

Family & Friends..... November 17, 2021

Thanksgiving Day is just a little over a week away. The spirit of Thanksgiving is one of being with family & friends, love and being grateful, and of course delicious foods. It is a day that we thank God for the blessings He has blessed us with the past year. It's a time to reflect on the challenges of 2020 and 2021, and to give thanks for all we do have, and our hope for a brighter future. Gratitude is an expression of our freedom that comes from God and God alone. We give thanks for all blessings. The First Thanksgiving was in 1621 over a three-day Harvest Festival. The Pilgrims gave thanks to God for the bounty they had harvested. They had to eat what they brought with them on the Mayflower that first year, until they could plant and harvest their gardens. The Pilgrims wanted to thank God for their bounty from their harvest. Something we should always do. Our traditions are important to us. I think Thanksgiving is one of the most beautiful traditions we observe. It's not about expensive gifts and decorations, but sitting down with family and friends and enjoying a meal together, or even help serve those who are homeless, in a shelter or anyone needing a meal. Let's pray for a change in the world that those who are hungry may be filled and those without hope may be given courage. Thanksgiving is not just a day. It's a way we can live our lives every day! To God Be the Glory!

He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God. (Psalm 50:23)

We are thankful for our visitors: Danny & Maggie Wilke (Kimberling, MO), David & Sarah Ellison (Fayetteville), Kyle Dillard (Springdale), Alyce Johanson (Centerton), and Kelli Homeyer. (Bella Vista)

Those on our prayer list: Good news for Roy Fanning! He has been cleared by his doctors and doesn't need to see them again for a year. Lynn Barnica had surgery Monday. Marg Kahler had surgery at the Mayo Clinic last week. Please keep both Lynn and Marg in your prayers. Chuck Pippin is in Highlands Health for rehab after a fall. Doug Klingman is at home and still struggling with his health. Becky Donceel is struggling with health issues also. Continue to remember and pray for Jennifer Oxford, Ramin Salimi, Pat Musson, Ola Harless, Susan Duffy, Judith Carmical, our missionaries, our military and police force, our country and president, and a cure for the Covid virus.

"We must find the time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives." John F. Kennedy

Items needed for Fair Haven Children's Home: canned vegetables, tuna, egg noodles, olives, pancake mix & syrup. Our Food Pantry for Nov.: canned chicken, stuffing mixes, peanut butter, cereal, evaporated milk, marshmallows/marshmallow cream, cookie mixes, cereal & sugar.

The Light of the World knows no power failure. Love you, stay safe.

Karen

**Bella Vista
Church of Christ**

Highway 71 and County Road 40
989 NW McNelly Road
Bentonville, AR 72712

Return Service Requested

LORD'S DAY	8:15 AM
Early Worship	9:30 AM
Bible Class (Livestreamed)	10:30 AM
Worship (Livestreamed)	
WEDNESDAY	9:45 AM
Ladies' Class	7:00 PM
Bible Classes (Livestreamed)	

Phone: 479/273-2434

www.bellavistachurchofchrist.com

ELDERS

Tracy Bowman.....479-899-3089
Don Butcher.....636-548-0458
Dallas Dobbs.....479-640-49439
Pery Johnson.....913-707-8379
Ray Reiss.....903-908-0203

DEACONS

Mark Bagwell John Bowman Chris Johnson Bryan Busbee Joe Hott Robert Horton
Randall Hunt Harold Phillips Terry Roberts Aaron Sloan Mitchell Whittington

MINISTERS

Jeff Grisham.....479-531-9135
Parker Willis.....615-587-3208
Cory Spruiell.....501-941-4525
Javier & Helmer Rosero.....Bogota, Colombia

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A Thankful People

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7 ESV)

Next Thursday, people all over our country will gather with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving. For many folks this is a great time to enjoy reconnecting with family. It is a day of laughter, celebration, and counting blessings. For many people this holiday may conjure up images of the good china, the good silverware, special table settings and a table full of great food. It may bring back great memories of time spent with extended family.

For many, however, it is not such a joyous day. Instead of gathering with family and friends, we may find ourselves alone, or being reminded of a strained or broken relationship. Instead of laughter, the Thanksgiving holiday may leave us sad because of an empty chair at this year's table. Instead of wonderful warm memories, it may bring back hurt from a family life that was less than ideal. How are we to celebrate when this is our experience of Thanksgiving?

Paul gives us some good instruction for this situation in Philippians 4. Paul, writing from prison and separated from these people that he holds so dear, tells the church in Philippi to rejoice in the Lord. He encourages them to rejoice in every situation of life (Philippians 4:11-13). Then he makes the connection between rejoicing and being thankful.

Now, if we find ourselves in the group of people for whom Thanksgiving is a great day of celebration and joy, rejoicing and being thankful

MEMBERS



seem really appropriate. But, what if we find ourselves in the other group? Is it possible, does it make any sense, to be thankful in these situations?

We can always give thanks that God hears and cares for us. Paul says, "The Lord is at hand." In other words, God is not distant, uncaring, or unfeeling. God is near and is able to help. God has made great promises to his people. Among those promises is the promise of, "I will not leave you or forsake you." (Joshua 1:5) Jesus repeated that promise to his followers in Matthew 28:20 when he said, "And, behold I am with you always, to the end of the age." Remember that in all areas of our lives, God loves us and is actively working.

We can always give thanks that God enables us to live in peace. Despite all the things that constantly swirl around us; no matter the circumstance in which we find ourselves God has made it possible for us to be at peace. Because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ we can be certain that we have hope and a future. God demonstrates forgiveness and reconciliation in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. If this holiday reminds us of a strained or broken relationship, God has demonstrated that reconciliation and healing are possible. If this holiday saddens us because there is an empty seat at the table, we are reminded that death is not the end of things for us because of God raised Jesus from the dead. We need to stop and give thanks in the middle of our joyous celebrations because God has enabled us to be a part of a loving family modeled after the love Jesus demonstrates for us.

Holidays affect different people in different ways, and navigating them can be challenging. This year, as this holiday approaches, let's remember what it means to be part of God's family. For those who have looked forward to this holiday and the celebration that it brings, please be aware and look out for those we know for whom this holiday may be difficult. Reach out and share the love of Jesus with them. Remind them of the joy, the family, the hope and the future we have because of what God has done. For those for whom this holiday is a reminder of loss and suffering, reach out to your spiritual family for support. Remember the closeness and care of God. Thank him for the love he has demonstrated and for all he has done to allow us to rejoice in all circumstances. For all of us, let's remember every day to give thanks for all God has done for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

-JEFF GRISHAM

Thanksgiving Lost

In 1789 George Washington issued the first presidential proclamation. Congress had asked the president to "recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer." He did so, and part of the the proclamation read like this:

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor....Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the 26th day of November next, to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country."

I identify with much of what Washington has to say here, I could give thanks to God for many of the same things he brings up in this proclamation. God has protected me and my family, his favor is obvious when I see the church family I am surrounded by. God's kindness and care is in plain view.

But, something interesting happened to the paper Washington's proclamation was written on soon after he put down his pen. It was lost. For the next 130 years, no one knew where this explanation of the meaning of thanksgiving was. Presumably, it was misplaced when the United States capital was moved from New York to Washington D.C. In 1921, historian J.C. Fitzgerald came across the document at a New York art auction and rescued it for just \$300.

How does a document as important as the first presidential proclamation get misplaced? I do not know, but something just as significant about Thanksgiving is still lost. At our best we think of this holiday as a chance to spend time with family, at our worst we turn it into a consumeristic nightmare. For most of us, God will only receive an honorable mention on the last Thursday in November, likely just before the meal. The rest of the day will be spent eating, watching football, and searching the sale ads for stuff we do not need.

Romans 1:18-23 contains a scathing rebuking of those who fail to acknowledge the plain ways God makes himself known to us. What is their sin? They fail to "honor him as God or give thanks to him." Indeed we might even describe the first sin as one of ingratitude. Adam and Eve were not satisfied with the good gifts God had given them. They wanted more and in taking more than what was allotted to them they changed the course of history. Apparently giving thanks is a big deal.

The past couple of years have produced widespread hardship in this country and around the world. Perhaps some of that has hit particularly close to your home in the form of lost jobs, sickness, or death. Still, God's goodness, kindness, and favor are in plain view as long as we are willing to look - as long as we are willing to prioritize thanksgiving.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

-CORY SPRUIELL



SUNDAY SERVANTS: 11/21/21

First Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture Bill Alumbaugh Song Leader Sammy McCain
 Greeters Joe Hott, Gary McCool Communion Scripture & Prayer Dallas Dobbs
 Closing Prayer Chad Dobbs
 Nursery Workers Brenda Tucker, Alana Tucker

Second Service

Welcome, Prayer & Scripture John Bowman Song Leader Lee McCain
 Greeters Curt LaPorte, Jack Johnson Communion Scripture & Prayer Stephen Hunt
 Closing Prayer Ray Reiss
 Nursery Workers Nan Cope, Jamie Fulgham Van Driver Mark and Wilma Bagwell

October Worship Coordinators

Worship Coordinator Mike York Streaming Coordinator Aaron Sloan
 Audio Coordinator Jim Caylor Video Coordinator Marquis Elliott