



Newsletter

FIRST CHRISTIAN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

November 2022

PASTOR'S PONDERING

I admit sometimes a part of me is just unimpressed with the standard call to be thankful at Thanksgiving. Don't get me wrong, we do it. I like it in a way but surely displaying gratitude- deep, deep attentiveness to and pleasure in knowing that life is a gift in a good and ordered world that comes from the breath of a benevolent Creator is a spiritual discipline to be nurtured more than once a year!!

Being immersed in communities of faith that live into that ethos and encourage daily spiritual practices can help develop within us this kind of a thankfulness. It is possible.

Still, as we whisper (or in some cases shout and publish) our gratitude for jobs, homes, families, health, meaningful lives, food- whatever- these gifts must be named with an awareness that not everyone has such gifts. If we thank God then I am posed with the juxtaposition of thanking God for what I have meaning that it is also God's fault for what I do not or for what others do not have! If I attribute to God's special blessing my good fortune then does it not follow that other's bad fortune also comes from the hand of God? And is that not close to attributing evil to God? Such is the quandary we feel if we care at all about the suffering of the world.

Barbara Brown Taylor, the eloquent and articulate Episcopal priest, preacher/writer talks about this kind of thing powerfully and thoughtfully in her many books; she reminds us not to say too much about what we know for sure about God. In one of her sermons, she tells of a church which was nearly hit by a tornado, and they understandably thanked God for His providence when it turned and missed them. Of course, the next town over was demolished. In light of that suffering, dare they give thanks?

What does it mean to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep as the apostle instructs? How do we generate gratitude, the kind to which we are called, this sort of thanksgiving which the hills and fields and valleys sing, is that it comes even when there is no abundance or peace or well-being.

It comes out of the depths of faith, even in adversity.

That's what the first Thanksgiving was about. Every Pilgrim family in the fall of 1621 had lost someone during the terrible first winter; a father, a mother, a child. Half of those who started the voyage in the mayflower across the North Atlantic were dead by autumn 1621.

Historians conclude there is no earthly reason any one of them should have survived that first winter.

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But there was a small harvest: corn, which natives showed them how to plant; squash, beans, peas and barley to brew beer. Governor William Bradford declared this as "a time to rejoice after a more special manner," and he sent four men "fowling" to bring duck and geese from the harbor.

Natives showed up, bringing five deer.

And so they ate and expressed gratitude to God in the middle of scarcity and insecurity, sickness, fear, and grief. That's our lesson for November. Show up, celebrate and express gratitude to God even in the midst of scarcity, insecurity, sickness, fear or grief.

Gratitude proved it did not depend on abundance or health or well-being. Gratitude is about God's grace and love and presence.

At the very end of the Old Testament is a book of the prophet Habakkuk. It notes that after the prophet complained to God and scolded the people and then thanked God for health and survival, were these amazing words:

Though the fig tree does not blossom,
and no fruit is on the vines;
though the produce of the olive fails,
and the fields yield no food...
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;
I will exult in the God of my salvation.

No matter what your situation is this Thanksgiving, remember, you still have God's grace and love and presence. Nothing you have done, or someone else has done to you, or that you will do can take away the love and grace of God. May your Thanksgiving be blessed and may you be grateful.

Pastor Joy

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Those remaining in our Prayers

Ray Hockaday
Elsie Bolick
Troy Johnson
Amber Massey
Rachel
Buster Freeman
Bobbye Mebane
Penelope Strange
The Andes Family

Randy Sellars
Lewis Fowler
Voncile Fowler
Sherry Massey
Marci Nanny
Joe Strickland
Suzette Pawson
Ken & Lola Pipes
Mary's daughter
(Lauren (Wake Med))

Change of Address

Did you change your address? Please let us know by contacting the church office via email, office@firstchristianucc.org or via phone, 336-226-7428.

Birthdays

Sherrie Linton 11/2
Roger King 11/7
Brooke Manning 11/9
Merle Sharpe 11/12
Sandy Stone 11/19
Phil Bray 11/19
Peggy Johnson 11/20
Keith Miller 11/27

Anniversaries

None this month

THEMES & LITURGISTS

(TENTATIVE)

November 6

Liturgist: TBD

Scripture: Luke 6:20-31

Theme: Sermon on the Mount

November 13

Liturgist: Kathy Russell

Scripture: Psalm 98

Theme: Praise

November 20

Liturgist: Sandra Greene

Scripture: Colossians 1:11-20

Theme: The Church

November 27

Liturgist: Brooke Manning

Scripture: Philippians 4:4-9

Theme: Rejoice

The page is framed by a decorative border featuring various pumpkins in shades of blue and orange, along with green leaves and stems. The pumpkins are rendered in a soft, painterly style. The text is centered on a plain white background.

CHURCH UPDATES

- **Saturday November 5th**
 - **Paint your own pottery day in Bray Hall at 10am**
 - **Dotti Davis will bring all the supplies needed**
 - **All are welcome!**
- **Sunday November 13th**
 - **Turkey Day**
 - **Come hungry!**
 - **We will have a cake auction after our meal.**
- **Saturday November 26th**
 - **Hanging of the Greens**
- **Sunday November 27th**
 - **1st Sunday of Advent**

CHURCH EVENTS

Women's Circle Meetings

Margaret Lightborne Circle meets on the 1st Monday of the month at 11am

Centennial Circle meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month
at 5:30pm at the Cutting Board

Adult Faith Formation Classes

John Graves Adult Sunday School meets weekly on Sundays
at 9:30am in the John Graves Classroom.

Discussions for Modern Christians meets weekly on Sundays
at 9am in Bray Hall.

Pastor Joy will share Nooma discussions with us.

****Starting November 20th both Sunday Schools will combine for The Advent Study****
All are welcome to join in!

Visioning Meetings

(TBD)

CHURCH INFORMATION

Mission Statement

We affirm our faith in Jesus Christ and in the Church that he has called into being which, by his grace and mercy, welcomes all. We encourage all who join us and confess Jesus Christ - regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, social, economic, physical or mental condition - to share fully in all aspects of our church life and leadership. We believe relationships between individuals, groups, and nations must be based on love, justice, commitment, and mutual respect; and we strive toward such relationships in our church, homes, and community.

-Approved by FCUCC congregation 2011

Our Ministry Support Team

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9am - 12pm
Office is closed on Fridays

Church Officers

President: Mr. Troy Johnson
Vice President: Mr. Jamie Fonville
Treasurer: Mr. Ken Little
Church Secretary: Ms. Nancey Simmons
Acting Church Secretary: Brooke Manning

First Christian UCC Staff

Interim Pastor: Rev. Joy Allridge
Minister of Music: Mr. Matt Rice
Office Administrator: Debbie Norris