

Thankful for all things!

Yesterday a package came for me in the mail. It really wasn't that exciting; it simply was a new HDMI cable so that I can experiment with two cameras for our live streams of worship. As I unpacked the box and began to work my way downstairs to test it out, I suddenly stopped and turned to my wife and said, "You know, if it hadn't been for this pandemic, I probably would not have learned all that I have about this type of equipment. I have really enjoyed learning so much and I am thankful for that."

That might sound a bit odd, being thankful to learn about different HDMI cables, but I am. Prior to March I had no idea that there was a difference between a micro and mini HDMI. I had no idea that your standard camera could be used for a webcam if you connected it to a capture card. In fact, I didn't even know what a capture card was. I have learned a great deal about hardware, software, ring lights, proper audio settings, everything you need to know about Zoom and more. I now know how to connect a number of different devices through our computers at the church and hopefully soon, you will be able to experience more of the church on a Sunday morning because of it.

Yet I am quite aware that this learning was not something that I would have done on my own without the push of something big. It is knowledge though, that I now have and that will without question be beneficial to me my whole life; and for that I am thankful. You know its funny, every year as thanksgiving approaches we are all encouraged to take some time to think about the things, people and events that we are thankful for; it is a good practise for our hearts and minds. The other night though, as I was watching a news broadcast, one of the anchors said that with all that was going on in our communities and world right now, that there really isn't much to be thankful for. Though I don't disagree that it feels that way, I do disagree with that sentiment.

You see over the last six months lots has changed in our lives, but what I find to be a universal truth remains; within all the challenges that we face are many blessings. This pandemic has forced us into a lot of new ways of being, some very challenging, but that doesn't mean that there is nothing to be thankful for. I know this is a bit personal, but this time of online church has enabled me to worship with my extended family in a way that I never thought would be possible. My grandfather in Saskatoon has attended both services every Sunday since our first one and not only has he attended, but he has made his room at the lodge in which he lives a little church, inviting others to join with him. My sister and her in-laws and extended family have all connected in and they in turn have connected others from their extended families. My aunt, my uncle, my cousins, even my great aunt and her daughter in England have joined in worship with all of us. About week ago, my aunt sent me a message and she simply said this, "This may sound weird, but I just feel that in some ways this pandemic and our ability to worship together has brought our family closer."

I am not thankful for the pandemic, but I am thankful that I have been able to worship not only with my family of faith, but my biological family as well; that's a gift and a blessing that I would not have otherwise ever had. Offering thanks for the blessings in our lives, is as much about acknowledging them as it is speaking about them. Far to often we simply don't acknowledge those things, people, and gifts in our lives that make every day wonderful. Far to often we focus on those harder things in life and we never get around to taking the time to be grateful for what we have. It's too easy to see the hardships, too easy to focus on what isn't right or what isn't going the way we want it to go and yet in every challenge there is always a blessing.

The last six months have been tough, have been challenged filled, but there is so much to be thankful for. So, let me offer you my thanks. Thank you all for your patience during this time; your patience as we have tried to make online worship something meaningful and joy filled. Thank you for patience when the zoom connection is poor or drops all together. Thank you for calling, texting, and emailing when you just needed someone to talk to. Thank you for welcoming me into your lives, into your joys and into your sorrows. Thank you for trusting me to hold what you say and feel and thank you for feeling that what I have to say in return has value and worth. Thank you for sharing our worship links with your friends and families, believing that what we have to offer on Sunday morning may be of benefit to others. Thank you for welcoming my extended family into this family of faith with open arms and with grace. Thank you to all of you who at first were worried about Zoom, but now are comfortable and content. Thank you to the members of our councils, our Board and to the working group in Tofield who over the last six months have offered their wisdom and insight into this situation that we live and face. Thank you to our treasures who are staying connected, dealing with companies over the phone and genuinely have approached this time with hope rather than worry.

Thank you to the members of the Ministry and Personnel Committee who are always on the other end of the phone or email when I have questions or just need someone to bounce an idea off of. Thank you to Jenn for all your hard work in the office and to you, Nick, Logan and even Vader (Jenn's dog) who provide music for us each and every Sunday. Thank you to all of you who do so much work for both of our churches; work that often goes unseen and unnoticed.

So much goodness, love and grace has been experienced in the last six months and though I wish the pandemic had not occurred and though I wish it would just now go away, I am thankful for all that I have learned and for the grace and wonder we have all experienced because of it.

There is much to be thankful for!

Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

Sincerely

Rev. Adam Hall