

November 2021 News

Always Be Thankful

Have we ever encountered such a Thanksgiving? Though the toll of the pandemic has been frightening, disruptive and mournful, it does appear we are moving toward a period of recovery and restoration. We owe so much gratitude and appreciation to the researchers, medical personnel and our first responders who have been, and continue to be, incredible in this crisis. We must give thanks for vaccines, boosters, and new treatments. And even show thankfulness for Facebook and Zoom!

We also need to take a moment and appreciate each other and ourselves. We have each contributed to other's ability to get through this pandemic and the difficulties that have arisen in everyone's life. Look at us! We made it thus far, and are still moving forward.

Church, nor virtually any part of our life, will ever be as it was before. We are not the same people as two years ago. But not all changes are bad changes. We appreciate community and fellowship, and especially family visits, more than before. We have learned to communicate with technology and to order groceries online. We understand we can keep in touch through technology. Importantly, we learned to keep learning, to be flexible and to push through. While we know many who mourn and for whom this time has been horrendous, we are here to praise God and show thankfulness as we continue to travel together through this most unusual time.

St. Stephen's has been able to offer the **Raleigh County Prevention Coalition** office and storage space. This makes our church a base for this critical work for our brothers and sisters in the community that are battling addiction and struggling with (and celebrating) recovery. Among many efforts of this group is the placement of the Blessing Boxes, prevention events and working with young people to guide them toward good decisions in their young lives. Several of our parishioners are involved with this organization and this is a new ministry of our church of which we can be proud. The coalition is using the old day school office and an unused classroom. If you have interest in getting involved, please see Kelly Elkins, Danielle Stewart, or Mother Susan.

*Bear one another's burdens,
and in this way you will
fulfill the law in Christ.
(Galatians 6:2)*

**Remember, food and personal hygiene items for
the Blessing Boxes are always welcome— especially
food that can easily be opened and consumed by the homeless.**



From St. Luke:

- **Thank you for your support of our Rummage Sale and Oktoberfest. The sale netted over \$2,000 for the operating funds and Oktoberfest netted \$1944 for Lutheran World Relief, designated for Haiti.
- ** St. Luke has long adopted a section of Maxwell Hill Road to keep clean. All hands are always welcome. Meet at St. Luke at 8 a.m. on November 6th. Safety vests and trash bags are provided.
- ** St. Luke also wraps gifts in the Cross Roads mall during the last two weeks of December. All money goes to local outreach. Watch for information on this opportunity.

An Advent Celebration will be held at St. Luke on December 12th. The two churches will join together at 10 am for an Episcopal service, followed by good food and great fellowship! Mark your calendars.