

Happy Thanksgiving! Dare I say Merry Christmas? Too early? Well, I am excited. If you have driven past the Bethlehem Lutheran Church parsonage anytime during the past couple weeks, you have probably seen some Christmas lights on here and there. The full display will debut on Thanksgiving (of course). I have added more lights this year and have moved some things around. I am not quite a “Clark Griswold”, but I may be close.

I say this because I think it is completely natural to get excited about Christmas this time of the year. I know that there are some people who are staunch defenders of Thanksgiving, like my wife, for instance. Her birthday is around Thanksgiving, and she was actually born on Thanksgiving. I respect that stance, and I am not trying to short-change this holiday. Rather, I am doing the very thing for which this holiday was created: Giving thanks.

I give thanks for many blessings in my life.

I give thanks for my beautiful family.

I give thanks for a wonderful community to call home.

I give thanks for my brothers and sisters in Christ at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

I give thanks for my brothers and sisters in Christ in the Buffalo Center area, across Iowa and across this world.

I give thanks for good health.

I give thanks for the clothes on my back, for the food on my table and for the roof over my head.

I give thanks for clean drinking water, fresh air, and a clean community.

I give thanks for sunsets.

I give thanks for sunrises.

And my list goes on and on, but I give thanks, most of all, for Jesus. He is the Son of God who was born of the virgin Mary. He is from all time and will reign for all time. He was born to save sinners, you and me. He was born to set you and me free. Jesus was born, a human being and thus knows and understands you and me.

Yes, I give thanks for many things and many people and many blessings, therefore, I am not short-changing the Thanksgiving holiday, but doing what all redeemed sinners ought to be doing, praising God for Jesus. I think that is why God orchestrated the Thanksgiving holiday so close to Christmas, to remind people of what and who should top our thanksgiving lists. And so, Happy Thanksgiving everyone and Merry Christmas. To God be all glory, praise, honor worship and THANKSGIVING, through Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.