

President's Note for November 2019

"A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues." Cicero

Roman orator and statesman Cicero, who lived in the century preceding the coming of our Lord, was not only a great orator, but a man of great intellect and insight. We know we should be thankful and as a nation we even have a day set aside for that virtue later this month. Yet, if we are honest with ourselves, I think many of us will admit we are not as appreciative and thankful for the many blessings we have in this world as we should be. We take too much for granted. One of my early resolutions for 2020 is to try to be more thankful and appreciative of the multitude of blessings in my life.

Here at St. Paul's I am thankful for many things. One recent event I am particularly thankful for is that we just celebrated another very successful Oktoberfest. The food, fellowship, music and fun were all first rate. Thanks to all who pulled this evening of German fare and restrained Lutheran revelry together. Particular thanks to Dede, Gayle, Punky and Lois. Thanks also to the Wolpert family for the great food including sauerbraten from Eddie and a multitude of delicious desserts from Kelly. Thanks to Rand and Erik for leading the raffle drawing which is always exciting and which raises the bulk of our revenue for this fund raising celebration. Thanks to all who came to support our little community of faith and thanks to Grace Presbyterian for indulging us as we shared a feast in what is normally their worship space. We don't have final figures to report as yet, but it appears we've had another successful fundraiser which will help us cover some new and recurring expenses, like there are a few shingles now missing from the south end of our church near the chimney...with an older facility there is always something. Or in keeping with the spirit of Oktoberfest we might say, es ist immer etwas.

Looking ahead this month and into Advent and Christmas we will have Pastor Mark Vance back with us the end of this month and next and will have Pastor Ray Olsen with us the first Sunday in both November and December. These two good men and brothers in Christ are fast becoming part of our church family. Again,

another blessing to be thankful for. It is also great to see Amy reading and Duane ushering. They did a splendid job; thanks and welcome aboard! Christmas Eve we will have worship at nine pm as has become our new tradition. For old school traditionalists pretend we are having midnight Mass, but with sort of an amended variation of eastern time;). As I say annually, our church sanctuary is particularly resplendent during the seasons of Advent and Christmas.

I opened this month's newsletter with a quote from Cicero on thankfulness and virtue. All of us, regardless of faith, should be thankful for the gifts we are blessed with in this world, particularly the gift of life. A few of us will travel through this world with a minimum of strife while others will endure great burdens. From what I've read, while Cicero had his moments of fame, glory and adulation he had periods of strife and suffering as well. Ultimately he suffered a fate similar to John the Baptist. No one should have to endure such a fate. Fortunately, final judgment belongs to our merciful Lord alone. Leaving the moribund and returning to the theme of thankfulness, as Christians we should be especially thankful not just for the gift of life in this world, but for the hope of eternal life in the world to come through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by means of faith through grace and the conduit of the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul writes in 1Thessalonians16: "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." NRSV.

As always pray for and assist the needy as able and do your best to attend worship services regularly. To paraphrase Luther we are a work in progress and not yet what we shall be. For this month of thanksgiving I will close with a direct quote of Martin Luther from the Book of Concord that directly relates to this theme of thanksgiving.

"Hence, since everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given and sustained by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank Him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to his service." Martin Luther

Thanks be to God,

Chuck Prewett

Council President