

The Messenger

November



Pastor's Ponderings

Gratitude is the attitude of a Christian. Do you agree with that first sentence? How are you doing living into the reality of that first sentence?

As I understand it (at the simplest and most basic level), Christians are people who recognize and receive God's grace and forgiveness. We are not able to "earn" forgiveness, nor can we merit (deserve) grace. Both are gifts! And as with any good gift, the appropriate response is . . . gratitude.

Humanity was made in the "image of God." We were/are created to reflect God . . . represent God on the earth. As a race we messed up that responsibility. So God put on flesh in the One we know as Jesus to (as the songwriter put it) "make a way when there seemed to be no way."

Life in Jesus . . . having the seal of the Holy Spirit means to be moving, growing, returning to humanities' pre-fallen state! In this pre-fallen state, folks had greater communion and fellowship with God; and we were more accurate representatives of God. Today, as in the Garden, Christians are to live in God-like ways.

What does that mean? Well, Jesus talked about how God extended grace to us; so we are expected to extend grace in the same measure to others. In other words, we are so grateful for God's gift that we desire to be like God and give the same gift to those around us. God has forgiven me . . . so I will forgive others. God loved me when I was unlovable . . . so I can love another when he/she is unlovable. God met me where I was and journeyed with me . . . so I can meet others where they are and journey with them. It really is that simple!?!

As Christians, our gratitude for all that God has done for us increases to the point that I am compelled to behave toward others in Godly ways. Not because I have to or God will be disappointed with me if I fail to; rather, the love for what God has done becomes so great that I can't imagine doing anything other than acting toward others as God has acted toward me.

So . . . gratitude is the attitude of a Christian. Then why does my life so often fall short? And the best answer I've come up with (for me) is that I have "spiritual amnesia" and begin dwelling on what I lack rather than what God has done.

To combat this tendency, I've found it helpful to rehearse (remind myself) what God has done: I'm thankful for Jesus and forgiveness. I'm thankful for my wife and children. I'm thankful for Sullivan First UMC, our staff, and its leaders. I'm thankful for the challenges and encouragements from the congregation because God works through each to develop His will and way within me. This list is not exhaustive to be sure, but it is a start. So this November, I want to encourage you to make a list of how God has acted toward you . . . and then go and do likewise! ☺

--Pastor Renner

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



It's hard to believe it is the first of November with Thanksgiving and Christmas just around the corner. The United Methodist Women have just finished making noodles and had their annual Fall Noodle Dinner. Now we are planning our Thanksgiving Luncheon on Wednesday November 2nd



in the Fellowship Hall at noon. All women of the church are invited to help us celebrate all the things we have accomplished this year and also to say "Thank You". Two officers from the Iroquois River District United Methodist Women will be with us. Bobby Walker, former president and now a representative of Cunningham Children's Home and Patty Russell the Social Action Coordinator for the Iroquois District and a Special Shepherdess for the Sullivan Unit. Come join us to help make them welcome. All officers of the Sullivan Unit are Hostesses for the Luncheon and a World Thank Lesson will be given by Hyllis Rhoades.

OTHER ACTIVITIES FOR NOVEMBER ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MARY CIRCLE

Tuesday November 15th 1:00 pm
Hostess: Janet Freadhoff 19 Kaskaskia Dr
Lesson: Joyce Shellabarger

MARTHA CIRCLE

Monday November 14th 7:00 pm
Hostess: Cynda Bonnett 17 Eastlawn Dr.
Co-Hostess: Cathy Nichols
Devotions: Judy Ozier
Lesson: Char Black

HAVE A HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY - UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



Auction
Saturday, November 5 - 9a.m.
Church Parking lot
All proceeds benefit
Honduran Missions

Items to be auctioned: Lawn care implements, glass top coffee table, Illinois basketball tickets, cherry china cabinet, cherry dining set, Handmade Oak plant stand, Handmade Oak Wall crosses, 32" Flat Screen TV, Entertainment Center and much more!

Library Update



We have had several books donated to our library this past month - too many to list - so here is a partial list of these books that are new to our library.

- Talking to Heaven by James Van Praagh
- First Place (The Bible-Based Weight Loss Plan Used Successfully by Over a Half Million People) by Carole Lewis with W. Terry Wahlin
- A Stranger for Christmas by Carol Lynn Pearson
- Dear Katie Dee by Joe Reese
- Bleachers by John Grisham
- The Real Christmas by Pat Boone
- You Are Special by Fred Rogers
- The Chronicles of Narnia by C. S. Lewis
- Second to Home by Ryne Sandberg with Barry Rozner
- Canary Island Song by Robin Jones Gunn
- Cajun Hearts by Kathleen Y'Bargo

These books, plus many others, are on the New Book shelf. Please visit our library to see what is available to all of you. Thanks again to those of you who have donated books to us!

Keep on reading!

Lois Shuman

Below is a brief synopsis of the book Not Just a One Night Stand Ministry with the Homeless by John Flowers and Karen Vannoy submitted by Janet Freadhoff.

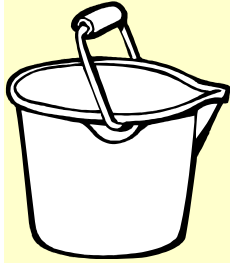
This book is in the Social Action section of our library. It includes stories of homeless individuals Julian, Luther, Adam and many others telling why we shouldn't give money to the poor! You'll have to read the book to learn why. There is much more to be learned from these co-pastors of the Travis Park United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Texas.



Sincere thanks to all who helped Ida May Bragg move into Courtyard Estates as well as those who have remembered her with cards and phone calls, especially Polly Shaw, God's taxi service ☺

I'm so thankful for the people who came by, the prayers, cards, notes received from the Salt of the Earth class, Pastor Renner coming by for a visit and prayer. Also for Joan Carnes and Helen Gustin-reading a poem, singing the Lord's Prayer, taking communion and giving me a beautiful silver cross from the church that says, "Angels Watch Over Us." My spirits were really lifted. I also want to thank the ladies of the church for the dinners they sent in September. I really appreciated all of the good food.

Prayers and many blessings to all,
Doris Haneline



The Yellow Bucket offering for November will go to CEFS to purchase turkeys.

The Yellow Bucket offering for October was \$190, but \$200 went to support *DOVE*.



**The Church office will be closed
on Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25
for the Thanksgiving holiday.**

*The deadline for the December Newsletter is
Wednesday, November 16.*



First United Methodist Church

216 W. Jefferson St.
Sullivan, IL 61951
Phone: (217) 728-4436
E-mail: jesusfirst33@hotmail.com

Office Hours
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Visit us on the web:
www.sullivanfirstumc.com**