

TWINBROOK BAPTIST CHURCH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2007

Moving Deeper into Gratitude

In a recent Thanksgiving sermon, I shared with you some of the intriguing and exciting results being done by research psychologists in the area of thankfulness. Initial results correlated by people like Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough indicate that a consistent focus on gratitude can lead to more positive appraisal's of one's life, a greater willingness to help others, fewer reported physical symptoms, and a greater sense of connectedness to others. All this seems to point in the direction of an important truth: greater thankfulness can lead to a better sense of well-being in life. This new research reflects an old insight of the Bible, where the apostle Paul encourages people of faith by saying: "In everything give thanks."

And yet, it is not enough simply to know this theoretically, or even to give thanks occasionally when the impulse hits us. Gratitude is a capacity which must be cultivated routinely in our thinking and living. In order for gratitude to become a meaningful part of our lives, and not just a good idea to which we give a nod during the Thanksgiving holiday, we must look for ways to create a space for it in our lives. For it is in this space that God can work in and through us.

One way to grow in our sense of gratitude is to build links beyond the things for which we are grateful. For example, it is one thing to be thankful for the sandwich I am eating, it is another step to be thankful for the bread in my sandwich and all the things connected to it (the fertile ground from which it came, the farmers who planted and harvested its ingredients, the people who made and baked it, those who delivered and made it available to us, and on and on). Or consider a second example, it is one thing to be grateful for a friend you cherish, it is another step to be grateful for those good things which made your friend who he or she is (family of origin, skills and abilities, local places where values were learned, experiences which have shaped them, and on and on).

This kind of thinking establishes links of gratitude beyond simply what is immediately in front of us at the moment. It builds a broader frame of reference from which we can express our thanks and opens us up in a mindful way to all that is around us. It also reminds us that we are part of a network or web of connections with the larger world of God's good making. In and through these connections, God blesses us, and we decide to live by faith and gratitude.

I know, I know, Thanksgiving is over and Christmas is approaching rapidly. But is Thanksgiving ever really over? Not, it seems to me, as long as there are so many things to be grateful for. The possibility of gratitude never really goes out of season.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Laly Cabañas' friend Sandra, whose son was killed in a car accident.

Barbara Carver's daughter in-law's sister, Lisa, is pregnant on bed rest.

Hank Clough underwent surgery for bladder cancer and is facing some further medical decisions.

Will Edmiston, a former member, has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Kay Fenton's friend, Jeannie, experienced a relapse of leukemia.

Marie Guy's brother, Al, is recovering from a recent time in the hospital.

Tom Lawrey, is struggling with health issues.

Carol Linder's mother, underwent successful hip surgery and is recovering in Georgia.

Carroll Matthews, continues a regimen of chemotherapy and dialysis.

Linda McNish's mother, continues to struggle with several health issues.

Win Puglia, continues to deal with breathing and back issues.

Jean Wilson, suffered a fall recently and is recovering at home.

Our hearts go out to **Bob Dargel** in the loss of his sister's granddaughter, Kaitlyn, who died of an overdose at Lawrence University in Kansas. And our hearts go out to **Nettie and Tom Lawrey** in the loss of their longtime friend, Olga Collier.

Dec. 7 – M&Ms

The ladies of our church are going to Mrs. K's Toll House on December 7. You are encouraged to meet here in the church parking lot at 11:30 a.m.. Evelyn Smith is the contact person for this month.

Dec. 9— Angel Tree Gifts

If you signed up to buy an Angel Tree gift, please bring your gift wrapped to worship on Sunday, Dec. 9, where we will present them under the Christmas Tree and dedicate them in God's Presence.

Dec. 11— Book Club

The Book Club will meet at 10:00 a.m. in the multipurpose room on Tuesday, Dec. 11th. We will be discussing *We are All Welcome Here* by Elizabeth Berg. Please join us.

Dec. 14 – Church Potluck Party and Gift Swap

Join others in an evening of good food and fun at the home of Kay and Jim Fenton on Friday, Dec. 14 at 6:30pm. We will have a potluck dinner and then play "pass the trash" with a white elephant gift which you are asked to wrap and bring. The gifts will be exchanged as part of the fun, should not be worth more than \$10, and should be something you have at home. Meat, beverages and rolls will be provided. We ask that you bring either dessert, salad or vegetable. Please R.S.V.P. to Sonia at the church office (301-424-6524) by Dec. 12th, and let her know that you are coming and what you will be bringing. Join us for a fun night together.

Dec. 15 — Chase House Dinner

This month team D is responsible for providing the meal. Gladys Donoghue is the team leader for this month.

Poinsettia Reminder

Let us know if you wish to order a flower this year! Forms are on the table or call the church office

Dec. 9 – Hanging of the Greens

Dec. 16 – Caroling and Pizza

Do you enjoy singing? This is your chance to be part of a night of informal singing with other as we share our joy with the community. We will begin this fun evening by meeting at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall to share some Pizza together and practice our singing before we go out caroling. We plan to leave the church for caroling around 4:45-5:00. Everyone is welcome. If you don't want to come for pizza, you can join us just before we leave. Be sure to dress warm!

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Service

This special candlelight service will begin at 7:00 p.m. Come and join us we sing and listen to some wonderful music, share the Christmas story, light a candle, and share the sacredness of this special night. Also, as a special treat, our Handbell Group will be performing several beautiful Christmas pieces on the bells.

Annual Meeting Items

The Annual Meeting of our congregation took place on Sunday, Nov. 18. Thanks goes to our moderator Bob Tiller for coordinating and leading the meeting, our church council members who put together reports on various dimensions of our congregation life, all our church members who participate in this important meeting.

There are copies of all the meeting documents on the table in the hallway, along with the moderator's remarks on the state of the church. And if you did not get the chance to turn in a pledge card for next year, cards are still available on the hallway table.

We give a special note of thanks to Bob Tiller, for 3 years of faithful leadership as moderator in working with the pastor, council and church. We also look forward to our new moderator, Carol Linder, and the new year of possibilities with her leadership.

Congratulations!!!:

To **Tamala Gondwe**, who will graduate from the Univ. of Maryland on Dec. 19 with a B.S. in Public and Community Health. She plans to start a Masters Degree in the Fall.

To **Erin Gruentzel**, who was accepted to Johnson and Wales University, a culinary school in Rhode Island.

[Note: We apologize for the newsletter being late. In changing to a new computer, we had to create the newsletter from scratch with a new program this month—Sonia and Kip]

BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER	JANUARY
3 Wanda Russ	5 Reinaldo Cabañas
11 Mary Beth Pearson	7 Debbie Rickman
13 Hank Clough	Rebecca Gondwe
John Haire	10 Tara McClellan
22 Yung Ryeom	11 Jonathan Alpaugh
24 Jean Wilson	13 Emily Alpaugh
27 Gavin Strade	22 Andrew Freese
24 John Alpaugh	
25 Hilda Cashwell	
30 Mary Honigsberg	

ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER	JANUARY
30 Laura and Carroll Williams	04 Kay and Jim Fenton
	19 Win and Frank Puglia

THE END