



# Olive Tree Newsletter

## November 2023

**Psalm 107:1 ~ Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!**



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# Minister's Musings



Thomas Fedorka, LLM

I had the recent pleasure to have dinner with a few young men at a nice Boston restaurant. These four men are mid-twenties to early-thirties in age and members of the fraternity I serve at Boston University.

The evening started with light conversation and a caution to avoid religion and politics. One man I haven't seen for 3 years asked what I was doing since retirement. I told him I became an LLM in the ELCA and that I serve a wonderful congregation in Manchester, NH.

So much for not talking about religion.

Another asked about my view on, "you know, people in our generation?" Before I could answer, a third young man started to describe himself as spiritual but not religious, "I just don't go to church."

This is a comment I hear often from young people of "this generation." Especially here in New England.

This led to a whole conversation that bordered on an argument between two men that have been friends and roommates for more than 7 years. Both had been raised Christian and neither one realized it of the other.

Conversation continued with various reasons and explanations around why people don't feel the need to attend worship. Reasons ranging from the abuses committed by religious leaders to ministers and members who don't practice what they preach.

I told the group how much I appreciated the very rich, open, and honest discussion. I cautioned them about losing religion because of human actions. We get our faith from God; it takes humans to ruin it through religion. I also told them the reasons I attend worship.

I long for and look forward to being with other believers, to be refreshed by the Word, to hear the Good News over and over again. I need to be constantly reminded that I am a baptized child of God, saved through Grace, and Loved by a merciful God. I need to be refreshed and renewed so that I can face the world and try to be part of God's peace.

Please accept my sincere thanks for sharing your worship experience with me.

# Peace Around the Cross

Submitted by Sara Kjendal

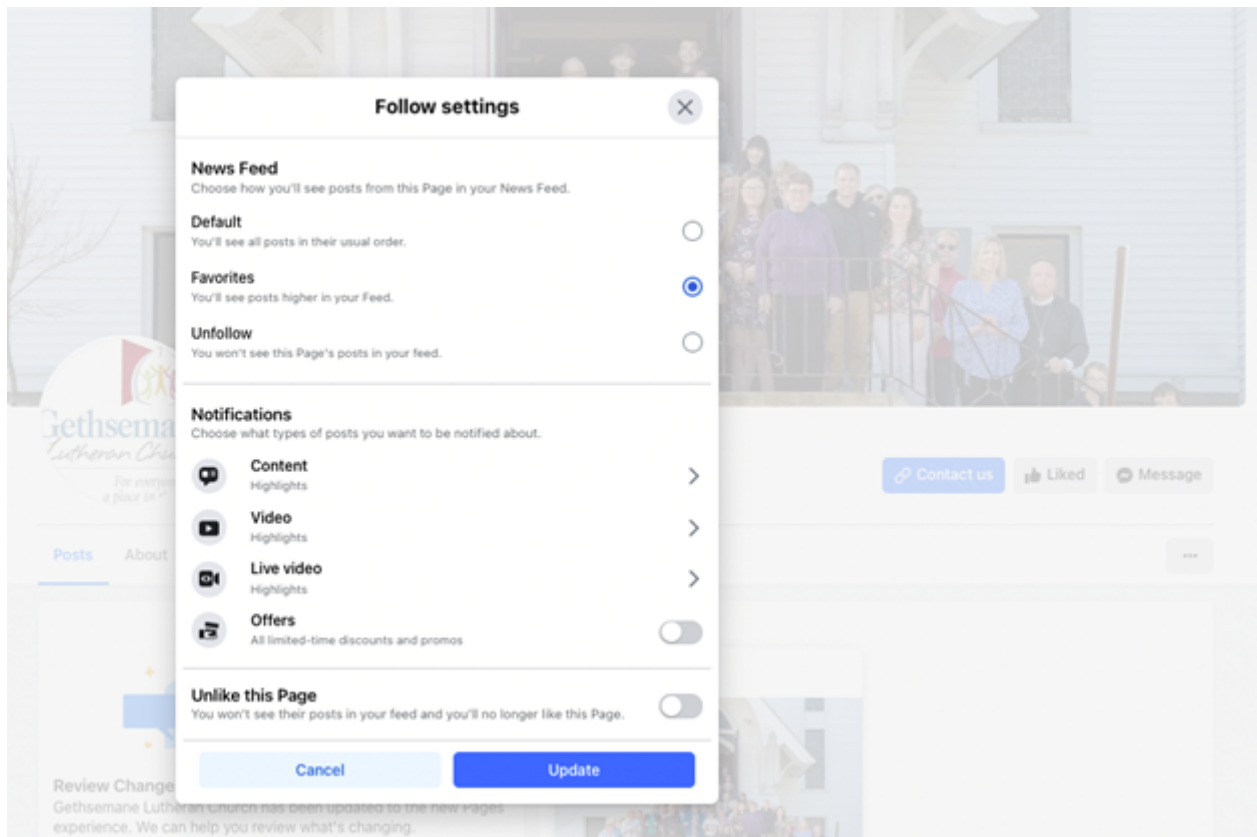
On October 18th, at 6 PM, 11 of us came together to pray for peace. With the wars between Israel and Hamas and Russia and Ukraine, and violence in our country and throughout the world, we used a service called Prayers Around the Cross. We came together in our work day clothes or jeans and sweatshirts to join in intercessory prayer for peace throughout our troubled world. The hymns we sang were new to most of us, but very beautiful and meaningful. Gary's music added so much to peaceful spirit of the service. Thomas had set up choir chairs around the processional cross near the front of the church. Sometimes we prayed together, other times we went up to the communion rail to pray silently. Our spirits were fed, and led towards a deep desire for God's peace. At the end of the evening, we all agreed we would like to do this again. So on Wednesday, November 1st, at 6 PM, we will once again gather for Prayers of Peace Around the Cross. I hope you will join us!



# How to Support Gethsemane Using Facebook

Submitted by Theo Groh

Social media provides a number of different easy opportunities to support Gethsemane and our ability to reach a wider audience. Every time you “like” or “share” or “comment” on something posted by the Gethsemane page, that helps that particular post reach a wider audience and lets the algorithm that governs what shows up in people’s Facebook feeds know that this is something interesting worth showing to more people. Have you already “liked” Gethsemane’s page, but feel like you never see posts? Posts by pages on Facebook generally only get seen by 5% of the people that follow that page, because there is so much other content competing for our attention! Would you like to see more of Gethsemane’s posts so you can help spread the word? You can do that! If you go to our Facebook page and click “like” (or “Liked” if you already follow our page). That will open up a menu (see screenshot below) where you can change your following settings from “Default” to “Favorite.” Changing to “Favorite” will let Facebook know to prioritize showing posts from Gethsemane’s page higher in your newsfeed, ensuring that you will see more of them more often. It’s a small thing, but it’s an easy way to help out, and it’s something that everyone with a Facebook profile can do to help.



# Book Review

Submitted by Thomas Fedorka

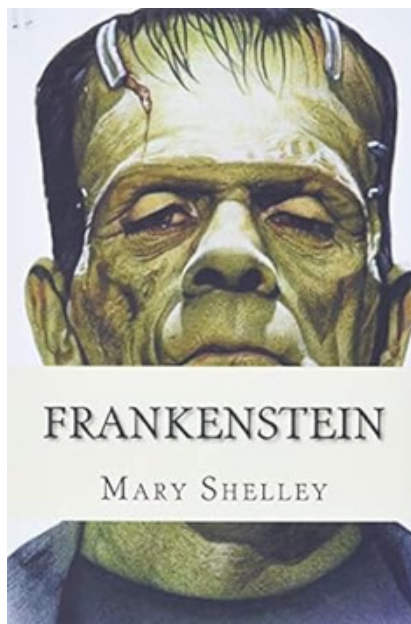
**Frankenstein** was written by Mary Shelley when she was only 18. The first edition was published anonymously in London in 1818 when she was 20. Her name first appeared on the second edition published in 1821. The story was written in response to a bet among friends on who could write the best horror story. It has been heralded as the first science fiction story, but I think of it as a Love story.

The scientist, Dr. Frankenstein, through a series of experiments with electricity (quite new at the time) was able to create life. While his friends tried to warn him and some tried to stop him, Frankenstein persevered until he was finally successful. His success was fleeting however because the enormity of what he had done suddenly hit him and he was immediately horrified by what he had made. Frankenstein destroyed his notes so that no one could do what he had, but he was unable to destroy the creature.

The one thing the creature wants most is to be accepted and Loved by its creator. Frankenstein was repulsed by the creature and could only see his own failure manifest in the creature. The creature wanted Love so badly that he promised to destroy everything Frankenstein Loved unless Frankenstein would accept him. This is such a basic feeling for the created to want the Love of the creator. Something fortunately, we have from our Creator. Frankenstein could not bring himself to accept his creation and so the destructive rant began.

Shelley portrayed the creature in the book as very intelligent, strong, and incredibly fast. Quite different from most of the movie portrayals (most often associated with Boris Karloff or Bela Lugosi) where the creature is shown as slow and dim witted.

Shelley never called Frankenstein's creation a monster. Though the creature wreaked havoc, death, and destruction, Frankenstein withheld Love. I think that makes Frankenstein the real monster of this classic horror story.



# Book Review

## Submitted by Crystal Bluto

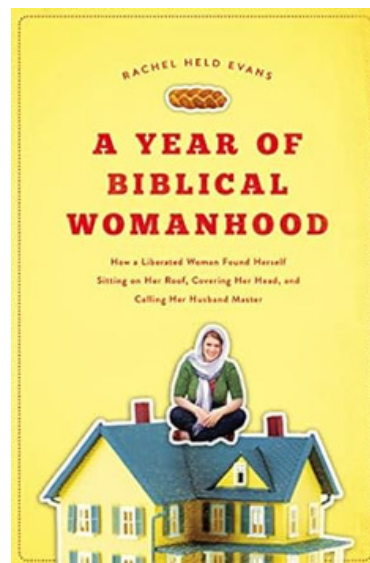
I recently re-read A Year of Biblical Womanhood: How a Liberated Woman Found Herself Sitting on her Roof, Covering her Head, and Calling her Husband “Master” by Rachel Held Evans (1981-2019). I first became interested in RHE’s writings after she visited the Wesley Student Center at Penn State while I was a student there. RHE had an engaging personality both in person and on the page.

The book recounts a year in which RHE attempted to follow as literally as possible the Bible’s dictates toward women. Within that year she never cut her hair, always covered her head to pray, and deferred decision-making to her husband. As you can imagine, following the gestalt of ancient instructions literally in a modern context proved difficult, so she divided the experiment by focusing each month on a different attribute of women in the Bible: gentleness, domesticity, obedience, valor, beauty, modesty, purity, fertility, submission, justice, silence, and grace. Each month came with a to-do list of experiences. For example, her March (modesty) to-do list included wearing a head-covering at all times, eschewing pants for skirts and dresses, not wearing jewelry, and visiting an Amish family.

Through extensive research, RHE uncovered many truths about the passages in the Bible frequently used to justify devaluing women and keeping them from positions of power. For example, in the second creation story in Genesis, the Hebrew word usually translated as “help meet” or “helpmeet” is actually a combination of two words, *ezer* meaning “to help”, and *kenegdo* meaning “as in front of him”. However, much of the color of this original meaning was lost in translation when the King James Version used the term “help meet” and subsequent versions followed suit.

Throughout the project, RHE had to evaluate the teachings about gender that she had grown up with. For example, she had been told as a young girl that her highest calling was to be a wife and mother. She writes, “As a Christian, my highest calling is not motherhood; my highest calling is to follow Christ. And following Christ is something a woman can do whether she is married, or single, rich or poor, sick or healthy, childless or Michelle Duggar” (p. 180).

I highly recommend this book to anyone who is interested in this topic and would be happy to lend out my copy.



# ReachOut Updates

## Submitted by Crystal Bluto

- Trunk-or-Treat is coming up on Sunday, October 29. We are still in need of more cars full of candy! This is an event that our neighborhood kids enjoy very much, and the parents appreciate. Please let Crystal know if you are interested.



- We have a community meal coming up on November 19 from 3-4 PM. As always, we can use more volunteers, as well as donations of items for our snack bags: fruit-and-grain bars, applesauce, cheese/peanut butter crackers, and bottles of water.
- As the weather gets colder, we are expecting more requests for warm hats, gloves/mittens, and scarfs from our unsheltered guests. If you have any of these items you would like to donate, whether new or gently used, please place them in the narthex.
- ReachOut will be assembling Thanksgiving baskets for local families in need. Please let us know if you would like to help with assembling the baskets or would like to donate food or funds towards the cause.
- Thank you all for your continued support of our ministries!



# Announcements

## Looking Ahead to the 2024 Synod Assembly:

We're sharing news of our 2024 Synod Assembly, taking place June 6-8, **2024**, at the DCU Center in Worcester, MA.

This will be a 3-day assembly that will include, among other things, an election for a new bishop of the NE Synod. We'll also hold elections for positions on Synod Council, Discipline and Consultation committees, as well as voting members to the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, which will be electing a new presiding bishop.

With these items on the agenda, we want to encourage a wide and diverse representation of voting members. Please begin making plans now for our congregation's participation. Our synod constitution allows each congregation to send their pastor/deacon or licensed lay minister plus two voting lay members. In an effort to encourage broad participation, the Synod Council has authorized the option of sending additional lay voting members provided they are a person of color and/or a youth/young adult (age 14 to 30). We're sending this information now, so we may plan accordingly.




## Items to Share:

From Jean Rolph: Gary and I have a shower chair, shower bench, and commode previously recommended for Gary when he left rehabilitation therapy. We purchased more specialized equipment for Gary and would like to give one or all these items to someone who could use them. Thank you for all your prayers and concern for Gary as he heals. If you or someone you know is in need of one or all of these items please contact Thomas Fedorka or the church office.

## Email Address Change and Security Reminder:

The church office email address is changing to [office@glcmanchester.org](mailto:office@glcmanchester.org). Please add this new address to your "safe sender" list to avoid having messages from the church end up in your Spam folder. And, as always, please be cautious of emails or text messages appearing to be from Thomas or the church. We will never be contacting you to solicit money or gift cards.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29  Altar Guild - Judie 9:30am WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00am Christian Ed 1:00pm Trunk-or-Treat 6:00pm AA	30 5:00pm AA HHE 7:00pm AA MNWS	31 7:00pm AA WB2B	1  12:00pm BIBLE STUDY 5:00pm AA HHE 6:00pm Prayer Service for Peace	2	3 12:00pm AA WNBB 5:00pm AA HHE	4 10:00am AA NO NAME
5 Altar Guild - Bonnie 9:30am WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00am Christian Ed 6:00pm AA	6 5:00pm AA HHE 7:00pm AA MNWS 7:30pm COMMUNICATIONS	7 7:00pm AA WB2B	8 12:00pm BIBLE STUDY 5:00pm AA HHE	9	10 12:00pm AA WNBB 5:00pm AA HHE	11 10:00am AA NO NAME
12 Altar Guild - Sue 9:30am WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00am Christian Ed 6:00pm AA	13 12:00pm MARY MARTHA 5:00pm AA HHE 6:30pm REACHOUT 7:00pm AA MNWS	14 7:00pm AA WB2B 7:00pm FINANCE	15 12:00pm BIBLE STUDY 5:00pm AA HHE	16 7:00pm COUNCIL	17 12:00pm AA WNBB 5:00pm AA HHE	18 10:00am AA NO NAME
19  Community Meal Altar Guild - Janine 9:30am WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00am Christian Ed 3:00pm COMMUNITY MEAL 6:00pm AA	20 5:00pm AA HHE 7:00pm AA MNWS	21 7:00pm AA WB2B	22 12:00pm BIBLE STUDY 5:00pm AA HHE	23 	24 12:00pm AA WNBB 5:00pm AA HHE	25 10:00am AA NO NAME
26 Altar Guild - Judie 9:30am WORSHIP SERVICE 11:00am Christian Ed 6:00pm AA	27 5:00pm AA HHE 7:00pm AA MNWS	28 7:00pm AA WB2B	29 12:00pm BIBLE STUDY 5:00pm AA HHE	30	1 12:00pm AA WNBB 5:00pm AA HHE	2 10:00am AA NO NAME

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 Licensed Lay Minister (LLM): Thomas Fedorka  
 Director of Music: Gary MacDonald





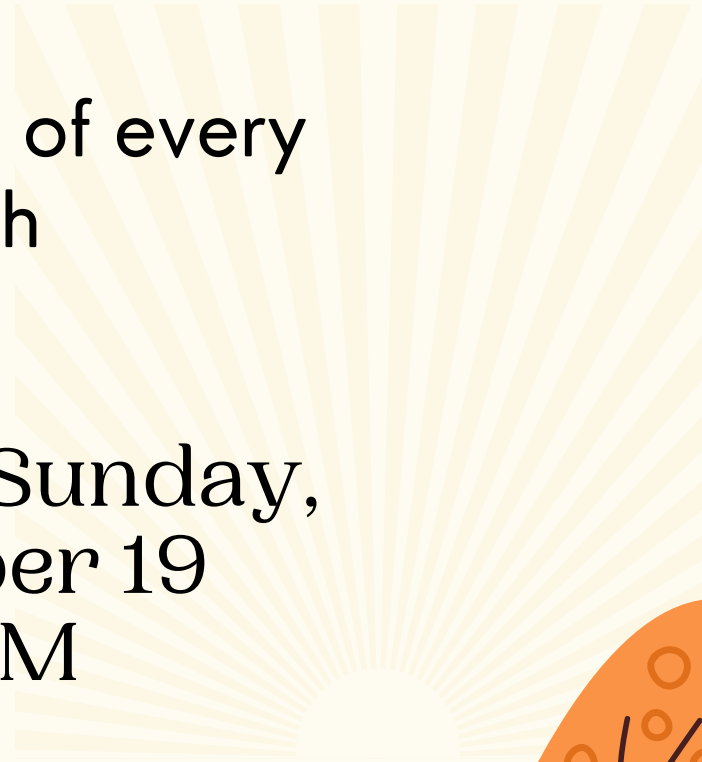
Gethesemane Lutheran Church

# Free Community Meal



Third Sunday of every  
month

Next meal Sunday,  
November 19  
3-4 PM



60 Pennacook Street  
Manchester, NH

(603) 623-3451

