

Think Big Pastor Pete Kontra

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.” --Hebrews 12:28

The Bible talks a lot about giving thanks.

- † 1 Thessalonians 5:18: *“Give thanks in all circumstances.”*
- † Philippians 4:6: *“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”*
- † Psalm 100:4: *“Give thanks to Him and praise His name.”*
- † In Luke 17:11-19, we read of Jesus healing ten lepers. Verse 15 says, *“Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked Him.”*

How do I give thanks to God? Really. Am I short-sighted, or do I think BIG? **When you give thanks, think BIG.**

As we live our lives, our first stage of thanksgiving is:

Blissful: centered on the bliss of the moment, not really thinking too much about where God is in all of it. This is kind of the entry-level thanksgiving. It’s more centered on the bliss of the moment, not really understanding the deeper things going on, nor really thinking too much about where God is in all of it. That’s where many people exist in life. They are thankful, but kind of thankful in general—to no one or nothing in particular. As I heard someone say once, that’s like being married in general. It doesn’t really make sense.

And then, some move into the next stage of thanksgiving, a little deeper and little more awareness, but still pretty much:

I-centered: Centered on self-gratification.

This stage of thanksgiving goes something like:

“Thank You God for all I have. And as I look around me, God, at all those people who have very little, thank You that I am not like them.”

I-centered—just looking at your own feet.

You could say that the nine lepers Jesus’ healed that did not return to give thanks fall into this category. They were happy they were healed, and knew who it was that healed them. They went to Jesus after all. But off they went once they got what they wanted.

Now, this stage isn’t all bad. You begin to at least recognize from whom our blessings flow. It certainly is good to be thankful for what you have. But it kind of stops there. There’s not much outward activity going on to others. And, when the stuff we have goes, so goes our gratitude.

In this stage, our thanksgiving is pretty much based on our circumstances.

And so, where is it God calls us to be?

God-centered: the deep awareness that God has done something amazing here.

“We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.”

The Kingdom of God. Jesus came to us and declared that the kingdom of God has come. He is here, in all His resurrected glory and transforming power.

Power to heal our wounds. To shine His light into our darkness. To forgive us and set us free from living for just ourselves. To make us His children, as part of God’s family, that all know love and are part of something that will never be taken away. Living in His kingdom is living now in peace, in abundance of His grace and the fruit of His Spirit.

What can be shaken is all created things. All the things of this world—the earthly tables we set for ourselves—can and will be shaken. They will come to an end. They will pass away.

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But God's kingdom cannot be shaken. Put your life into He who is unshakeable. May that be true for us as His Church.

Because when we do, it brings our focus off of ourselves and onto the hurting world around us, seeing once and for all that we are all in this together and all the same.

The author Fleming Rutledge writes:

“The life of thankfulness—Biblically speaking—is lived in view of the hard things of existence. As the life of thanksgiving deepens, we discover that the more mature prayers of thanksgiving are not those offered for the obvious blessings, but those spoken in gratitude for obstacles overcome, for insights gained, for lessons learned, for increased humility, for help received in time of need, for strength to persevere, for opportunities to serve others.”

Fleming Rutledge, The Bible and The New York Times (Eerdmans, 1999)

Because you see, as I got a little deeper into life and away from merely thanking God that I was not like “those others” who didn't have what I had, God helped me to see that I am just like all of “them”. Yes, I am thankful that I have enough to eat and a house and many comforts. But all of that can be gone tomorrow.

And no matter what I have compared to my neighbor, we are all the same—fragile people who need love, hope, peace, and the knowledge that there is a kingdom that will never be shaken. So now my thanksgiving still shows signs of self-centeredness. But God has helped me to grow into a gratitude that knows it is only by His grace I am here. And because of that grace given to me, my thanks becomes a giving of all I am to Him. God bless you! -Pastor Pete

Grains of Rice

Pastor Kent Rice

Keep On Swimming



This morning the calendar on my phone announced that I needed to submit this article today. So I made a visit to someone, worked on some other things, had lunch, worked on some different other things and then proceeded to work on still different other things.

Why?

Because I feel quite uninspired today, that's why. And I've learned in ministry that attempts to communicate Divine truth generally work out better when one of God's truths has been recently revealed to me. Otherwise it turns out like one of several Charles Dickens pieces that make it obvious he was getting paid by the word. Diluted, lukewarm, aimless.

So today I am reminded of the goldfish Dori from “Finding Nemo” who tells everyone to “keep on swimming.” Eventually something will connect... but in this case by then it'll be too late.

You see, this whole thing is totally my fault, not God's. He seeks to impart truth and wisdom all the time. Is today a trial that will prove instructive? Maybe. Is this a lesson in humility? Perhaps. Is today a reminder that I need to sleep more, pray more effectively and stay closer to the cross? Probably.

My personal Heroes of the Faith never had days like this, did they? Well, of course they did. But I don't extend that grace to myself and consequently my self-perceived failure to measure up just makes it worse. We all have days like this, even when you're doing work that you love and are surrounded by caring and affirming people. Some call it “being human.”

So I'm going to keep doing “stuff” today until the current changes or until I start swimming with it, not against it. And my advice for you is that sometimes it's best to just keep swimming. And to remember this from Isaiah 41:10:

*“So do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

Messages in November

November 3



Nineveh Bound—*Jonah 3 & 4*

Pastor Kent Rice Preaching

As we start November's theme of what it means to "Go" in Christ, let's consider our old friend Jonah and what this story has to teach us about our desire for ALL people to know the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

November 10



Keep It Simple—*Matthew 10:1-10*

Pastor Doug Hinton Preaching

In what monumental way will God move through you to bring people to Christ? For most, it begins with conversations of faith with those who walk, live, and work with us daily. As we look at our passage in Matthew, Jesus instructed the twelve disciples to "go to the lost sheep of Israel." As we explore this passage, we may see that we do not have to travel to the ends of the earth to see God move. Instead, we can keep it simple, start with people we know, and go into East Petersburg, Manheim, Lancaster, and the surrounding area to see God move in ways we never imagined!

November 17



Sanctified We Go So That the World May Know—*John 17:10-19*

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

As Disciples of Jesus Christ and as His Church, we are set apart for God's work, made holy in Him, so that we may go into the world as His ambassadors. God has unified us, sanctified us, and now says, "Go".

November 24



Make the Most of Your Time—*Colossians 4:5-6*

Pastor Pete Kontra Preaching

Do as much as you can: There's a lot to experience. Treat every person as if it's your last time with them: Cherish every moment. Remember you're going home: You won't be here forever.

November Ministry Schedules

NURSERY—SS
November 3 Bob & Mary Ellen McEvoy
November 10 Carolyn Gingrich
November 17 Karen Rice
November 24 Jody Kettering



NURSERY—WORSHIP
Donna Schaidle, Betty Lull, Laura Myer, Morgan Rice
Emmy & Dave Schott, Marg Zurin, Libby Rannels
Sherry, Katie & Lauren Miller, Libby Myers
Betty Cox, Lydia & Sarah Fisher, Hilary Hoffman



SOUND TECHNICIANS—8:00
November 3 Dick Caldwell
November 10 Rich & Jamie Bushong
November 17 Dave Schott
November 24 Matt Markey

SOUND TECHNICIANS—10:15
Rich Bushong & Blaine Garber
Matt Markey & Rich Bushong
Rich & Jamie Bushong
Matt Markey & Rich Bushong

WORSHIP LEADERS—8:00
November 3 Randy Ziegler
November 10 Cindy Harnish
November 17 Ray O'Boyle
November 24 Dennis Hughes

WORSHIP LEADERS—10:15
TBA
TBA
TBA
TBA

SPECIAL MUSIC



CHOIRS/SPECIAL MUSIC
November 3 Sanctuary Choir
November 10 TBA
November 17 Sanctuary Choir
November 24 TBA

VIDEO TECHNICIANS—10:15
Dave Bendit
Nate Polonchak
Alex Troxell
Dave Bendit

DEACON GREETERS
November 3 Pete Moore
November 10 Mary Ann Fisher
November 17 Doris Wright
November 24 Janet Moore

JNH GREETERS
Earl & Betty Zimmerman
Jeff & Bev Moyer
Bob & Mary Lou Haldeman
Roger & Gladys Ulmer

OFFERING TABULATORS
Glenn Brubaker, Marcia Root & alternate

SUNDAY SCHOOL SEC.

HCOB Adult Sunday School

† **THE CHRISTIAN HOMEBUILDERS** classes will meet in the library. We study the International Lesson. We have three or four regular teachers who each teach about one Sunday a month. We have several socials a year with the majority of our class participating. Our offerings are used for special needs within our congregation or community. The contact person is Ruth Johnson.

November 3	God Prepares for Deliverance	Teacher: Denny Bushong
November 10	International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church—Combined in Choir Room	
November 17	Beginning of Freedom	Teacher: Jim Kettering
November 24	Beginning of the Tabernacle	Teacher: Denny Bushong

† **THE SEEKERS**—We are studying the book of Philippians. Paul’s primary purpose in writing this letter was to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him. Paul also writes in this book to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of the circumstances. Rich Bushong is the contact person.

November 3	Philippians 2:17-30	Teacher: Ray Hutchison
November 10	International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Church—Combined in Choir Room	
November 17	Philippians 3:1-11	Teacher: Galen Brumbaugh
November 24	Philippians 3:12-16	Teacher: TBD

† **CONVERSATIONS**— Conversations Class will be exploring the Discipleship Team’s vision for HCOB: *Learn His Way – Live His Way – Grow His Way – and Go His Way*. During November, we’ll be examining some of the basic commands that Jesus gave to his disciples – commands that apply to us all – and how we could put these into action, grow in our love and knowledge of God, and go into all the world and make disciples. Geoff Davis is the facilitator.

Praying Attention



“Remember that you can pray anytime, anywhere. Washing dishes, digging ditches, working in the office, in the shop, on the athletic field, even in prison – you can pray and know God hears!” --*Billy Graham*

HCOB Family News



MANY THANKS to the volunteers who participated in the Wheelchair Walks at Brethren Village this season. You gave the residents a chance to see another world outside their health care room in the Courtyards. --Gerrie Hurst and Lois Killian

IT'S TIME FOR HOUSECLEANING! On Saturday, November 9 at 9:00am you are invited to come to Hempfield and help us clean up and sort through the items that have been stored in the stairwells and storage areas of the church. Many hands make light work as we do our best to keep the building attractive and welcoming for visitors. And yes, refreshments are included!



HOPE INTERNATIONAL FALL BREAKFAST—Friday, November 15, 8:00-9:30 AM, Calvary Church Lancaster PA—HOPE International's president and CEO, Peter Greer, will share how HOPE empowers individuals through discipleship, biblically based business training, and small loans. The breakfast is free but registration is required by November 8. Please RSVP to Lori Oberholtzer at lori@hopeinternational.org or 717-464-3220 ext 140.

BI-ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL GATHERING will be held Thursday, November 14 at 7:00 PM here at the church. If you are a church member or regular attender, please plan to attend this important meeting in the life of our church. The agenda will include approving the 2014 budget and confirming church leadership for the new year. Please pick up an informational packet on the narthex table to read before the meeting.



THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 27--7:30 PM

East Petersburg Mennonite Church will join us here at HCOB for a special service on Thanksgiving Eve. Bring your whole family and prepare for the Thanksgiving Holiday as we enjoy singing, special music from the combined choirs of both churches, a children's story by HCOB's Pastor Kent Rice and a brief meditation by Pastor Bob Nolt of East Petersburg Mennonite Church. We will also collect a special monetary offering to benefit the newly formed East Petersburg Faith Outreach.

Youth News

Next summer the Senior High youth will be journeying to Ft. Collins, CO for **National Youth Conference 2014**. Located on the beautiful campus of Colorado State University, the event is often life-changing for those who attend. Thousands of Church of the Brethren youth will gather from July 19-24 for worship, small groups, service projects and fun. One highlight of our last NYC was the anointing service during evening worship. We are grateful to Ed Haldeman for his passionate and able leadership of this event. This will be his seventh (surely a record)! Please help the youth by supporting their fundraisers, making special donations (consider United Airways frequent flyer points) and praying for them.

To learn more about NYC, please visit <http://www.brethren.org/yya/nyc/>

HCOB Kids News



We are enjoying our new classes and getting excited about the upcoming Holiday Season!

We are using our Kids Church collection to buy turkeys for families who may not have them this year. So far we have enough for at least two!

Thank you to all the new teachers and helpers. Huge blessing!!! Please remember that if you want to get involved with the HCOB Kids Team, there is always room for you!

Our Church Teams

Each month we will highlight the work of a different team. This month we are featuring the Deacons and the Leadership Team.

THE DEACONS just held the Fall Love Feast. We had tried a few non-traditional ways but this was a traditional event. The cooperation between the Deacons and the Pastors was tremendous. It was a very uplifting program. The Team has a renewed focus to stay in contact with their Shepherd Groups. The service of the visiting teams has been a welcome addition for that goal.

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM here at Hempfield is comprised of the chairpeople of the ministry teams and includes Pastors Pete Kontra, Kent Rice, and Geoff Davis; Karen Rice, the Children's Ministry Coordinator; Pete Cope, the church moderator; Wes Bowers, the chairperson of the Deacons; and Dave Bendit, the church treasurer. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of each month in Chapel Hall. Our administrative responsibilities include planning, coordinating, integrating, and supervising the ongoing programs of the congregation. At our January retreat we established several goals to address this year. They include discipleship, adult education, outreach, and communication. Many of the initiatives that you have experienced since January are the direct result of our focus on these. We intend to continue to work toward coordinating our efforts to put Jesus' purpose for the Leadership Team, and the congregation, first. The fruits of the Spirit have been widely in evidence in our congregation and we intend to continue to encourage and facilitate servanthood in being our best ambassadors for Christ the rest of this year.

Change of Contact Information

Please fill in only the information you would like to be changed in the 2014 directory (name required). Then place this form in the tray in the church's outer office labeled, "Contact Information."

Forms must be turned in by Sunday, November 10.

*Family's Last Name: _____

*First Name(s) of Adult(s): _____

Name(s) of Child(ren) Living at Home: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: (_____) _____

Cell Phone 1: (_____) _____ Name of owner: _____

Cell Phone 2: (_____) _____ Name of owner: _____

E-mail 1: _____ Name of owner: _____

E-mail 2: _____ Name of owner: _____

*Required Information

HCOB Calendar

Keep up with what's happening at Hempfield COB by checking out our online calendar.

Please go to

<http://www.hempfieldcob.org/whatsup.html>

for a full calendar of events.

**Toon of
The Month**



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The Month**

Hempfield Church of the Brethren
P.O. Box 246
East Petersburg, PA 17520

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

November