23 Gene Hojan
28 Kathi Schultz

Anniversaries . . .

3 Tom & Darleen Behling
8 Bill & Rin Hansen
9 Dave & Bonnie Deutsch
12 Tom & Alicia Johnson
13 Ken & Judy Boksa
Gary & Sallee Gehrt

Thank You . . .

- to all who donated clothing items for the ministry of **Orphan Grain Train**. A hearty thank you to Joan Hojan who packed and transported all the donations to the drop-off center at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Wausau. Your support of people in need is greatly appreciated!
- to all donated to the special offering for those whose lives and livelihoods have been impacted by the devastation resulting from hurricanes Helene and Milton. A total of \$2,256.00 was sent to our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Disaster Relief Fund. Thank you for your generous support!

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD - Samaritan's Purse (a Christian organization) is again sponsoring the **Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Project**. Hope Ladies have done this in the past with heart-warming experiences. We would like to do at least 15-20 boxes. The suggested list for boys and girls is on the table in the hallway, you may take one, but please NO pens, pencils or colored pencils. We have plenty from a previous donation. All items need to be at church by **Sunday, November 10th**. Cash may be put in an envelope marked '**CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES**' and put in the offering basket. This would help with shipping expenses of \$10 per box. For additional information, please contact Joan Hojan.

Wooden Flower Workshop - A Christmas wooden flower making class is planned for **Saturday, November 9th, from 1 - 3 PM**. Cost: \$30; registration and payment are due by November 3rd. Mary Noordyk will be our instructor. Registration forms are the shelves in the Narthex.

As Election Day Approaches - A Prayer for Christian Participation in Politics

Gracious Father, You rule the world with unfathomable wisdom, power, and love. We now ask Your blessing as we enter a time of national vulnerability as we conduct our national free election. Do not permit the enemies of this great country to disturb, distract, or derail us from the goals of an honest and safe election. Encourage the citizens of this land to turn out and vote. Cause believers everywhere to participate in our democratic process, ensuring the continued freedoms guaranteed by our constitution. Remind us that no matter what the outcome is, You work in all things for the good of those who love You. Lead us to renew our thankfulness for Your guiding hand and to serve as volunteers in our local elections. And in so doing, may we shine the light of Jesus as a reflection of Your incredible love in this dark world. Amen.

Special Gifts Received during October . . . We express our gratitude to . . .

Kurt & Beverly Ahlborn - Thank offering

Jan Bathke - Thank offering

Ron Clesen - Thank offering

Tim & Candy Cook - Thank offering

Tom & Dawn Kind - Thank offering

Mark & Megan Tanney - Thank offering

David & Jill Byers - Thank offering

Bill & Ellen Minchk - In memory of Mary Lee Minchk Pedretti - Faith, Hope, and Love Campaign

Tom & Darleen Behling - Faith, Hope, and Love Campaign

Barb & Mary Natzke - Faith, Hope, and Love Campaign

Terry Kind - Thank offering

Craft Club



Come join us for crafts and conversation on Wednesday, November 6. The group meets the first Wednesday of each month from 10:00am-Noon at Hope. Bring whatever you want to work on or just join us for coloring, conversation and fellowship. Members, friends and the community at large are welcome to attend this ongoing event. The group will continue to meet throughout the year. Come check us out and bring a friend! Questions? Talk with Vicky Holbrook.

Women of Hope will be collecting hand sanitizer and toilet tissue for the Headwaters Food Panty during November. You may place your donations in the basket in the Narthex. Thank you for your support!



The **Women of Hope** will be collecting **Mite Boxes**, money for **Lutheran Women's Missionary League** mission projects, on **Sunday, November 3rd**. If you still need a mite box, they are on the table by the front door. Thank you for your support of mission outreach.

Be sure to vote! Remember, elections have consequences!

Parish Update

Call Update

A call was extended to Rev. Steven Hulke of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, Stevens Point, Wisconsin in September. Pastor Hulke and his wife Olivia visited Hope on September 30 and October 1 to a meet and greet. On October 11, 2024, Pastor Hulke informed us that he was declining the call to Hope. The Call Committee met on Monday, October 14, 2024, to review additional candidates from the lists provided by the North Wisconsin District. The Committee identified additional candidates for possible interviews. Three interviews were scheduled. The Committee will keep the congregation informed if any of the candidates will be considered for a call.

Faith, Hope and Love Campaign

The Lord continues to bless Hope Lutheran. More than \$43,000 has been given to the Faith, Hope and Love Campaign. At our recent voters' assembly, the congregation approved an aggressive budget that includes a full-time pastor and benefits, in addition to a part time secretary and an organist. The Faith, Hope and Love Campaign was started to assist us in meeting the needs of the congregation as we move forward in faith to share the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

Pastor Albert this past Sunday assured us that our Lord and Savior is always with us on our journey. Our God is faithful and He will never leave us. Brochures and special envelopes for the campaign are available on the shelves in the Narthex.

Jim Holbrook, Chairman

Father, We Thank You!

Thanks to God that He is God! Thanks to God for who He is and what He does! Without the grace of God, how could we live? Without giving thanks to God for what He is and what He does, how can we be truly human and genuinely alive? In His goodness and grace, God sent His eternal Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of the world. In His goodness and grace, God sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts of people like us so that they may believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

Out of His fatherly goodness and grace, God gives us resources of mind and heart to be used for His glory and for the benefit of all, beginning with our own families for whom He has given us responsibility and extending to those who need our help. Out of His goodness and grace, He gives bread for today in the form of resources for whatever we need to support this body and life, along with mind and heart to use those resources intelligently in provision for tomorrow. All are gifts from Him, to be used in faith and received with thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is missing from most of life in this self-centered world. After all, why be thankful to God when you have accomplished everything on your own? The problem is not that we have so little, it is that we are so little. Thinking and thanking go together. An unthinking person is never thankful. Only big people - big with faith and love toward God - give thanks. Thinking people thank God for He is the Giver and the Forgiver. Thanks to God that He is God. Thanks to God for Jesus Christ and for the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Thanks to God for faith to live with courage and joy. Thanks to God for people who help and care for one another out of faith and love. It is a godly thing to do, to give thanks to God! *"Now we thank You, our God, and praise Your glorious name!"*