

Sermon- Our Saviors Lutheran Church- 9/29/2019

Text 1 Timothy 6:6-11

“Farvol, Takk for Alt.”

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we have reached the end of my time with you as your Interim Pastor. It's been a great run. Together we have gathered at worship and you have listened to my homilies and hopefully received at least one kernel to use in your faith journey.

A story. (You know I would have to use one last story or joke.)

Three friends decided to go deer hunting together. One was a lawyer, one a doctor and one a Pastor from Neenah. As they were walking, a huge 10 point buck appeared in front of them. The three of them shot their rifles almost simultaneously. Immediately the buck dropped to the ground and all three of them rushed up to see the size of the deer.

Upon reaching the buck, they ascertained that it was huge and only had one bullet hole in the carcass. Thus a debate ensued concerning who shot the buck and whose buck it was.

A few minutes later a game warden came by and asked what the fuss and the argument was all about. The Doctor explained the reason for the argument. The game warden told them he would take a look and tell them who shot it. Within a few seconds the warden came back and said with much confidence, “The Pastor shot the buck.” They all asked how he knew that quickly.

The warden said, “Easy, the bullet went in one ear and out the other.”

Thankfully that has not been the case here at Our Savior's.

So today, what to say in this the final homily. Amos, the first lesson wouldn't work. You might all get up and leave if I preached on that. Lazarus - would not work for you. You are a giving and caring congregation. So I decided to focus on Paul - actually all the times in Paul's writings that he paused to give thanks. Many times he used the phrase “I give thanks for you.” That's the theme of this last homily - Giving Thanks.

First- When I arrived 21 months ago, I knew this would be a busy, complex stint as an Interim Pastor. An indispensable helper was Cheryl Timm - the office manager. Her expertise and knowledge of how Our Savior's functioned was a key to keeping my sanity. But Cheryl had a dream and plan to retire, which she did. Then, I and you were blessed when Kasey Konkle took over as the new office manager. She has assumed this role with enthusiasm and expertise. A blessing for me and you.

Then I give thanks for Marcie and Ruthie, my ministry associates. Without their assistance, my task would have been somewhat impossible. Their care for this church was profound. To Karen Whitmer, my first Youth Coordinator, what a blessing. And now Colleen has assumed a full time role and we continue with a vital ministry. And Chris and Dave Z - always there- faithful- whatever I needed- never complaining even when I had no idea what I was talking about. And certainly Jennifer Hurley, our web page manager. I love seeing our webpage. That is the work of Jennifer who updates this webpage. This requires constant updates and certainly you can see the results. These people have been a blessing. I give Thanks.

And our music staff - Berdie, Ardy and LuAnn. It's been great - we have always worked as a team. Together we have tried to make every service a joyful one- one where all people could say "I'm glad I came today."

I also give thanks for our church council and all the teams at Our Savior's. They are really good. Especially Sue Schultz who assumed the role of President shortly after I arrived. And what a job she has done. Her expertise and love of this congregation has been fabulous. She has continued to help move the church council in a positive direction - sometimes difficult as an Interim- but not here.

And to all of the numerous folks who volunteer each and every week. Those on Teams, in office assistance, worship volunteers, teachers for Sunday School and Confirmation, my great Altar Guild, and my Funeral Ladies who give much time to make sure the celebrations of life is "really" a celebration. Since we have had over 24 funerals, that has been some kind of commitment.

And of course a shout out to the great Call Committee. Pastor Jon is coming because of them. Much time and commitment. Yes I give thanks.

And lastly, to you. My thanks to you. Most Pastoral Interims put everything on hold. Not here. I think of the Faith in Action campaign. Exceeded the total. I think of the 30/30 campaign. Exceeded the total. I think of your time and talent cards - more and more names. Yes, I truly give thanks for you and your commitment. But even more than that.

I give thanks for the kindness you have shown Cathy and I. I give thanks for the warmth you have shown. I give thanks for your constant comments like, "great sermon Pastor," or "we will miss you." You have warmed my heart.

Pastor Jon is a lucky person. He will become the Pastor at Our Savior's, which has dynamite people. One favor for him - tell him your name not once but repeatedly. Over and over. It will help him.

So - Yes I give thanks.

Farvol, takk for alt.

Amen let it be so.