

YPOG NEWSLETTER

Middle School & High School Youth

Everything with Thanksgiving

This month is a time to reflect on all we have to be thankful for and our many blessings that have been so graciously given to us. Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because it is such a great time to sit back, relax, and focus on what we have to be thankful for in the here and now. And I also love all the food that Thanksgiving brings! However, giving thanks and being thankful 1 out of 365 days is not even what God intended for us.

We are to be thankful EVERYDAY! I fall short with this more often than I would like to admit. I find myself complaining more than I should and losing the chance to find the joy in each situation. It is easy giving thanks when things are going right and we are all living in peace and harmony. But to give thanks when: things don't go our way, people are mean, hurt words are said, life is tough, struggles are real, the car breaks down, the house is a mess, homework piles up, a breakup happens, a test is failed, a friend talks behind your back, etc, etc, etc.

Paul's journey in the Bible is full of hard, difficult, and challenging times. He spent most of his life in a prison writing letters (when he didn't do anything wrong). He had every reason to be crabby, down, upset, and blame life for his troubles. He had every right to scream, "This isn't fair!" ... but instead he writes in Philippians 4:4-7 "*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with THANKSGIVING, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*"

He goes on to write in versus 11-13 ... "*I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*"

In his letter Paul doesn't tell us to rejoice and be thankful sometimes. He tells us to rejoice always and give thanks in everything! "This is the day" includes every day! That does not mean it will be easy every day. Some days will be worse than others. Some days it will be harder to find the joy. Some days will just plain stink! We can't always control what happens every day ... but we can control how we choose to respond to it. There is a quote somewhere that says "our problems are 10% of what happens to us and 90% of how we respond to it."

As we head into the season of Thanksgiving with family and friends, my challenge for myself and for all of you is to begin each day with God's grace. Filling ourselves up with God's grace will cause us to be filled with gratitude! Gratitude for the good and the bad; the fair and unfair; the positive and negative; the comfort and challenges; the peace and war; the need and want; the present and future.

Let's be filled with his grace and live each day with thanksgiving.

Happy Thanksgiving! I pray blessings on all of you and your families! – Jenna Bents, Director of Youth Ministries

Calendar of Events

Nov. 3	Worship & Sunday School 9:15 AM
Nov. 3	Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp Outreach night 4-9 PM
Nov. 6	Youth Group 5:30-7:00 PM
Nov. 10	Worship & S.S. 9:15 AM
Nov. 13	Youth Group 5:30-7:00 PM
Nov. 15	Jr. High Prayer/Play night 6-8 PM
Nov. 17	Worship & S.S. 9:15 AM
Nov. 19	Helping hand pregnancy center banquet 5-9 PM
Nov. 20	Youth Group 5:30-7:00 PM
Nov. 24	Worship & S.S. 9:15 AM
Nov. 24	H.S. Senior Night 6-8 PM
Nov. 27	NO YOUTH GROUP

Service & Fellowship Central

- *Sunday Nov. 3: Outreach night at Okoboji Bible Camp: leave at 4:00 PM; return by 9:00 PM
- *Tuesday Nov. 19: serving at Helping Hand Pregnancy Center Banquet (exact time TBD – about 5-9 PM)

YPOG NEWS CONTINUED

Helping Hand Pregnancy Center Banquet: Our youth group has been asked to help serve at this year's fundraising banquet on Tuesday November 19th. This is a great way to serve and volunteer to help a wonderful organization in our community! Estimated times to help serve are 5-9 PM but more exact hours will be sent out to parents and kids as it gets closer.

Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp Event

What: Outreach Event (open to youth groups in surrounding area) – Kids loved going to the first one in October!

Date: Sunday, November 3rd

Time: 4-9 PM

Who: 8th-12th grade students

Details: We will leave St. Matthew church parking lot at 4 PM to head to Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp. This event will include dinner, worship, a short message, and "Commandos" outside game. We will be back about 9 PM.

Cost: \$4/person. Please RSVP and give money to Jenna before departure. Liability/waiver forms must be turned in before going.

H.S. Senior Night

High School Seniors are invited and encouraged to come to Andrew and Jenna Bents' house the last Sunday of every month September-April. We will meet on Sunday November 24th 6-8 PM. We will be having a Thanksgiving feast! Please RSVP to Jenna so we know how much food to make!

Wednesday Night Youth

Come and join us at 5:30 PM on Wednesdays in the youth room. We will enjoy food, fellowship, and small group time!

Worship & Sunday School:

Youth, we want to see you in worship on Sunday mornings! Join us at 8:00 am (Traditional) or 10:30 am (Contemporary). Sunday school is on Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM in the youth room. We hope to see you there!

Middle School Prayer/Play Night

5th-8th graders are invited on Friday, November 15th for a Prayer/Play night at the church 6-8 PM. Friends are welcome to attend! We will spend time in prayer, playing group games, and eating pizza!

- Please let Jenna know if you will be bringing friends so we can plan accordingly for pizza.