"Now, remember to say '**Thank You**'," we heard so often from our parents. It was a learning process to be thankful and to recognize and respect the time and care and love shared. Sometimes we still need reminders to do so, to say thanks to family members, providers and care givers for little and larger things: A smile, a kind word, a helping hand, an act of kindness, a moment's presence, a card, a gift.

And, in the larger scene "thanks" are much in order to be given to **God our Creator, Provider, Preserver and Redeemer**. A word of thanks to God for the person that did a little extra; the person that brings an extra bit of happiness into our lives; for the cook that prepared a meal that tasted a little special; the individual that sent a card so we wouldn't feel forgotten; for the doctor, nurse, aid, staff person that took a little extra time to make arrangements or explain what was happening; for the person that lifted or calmed our troubled spirits; for the people that put up with our short temper or confusion and forgave us; for sleep and comfort care, sights and sounds. Each of us has our own little things to give thanks to God. The big things, like a successful surgery, a better change in medication, a comfortable recovery, being able to walk and get around again, they are all easy for which to say a prayer of thanks to God, but the little things are so often taken for granted.

I was reminded of a song recently: "Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One for all the things He has done for us.....Give thanks."

David said it this way: "I give thanks to You, O Lord, my God, with my whole heart." Psalm 86:12

And we can seriously say in prayer: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good and His mercy endures forever." We are benefactors of His love, mercy, forgiveness and grace in Christ. He is with us always, and heaven will be our home. So many things there are for which to **GIVE THANKS**.

With St. Paul I can say: "I give thanks to God for you, always...." You are special."

PASTOR LEMKE

Little babies and young children like to touch things, feel things, experience things, and that seems to stay with us most of our lives. We like the feel of fabric, the smoothness of a newly sanded board, test the weight of an object. We like the warmth of the sun on a winter's day, the cool of the shade in the summer. We appreciate the gentle touch of a friend or kind care giver. The sound of a familiar voice cheers our hearts and lives. We love the tangibles of touch and taste, the tangibles of seeing and experiencing.

Sometimes, because God is intangible, we miss the physical experience and might have feelings of doubt and loneliness, and the events that touch our lives and impact our being tend to overwhelm us.

The other day I ran across these words that were very reassuring to me, (From Psalm 50 PSALMS FOR NOW):

God is indeed in our world,
From dawn to dusk,
from twilight hours to the first light on the eastern horizon,
God is near us and around us.
God speaks to our world,
He speaks in gentle love and thunders fiercely in judgment..
He calls to those who are faithful to Him.
He confronts and challenges them.
He secures them and sends them forth.
God is at work in our world.

Day by day in special ways through sights and sounds and experiences God touches the lives of His people, the lives of each of us. And especially through His Word He reassures us that we are His in time and for all eternity. He touched us through the water of Baptism adopting us as His own. He has touched us through the bread and wine with the body and blood of His Son reassuring us of forgiveness as well as His personal presence in our lives. We remember the Bible stories we heard and studied about God's intervention, protection, provision and care, about His miraculous power and personal interest in individuals, about Christ's love for us. This in turn touches our hearts and lives, bringing us joy and peace with our believing.

As coronavirus continues, be assured God's love and grace continue to surround us. The Lord Bless you and keep you. PASTOR LEMKE

We have all heard repeatedly, "We are all in this together." Especially spoken in connection with the coronavirus scenario, with especial emphasis on handling it together and personal responsibility.

St. Paul writes something similar in Galatians 3:28: "For you are all one in Christ Jesus, all baptized into one body" .....regardless of age, racial background or social standing. So, in a very special way, as members of God's family, we are all in this together: Together in stress, strain and sorrow, but together in sharing forgiveness, life and salvation. We are concerned about one another, we pray for one another, we encourage one another, and so fulfill the law of Christ. We can lean on each other as we all lean on Christ the Rock of our salvation. So even though separated, we are all in this together, and we all share the assurance of Christ's forgiveness, the assurance that our Good Shepherd looks after us knowing each one by name, the assurance knowing that one day we will all be together in heaven. So we rejoice that we are all in this TOGETHER for comfort and support, for joy and peace amidst separation and sadness.

Some verses from Psalm 57, rewritten by Leslie F. Brandt in PSALMS FOR NOW:

Encompass me with Your love and mercy, gracious Lord;
I have no security except in You.
I am in constant danger of losing the battle to the passions and desires of my own nature.
I can only submit myself to You
and trust that You will fulfill your purposes in me.
Your love, O God, is steadfast; Your grace is everlasting.
Even when I am beaten down by depression, ensnared by my weaknesses and frailties, YOU ARE MY GOD, AND YOU WILL NOT LET ME GO.

So, for such a time as this, we rejoice that we are all together in the Savior's hands of love, mercy and grace. We are safe and secure in time and for all eternity regardless of what issues may come our way individually or collectively. We are HIS.

God's Love and Blessings, PASTOR LEMKE