

The Visitor

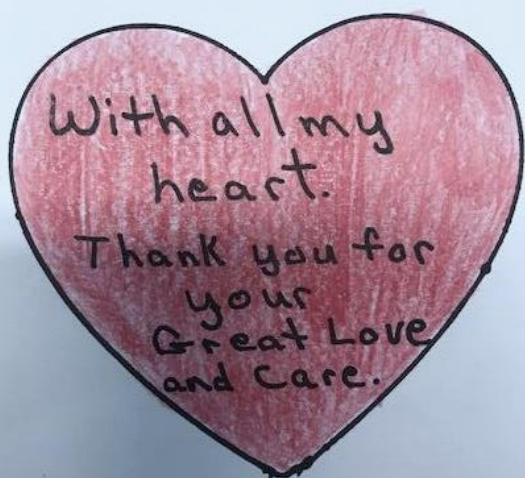
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 900 S. Ennis, Bryan, TX

November 21, 2017

An Invitation to Give Thanks with Mision Elim

Mision Elim is celebrating Thanksgiving this Saturday in its own style, with some home cooking, as in south of the border home cooking. They have invited us to be their guests. I certainly will be there! We have not been asked to bring anything, but if you don't feel right about that feel free to bring along a tasty treat.

"I give thanks to you, LORD..." (Ps. 9:1)



Their cooks will be out in the pavilion by 2 p.m. My contact, **Oscar Cruz**, tells me that most of their people will arrive by 5 p.m. The evening will end with worship between 7-8 p.m. (Be forewarned, men and women sit on opposite sides during worship.) Table fellowship is an important part of Christian community. Over the past two and a half decades of ministry, I have found that to be especially true in the Hispanic community, so this represents an important point if we hope to establish a relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ at Mision Elim. I hope you will join us!

If you have questions, call me.
Jesse

Last Sunday's Sermon

Title: "A Thanksgiving Collage"

Scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 Chronicles 16:7-11,34

With images of Thanksgivings past dancing in my head, I'm ready. Show me the turkey! Ah, I can smell it now! In part that's because our church Thanksgiving dinner begins when worship ends, but the main event comes later this week! So, I'm thinking of turkey and not just any turkey. I'm thinking of the turkey from nearly 20 years ago. I carried it across the street after dinner from First Christian Church to our joint Thanksgiving service with the Methodists. Though carefully hidden by a linen napkin, the bird was still warm and clearly recognizable. That evening as I preached my Methodist brother in Christ, **Rev. Bill Koch**, carried it through the pews and up and down the aisles. As their mouths watered the shroud was removed to reveal a turkey's carcass picked clean to the bone. I called it a metaphor for Thanksgiving, contemporary American-style. Gratuitous consumption! Before we reach the table this week, let's give Thanksgiving some thought before the thankful part drowns in a sea of mashed potatoes and gravy.

[Listen to the Sermon](#)



I have cherished Thanksgiving memories, and so do you. In the first I clearly remember, dinner was served at the Nashville House in Brown County, Indiana. My Granddad was younger than I am now. Afterwards we adjourned to his weekend place outside town to rake the many-hued leaves that had fallen around the cabin. Feel free to dust off some of your own cherished memories and lay them down beside mine. While you are doing that, I have a few other images of thanks share.

The first is of a thankful leper kneeling at Jesus's feet (Luke 17:11-19.) As was so often the case, Jesus was on the road when ten lepers called to him from a distance: *"Jesus, Master, have pity on us."* (17:13.) No sooner had that been said, and the miracle was done. *"Go show yourselves to the priests..."* (17:14) is all Jesus said. Away they went, but on the way, one of them realized exactly what had been done. He left the others to hurry along their way. Reclaiming all that they had lost was what they had in mind. But the priorities of that thankful leper changed. No longer focused on himself, he turned back toward Jesus, praising God along the way. When he got there, this is what Jesus said, *"Your faith has made you well."* This lesson remains for us. The faith of a thankful heart has the power to make us (and maybe a few others) whole.

Though giving thanks often leads us back to Jesus, it might not be our lot to remain safely sheltered at his feet to rejoice at being whole. It could just be that our giving thanks will send us back into the world. That's what happened to the demon-filled man of the Gerasenes. (Mark 5:1-20.) Jesus cast out a legion of demons from a man too wild to tame. The news of that miracle quickly drew a crowd, but out of fear they begged our Lord to simply go away. That was not the case for that no-longer-demon-filled man. He wanted nothing more than to sit at Jesus' feet. But that was not to be. *"Go home,"* is what Jesus said, *"and tell your family how much the Lord has done..."* (5:19.) The man did that, and more. For he told not just family members about Jesus, but everyone he could find. A thankful heart powered that new ministry.

If you are still sorting through your own mental images of thankful moments past, I have another of my own to share. I remember a ride back home from that country place I spoke of before. On a lonely stretch of country road, Granddad's beat up old Chevy truck broke down. While dad used tape and wire to put it back together, I did my part in the roadside maneuver. Still just a little kid, I gave Granddad a lucky buckeye that I'd found. I told him, "you need this more than I." With a broad smile he put it in his change purse. I got that very same buckeye back at his funeral almost forty years later. He'd carried it with him for all those years. Though sometimes the gift seems small, it can be the most precious one of all. Next to that I think I'll lay the image of the widow and her one lone mite. (Luke 21:1-4.) Jesus saw her in the Temple one day, stoop to lay one single penny down as her offering. Though others had given much, much more, Jesus praised her gift above all the rest. I'll label this part of our work today, small gifts from great and thankful hearts.

And if we need a caption for this collage of Thanksgiving's many works, I have the perfect one in mind. It comes from Acts chapter 2, verses 44 through 46: *"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts..."* It's a good Thanksgiving text. For God's work at almost every stage, both then and now, relies on the thankful gifts that come from glad and generous hearts. Amen.

Next Sunday's Message

Title: "All Hail, the King!"

Scriptures: Ezekiel 34:11-19; Matthew 25:31-46

Starting Point: Jesus' parable of the *"Sheep and the Goats"* is one of judgement. With Christ the king sitting in the glory of his heavenly throne, the sheep and the goats are separated for their reward or punishment. In reading the parable it becomes clear that those destined for punishment do not understand that they are goats. In like manner, the prophet Ezekiel condemned the religious leaders of Israel, calling them false shepherds. Almost certainly their reply to the charge would have been, *"We serve the Lord!"*

Minister's Moment

Friends and Disciples:

With November winding down and my joyful discipline of intentional thankfulness nearing the end of my self-declared season of gratitude, I want to indulge a pet-peeve by naming it. It really is not a secret. I believe that Thanksgiving gets short changed by the more commercially viable holidays on either side of it! This year thanksgiving is going to return the favor.

Thanksgiving's intrusion upon Advent's lead in to Christmas comes by way of last Sunday's table assignment. On each table during our shared meal was a stack of half-sheet card stock. Each had the following inscription printed across the top: *"I give thanks to you, Lord..."* The assignment was to use the material provided to create a gift of thanksgiving for God. Many of you did just that, and all of them were wonderful.



Vicki collected them as the meal ended. They will be used along with the center-piece poster created by **Jaden Meng** for the bulletin board just outside the Fellowship Hall door into the hallway. By using display space this way we are putting a bit of Thanksgiving into our Christmas thoughts.

Really it is not much of an intrusion. Giving thanks to God is just as much a part of Christmas as it is during November's Thanksgiving holiday. The same is true for the whole year. Worship of God begins with a thankful heart!

Yours in Christ,
Jesse

Thanksgiving Celebration Luncheon

Thanks to everyone who made Sunday a success! A special thank you goes to **Vicki Green** for her dressing, decorations and planning of the thankfulness activity and indeed the entire day. A big job well done to those who helped serve and clean up and for the wonderful food brought by everyone. Many hands make for light work!

Stewardship Reminder

Just a reminder that the Stewardship Committee would like to receive your estimate of giving cards this Sunday or no later than the 28th. As we have already been reminded stewardship and giving is a natural outgrowth of all of the many blessings we have received from God. Check your gratefulness list!!

Serving Sunday, November 26

Elders:

Ron Colbert
Ann Thompson

Deacons:

Cheryl Aufderheide
Jane Colbert
Vicki Green
Steven Myers

Lay Leader:

Sharon Jeffrey

Communion:

Ben Tedrick

Choir Director:

Karl Aufderheide

Pianist

Karen Smith

Prayer Concerns

While we believe everyone needs prayer, those named on our list have specific and ongoing needs,

Evelyn Lively
Michael Maloney
Liz McGee
Leta Capps
Gerry Hart
Vicki Couvillin
Kevin Rodgers
David Hahn
Diane Andrews (friend of Cheryl Aufderheide)
Jo Naumann (Jessica Meng's grandmother)
Buddy Wilson (friend of Larry & Vicki Green)

Ellie Erin Albrecht
Julie Atterbury
D'andre Fleeks
R. J. Bozeman
Roger & Emily Nichols
Mark Stadelman
Mary Anna Franke
Jim Conway (cousin of Bob Richards)
Pam Kopf (friend of Vicki Green)
Leatha Jeffrey (Calvin Jeffrey's mother)
Brad Slocum (brother of Stacy Atterbury)

Shut-Ins

Henry & Rosemary O'Neal
Nancy & Art Wright
Eleanor Kindt
Marge Shepperd
Gene Holt

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH B/CS

NOVEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Choir 7:30 pm Elders Mtg 6:00	2	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4
5 Disciples Breakfast 8:30AM Morning Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	6 SFA Young Life 4:45 PM	7 House Church 6:00 PM	8 Choir 7:30 pm Disciples Women 9:30	9	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11 Veterans Day
12 General Board Mtg (after Worship) Morning Worship 10:45AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	13 SFA Young Life 4:45 PM	14 House Church 6:00 PM	15 Choir 7:30 pm	16	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18
19 Morning Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM Thanksgiving Meal	20	21 House Church 6:00 PM	22 Choir 7:30 pm	23  Thanksgiving	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25
26 Morning Worship 10:45 AM Sunday School 9:30 AM Youth Group 3:00 PM	27 SFA Young Life 4:45 PM	28 House Church 6:00 PM	29 Choir 7:30 pm	30		