

Good News!

St. Paul Lutheran Church

311 Marlboro St. Hamlet, NC 28345

⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5

These days it can be difficult to rejoice always and give thanks in all circumstances. Between the election that just won't end, to the pandemic that continues to take the lives of so many people and threaten the lives of many others, it is hard to rejoice and give thanks. Still Paul calls us to embrace these spiritual practices.

One of the ways to develop spiritual practices is to, as Nike says, "Just do it!" so to that end, let me start by sharing some of my thanksgivings.

First, I'm thankful for Bob and the support of my family. Bob and I were married in 1979. Over the years, he has supported me as I followed a series of different paths which eventually led me to seminary. He and our two daughters continue to support me in this amazing call to serve as pastor and a hospice chaplain. Their presence and companionship in my life are beautiful gifts from God.

Second, I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve as your pastor. It's all been a bit weird since we can't gather the way we would under "normal" circumstances. It's been tiring and even a little frustrating at times as we've needed to learn a new way of worshipping while also getting to know each other. Yet we are doing these things! And it feels good to me. Thank you for your patience, words of encouragement, and support along the way. I look forward to seeing how God continues to lead us into the future.

Now it's your turn.

Take some time this month to identify and give thanks for the people and experiences you've had in your life. Giving thanks during good times and for people who fill your life with joy can be a deeply meaningful experience.

But Paul tells us to give thanks in **all** circumstances. This can be hard when we're in tough situations, when things aren't going the way we'd hope, when people have hurt us. Certainly, we're not being told to give thanks in those circumstances!

I believe that Paul isn't telling us to be thankful for the tough stuff, the pain, and disappointments we feel. Instead, Paul encourages us to give thanks because God is with us in the bad stuff.

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in all things
GIVE
thanks

In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul describes an conversation he had with the Lord with these words: “⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.”

We can give thanks in difficult circumstances because the Lord’s grace is sufficient for us and because the Lord’s power is made perfect in our weakness. You see, God never promised that life would be easy. Instead, Jesus promises to be with us always to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20).

It’s the presence and promises of the Triune God in our lives that enable us to give thanks in all circumstance because we know that the circumstances in our lives won’t have the final word. God has already had the final word in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, we can face every circumstance that comes our way knowing that we are not alone, and that God’s grace is sufficient to carry us through the ups and downs of life.

*O give thanks to the Lord for he is good, and
his steadfast love endures forever!*

Psalm 136:1



Angels at the Hamlet House

With the leadership of Mary O’Neal, St. Paul has adopted residents, angels, at the Hamlet House to be recipients of Christmas gifts from the community of St. Paul. If you’d like to adopt an angel, please give Mary a call at 910-995-5004.

Bring your gifts to the church and leave them downstairs before December 6th. Mary will be in the church parking lot on December 6 from 1-3 pm to receive any gifts that were not left in the fellowship hall. Gifts should be wrapped and the whole name of the recipient should be on the gift tag.

Short Services of Holy Communion

On Monday, Nov. 2, three short services of Holy Communion were held in the sanctuary at St. Paul. Nearly 20 people gathered over the course of that day for confession, absolution, scripture readings, a short homily, prayers, and Holy Communion. It was such a blessing to gather in that space as God's people.

Everyone who attended did their part to keep each other safe: masks were worn, social distancing was honored, and safe procedures were practiced in the preparation and distribution of Holy Communion.

Monday, Nov. 16 is another opportunity to attend a short service of Holy Communion.

These services will be held at Noon, 2:00 pm, and 4:00 pm. Only 9 spaces are available for each service so please reserve your spot now.

Those who wish to attend need to reserve their spot. You can do that by emailing Pastor Pam at pastor@stpaul Lutheranhamlet.org, calling her at 919-987-0102, or visiting <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040D48AAAA2CA7F85-short2>.

We need to continue doing our part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Please evaluate your own health before coming to church. Stay home and talk with your doctor, if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or a recent loss of the sense of smell or taste. Please stay home if you have been exposed or think you've been exposed to COVID-19.

Everyone coming to the church is expected to wear a mask and maintain the appropriate level of social distancing.

Please follow these instructions:

- Enter using the elevator or the front doors. Other doors will be locked.
- Enter one person/household group at a time through either the elevator or the front doors.
- Avoid clustering on the steps, in the narthex, or sanctuary.
- Refrain from hugging and touching each other.
- Use hand sanitizer when you enter.
- Pick up a bulletin when you enter.
- If you forget your mask, a disposable one will be provided for you on the table when you enter.
- Space yourselves out in the sanctuary – if possible, leave a row between you and the person in front of you. In any case, leave at least 8 feet between household groups.
- We will not be singing during the service – soft music will be played electronically.
- Listen closely to the instructions provided by the pastor about the distribution of Holy Communion.
- When you depart, wear your mask until you are away from others.

If you are unable to attend and would like to receive Holy Communion in your car or at your house, please let me know and we can make this happen.

Celebrating the Season of Advent

The Advent season begins on Sunday, Nov. 29.

The word Advent means “coming” – Christ’s coming to earth as a baby for us, his coming into our lives each day, and his coming again in power and glory.

Our preparations for Christ’s coming can be enriched if we gather around an Advent wreath for devotions each day during the Advent season. These devotions focus our attention on our relationship with God.

The candles that we light symbolize Christ as the light of the world, a light that grows brighter as we approach the festival of his birth.

This will be an Advent season like we’ve never seen. Sadly, many of our traditions won’t happen or will be change dramatically. While our hearts may be filled with sorrow as we wait for an end to the pandemic and a return to congregational worship and fellowship, we know that light shines in the darkness.

To help us move through the Advent season as a congregation, an Advent Devotions Kit has been prepared for each family/household. These kits may be picked up at the church beginning on Monday, November 16, 2020 in the narthex. They will continue to be available on the table in the fellowship hall after November 16. Please let the Pastor know if you’re unable to pick up your kit and it can be delivered to you.



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Contact Pastor Pam at

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or 919-987-0102

St. Paul's mission is to

*Proclaim the Good News
of Jesus Christ to our
community and the
world.*

Congregation Goals

*Deepen faith + Grow
the church + Help
others + Increase
fellowship*

*How can we pursue these
goals in the year 2021?*

*Share your ideas with
Pastor Pam.*