FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

NOVEMBER 2026

This past weekend, Marsha and I were in St Joseph, MI to officiate at a wedding. Sunday morning, it was time to make our way home. From St Joseph, the closest path would have been around Chicago and on up through Wisconsin. But we decided we wanted to enjoy a full dose of the 'Mitten' and drive up through Michigan to enjoy the colors that Michigan has this time of year. Upon looking at our Rand McNally (road maps are still useful in plotting individual choices for travel), we decided to take US 31 up the west coast of lower Michigan, traveling through Grand Haven, Muskegon, Ludington, and Manistee. It was a beautiful sunshiny day, and the trees were still full of the vivid colors of autumn. From an advertising magazine, *Pure Michigan,* we learned of side roads known for their color. One such road went through Harbor Springs and was entitled *'The Tunnel of Trees'* because the trees alongside the road were so dense they touched each other across the road. It was a beautiful ride through the heart of autumn. Eventually, we reached a point where there were no road signs and even old faithful 'Rand' was of no help; so when we had one bar of service, we let GPS guide us out of the forest to the bridge.

Monday morning, we made our way home from St Ignace. There wasn't much left in color along US 2 except along the lake east of Escanaba. The trees were mostly bare, with a few maples and oaks tenaciously hanging onto their leaves. Fall, as we enjoy it with all its color, was coming to an end and it was looking more like November with a rusty hue over the landscape. But there is something about November that gives me a good feeling, and I think it is the prospect of Thanksgiving at the end of the month. I am so blessed by Thanksgiving for it is a day to stop being unhappy with what we have been provided and to be thankful for what we do have, namely our basic needs met and relationships with which we are blessed. Thanksgiving is sort of like the eye of the storm which has swirling around it an unsatiable appetite for more. It is a peaceful contentment and thankfulness for God's faithfulness in providing our needs. A prayer from my readings this morning:

> **To a fervent spirit, having to make use of food, drink, clothing and other things to keep the body going is a burden; grant that I may be sparing in my use of such bodily comforts and not over-anxious to enjoy them. It is not right to dispense with them entirely; we have to make provision for the needs of our nature; but Your holy law forbids us to seek for unnecessary luxuries. Otherwise, if we did, the flesh would rise in revolt against the spirit. In all these matters, I pray that I may be guided and directed by Your hand, so as to avoid extravagance.**
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> --From *Humility and the Elevation of the Mind to God* by Thomas A Kempis.

May this month for you be a peaceful time of being grateful for all that you are blessed with, and an offering of thanks in your own to way to the One who has showered you with all that is necessary in His love for you.

With love,

