Giving Thanks Always

One of our favorite fellowship events of the year takes place on Sunday, November 22. At 5:00 p.m. we shall gather for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner and Service.

During the Thanksgiving Service we ask people to share expressions of thanks. If we ask people to share a favorite verse of Scripture, many would select verses such as John 3:16, Psalm 23:1, or Proverbs 3:5-6. However, some of you may give Romans 8:28 (NIV) as your favorite verse. Romans 8:28 is a verse that has provided more comfort for God’s people in times of difficulty, discouragement, disappointment, and distress than perhaps any other verse. Romans 8:28, which states, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose,” is a promise that we can never exhaust or wear out. John Stott said, “Romans 8:28 is a pillow on which the distressed Christian may rest his weary head.” Because of the truth of this verse, we can be thankful every day regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

One reason Romans 8:28 is such a precious promise is because of the next verse. In all things God is working for the good of those who love him, so that we may “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29). You see, God is far more concerned about our character than He is about our comfort. And we, of course, tend to be more concerned about our comfort than about our character. So, let us recognize that in all things, and especially in times of difficulty, discouragement, disappointment, and distress, God is conforming us to the image of His Son.
A sculptor once carved a magnificent lion out of a solid block of stone. When asked how he had accomplished such a marvelous masterpiece, he had a simple answer. “That’s easy,” he said, “All I did was to chip away everything that didn’t look like a lion.” In our times of difficulty, discouragement, disappointment, and distress, God is chipping away those things in our lives that don’t look like Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah.

So, Romans 8:28 really serves as the basis for special thanksgiving. Many in our culture promote the power of positive thinking or possibility thinking. But those approaches simply don’t measure up when considering our Sovereign God who created heaven and earth, who is not only able to make such a promise to His people but is also able to fulfill it!

I don’t know what times of difficulty, discouragement, disappointment, and distress you may be going through right now. But nothing is beyond the reach of Romans 8:28. It is because of Romans 8:28 that we can have peace that passes all understanding. It is because of Romans 8:28 that we can cast our burdens upon the Lord. And it is because of the “all things” of Romans 8:28 that we can obey the “all things” of Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

So, let us give thanks always!

Session News

Please make every effort to attend the Congregation Information Meeting on Sunday, November 1 at 8:45 a.m. It is an opportunity to stay in touch with the congregation, have various ministries give updates on their ministries, and pray for God’s work in our church and community.

Thoughts from the Associate Pastor

By Rev. James Nichols

Live, Work, Play

As a way to help us think through how we can live out the Outreach team’s vision of “Ordinary People Living Ordinary Lives with Gospel Intentionality” we are talking about how we can bring the gospel into the places that we live, work and play. We are called to be God’s children wherever we are: in our neighborhoods, at our jobs, or wherever we may find ourselves. How can we do this well? This month we will begin by looking at how we can be an example where we live. It doesn’t matter if we live in an apartment, condo, townhouse, neighborhood in the suburbs, the country, or the city. Wherever God has put us—and, yes, He put us there—we are to be His witnesses. So how do we do that?
First, we have to examine our own hearts. When we think about our attitudes and thoughts toward our neighbors, we need to ask ourselves how we approach them. Do we have hearts for them that are compassionate and flexible? Are we willing to put aside some of our plans and comfort? Are we running around and too focused on ourselves to pay attention to those who live around us? Think about Luke 10:25-37, the story of the Good Samaritan. The parable itself is profound because it involves not only a selfless act, but a selfless act by the least likely party to help. Remember, the parable itself was a response to the question by a lawyer about the greatest commandment. Jesus’ answer was “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” The lawyer, trying to justify himself, asked Jesus who was his neighbor. That is when Jesus gave the parable. To quote the authors of *The Art of Neighboring* in referring to the lawyer:

The man wanted to define this word neighbor in such a way that he could not be found blameworthy. If his neighbor was someone he could choose, then he’d be okay. By asking Jesus to define the word neighbor, this man was looking for a loophole.

See how the lawyer was seeking to define the term “neighbor” so that he could get out of it? Our first instinct is often to do just what the lawyer did…we seek to point out inconsistencies, find loopholes, look for excuses, etc. Instead, we need to examine our hearts and look at Scripture. God’s Word tells us that we are to be a light in the darkness and to show God’s love to those around us. So the first thing that we must do is to examine our attitudes and hearts toward those who live near us. Pay attention over the next few weeks to the ways that you interact with your neighbors. Think about ways that you can purposefully interact with them, and look for opportunities to serve and care for them. Next month, we will look at various ways that we can love and interact with our neighbors.


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**Adoption**

By Holly Hawkes

My mom and dad, Sandi and Peter Walter, approaching their mid-sixties, are entitled to enjoy their empty nest and grandkids. Yet, God had something different in mind. At the prodding of the Holy Spirit and the encouragement of their church, my parents opened their home as foster parents. On February 9, 2015, they finalized an adoption in the state of Tennessee for three special teenagers. On that day, Tina, Trent, and Matthew became my sister and brothers. It would not do them justice to recount their history of abuse as they craft new identities as a “Walter” kid. Above all, my parents hope to shower affection upon these kids and lead them toward the cross.

Beside pointing out the value of public adoption, this experience has solidified for me its beauty in God’s plan. One year ago, Tina, Trent, and Matthew were strangers. Now, they are my family sharing a seat at Thanksgiving, a phone call for advice, or a joke about my parents. During the adoption hearing, the judge explained that the proceedings grant the same rights to the child as if he or she had been born.
Romans 8:14 – 17 outlines the rights for children of God:

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Praise God for taking us out of our state of sin and fear into the glorious light of Christ Jesus. I would add that foster care and public adoptions can be a tremendous blessing for you and Florida’s 14,000 children in foster care. Be open to the leadings of the Lord. James 1:27 calls us to specifically “look after orphans and widows in their distress.” Below is a link to the Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay a local resource for public adoption.

http://www.heartgallerytampabay.org/
NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12 — Mr. & Mrs. Bill Jeffries
15 — Mr. & Mrs. Albert Lok
21 — Mr. & Mrs. Rick Donaldson
25 — Mr. & Mrs. Wes Mollard

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4 — Brian Carrier
4 — Ryan Gawrych
4 — Eric Issac
8 — Cheryl Chew
9 — Kinsley Egbert
11 — Skye Campbell
11 — Ethan Hayman
11 — Carrol Josephs-Marshall
11 — Yisha Tan
12 — Penelope-Rose Atkinson
12 — Arianna Nants
14 — Cathy Gartman
15 — Alex Hensley
15 — Molly Knox
18 — Freddy Fritz
20 — James Montoney
21 — Nora Jeffries

Missionaries Supported by TBPC

Mission to the World
Peter & Lauren Dishman
Esue & Natacha Etienne
Ken & Tammie Matlack
Carla Stevens
Reformed University Fellowship
Jeff & Jenny Lee
New Harvest Missions International
Nathaniel & Cherita Adawonu
Serving In Missions
Rene & Lili Palacio
Wycliffe Bible Translators
Don & Judy Vander Ploeg
Kevin & Gertrude Nicholas
Ven Con Nosotros Church
Dr. Oscar & Elizabeth Alvarez

PRCC
Chaplain Ted Hamm
Chaplain James Cochell
Thank You

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Presbytery Love Gift through prayer and monetary support. We collected $900 to aid women in the Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) ministry. RUF teaches and encourages college students to model their lives by the Christian values we hold dear and to share their faith with others.

Please continue to keep the RUF ministry and its leaders in your prayers.

Thanks also go out to all who attended the Sister to Sister fellowship and contributed to the bountiful, beautiful, healthy, and delicious buffet table. A special thank you to Marianne Cali for her devotional about gratitude. It was so appropriate at this time of year when Thanksgiving is, at times, a formality. Gratitude, on the other hand, is that heartfelt emotion that we experience when another has helped in a way so as to carry our burden. Keep in mind during the coming Thanksgiving and Advent season the gratitude Christ deserves for what He has done for us.

Thank you also to Joan Kosanovich for the game she led and to Emily for designing the question sheet. Remember to keep your prayer partner in your daily devotion and if possible get together for additional fellowship.

November Events

During the month of November you will again be able to purchase memorial poinsettias to brighten the church through the Advent season. The cost is $7.00 for each plant. They will be placed in the sanctuary and narthex the first week in December and can be taken home after the Christmas Eve service. Look for the poinsettia order form in the church bulletin. Please give both your name and the name of the person for whom the dedication or memorial is being made. Then place the order form along with your check in the offering plate. Please mark “poinsettia” on the memo line of your check.

Also, in November, we will have our annual “Hanging of the Greens” from 9:00 – 11:00 AM. This usually takes place the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Please accept our invitation to participate in this ministry to glorify God by beautifying His church. We welcome all those who have helped in the past as well as first time decorators. There will be a job for everyone!

Looking Ahead

We continue to plan for the 27th Annual Christmas Brunch which will be on Saturday, December 7th. **We are now looking for volunteers to be table hostesses.** As in the past several years, we are planning for family style service. The hostesses will be required to set a table with their own table settings (dishes, silverware, serving pieces, a centerpiece, and personal décor) and make their guests feel welcome just as they would at home. The Women’s Ministry (WM) will provide favors, so you will not need to plan for these items. If your spiritual gift is to share your table and welcome guests, you will surely want to be a table hostess! **There is a sign up sheet on the WM bulletin board across from the ladies’ room. We would like to have our hostesses lined up soon as the instructional luncheon will be on November 7th. We are still in need of several hostesses!!** If you have questions about hostess requirements please contact Molly Knox at mollyknox@hotmail.com or by phone 813-451-0022. Tickets will be available for sale on November 15th, 22nd, and 29th, after worship.

We will have our next WM 15 on November 8th in room 23 following worship. Please attend to share ideas and to help plan future events.
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<td>8:45 Session Bi-Annual Meeting, Youth &amp; Children's Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; 5p Christianity Explored</td>
<td>11a Staff Meeting; 30p Women's Bible Study</td>
<td>7p Outreach Team Meeting and Missions Committee Meeting</td>
<td>9a Women's Bible Study; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong> 7:45a Men's Bible Study</td>
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<td>8:45 Adult CEF, Youth &amp; Children's Sunday School; 10:30a Worship Service; 5p PHOS Dinner and Meeting; 5p Christianity Explored</td>
<td>11a Staff Meeting; 6:30p Women's Bible Study</td>
<td>9:30a ESL; 7p NTCA Board Meeting 2015</td>
<td>9a Women's Bible Study; 6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
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<td><strong>13</strong> 7:30p Indelible Grace Concert</td>
<td><strong>14</strong> 7:45a Men's Bible Study; 9a Men's Ministry Team Meeting; 9a Christianity Explored Day Away</td>
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<td>9:30a ESL</td>
<td>6:15p Dare 2 Declare Rehearsal; 6:30p Kids of the King Rehearsal and Prayer Meeting; 7p Pioneer Club; 7:15p Adult Choir Rehearsal</td>
<td><strong>19</strong> 7p Session and Diaconate Meetings</td>
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<td><strong>21</strong> 7:45a Men's Bible Study; 1p Men's Gold Outing</td>
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The Sunday Schedule

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<td>Classroom Wing</td>
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<td>Christian Education &amp; Fellowship for Adults</td>
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<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Sanctuary</td>
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