

# Levenhagen Update

November 2022

## Thoughts from Aaron

### *The Thanksgiving Table*

When anyone mentions the Thanksgiving holiday, the first image that comes to mind is the *table*. Perhaps that's because it's all about food; from the classic favorites—turkey, mashed potatoes, and gravy—to the things that are hotly debated—is it *stuffing* or *dressing*, or which is better: homemade cranberry sauce or the *correct* answer...canned cranberry sauce. Then there are the foods that never should have made the cut: turducken, tofurkey and, in my opinion, candied yams! I'm sure you have your own personal favorites and perhaps a few recipes that you hope a particular relative might have misplaced in the last year. But beyond the food and feasting, there is another reason the table is an indelible image of Thanksgiving celebrations: it is the place where *family* gathers. For many families, it may be the one time each year when the entire extended family is together. Whenever a family member can't be there—whether due to schedules not aligning or those who are absent having been called to the Lord's nearer presence—it can be bittersweet. But for those who gather, it is a precious time—a chance for families to reflect together on their blessings and remember how God has been faithful in their lives.

I've been thinking lately about the way the last few years have changed how we worship—how our *family* gathers. Some have become accustomed to worshiping via livestream; still others have not returned at all. Sadly, those who worship from home miss something a livestream can never offer: the family *table*. A table graciously prepared by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ—where we are the guests, and He is the Host. At this table, Jesus Himself speaks and His powerful words bring into effect what they say, and those words speak clear that the gracious gift of His body given *for you*. The body and blood of Christ are food for the soul, surpassing any Thanksgiving feast we could ever imagine.

These are difficult days. But our Lord's table is, as Luther writes in the Large Catechism, for times "when the heart feels that the burden is becoming too heavy." Whatever burden you bear, whatever sorrow weights you down, whatever temptation you face, you will find strength for your journey at the Lord's table of forgiveness. The gifts of this table carry us toward the future, toward the great banquet yet to come when we will no longer see Christ hidden in the appearance of

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

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, ESV)



Above: Sanctuary at Our Savior Lutheran Church (St. Charles, MO)

## Prayer Requests

- **Aaron** – managing the increased pace of preaching as we head into the Advent and Christmas seasons.
- **Jill** – for the success of her new blogging project and that it would be a blessing to LCMS women.
- **Nathan** – for wisdom and discernment as he plans for the transition to college. Also, that Jill and I would support and advise him well.
- **Faith** –for godly friends and that God would give her peace as she manages all the daily challenges that come with being a young woman in middle school.

# Thoughts From Aaron (con.) & Family Update

*(continued from front)*

of bread and wine but will see Him face-to-face. For this we offer our heartfelt thanks. Indeed, this table of forgiveness is the *ultimate* place for thanksgiving. We join our voices in the words of the old Danish hymn:

*O, Jesus blessed Lord, to Thee  
My heartfelt thanks forever be,  
Who hast so lovingly bestowed  
On me Thy body and Thy blood.*

*Break forth, my soul, for joy and say:  
What wealth is come to me today!  
My Savior dwells within my heart:  
How blessed am I! How good Thou art!*

This Thanksgiving, we are grateful for the gift of the family table and the joy we find there. And, yes, we are profoundly grateful to the Lord for the forgiveness, joy, and peace that we receive at His table.

## Family Update

Jill is working on a new project with several Lutheran women to create a network of blogs addressing a variety of issues of interest to women both inside the church and out. Between

school carpools and all the other details that must be addressed every day, Jill holds the family together.

Nathan recently turned 18. He wrapped up his racing season in October. We're so proud of not only his performance on track but also his work ethic in developing sponsors to make it all possible. He's been accepted to Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, so it's likely that he'll be heading back "home" to Indiana next Fall, hoping to study motorsports engineering.

Faith celebrated her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday earlier this month. When she's not talking with friends on the phone or snuggling with her 7-month-old kitten, Bebe, you'll find her at rehearsals for her youth theater company's upcoming production of the musical "Elf." She's also volunteering in the Sunday School at the church.

Vicarage is going very well. Among all the things I'm learning, I'm beginning to enjoy preaching even though it is a singularly terrifying activity! I love sharing my passion for the Bible with the midweek adult Bible study. And, of course, visiting shut-ins and hearing their stories is always a blessing.



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