

# *The Epistle*

November 2021

Vol. 48, No. 11

*"So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness." (Colossians 2:6-7)*

November is always that time of year when we give thanks. Brought on by the timing of the secular holiday of Thanksgiving, there are two ways we can make use of that timing. Either we can go through all the motions of gratitude and consider it "done," or we can take advantage of this prelude to the holiday season, and use it to set the tone of how we will celebrate: not just in November, but throughout Advent, Christmas, and on into the new year. To encourage us to think more expansively about giving thanks, our newsletter theme this month will be all about giving thanks.

As for me, I give thanks to God for being here in Huntington. I have been a pastor for more than eight years, and have served in congregations from Easton, PA, to Upstate New York, from Green Bay, WI, to Baltimore, MD, and I give thanks for all those settings and people I have served alongside. This past summer I served as program leader at Red Willow Bible Camp in North Dakota, and am thankful to be back on the east coast for a time. I am a trained and experienced mission redeveloper, and have worked with congregations and area ministry strategies in various consultant roles. I am thankful to be able to use these gifts here in this interim role and to be on the adventure of interim ministry and collaboration with you all.

I am thankful for the gifts and passions God has given me. I already mentioned redevelopment, which in the ELCA is a word for the kinds of renewal and reformation that many congregations are going through as ministry changes in our changing world. I am a member of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians and a member of Proclaim, the professional organization for out LGBTQ+ ELCA clergy and candidates. I am thankful for the new relationships I will be building with you over the coming months: stay tuned for information about specific opportunities for this in January!

As we enter into the holiday season with the prelude of giving thanks, I encourage you to find ways to "overflow with thankfulness," not just this month, but throughout the holiday season and into and throughout the new year.

Thankful for each of you,  
Pastor Amanda

## ***Joseph's Storehouse—Food Pantry @ Gloria Dei***

### *Feed My Sheep*

*John 21:15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."*

There are many things to ponder in the verses above. Let's take a look at just two points. First, in last month's epistle, I said : "As Jesus' love grows in our hearts, we express our love for Him with service." These verses verify that statement. Jesus expects us to demonstrate our love for him with action. It is the duty of all Christ's followers to feed his lambs and sheep - tend to them with physical care and food and demonstrate to them the gospel, which is spiritual food. We have repeatedly made that point. Looking deeper, we see that Jesus has such a tender heart for his flock that he will not trust it with just anyone, but only those that love him, and therefore will love all that are his for his sake and take care of them the way that he himself would. What an honor it is to tend to the flock of the master! This opportunity is available to all of us.

Look at John 10:11 *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."* Those that do not truly love Christ will never truly love the flock put under their care and will run when the going gets too tough. We have a saying in the pantry that it shouldn't be so hard to help people, but sometimes it is! Nothing but the love of Christ will empower and enable us as God's servants to go cheerfully through the difficulties and discouragements we meet with in our work. It is his love in our hearts that makes the work we do possible for us to do!

The second point I'd like us to ponder is Jesus' tender restoration of Peter. He was so loving that he waited until after dinner! Jesus knew that Peter was remorseful and repentant. Peter was beating himself up, and therefore Jesus did not pile more guilt upon him nor did he condemn him. Being satisfied in his sincerity, the offense was not only forgiven, but forgotten. Jesus let him know that he still loved him as much as ever. Our Lord has given us an encouraging example of his tenderness towards penitents, and has taught us that we should also restore those that are fallen with a spirit of meekness. He could have said, "Though I forgive him, I will never trust him," but when he forgave Peter, he trusted him with the most valuable treasure he had on earth.

I want to encourage you that Jesus will be every bit as tender with us when we fall, which we will. Proverbs 24 says that though the righteous fall seven times, they get back up. The only perfect man in the Bible is Jesus. God works with broken people because there isn't any other kind! If you are beating yourself up over something, be encouraged - you and everybody else! Stop beating yourself up and run TO God, not away from him.

Continued→

Let me show you one last scripture, perhaps in a way you haven't seen it before.

*John 15:1 I am a true sprouting vine, and the farmer who tends the vine is my Father. 2 He cares for the branches connected to me by lifting and propping up the fruitless branches and pruning every fruitful branch to yield a greater harvest. (The Passion Translation)*

The Greek phrase used in verse 2 and most commonly translated as “cut away” can also be translated “he takes up to himself every fruitless branch.” He doesn't remove these branches, but he lifts them up. Grape vines require a trellis or support system of some kind. The grapes will not grow laying on the ground. As the wise and loving farmer, God lifts them up off the ground to enhance their growth. Christ's tender love for Peter emphasizes God's love, even for those who fail and disappoint him. Peter's denial didn't bring rejection from Jesus. He did not discard him. He lifted him up!

He will lift you up, too! And when he does, feed his sheep.

Dennis Hood, Director



Many thanks to property team for their work during the pandemic to keep our campus maintained and improved in many ways, including roof repairs on Olson Hall and the parsonage, lawn and fence work along 19th street, tree work around campus, and preparation in the parsonage for Pastor Amanda's arrival.

We give thanks for the altar guild and all they do to prepare our space for worship. We are look for a small fridge for the altar guild to use (dorm-size or smaller: no freezer needed). If you have one to donate, please contact Pastor Amanda.

DO NOT drop off without talking to Pastor Amanda.



## *Church Council News*



1. We have decided to move forward with our Thanksgiving Basket collection again this year. Please refer to the list of food items enclosed. Distribution will be handled through the food pantry on Monday, November 22. Please bring your basket donation to Olson Hall on Sunday, November 21.
2. HiHi contract has been signed in conjunction with Family Service League. Gloria Dei will be hosting the homeless 7 days a week from December through March 2022.
3. Boy Scouts will move to Bethel Lutheran for their meetings during the winter due to the conflict with Respite.
4. Libertad en Cristo has moved into the Chapel building and are currently holding services on Wednesday and Saturday evenings.
5. The office steps will be repaired this winter. Bids are being obtained for the replacement of the office door.

Next Council meeting is November 17, 2021

→We give thanks for the Huntington Collaboration and the ways we continue to work together: Bible study will continue looking at Luther's Small Catechism on November 3 and 10 and then will take a two week break until December.

## *Scriptures for November 2021*

### **Sunday Nov 7—All Saints Sunday**

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 24

Revelation 21:1-6a

John 11:32-44

### **Sunday Oct. 14—Pentecost 25**

Daniel 12:1-3

Psalm 16

Hebrews 10:11-14, 19-25

Mark 13:1-8

### **Sunday Nov 21—Christ the King**

Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14

Psalm 93

Revelation 1:4b-8

John 18:33-37

### **Sunday Nov 28—1 Advent**

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalm 25:1-10

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Luke 21:25-36

## ***Thanksgiving Baskets***

Giving thanks for what we have been given by sharing with those who do not have...

Each Thanksgiving, the members and friends of Gloria Dei share their abundance with those less fortunate than themselves. We give thanksgiving to God for blessing us with such gifts. As in years past we invite you to add your gift of a basket.

We have listed here ideas for one basket. A meeting group, club, family, a couple of families, scouts, or a group of friends, can fill a container with these items. The container can be a cardboard box, laundry basket, a Rubbermaid bin or a tote bag (recommended). Be as creative as you like.

The contents of the basket should include the items listed below and kept *manageable in size* so that they may be easily distributed.

The baskets will be due by Sunday, **November 21**. During the Worship Service that day, special prayers of Thanksgiving will be offered for the donations, the people donating and the families that are to receive the baskets. Please join us for this special day.

### **Shopping List**

- |                                     |                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • <b>Stuffing Mix</b>               | <b>Canned sweet potatoes</b> |
| • <b>Instant potatoes</b>           | <b>Jar gravy</b>             |
| • <b>Canned vegetables</b>          | <b>Napkins</b>               |
| • <b>Cranberry sauce</b>            | <b>Sugar</b>                 |
| • <b>Candy/Nuts</b>                 | <b>Coffee/Tea</b>            |
| • <b>Cookies</b>                    | <b>Cake/Cornbread mix</b>    |
| • <b>Frozen Turkey (max 18 lbs)</b> |                              |

**PLEASE, nothing that needs refrigeration, except the turkey**

**ALL BASKETS SHOULD BE DROPPED OFF AT JOSEPH'S  
STOREHOUSE IN OLSON HALL ON 11/21.**

**PLEASE SIGN UP IN THE NARTHEX IF YOU PLAN ON DONATING A BASKET**

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS 11/7/21.  
TURN CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR!!**



We give thanks for what we have by giving to God through Gloria Dei. As you prepare for holiday shopping, consider signing up for AmazonSmile and designating Gloria Dei Evangelical Lutheran Church (making sure to pick the one in Huntington Station!) as your charity of choice. AmazonSmile will then donate a portion of your purchases to our congregation.

## **MUSICA SCHMOOZICA**

A vocal ensemble directed by Stephen Goldstein presents:

### **“WHAT SWEETER MUSIC”**

Concert of Sacred and popular Christmas music



**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2021 2@ 3:00 pm**

**GLORIA DEI LUTHERAN CHURCH  
22 E. 18TH STREET \* HUNTINGTON STATION**

**FREE WILL DONATION TO BENEFIT GLORIA DEI**

**PROOF OF VACCINATION AND MASKS REQUIRED**

Giving thanks for our physical campus and all the ways we are able to serve our community through it. To support this service, Pastor Amanda and Karen are putting together a full campus calendar with all events and building use noted. If you have an event or regularly scheduled group that meets (on-campus, off-campus, or by zoom), please make sure the office is aware. This way we can ensure communication about events, promote groups, and avoid double-booking our spaces!



# *Lutheran Counseling Center—Update for November*

## **Is Counseling Helpful For Us ‘Normal’ People?**

By Rev. Dr. Ronald Lehenbauer, LMFT, LCC Pastoral Psychotherapist

Our society has a history of putting a stigma on persons who go for counseling. To admit needing help was to admit weakness. People thought there must be something “wrong” with you if you worked with a psychologist. But time is slowly erasing that stigma. It’s a healthy sign that this perception is changing. Most of us believe that if you’re not feeling well physically it is probably smart to consult with a medical doctor. And, as a society, we’re beginning to see that if you’re not feeling well in your mind it might be smart to consult with a mental health therapist. That might be in your best interest and the intelligent thing to do.

What is “normal”? Currently there is a debate and a wide variety of views about how to define “normal”. What someone may consider strange or “abnormal” may simply be differences in personalities or viewpoints or backgrounds. We all have different ways of looking at the world and reacting to various situations and stimuli. Who’s to say my thinking and behavior is normal and yours is not? What is considered “normal” may also vary from one culture to another. My point is simply that we need to be careful in how we use that word “normal.”

I think it’s important to demystify what therapy is, and what happens when you talk with a counselor. Persons troubled with serious depression or anxiety, or couples and families experiencing severe conflict and disruption in their relationships frequently find relief and experience substantial benefits and healing working with a trained counselor.

But what many don’t understand is that you don’t have to have “severe” emotional or relationship problems to benefit from counseling. The term “mental health” has often been only an “OK topic” to discuss if you’re talking about bouts of severe depression or some similar big emotional challenges. What we’re beginning to better understand is that taking care of your mental health may simply mean doing what you need to do to handle some life-stresses you’re dealing with, to get yourself into a better frame of mind, to reach some goals you’re striving for, to feel good about yourself and live a meaningful life.

Learning some healthy thinking habits, and practicing some mindfulness-meditation is simply good “brain hygiene.” And that can be the main objective of some sessions with a psychotherapist. There are lots of reasons people are coming into counseling more frequently. I’m a big tennis fan, and not surprised that many professional tennis players are working with sports psychologists to help them play better. Or couples who have a generally good relationship with each other are able – with some couple counseling sessions – to find ways to improve their communication and discover some new insights and ways to experience an even deeper connection.

One mode of therapy I use (ACT: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) emphasizes the importance of individual psychological flexibility for quality of life and mental health – living a rich and full and meaningful life. Psychological flexibility means holding your own emotions and thoughts a bit more lightly, and acting on longer term values and goals, rather than short term impulses, thoughts and feelings. That’s a kind of thing a person can talk about with a therapist.

As a pastoral counselor, I think of my counseling work as being sacramental. Our Lutheran Confessions consider the “mutual conversation and consolation of (Christian) brothers and sisters” to be a “means of grace” – sacramental. Sitting together and talking through stuff that’s troubling us, empathizing and comforting one another, sharing the grace and love of God together – I see this as holy and sacramental activity, through which God blesses and cares for us. {Sources: Stephen Tignor, “Brain Training,” *Tennis Magazine* (9&10, 2021), pp.74-77. *The Book of Concord*, Smalcald Articles, Part 3, Article IV: The Gospel}.



Holly Siedlecki	11/2
Megan Hansen	11/4
Zachery Bowden	11/6
Matthew Bradbury	11/6
Lisa Erickson	11/8
Annabelle Seltman	11/8
Shirley Tull	11/11
Betty Townsend	11/14
Denise Sauer	11/16
Amelia Bombace	11/17
John Callahan	11/18
Laura LaRosa	11/19
Daniel Frangella	11/22
Allen Hanson	11/23
Michael Daniello	11/30
Deena Scott	11/30
Kevin Smuss	11/30

The collaboration team has a **survey** to help us get to know the three congregations. If you did not get a chance to fill out the survey in worship, please do so here: <https://bit.ly/2Xa6fsN>

If you would prefer to take the survey by phone, contact Peter Teichmann, Deena Scott, Barbara Thomas, or Pastor Amanda.

## STAYING CONNECTED

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**Joseph's Storehouse Food Pantry, Olson Hall**  
**Dennis Hood, Director**  
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*The church office is open Tuesday,  
Thursday and Friday  
from 9am to 1:30pm.*



**Gloria Dei Evangelical  
Lutheran Church**

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**NOVEMBER 2021**



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!**

