Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
Pastor Terry's Thoughts of the Week

My Plans/God's Purposes

I have plans for Thanksgiving Day. How about you? If you are entertaining, you probably already have the menu planned and know that your bill at the store will be horribly high this week – but you'll enjoy the company so it will be worth it.

If you've been invited out, you are already planning what "host/ess" gift you will be taking along and thankful that somebody cares enough to invite you to the gathering. (I'm going out. I'm lucky!) But, again, it's probably the company you will be enjoying even as the hosting family has put out an enormous amount of work to make the day wonderful. Whatever, we have our plans for the holiday.

Have you ever heard the statement "if you want to give God a good laugh, tell him your plans"? Our journey for the next six weeks or so are in that category. Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, New Years, probably a couple of birthdays and/or anniversaries. Some of us just give a sigh of relief after all the activities, and some of us love the excitement and enjoy all the memories afterwards.

Now, what does this have to do with God's purposes? Quite a lot, actually. I believe (and remember my "beliefs" are not always theologically correct) God wants us to enjoy each other's company so holiday gatherings are good. God also wants us to be reminded of all the things we are blessed with and to take time to give thanks for everything.

But the holiday season is one in which we also need to remind ourselves of the needs of others. As a congregation, we are pretty good at that. We give food and clothing rather regularly to the neighborhood center. Many of us spend hours at the center as volunteers. We give toys by the dozens to our

FAITH neighborhood center "extra children and grandchildren", and, at holidays we probably will be bringing a little extra food. That's nice.

But God's purpose is that ALL his children are fed, ALL his children are safe, ALL his children have the same blessings. There is no way we can take care of ALL God's children, as much as we would like to. So we need to keep our prayer lives active and ask what can we do, what can our part be?

We are blessed – no doubt about that. But by being blessed it also means that we have responsibilities as stewards of those blessings God has given us. Let's take time during this holiday season not only to count our blessings, but to discover what God wants us to do with those blessings.

Some of you are using your talents as teacher's helpers in the public schools. Some of you are using your creative talents to make shawls, afghans, ME dolls, Christmas stockings, and special gifts for those you love. My mother always liked to knit gifts for others. One of the nicest Christmas gifts I was able to give last year was the last sweater my mother had made. It went to the great-great-grandchild she had never met. A gift of love from one of God's loving children to one of God's newest baptized children.

Try to keep God's purposes in mind even as the holidays gather us into their craziness. God loves us all. Keep in touch!

TMK

-- *Week of November 22, 2009*