



St Paul's of German Lake

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November 2022

Pastor Karl's Ponderings

As Christians, we frequently use the word blessing. We often speak of God's blessings. As many of you know, I usually end my e-mails and other correspondence with the salutation of "blessings." As a pastor, I lay my hands on young children at the communion rail and offer them a blessing. I have done something similar at dozens of confirmation services as I lay my hands on a confirmand's head and offer a prayer similar to the one, we say for a child at their baptism. During a Christian healing service, when a word of blessing...a word of grace and power...is offered through prayer and the anointing of oil, participants discover that God's grasp on their lives is more powerful than the grip of any ailment that may afflict us.

It has been six months since my installation as your pastor. On that day, Pastor Barb Streed blessed me by laying her hands on my head and offering a prayer for our ministry together here at St. Paul's. It sent shivers up and down my spine. I felt those same shivers at my ordination and every one of my installation services.

Like many "theological" words, we use the word "blessing" a lot, but do we really understand what it means?

Blessings are powerful. To bless another person involves more than sharing some vague expression of goodwill, though we often do that when we bless someone who sneezes. The act of blessing actually transfers a portion of our soul's energy and vitality into the soul of another. Maybe that explains the shivers I experience.

Blessing another person can feel awkward and uncomfortable. We're not used to formal blessings outside of the church. However, we frequently bless others in our daily lives. When we bid someone "goodbye", we send them off with an abbreviated version of the blessing, "God be with you". Kissing our spouse or our children is a form of blessing them.

Of course, all blessings find their source in God, and God makes it clear that the blessings aren't to end with the person who receives them. God wants us to be conduits of blessing, not reservoirs. God doesn't bless us just for our own good. Instead, God blesses us for the benefit of others. So, as Christians, we don't spend time counting our blessings. Instead, we give thanks and share them. That was the motivation behind the veggie table at

church this summer. God blessed some of us with a bounty from our gardens...more than we could use. So, instead of hoarding our blessings of abundant produce, we took the opportunity to share them with those without a garden.

Blessing is a sweet spot with God that never ends. We can't seek it out or make it happen. Blessings just come, steadily and persistently, day after day.

As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, may God bless each and every one of you today...and always.

Pastor Karl

*We should certainly count our blessings,
but we should also make our blessings count.*

Neal A. Maxwell



Are you interested in helping out, but not sure what you can help with. Take a look at the projects the women of the church have done. Anything there that might be of interest? Or maybe you have an idea of something new, different or take a project up a notch. If so, contact Virginia McCarthy @ gin5434@yahoo.com / 612-481-9691.



WELCA
PROJECTS.pdf

Music to Our Ears

Each month we plan to include a little article about a favorite hymn. If you have a favorite hymn you would like featured in this space, please send your suggestions to stpaulsofgermanlake@gmail.com. Although it isn't necessary, we would love it if you would include a little story explaining why this is your favorite hymn.

This month's hymn is **Earth and All Stars** by Herbert Brokering and David N. Johnson. It was requested by Cora Hohnstadt, who was curious about the hymn's origin and backstory.



This hymn was written for the 90th anniversary of St. Olaf College in 1964. The chorus, "God has done marvelous things. I, too, will praise him with a new song" is based on Psalm 96:1. Herb Brokering commented that he "tried to gather into a hymn of praise the many facets of life which merge in the life of an academic community. So, there are references to buildings, nature, learning, family, war, and

festivity. Seasons, emotions, death and resurrection, bread, wine, water, wind, and spirit...have made great impressions on my imagination”.



Herbert Brokering, who wrote the lyrics, was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He was born May 26, 1926, in Beatrice Nebraska. He was a celebrated author of more than forty books, a poet, and hymn writer, Lutheran pastor, and teacher. From the early 1980's into the early 2000's he led church groups on pilgrimages to Luther's Germany. In the midst of the Cold War, he was able to sidestep political hurdles so that his groups could meet, worship with, and stay in the homes of Christians behind the Iron Curtain. Throughout his career, Herb crisscrossed the continent giving talks and workshops and hosting many religious events, including Renaissance-Reformation festivals with the Lutheran scholar and writer, Roland Bainton. In 1998, Herb was the keynote speaker for a Parish nurse retreat at Immanuel- St. Joseph's hospital in Mankato. I was blessed to participate in that workshop and get a close-up view of his extremely imaginative mind.

The music was composed by David N. Johnson who was the chair of the music department of St. Olaf College.

Over the years, this lively, unforgettable, hymn has become a favorite of many worshippers. Perhaps it is one of yours as well.

*If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is “thank you”,
it will be enough.*

Meister Eckhart



...Thank you to everybody who took on the “paper towel challenge” to benefit the residents of Ruth's House. There was quite a pile that accumulated in the hallway between the sanctuary and the fellowship hall! Thank you to John and Patricia Peterson for initiating the challenge and matching the congregation's gifts.



...Thank you to all those who made worship possible during October...our readers, ushers, the altar guild (and their helpers), communions assistants, our keyboardists, and those who provided special music. As you can see, it takes many hands to provide worship each Sunday.



...Of course, we can't forget to thank those who provided the treats for our after-worship fellowship time. An important part of Sunday morning is the fellowship we share during that time. It's a time to visit and share our joys and concerns, to meet and get to know others better and build community among our members.



...A special thank you to those who have volunteered to count and record the offerings each week. We are so happy that you are willing to share your time and talents of your talents in this way.

Give thanks for a little, and you will find a lot.

Hausa Proverb



Some thoughts about November...

In Minnesota, the month of November often takes on a somewhat mysterious aura. The days grow noticeably shorter, the trees shed their leaves and begin to appear stark and lifeless. The crops are mostly harvested, our gardens have been dug up or composted, the temperature drops dramatically, the squirrels are busily gathering nuts, and the birds start flying south.

During November, we seem to feel a deep need to pause and ponder the transitory nature of earthly life. On the first Sunday in November, we take time to remember those who have died before us...God's saints. This year, along with those we reflect on from years past, we give thanks for those from St. Paul's who have joined the church triumphant during this past year.

† Mary Ann Dusabek

† Carol Morris

† Marlow Louis Roessler

† Gary Nickels

† ReLou Schwichtenberg

† Roger Hohnstadt

As we reflect on their lives and the ways they touched ours, we find ourselves pondering our own mortality and the promise of eternal life that awaits each of us because of what God has done for us in Christ's death and resurrection which gives us the victory over sin, death, and the devil. The silver lining of death, if there is to be one, is that death ushers us into a new life in the heavenly presence of God.

A couple of Sundays later, we celebrate the festival of Christ the King, which focuses on Jesus's death and the end times. Christ, who died, who is risen, will come again to gather his people and make all things new. Then we, together with all who have died, will be reunited as one around that banquet feast that has no end in God's eternal kingdom.

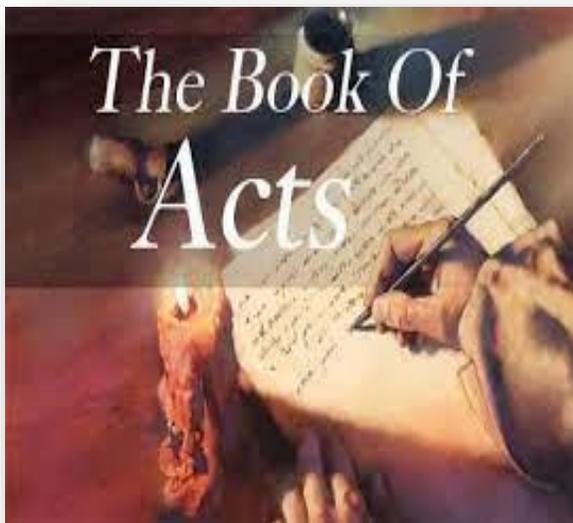
Some folks think that death is too gloomy of a topic for us to talk about. We're afraid of re-opening old wounds, rekindling old heartache and sadness. But death is a very real part of our life experience. Almost everyone you meet carries with them the sorrow and sadness of

having lost someone dear to them to death. To acknowledge that sadness, to provide an opportunity to talk about it, to lift it out of the shadows of fear and bring it into the brilliant light of the risen Christ can help bring healing, hope, and peace to our burdened and broken hearts.

The cycle of life to death to life again is reflected in the natural world around us. The seeds we planted last spring have grown into fullness of life...bearing fruit, vegetables, and grain in bountiful quantity. Now the once vibrant plants have withered and died and returned to the ground, only to come to life again after a long winter's rest. We celebrate and give thanks for this never-ending cycle and the bountiful harvest it has produced to nurture and sustain our lives.

Finally, as we step back and take all of this in, we find that we can't help but be thankful. Thankful for the gift of life, both earthly and eternal...thankful for the gift of family and friends who share this life with us and bring us joy as we share our love with one another...thankful that ours is a God whose love never fails us or forsakes us...a God who always holds us close in His tender loving care.

Bible Study



Although we are a couple of weeks into our study of the Book of Acts, you are invited to join us on **Monday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.** as we explore the fascinating story of the struggles the early Christian church faced as they sought to understand their identity as a new form of religion and proclaim the Gospel to an often-hostile world.

The Book of Acts is like a book of short stories, so you can join us every week and hear the whole story, or come a week here, or a week there, and hear the story we are exploring that week. Come and join us as we dive into this amazing story.



Share your photos

We are asking members to share a few pictures of themselves doing something they like to do for vacation, a passion of yours or just hanging out with family or friends. Whatever you would like to share. The pictures will be added to a multi-picture frame along with names. The picture frames will be hung in the fellowship hall.



NOVEMBER

HEAD USHER – Bob Gress

Ushers –

6th – Curt & Joyce Bohlen

13th – Al & Marlys Boyum

20th – John & Patricia Peterson

27th – John & Tina Mack

Readers –

Nancy Nickels

Patricia Peterson

They walk beside us

THOSE WE LOVE DON'T GO AWAY
THEY WALK BESIDE US EVERY DAY.
UNSEEN, UNHEARD, BUT ALWAYS NEAR
STILL LOVED, STILL MISSED, AND VERY DEAR.