

The Edge

November 2015

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | FOREST HILLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

From the *Pastor's Perspective*

"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." - Colossians 3:17

The Thanksgiving holiday was set late in the autumn in honor of when the Pilgrims celebrated the first Thanksgiving. By coincidence, then, it falls right before Advent, the beginning of the Church Year. Or perhaps it is no coincidence?

Advent is the beginning of the Church Year. The Church Year follows the life of Christ, placing the key events on the yearly calendar year: from the preparation and anticipation of His coming (Advent), the celebration of His birth (Christmas), the arrival of the Magi (Epiphany), the beginning of His public ministry (His Baptism), the preparation and anticipation of His sacrifice on the Cross for human salvation (Ash Wednesday and Lent), the sorrow of His Passion (Holy Week), His death and resurrection (Good Friday and Easter), the coming of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost), and then the time of Christian spiritual growth (the time after Pentecost).

Normally we think of Thanksgiving as a time when we stop to appreciate the harvest, that has grown all season long and is harvested for our blessing. Yet Thanksgiving is also a time for us to stop and take a look at our lives and intentionally give God thanks for all the blessings He has given us throughout the year. In both

continued on page 2

Church Events

Nov 5	10:30 a.m.—Book Club 12:00 p.m.—Sarah Circle
Nov 6	6:30 p.m.—Young Adults
Nov 8	11:30 a.m.—New Member Potluck
Nov 7	7:00 p.m.—Finance Meeting
Nov 11	11:30 a.m.—ROMEOS
Nov 12	1:00 p.m.—UMW 6:30 p.m.—SPRT Meeting
Nov 14	6:00 p.m.—Adult Fellowship
Nov 15	10:00 a.m.—Hymn Sing 11:30 a.m.—Church Conference
Nov 16	6:30 p.m.—Trustees Meeting
Nov 17	7:00 p.m.—Rebecca Circle
Nov 19	7:00 p.m.—Dementia Seminar
Nov 21	7:00 a.m.—Community Care
Nov 25	11:45 a.m.—Eat. Pray. Love. 7:00 p.m.—Thanksgiving Eve Service
Nov 29	11:30 a.m.—Hanging of the Greens

Pastor's Perspective (continued)

senses, Thanksgiving is a time of looking back and being appreciative.

Now, Thanksgiving falls on the last weekend before the beginning of Advent (some years it even falls on the same weekend!). Perhaps Thanksgiving could also be a time of looking forward, when we see the beginning of the Church Year, and celebrate the earthly life of Jesus. Thanksgiving can also be a time of intentional gratitude that our God chose to come as a person, was born at Christmas; lived among us teaching, healing and ministering; suffered humiliation and torture; died and was buried; was raised from the dead; ascended back to heaven; and then sent the blessing of the Holy Spirit to be God among us.

All the other blessings for which we are grateful are actually linked to this supreme gift. The gift of Christ demonstrates most fully God's loving and caring heart. The very nature of our God is a nature of giving of Himself so that we may be blessed. That giving to us is received in the harvest and in every other daily blessings. But most importantly, that giving to us is received in the gift of Jesus and the gift of salvation that He earned for us by His faithful earthly life.

This Thanksgiving, I invite you to look back and notice just how God has continued to bless you. "Count your many blessings, name them one by one" as the old hymn goes. It will give you a

better sense of God's giving and loving nature. But then also look forward. Look forward to the season of Advent and Christmas. Look forward to the blessing we receive because of Jesus in our lives and the salvation we now enjoy. On Thanksgiving, give thanks for the greatest gift of all.

One last note: it seems that for once the annoying commercialism in which we live is actually a blessing. Stores have had Christmas decorations up for at least a month already. Next to them are aisles of Thanksgiving decorations. What a wonderful reminder during Thanksgiving to look ahead and give thanks for Jesus!

Happy Thanksgiving!
Pastor David

Thank You So Much!

Thank you to our whole church for the special Pastor Appreciation gift! SPRT coordinated a very thoughtful gift of a \$250 certificate for a special getaway at a resort in Stillwater. Stillwater is a town we love to visit, and Reese and I will use this gift as a celebration for when I finally finish my doctoral thesis in January. What a great incentive to get it done! It is such a joy to serve the Lord with you.
Pastor David

UPCOMING EVENTS

New Member Potluck

We'll be having a new member meet and greet after service on Sunday, November 8th. Please stop in and introduce yourself to our newest members and enjoy some delicious food!

Thanksgiving Service

Join us at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25th at Hosanna Lutheran Church (9300 Scandia Trail) for our Thanksgiving Eve Service. Pie and refreshments will be served after the service.

Hanging of the Greens

Worship invites you to join us as we hang the greens and make our church beautiful for the Christmas season. We will be doing our decorating after church on November 29th and all are welcome to join. Hope to see you there!

Annual Church Conference

Our Annual Church Conference is Sunday, November 15th after service. This is the annual meeting of our church to review the work of our past year and set the budget and nominations for 2016. Everyone is encouraged to come and all members have a vote.

Adult Fellowship

Adult Fellowship will be meeting on Saturday, November 14th at 6:00 p.m. at the China Buffet in Forest Lake. There's a sign-up sheet in the lobby or contact Sherry Robinson at 651-270-6547 for more info.

Kid's Korner

I realize that the publication you are currently reading is a newsletter that is normally focused on relaying information. However, every news source has its quota of opinion and editorials so this month I want to take this opportunity to consider Christmas.

I know it's only November, but chances are you have thought about the holidays already. A few weeks ago, Pastor David got staff members thinking through Christmas services. "It's too soon!" I pleaded, but like it or not, the next store you enter will be covered in red, green, and Santa. The holidays are upon us.

They say it's the most wonderful time of the year, but deep down, I am a Grinch. In fact, my family has yet to put up a Christmas tree in our home. I have told my kids early on that Santa is a fabrication and honestly, we don't even give them presents. Now before you think that my children are deprived, or that I shouldn't be touched with a 39 and a half foot pole, please consider Christmas:

A grimy, smelly barn...a mother gasping in pain...a father feeling poorer and more helpless than he ever has before. Add a cold wind, noisy animals and a complete ignorance of any sort of medical knowledge and hygiene. Here in this lowly, sorry, excuse for a hospital room, our Savoir was born. Here, in the dirt, the mud and manure, Heaven broke into this world. Here in the trough full of animal feed and grubby straw was laid the King of kings.

God has subverted all of our expectations. Our King does not parade in with pomp and jubilation. He comes to us in the dark, cold night. He wears no crown, but rather rags and whatever else his parents could muster. He came not in strength, but in profound frailty. This is our God. This is our King. This is Christmas.

Undoubtedly, we will hear the "Christmas story" told in various ways this year, but let me propose a slightly different version from the book of Philipians:

continued on page 4

Worship's Word

November. This month means that we're well into the fall rhythm, we're used to the schedule of school, we're resigning ourselves to the continued trek toward winter, we're finishing up all of our outside work because we know there isn't much time left to get it done. In the midst of all of this we will pause for just a day and celebrate Thankfulness. Many of us will gather around a table with our family and closest friends to eat a meal that is specially prepared and set aside for this day. Thanksgiving gives us an opportunity for reflection, we can stop and take a look at our lives and be reminded of all the things that we have to be thankful for.

We can't live everyday like its Thanksgiving, if we did than Thanksgiving would lose its effect, the specialness of the day is what makes it impactful. But how can we take what we see and learn from this Thanksgiving season and make it meaningful for our lives? The Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

As Christians we strive to have thankful hearts and thankful spirits. We aren't living everyday like it's the holiday of Thanksgiving, instead we are indwelt with Christ and Christ in us changes our attitudes and actions. In this season we pray for a renewal of our lives and for the attitude of Christ to become our attitude.

In worship this month we look forward to our Thanksgiving Eve service with Hosanna Lutheran and we invite anyone who loves to sing to join the choir for that service. We also are anticipating the beginning of Advent and the start of the Christmas season. We will be having a Christmas Celebration service on December 13th and want to invite anyone who loves to sing to join our choir for that as well.

Many Blessings!
Andrew Buschena

Spiritual Growth

As the leaves continue to change and fall, I am once again reminded of the cycles of life. Every year our Earth goes through an extensive sequence of death and new life. And, every year Earth's inhabitants go with it on this journey. Some species handle the changes differently than others. There are those like bears, who hunker down and hibernate through the winter cycle. There are those like birds and whales, who migrate hundreds and thousands of miles to always exist in the areas of the Earth that are going through the "summer" phases of the process. And there are those like us humans, who change our layers of clothing and our outdoor habits to adapt to our new reality with each passing phase of the life cycle.

Much like the physical and natural changes of our Earth each year our human lives are filled with cycles of death and new life; and I'm not just talking about literal death and new life through babies and people passing away. Death and new life could look like moving across the country to begin a new job, or like stepping out on your own for the first time and leaving your childhood home behind. All around us our lives are filled with new life and new beginnings, and where there is new life there was something else that used to exist, something else that has now gone through a natural cycle of death so to speak that gave way to new life.

When these cycles happen they can bring many emotions and responses with them. At times we may want to hibernate like the bears as the period of winter sets in, or migrate away and pretend winter doesn't exist like the birds. But at our best we live through the phases of life and death with Christ by our side reminding us that He gives us the proper clothing for each and every process. We see this example in Colossians 3 where we learn what it looks like to live our new life in Christ. In Colossians 3:12 it says, "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." The beauty is that we not only have new life in Jesus always, but that He gives us the clothes we will need to go through the full cycles of death and life in our lives here and now on this Earth.

So as fall leads to winter and we observe the changing seasons and life cycles may we remember the changing cycles in our own lives, and may we clothe ourselves in the spiritual gifts that our new life in Christ gives us for the journey.

Grace and Peace,

Amelia Buschena

Kids Korner (continued)

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, **though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

For the King,

Andrew Bonsell

Events/Announcements

DEMENTIA AWARENESS SEMINAR

A Journey to Wholeness—presented by Jim Roe on November 19th at 7:00 p.m. at FHUMC

Jim is a retired United Methodist Pastor who served churches in Minnesota for 40 years and provided pastoral care for many parishioners who have had dementia. He was a care giver for his wife for 10 years while she suffered from Lewy Body Dementia. She died in May of 2012. He shares what he has learned from research, contact from professionals in the field and personal experience. Jim has provided presentations for staff training at nursing homes, schools of nursing, churches and care giving agencies. His message testifies to the value of facing the challenges of Dementia and how doing that can lead to personal wholeness.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

If you didn't get a photo done for the new directory, feel free to email your own picture to the church office by November 15th. We're also going to be including email addresses in the new directory. If you do NOT want your email address listed, please let the office know. (651-464-5249 or foresthills.office@gmail.com).



DO YOU LOVE TO SING?

We have two opportunities coming up for choral singing. First, Forest Hills will be joining with Hosanna Lutheran for a joint Thanksgiving Eve service, and their choir is inviting anyone who is interested from Forest Hills to sing with them.

We are also looking for members to sing as part of a choir for a special Christmas service on December 13th. Contact Andrew Buschena for more information.

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING MEAL

The church of St. Peter will be hosting a FREE Thanksgiving meal on Thanksgiving Day from 11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. It will be open to the community. Free will offering accepted, but not required. The proceeds will go to FLAMF/Haven Home.