

Pastor's Thoughts

FEBRUARY 2024

Saints of God in Christ at Holmes Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Welcome to February! Love and the thoughts of spring are in the air. Spring offers hope. We seem to always be anticipating the promise of love and the hope of a season that is coming to us next. Life springs from hope and hope springs from a heart set on the eternal. A heart set on the eternal is the source of love that God calls us to have for Him and for our neighbors.

It has been suggested that we live in a "brave new world"; each year is filled with days that reveal something new. Anticipating change dominates our minds. Scripture speaks of change when God tells us, *"All flesh is like grass, and all of its glory like the flower of the grass. The grass withers and the flower fall off, But the Word of the Lord endures forever."* (1 Peter 1:24,25) I hear God teaching us that looking for hope in the grass is looking that is done in vain. I love spring but spring does not carry our hope that God places in us through His Word. The Lord tells us to build our hope in His Word, *"His Word,"* He tells us, *"...Endures forever."* Friends this is the Word that is preached to you, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ provides us with hope that lasts. When the grass withers and the flowers fall off, our hope must rest in Jesus Christ.

For me, February has become a month of reflection. I reflect on time spent searching for value in the world. My brother Dave spent much of his life looking for hope in the wrong places. Looking for hope in the temporal world is a mistake that many repeat. For real peace to fill our lives we need more than temporal hope, we need hope that promises to remain the same forever.

At the congregational meeting I suggested that our church is standing at the gate of the new year. At the gate we reflect, and we see opportunity, or we accept defeat as inevitable truth. I wrote that the future fills us with questions and questions kindle fear in our hearts. Today I want to move our minds off ourselves. Instead, may I suggest looking at the big picture of the future of the world. A glance at the world's future for some without faith becomes the source of fear. Without faith we might be tempted to curl up in the corner of our room and weep tears without hope. With faith we pray for a future whose path is defined as coming through Jesus Christ. In Christ we are assured that God's promise will be fulfilled.

Think about the world we live in, think about our families, our children, our grandchildren. What will they face as technology advances at a rate most of us are uncomfortable with. There have been significant developments in the areas of AI, block chain, gene editing, brain embedded computer interfaces, neuro gaming, depth sense imaging, the metaverse, social media algorithms, and virtual reality. Our future in the so called "Brave New World" is at best intimidating and at its worst the future becomes a source of terror. The advances I reference are unsettling. If they aren't a source of concern for you, I urge you to pay closer attention to the events that are unfolding before us. There is concern imbedded with each advance. Each advance ushers in with it another opportunity for evil to reign.

I have a level of concern for each new technology. I am, however, not convinced that each new technology is necessarily evil. Each advance also brings with it an opportunity to benefit humanity, the outcome depends on the hands that control it. Technology is neither good nor bad. Technology, except for perhaps AI, cannot be the source of our fear. Technology in its own power cannot hurt people. It is always people that hurt other people. Some people will use technology as a tool to inflict harm on other people. The key is that we maintain control of technology and not technology controlling us. Wisdom



Pastor's Thoughts Continued...

dictates control of technological advances must be used with wisdom for good. Wisdom dictates that those who use it must remain in the control of the Almighty God.

The Word of God commands us to have dominion over His creation. Technological advances are a part of God's creation. Mankind develops technology to ease our workload. Think about the means utilized in our farm fields today. Planting and harvesting utilize technological advancements that have allowed us to farm more land than the generations of farmers that preceded us would have ever dreamt possible. Technology, when used correctly, provides us with the means required to compete efficiently in a world market.

As I see it, technology is like guns. Neither has the capacity in and of itself to bring harm. The harm that is inflicted comes as the result of the minds that pull the trigger or push the button. The depraved heart of humankind is the power that makes guns and technological advances dangerous to humankind. The evil intentions of the human mind are the intentions that have sentenced every man to hell. Evil intentions are our sin. Our sin against a God that is holy, holy, holy, demands that we understand that we need the same God we sin against to save us from our hearts that are described by Jeremiah *"more deceitful than anything else and is desperately sick."* **Jeremiah 17:9** Jeremiah asks, *"Who can understand it?"* Who indeed can understand when our hearts are convinced that "evil is good and good is evil." In this season of political unrest, be diligent to investigate the person or group your heart is leading you to follow.

My heart sympathizes with you that don't like discussions of a "brave new world". Nevertheless, I remain a realist. Reality says even the brave new world is the creation of God. God has created humans in His image. In that truth is we have minds enabled by God to discover new and better ways of getting things done. In His power we discover new technologies. Technological advances are the result of God working through us to create better lives for us. We are commanded by God to remain faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to us in this world, this includes our minds. Contrary to the environmentalist agenda that believes we are created for the good of the world. In Christ we understand that the world was created by God for us to have dominion over. I read this the other day, "just as our Lord has sovereignly ordained the ends of all things. He has also ordained the means of all His glorious ends." (B. Parsons November Tabletalk page 25) God remains in control even when the end of our days on earth come into focus. What I am trying to get you to understand is that we are to "make use of all the means that God provides to further His mission to the ends of the earth for His glory alone" (B. Parsons November Tabletalk page 25) As stewards of God's grace we live in the world knowing that the present earth is not our eternal home. Stewards of God's grace in His provision live to make use of the means God provides for our good and His glory while we wait for complete consummation of His eternal promise.

The world has always moved through time in cycles. We cannot ignore the truth that the world is always in the process of change. Our hope in the process of change rests on Christ. The Word of God stands forever. We are called as the body of Christ to stand on the Word of God. Standing strong in Christ we are empowered through his presence to use the technological advances for His glory and for the good of humanity.

May your new year in Christ be a year defined by God's glory revealed in every aspect of His creation.

Be blessed to be a blessing. I remain yours in the love of Christ.

Pastor George

Home Circle

Wednesday, February 7

1:30pm

Devotion/Lesson: Naomi Lette

Hostess: Barb Larson

Altar Flowers:

Joan Gangestad



MARCH newsletter and
calendar items are due by
Thursday, February 15th.

Items can be emailed to:
holmeslutheran@gmail.com

Thanks!

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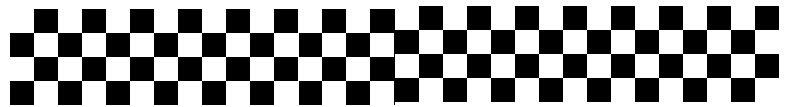
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If there are any phone or addresses in
the annual report book that need to be
updated, added or removed, please
contact the office with that information.

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Happy Birthday!!!

FEBRUARY

9– Grant Gangestad

Kevin Johnson

11– Vicki Iverson

Mary Jane Derscheid

14– Rick Manning

16– Kaylyn Gangestad

26– Gale Draves

Max Gangestad

28– Kevin Reed

Brayden Johnson