



Upstate New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



GROUNDING IN CHRIST JESUS
GROWING IN OUR WITNESS
GIVING OF OUR BOUNTY
GRACED FOR THE WORLD

November 2018

“O, give thanks unto the Lord for He is good and his mercy endureth forever. Amen.”

Throughout the years of my childhood and even into adulthood, whenever I was at my parents' house, this brief prayer focused the ending of our time around the table during meals. We began each meal with “Come, Lord Jesus...” and ended it with “O, give thanks...”

“O, give thanks...” was always and still is a reminder of the goodness of God as well as God's mercy which knows no bounds or endings or completion. Bottom line? It was and is a reminder that God is good. A pretty simple statement but one filled with deep meaning and hope.

Over the past couple of years in the Macholz household I have come to learn, as I believe we all have, that it's the little things in life that matter. We too easily get caught up the big things over which we have little to no control. We immerse ourselves in redefining the “Big Picture” and what that looks like and along the way miss what is truly important; the relationships with which we are gifted, the love that is freely given in those spaces, the joy that is shared, the laughter that comes from somewhere deep within and the sheer wonder of nature in all its beauty and breadth.

As I approached this holiday this year I am thankful for those little things. Thankful to have a roof over my head and food on the table. Thankful for family and friends who love me despite the fact that I am a deeply flawed person. Thankful for the call to ordained ministry and the trust that folks put in me and my gifts. Thankful for the saints who have gone before me and taught and continue to teach me. Thankful for a phenomenal family, a wife who loves me, children, now grown, who have become friends, colleagues who offer support and encouragement and so many other realities.

And, last but not least, I am deeply thankful for the prayers and words of encouragement of so many that have accompanied me and my family over the past three years. The great cloud of witnesses is real and alive and well. That is what I will give thanks for this year.

This time around what drew your attention toward thanks? Certainly a turkey and overabundance of food on the table or an alternative to turkey for those who are fowl-averse. When push comes to shove and we pause let us give thanks for those who brought the food from farm to table and everyone in between. Let us give thanks for those who work the fields in less than ideal conditions for less than adequate pay. Remember the truck drivers and their families. Give thanks for the farmers, the people who stock the shelves, the cows who give milk and butter and cream, yes, the cows. And who else?

When we pause to stop and think there are many to be thankful for and so much to offer our gratitude toward. Then, finally, let us give thanks to our God, for God is good and God's mercy endures forever. That is everything we need and that is all we need. It's the little things in life.

With thanks for you,

John S. Macholz, Bishop

