

Update for 11/25/2020: So much to be Thankful for!

How do you find things to be thankful for in 2020? It's been a tough year, but maybe we should change the concept of being thankful. Instead of being thankful for what you received in 2020, be thankful for when you were able to help others. Here are 2 stories just from November.

The first story is mine. A young man approached me in the parking lot wondering if he could sleep behind the church. I asked why he needed to sleep outside. He had broken up with his girlfriend and started walking. He saw our church and felt it would be a safe place to spend the night. I talked to Pastor, and we agree to let him sleep in the van instead of outside. I unlocked the door, got him a blanket from the rummage sale donations, and gave him some money for breakfast. (no, I did not give him the van key) I saw him again on Sunday and asked if he needed anything. He asked if I knew where to find a laundry mat. I didn't but invited him home to wash his clothes and get cleaned up. Tina agreed it was the right thing to do, but nervous about inviting a stranger into our home. He started his laundry, took a shower. Tina asked if he needed a phone or anything to help him get home. He said his phone had been stolen, and he wanted to call his mom. I gave him my phone, and he was able to reach his mom. She was going to send him a new ID and some money to get back to St. Louis. We asked if a phone would help and he said it would be a life saver. So, after the clothes were dry, off we went to Walmart for a cheap phone. \$80 later he had a phone of his own. A quick path through the grocery section and he had food for a few days. I dropped him off where he asked me to. I hope he makes it home for Thanksgiving.

Now for Tina's story. She was at church to get the meals together for donating, and I was there working on the phone system. A lady came in

asking for directions to Elliot Rd. Tina told her it was just a mile down the road. Then she asked how far it was to her home address. It was about 7 miles west on Elliot. The lady mentioned it was going to be a long walk. Shocked she was walking, Tina asked if she wanted a ride. She was so grateful and graciously accepted the ride. Tina found out her name was Charity, she moved to the USA from Kenya 2 years ago and was interviewing for a job at the memory care unit next to church. A friend was supposed to give her a ride home, but the friend had gotten a message her sister had cancer and left. Charity's phone had died, so she had no map to guide her, and no way of knowing how far she had to go. She did say that when she saw our Christian church, she knew someone would be there to help.

A few weeks ago, I wrote a story about why we need to go to church. Maybe it should be Why we need to Be the Church. Here are two stories of people that needed help knew they could get help at a church. God put Tina and I at church at the exact time they needed help.

This year I am Thankful God trusts both Tina and I to show up when we are needed.

Want to learn more? Visit our website at:

<https://www.spiritofhopelutheran.com/>

Find us on FB at <https://www.facebook.com/Spirit-of-Hope-Lutheran-Church-115925125094614>

You can visit us at 2605 S Signal Butte Rd, Mesa AZ. The office is staffed from 9AM to 1PM most days. Call 480.396.8300 for office hours.

You can join us on Sunday morning for service at 9:30 AM.

Thanks for reading

Duane Gilson