

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2020
PENTECOST 4
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
SOMERS POINT, NJ 08244
INTERIM PASTOR: REV. KEVIN HILGENDORF



“Count Your Blessings”

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you O Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

I am inspired by this prayer in The Word in Season. I do not know who wrote it; nevertheless, it filled my imagination. Let us pray: "Let me number my blessings today, dear Creator. I thank you for the beat of my heart, the rich smell of good food, the chance to laugh with others. Kindle in me a sense of gratitude, and let me linger over each bit of loveliness." Amen. "Kindle in us a sense of gratitude."

One quote I saved from somewhere states, "Never let the things you want make you forget the thing you have." I wonder if this is a typo. It says "things" in the beginning and "thing" in the second part of phrase. I do not want to forget God, who is the source of my life, my peace, my love for God and all of God's creation and creatures. That's why I focus on giving thanks to God for my blessings. Which leads me to this story in the book "The Pine Barrens" prior to God's Water.

.John McPhee observed the room a resident of the Pine Barrens invited him in, "...fading into pastel on one wall was a rotogravure photograph of President and Mrs. Eisenhower. A framed poem read: "God hath not promised Sun without rain, Joy without sorrow Peace without pain." Such a simple message. And yet posted on the wall that caught his eye spoke truth. God gives us all good things in the midst of things that are not so good. We have troubles, painful moments, doubts, and hardship. But God loves us and God indeed provides a way for us. We continue to serve others in God's kingdom by His presence and by the power of his Word.

I saved this poem which I found on a plaque and hung in the fellowship hall of St. David for members and visitors to read and think about God and blessings.

"Count your blessings instead of crosses. Count your gains instead of your losses. Count your joys instead of your woes. Count your friends instead of your foes. Count your courage instead of your fears. Count your full years instead of your lean. Count your kind deeds instead of your mean. Count your health instead of your wealth. Count on God instead of yourself."

I know this song that's a blessing in my life. It's from the "Singing Youth Book" that I borrowed from St. David, which someday will be returned. "When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed. When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done. (Chorus). Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your blessings, See what God hath done. Count your blessings, Name them one by one; Count your many blessings, See what God hath done." I didn't count the blessings. I started to name them. God, I count on you. Everything else comes from you. You are God's blessings in my life at this time. Together we count on God's blessings as we carry on.

In Grace's library I saw a familiar book "Little Visits with God." My dad would've read this to my brother Keith and I before bed time. I wonder if this practice led him to teach Sunday School to third or fourth graders. He taught for a long time. Dad belonged to Kiwanis a (men's community group). Besides supporting community events, he led devotions and prayer at their business meetings. My dad and mom taught me to do devotions for which I'm grateful. My experiences with dad paved the way for my faith to be nurtured and sustained.

In closing, Philippians 4:4-7. Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.