

The Attitude of Gratitude: Negativity and Neuroplasticity

by: Pastor Chasity Wiener

I have a doctor friend who said that I missed my calling. He is the Chief of Medicine at Hopkins—and, when I worked for him, was always saying that I had the skillset to be a doctor and diagnostician. And, I *love* medicine. Even though I also love what I do in ministry, the truth is, medicine was my first love. And, when I am not reading books on spirituality and church leadership or commentaries on books of the Bible, I usually am reading medical magazines.

In brain science, there's a lot of research these days about neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to reorganize (or change) continuously through an individual's lifetime because of the brain's capacity to form new neural connections. Why do I mention this? Well, our habits are like grooves in the brain, which get deeper and deeper as we follow our usual thought patterns. There's no way out of the habit as long as we keep following the same rut of the brain's "muscle memory." This is why "change"—be it a change of thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, or habits—is hard.

Do you know someone who naturally tends to be negative or curmudgeonly? It could be, in part, from those deeply trodden grooves in the brain; as the old adage says, "Be careful with your thoughts—because thoughts become words and words become actions. Actions become habits. Habits become character." What started out as a bad experience (or thought) has now evolved into the realm of formed character.

...but it isn't just about negative, curmudgeonly people, either: it could be about you and me.

Thanksgiving is upon us and many family dynamics play out around the dinner table. The American Psychological Association reports that 61% of people associate negative feelings to being with family around the holidays. If you are among the 61%, the dread you feel even before arriving at the Thanksgiving table is reinforcing the stress in your unconscious and you will most certainly fulfill that dread in your actions when you gather around the dinner table. Even if you think you are behaving well (all things considered) and don't say anything nasty, you will inevitably "act out" in your thoughts—say spending half an hour in bed pondering your family members' shortcomings. Whatever your reaction, it wears grooves in your mind, which then become your disposition.

But, when we interrupt our habitual behavior or go against our propensities, we start to establish new pathways in the brain.

On a spiritual level, this is a grand revelation! This idea of neuroplasticity means that we can change...that God has designed us to change, especially when we fall into those deep ruts of habitual thinking. One way to interrupt our habitual behavior and go against our propensities is to start with a sense of gratitude. Perception is a key component to gratitude. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances." As part of my spiritual practice, every time I am in a situation where I want to negatively react—either out of habit or otherwise—I try to pause and think of *one thing* that I am grateful that this situation has brought me. So, yes, when I am dragging my feet to go to Thanksgiving dinner, dreading whatever dysfunctional ways within my family's structure will manifest, I give thanks for *something*. Like food in my belly. Like the ways that I am reminded that I am connected into a larger family narrative that is beyond me. Like appreciating the peace around my own table which is better appreciated (and missed!) around the chaotic, extended Thanksgiving family table.

When I found the inoperable brain tumor in my head only one month after I married Phil, my first thought was of gratitude: whelp, I don't know what will come of this, but at least I have experienced and know what love is. When my beloved mom died of ALS, I was grateful that she was freed from horrible suffering. When Phil was diagnosed with skin cancer, I was grateful that we had doctors who advocated for his care and the extensive testing that made this medical treatment plan come to fruition. And, please understand me: I am not simply dismissing the pain and worry caused by these situations...those feelings are very real. Rather, I am not about wearing more grooves in my brain that will program me for negativity... because that will rob me of my peace. My circumstances were not going to define who I am.

Continued on page 2...

In this Issue



Sunday School News, page 4

Youth News, page 4

Member Spotlight, page 6

.....and so much more!

People are always telling me how energetic and positive I am. Here's my secret: I wasn't "born" energetic and positive. To be honest, I was quite cutting and curt, judgmental and self-preserving. I said whatever was on my mind (you know, those thoughts in those deep grooves of my brain) with little or no care of how my words might belittle or impact the other person. But, I came to an understanding that any experience can be made into a further blockage or can become a way of freeing ourselves...and a perception of gratitude is the key to avoiding that blockage.

Thanking the Creator who gave us the ability for neuroplasticity, despite having a will that resists it,

Pastor Chas

Influenza Prevention

Influenza (the Flu) is a contagious respiratory disease that infects the nose, throat and lungs. The illness may be mild or severe and can lead to death. Flu season occurs between November and March. Each year 20 percent of the population gets the seasonal flu and approximately 36,000 people die.

Signs and symptoms of the flu include fever, chills, headache, body aches, cough, sore throat, runny nose, and feeling fatigued. The flu virus is believed to be spread by droplets when people cough, sneeze and talk. You may also get the flu by touching a surface that is contaminated with the flu virus. Healthy individuals are able to infect others one day prior to onset of symptoms and for a period of seven days.



The flu may be different each year; there are many strains of the virus. The degree of severity and symptoms will vary from year to year. Complications of the flu may include pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration and worsening of chronic underlying diseases (i.e. diabetes).

The best way to prevent the flu is by receiving a flu vaccine. The vaccine needs to be given each year. Protection from the virus takes approximately two weeks after receiving the vaccine. The Center for Disease Control recommends that all individuals over the age of 6 months get a vaccine each year. Individuals who are allergic to eggs, had previous reaction to a flu vaccine, which have an active illness, or history of Guillian-Barre Syndrome should consult their physician before having the vaccine.

To prevent the flu get your vaccine, avoid contact with others when you are sick or they are sick, wash your hands often (hand gel works too), and practice healthy living with diet, rest and physical activity.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov.

With blessings, Barb Huber RN CSRN, FCHN

Join us this holiday season as we celebrate with a "Reverse Advent Calendar"!

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

EACH DAY ADD AN ITEM TO A BOX.
ON CHRISTMAS EVE DONATE THE CONTENTS TO A
FOOD BANK.

- December 1 - box of cereal
- December 2 - peanut butter
- December 3 - stuffing mix
- December 4 - boxed potatoes
- December 5 - macaroni and cheese
- December 6 - canned fruit
- December 7 - canned tomatoes
- December 8 - canned tuna
- December 9 - dessert mix
- December 10 - jar of applesauce
- December 11 - canned sweet potatoes
- December 12 - **diapers**
- December 13 - canned beans
- December 14 - box of crackers
- December 15 - package of rice
- December 16 - package of oatmeal
- December 17 - package pasta
- December 18 - spaghetti sauce
- December 19 - chicken noodle soup
- December 20 - tomato soup
- December 21 - can corn
- December 22 - can mixed vegetables
- December 23 - can carrots
- December 24 - can green beans

Poinsettias

Time to order Poinsettias for Christmas! Poinsettias are \$8.00 each All poinsettias ordered will be RED. Orders

must be in by December 17. Please see the order forms inside the weekly bulletin. Make check payable to Holy Communion Lutheran Church, and please include Poinsettias in the memo line.



Update from the Vision Team

We have been prayerfully listening to the Holy Spirit for directions and ideas that may guide our ministry in 2020, 2021, and 2022. We have, in truth and love, looked at the variety of ministries/outreach that we do and have scrutinized to see what we can do better together and how we can maximize our efforts in those ministries that we do well. We have also been listening to you, too, because the Holy Spirit has inspired her work through you and your lips have brought forth that work.

And, we are excited by the possibilities! We have identified some vision goals surrounding our core values: faith, fellowship and discipleship. We would like to propose to you some new ventures concerning service, youth, mission trips, outreach, and staff changes (which includes the possibility of having another vicar—you might remember that Pastor Chas was our very first vicar and this could be another way that we can participate in God's mission by being a much-needed internship site for future pastors). We even hope to schedule a trip to "Lutherland" (AKA Germany) in 2021 to gain a greater appreciation of our Lutheran origin-story.

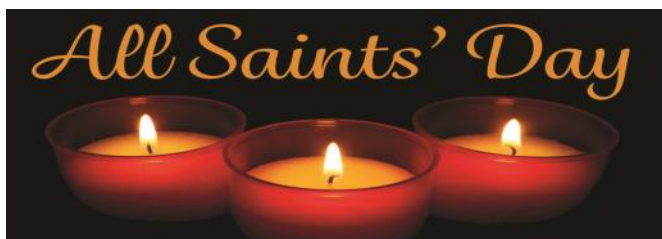
We want your input, as whatever we do may affect our budget (which is created from your offering). This is an opportunity for you to personally shape our vision and get excited at the possibilities that allow us to continue "Reaching Out and Sharing Christ's Love!"

Please sign up to attend one of the following "round tables" discussion events:

- Monday, November 4 at 6:45P

"All Saints" Sunday

All Saints Day is November 3! We will be commemorating all the saints of the church at both services. All Saints Day celebrates the baptized people of God, living and dead, who make up the body of Christ. On this day, we remember all who have died in the faith, and now serve God around the heavenly throne. Please bring a memento or picture of your loved one with you on November 3rd to place at the altar and create a physical space of remembrance.



Items Requested for HCLC Blessing Box

Good news! Our Blessing Box has seen an increase in demand! That means that we have identified a real need in the community, and are blessing those around us...but we have run out of supplies! We are especially in need of spaghetti sauce, canned meats, sanitary pads/tampons, diapers and wipes, canned veggies and fruit, and toiletries. Thank you, Church, for your continued support and dedication!

- Canned meats
- Canned fish
- Canned vegetables
- Fruit (canned or dried)
- Granola bars
- Mini cereal boxes (one serving)
- Oatmeal
- Instant mashed potatoes
- Nuts/Peanut butter
- Pasta and low-sodium pasta sauce
- Mac n' cheese
- Rice
- Low-sodium soups
- Applesauce
- Powdered milk
- Diapers
- Diaper rash cream
- Baby food
- Powdered Formula
- Basic toiletries
- Feminine hygiene products



*** Please help spread the word to neighbors in need! And, consider sharing the news on your social media feed! ***

Youth News

Youth Events: Coming Soon

Remember my license plate “GodKares” story from last month? If so, you know that “GodKares”. However, have you ever thought about how God cares? Not only is it during the most difficult and big times, but also through the little things, too. Has a person crossed your path at just the right moment and you realize that they were there for a reason? That’s God caring. Have you ever been there to help someone, and it was something you wouldn’t typically do? That’s God caring. God appears in our every day lives without us realizing. Sometimes we need to take a step back and savor those moments realizing “GodKares” and we’re not alone.

Join us for Friday night faith, a spiritual journey to learn more about ourselves, God, our faith, the Bible and how we experience faith and God through our everyday lives. We will be meeting on the third Friday of the month. Our next meeting is scheduled for **November 15th**. Our exploration will encourage *Think.Believe.Do*.

Join us for “Advent Cookies, Cocoa, and Crafts” on Sunday, **December 1 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**. Let’s kick off the season of advent with fellowship, faith, and fun! This is a great way for families of all ages to come together as a community and begin our preparation for the season.

Join us for First Sunday’s (first Sunday of the month) from **6:00 PM – 7:00 PM for 4th – 7th grades, and 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM for high schoolers**. Come hang out, talk, play games, share faith, and get to know one another. We encourage you to bring friends! Our next scheduled meeting is November 3rd.

Join us for Illumin8 on the first Sunday of each month during Sunday School for our 2nd and 3rd graders. By providing a foundation of knowledge, Illumin8 helps them understand what God has in store for them and the many ways that he is already working through them in their everyday lives. Illumin8 aspires to strengthen kids’ faith as they participate in fun events, crafts, fellowship opportunities and even good service works within our community. Our next scheduled meeting is **November 3rd**.

We look forward to seeing you!

We hope to see you there!

Heather Henderson, Youth Leader

Sunday School:

Come Join the Fun and Discover God’s Love!

by: Carrie Dorsey

Our annual Reformation Celebration was a great success despite the weather. Instead of Trunk or Treat we did Trick or Treat in the pews! A big thank you to all who worked so hard to make the event a success.

Looking ahead to November, we will be learning about Zacchaeus, making cards for Veterans, and yes...preparing for our Christmas play. All are welcome to participate and help with the production.

Remember to practice the Lord’s Prayer, Ten Commandments and the Books of the Bible. Everyone who recites these receives a special pin of recognition.

If you have not yet registered please take a minute or two and use the following link to sign-up your child or yourself as a volunteer. <https://vbspro.events/p/events/594eb7>

For questions or to volunteer please e-mail me at SundaySchool@HolyCommunionFallston.org.



Community Christmas Tree Lighting Tree Light-

There will be a Community Christmas Tree Lighting held Sunday, November 24 at 7:30P. The tree lighting will take place at Fallston United Methodist Church, 1509 Fallston Rd, following the Thanksgiving worship (see page 5).



Advent Wreath Workshop

There will be an Advent wreath workshop taking place **December 1** after second service. The cost is \$25, which covers the instruction and all the supplies. To ensure there are enough supplies, please sign up on the clip board located next to the TV in the narthex.



“Thanksgiving” Worship

The Thanksgiving worship service and dinner will be held at Fallston United Methodist Church (1509 Fallston Road) on Sunday, November 24th. Potluck meal begins at 5:30, and worship begins at 6:30. A Christmas tree lighting will follow the service at 7:30.



Church App

Did you know you can listen to sermons and access calendars, events, an electronic Bible, and the newsletter on our church app for your smartphone? Here's how: Download the Church app (Tithe.ly) in the Google Play or Apple Store and then select Holy Communion Lutheran Church as your default church. You can read our facebook posts and see pictures posted on Instagram even if you do not subscribe to Facebook or Instagram. There is also space for you to write prayer requests on our prayer wall. Take us wherever you go!



The Sharing Table

It is our turn to host for The Sharing Table, a local soup kitchen for Harford County residents. On November 9, we will serve anywhere from 75 to 125 people or more (approximate), and volunteers are needed to cook and serve (one or both) at The Sharing Table in Edgewood. The Sharing Table takes place at Prince of Peace Catholic Church on Willoughby Beach Road. As you might remember, or for the edification our new members, we all cook the same recipe (this is NOT a potluck) to serve. We make the recipe, fully cooked, in advance of November 9.



You can also deliver the fully cooked recipe to our church refrigerator the week of November 5 if you are only able to volunteer to cook (call Hailea Cole for availability). If you are helping to serve, then just report directly with the food to the Sharing Table at Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Edgewood (Willoughby Road). We warm all casseroles on site.

SHARING TABLE FUSILLI

- 11lb Fusilli (Little spindles, cork screw, spirals) cooked
- 2 Medium sized (28 oz) cans of tomatoes
- 2 Green peppers – chopped fine
- 3 Onions – chopped
- 2 Teaspoons of dry mustard
- 2 Teaspoons Worcestershire Sauce
- 1-1/2 lbs Grated Sharp Cheddar Cheese (Reserve some to sprinkle on top)
- 2 lbs Hamburger – COOKED

Mix all ingredients in a large pot, divide among two medium aluminum baking pans. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top. Casseroles will be warmed on site the day of service. If you are unable to serve, but would like to provide a casserole, please cook in advance and make arrangements to drop off at church and place in the church refrigerator (Hailea is in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesday, and Thursdays). Thank you for your help.

Member Spotlight

by: Joan Giordano

What brought you to HCLC?

“Pastor Burk. My family and I were members at St. John's in Parkville before we moved to Harford County. Not long after we moved he transferred to HCLC.”

What do you see as your gifts to serve God, God's people, and the church?

“Ugh - tough one - I try to live out the gospel through my interactions with everyone - especially family, friends, and the children I teach. I try to be as involved in church as my schedule will allow - especially with the youth”.

Favorite ice cream flavor?

“mint chocolate chip”

What is something people may be surprised to know about you?

“I was named after the movie star Joan Collins. Just kidding, but my maiden name is Collins!”

What bible verse is meaningful to you?

“Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.”

How do you serve at HCLC?

“I am an assistant to Larry helping to keep the kitchen stocked, head Chef for Bible school, and a member of the Think Tank Committee.”



The Chosen Cross of Christ

by: Pastor Bob Ridenour

The cross is the symbol of Christianity. But, in spite of this, many (most?) of us do not understand why. There are many reasons for this. So, let me just address two of those reasons.

The cross has come to be seen as an unwanted burden, that someone else thrusts upon us. “I guess that is my cross to bear”, we say. But, the cross is not a burden. We are called by God to come to the cross and to take it up as a sign of our unforced willingness to suffer (and even perhaps die) for Christ and for his hurting creation. We suffer on the cross because we think of others before ourselves. Twentieth century UCC clergyman, Niebuhr, and prophet said, “Belief is not easy. Sharing Christ's sufferings is not easy. We are called to die to old ways of sin and pain and prejudice and self-love and so to gain a life of hope and salvation for all God's people.”

The cross is not a horror to be avoided, but a sign of salvation for all who carry it willingly. This is a very difficult thing to do, but it is our calling.” Take up your cross,” says Jesus “and follow me.” Not a burden, not a horror, but the way to life and peace.

This brings us to the second way we mistake the cross.

Many see the crucifixion of Jesus as a thing he suffered through for us. In fact, it is not so much a “suffering in our place” (although it is also that). More importantly though, it is a visual way of saying to us, “Be like Christ. Bear the suffering of the world. Know that the cross is not the foolishness that many see it to be, but is instead what it means to be his followers—what it means to be a Christian.” It is, says Paul the apostle, “the power and wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23). We are called to remember that all of us are sinners; that none of us is perfect, or even on the road to perfection. The cross, the suffering, is part of our lot, too. But the way to life in Christ is to reject self-love and to trust and walk the way of the cross; to “take up our own cross and follow him.”

Look upon the cross each Sunday in church, or at home and give God thanks and glory. Walk in its light.

Lovin' Life Seniors

LOVIN' LIFE SENIORS

Our goal is to offer friendship and support to one another through social events. Please join us! Invite your friends! Our 2019 schedule and sign-up sheets for upcoming events are posted on the senior's bulletin board in the hallway. Please read the Sunday bulletins and Bread and Wine for any changes to the schedule below. All activities take place on 2nd Tuesdays of the month unless otherwise noted.

2019 CALENDAR

Tuesday, November 12 at noon

Barrett's on the Pike

Tuesday, December 10 at noon

TBD

We welcome new ideas as well as new members. Contact Ellen Priebe 410-679-8655; Frances Gosnell 410-893-4622; Nancy Campbell 410-836-7688.



New Webcam

We have upgraded! We have a new high definition webcam that will enhance the worship experience for those who join us virtually on Sundays. We were able to procure this camera from the generous donations given in memory of Dave Warren. This is a much needed upgrade, as we were having connectivity issues with our previous webcam. The picture and audio are also greatly improved (see the actual image below)!

Thanks to Bruce Amrein for all his hard work in researching and installing the new webcam.



November Birthdays



11/02 Gail Amrein
11/02 Mark Theys
11/03 Anna Lee Eyler
11/03 Madison Tacka
11/05 Charlie Svoboda
11/06 Alice Oberender
11/06 Thomas Bagwell
11/17 Sandra Fleming
11/18 David Snyder Jr.
11/18 Jeff Blackwell
11/19 Hillary Griffin
11/20 Arthur Romain
11/20 Nancy Collins
11/21 Amber Deems

11/21 Arlene Weber
11/21 Elyssa Hoffmann
11/24 Anthony Giordano
11/24 Charlie Rudolph
11/25 Thelma Maisenholder
11/26 Jonathon O'Leary
11/26 Susan Dulaney
11/27 Jeanette Gray
11/27 Joe Shaver
11/28 Natalie Schromsky

Happy Birthday

Do you have a **November** birthday but do not see your name printed here? That means we do not have your complete information on file. Please contact Hailea in the church office to update your information.

"Good Grief" Group

When you have lost someone you love, the holidays can be a particularly difficult time. Please join us for an evening of support and comfort while exploring ways to cope and manage your grief during the Holiday Season, facilitated by Amedisys on **Thursday, November 14 at 6P at Fallston Presbyterian Church** (this workshop will be in place of our normal monthly meeting). To register for this workshop please call Andrea Williams, Bereavement Coordinator at 410-686-5635.



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