

## Hope and Gratitude

What have we learned in the last year? Will we be grateful for those things we have missed when they are returned to us? A friend took me to lunch a few weeks ago. It was so nice to sit down and be served and eat food that was hot and had not traveled in the car. Will I feel that way about all things as they are once again returned to us? What about going to a Movie, I have not tried that, and I think I will hold off on that for a while. Without Popcorn and the concession stand it just is not the same. The other day I realized I have not been in a Department Store since February 2021. I am a shopper, and this is unheard of for me. Will I return to my former ways or will I continue to shop online? Will Amazon give me rewards for best and most frequent shopper of the year? I have changed a lot of the things I do such as grocery shopping. I have my groceries delivered; I am not sure I want to change that. I rather like having a shopper. I do not think I ever really liked grocery shopping. It was just something I had to do to keep from starving. I am grateful that we have been able to return to Church. I have missed the sense of coming together for worship, the community. Now we are back in the Sanctuary and able to hear the organ and sing the hymns we love. We still wear masks and do our social distancing, but we are together as a church. As we return to normal, unless there is another surge, I hope we will appreciate what we have and the blessings we receive. We will mourn those that are lost and grieve for what once was but good can come from bad. We have proven that in our lives. We have found new ways of doing things with Zoom for meetings and visits with Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren. May we not take for granted the blessings we have received. Good can come from bad. Christ proved it on the cross.

Colossians 3:15-17 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Lord, we thank you for this day and for our blessings. Please Lord be with those loved ones and friends suffering from this pandemic, may they find health restored. Be with those who are suffering other illnesses, grant them peace and wholeness. Be with those who are grieving, may they be comforted by your love and the memories they share. Be with our Pastor and bless his ministry. Be with his family, grant them good health. Be with our staff and leaders, bless their work and give them strength for the day. Be with our church; may we be strengthened in our resolve and open to where we are needed. Lord may we all have the strength and resolve to do what is needed in this Pandemic so that we can emerge stronger, more faithful, more trusting. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Grace Epperson