



Every Day Thanksgiving

Recently I read an article that got me thinking about the different times of our lives. It talked about the high times, the low times, and the "in-between times."

The high moments kind of speak for themselves. They are the special times when all things seem right in your world; everything is going great and anything you do turns out well.

The low moments also speak for themselves. For me, my lowest moment was undergoing treatment for cancer and all the side effects that go along with that treatment. At times I wondered if I would ever be back to "normal" again. I am sure this rings a bell with those who suffer from any type of chronic condition.

This brings me to the all-important "in-between" moments. The ones we too often tend to overlook; those moments that fill our days and nights with barely a passing thought. When we look back on our lives, I would venture to say that while the highs and lows get most of our attention, it is the "in-between" moments that really make up our lives. Those moments are driving to and from work, going shopping and fixing dinner, sending a card to a friend who is sick, having lunch with your loved ones, and walking on the beach or swimming in your pool. You know, the moments that fill up our days and nights.

If we take time to focus on the "in-between" moments, we can make them into daily "highs." Driving to and from work shows that I am blessed to have a job. Going shopping and fixing dinner means I can provide for my family. Being able to send a card to a friend who is sick allows me the blessing of helping someone else feel better. Time with your loved ones is priceless. And a walk on the beach or swim in the pool is a real treat.

These are the moments which seem to go unnoticed, but really are the highlights of our days. How much time do we waste waiting for the next high or low? Let's not take for granted all those seemingly meaningless "in-between" moments. They truly make up the best part of our lives. Therein lies the joy and thanksgiving.

Carolyn Deering

Thanksgiving Beatitudes

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire. If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times. During those times you grow.

Be thankful for your limitations, because they give you opportunities for improvement.

Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes. They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary, because it means you've made a difference.

---Author unknown

As we move into the year's final months, may each disciple be mindful of the opportunity to support Christ's mission in the world through our mission tithes. Each of us is invited to closely examine our true capacity to support the local and world church's divine mission.



Hello, Geri

I am happy to say that I joined the Bradenton/Sarasota congregation in June, 2015!

My first church family was in Alaska (Michigan) near Grand Rapids. I was baptized in Thornapple River in 1936. In 1942 my

father's employment took us 20 miles north of Detroit where I was a member for 64 years in the Royal Oak Branch which became Troy Oaks. I took a temporary assignment at work for a little over a year in Minneapolis, Minnesota, but I didn't change my membership.

For five years I was a snowbird. Then I moved permanently in 2006 to Sebring and attended the Lakeland congregation.

I have been widowed two times and now live near my oldest son, Paul Stevenson and his wife Susan. They have a daughter Nicole and a son Mark who live in Tampa. My second son, Jack Stevenson, lives with Yoriko, his wife, in West Palm Beach.

Until my sons were in high school, I was a stay-at-home "mom". After selling cosmetics for a year, I became a buyer of coordinating sheets and comforters for the J. L. Hudson Dept. Stores now owned by Macy's.

In 1994 I was ordained as a Teacher and hope I have been a peacemaker and a willing servant to Christ's Mission.

Thanks for accepting me, and may we all be a blessing to each other in love and peace.

Geraldine Bernadic



"Thank You"

I look around the world and see the blessings you have given me.

The earth below and sky above are filled with wonders of your love.

The crops that grow, the birds that sing, the water, sunshine - everything!

For all these blessings, Lord, we say "Thank you" now and every day!

FMT has Been at Work!

On Saturday, October 10, at 9:00 am a small group of people from our Facility Management Team arrived at the church to do a very tough project. The plan was to take out all the bushes/trees against the classroom walls from the north side of the building and all the way around the back to the kitchen. Also planned was the removal of the bushes/trees around the garage. This was quite a project that started at 8:00 am and lasted until 2:30 pm. **Kenny Johnson, Brad and Joan Martin's** son, was a huge help as he brought in the necessary big equipment to make the removal so much easier.

All the bushes, trees, and brush were taken to the dump for a total of 4 truck loads! The bushes/trees needed to be removed due to their being way over grown. Our thanks to all those who helped! **Brad Martin, Kenny Johnson, David Robertson, Jason Van Beek, Cole Van Beek, Dick Chlebina, Jim Deering, and Bob Beers** did a great job. Well done, guys!

The Mission Prayer

God, where will your Spirit lead today? Help me be fully awake and ready to respond. Grant me courage to risk something new and become a blessing of your love and peace. Amen.

Ok, I must admit I have been a little lax and somewhat lazy over this prayer we have been given and challenged to use daily. This Mission Prayer is also a dare (in my mind). It's a dare to try, risk, defy, and challenge something I should be able to do myself. "Help me be fully awake and ready to respond", is the "key" to invitational ministries (inviting people to Christ). How many times have I been fumbling for the "key" or just plain can't find something and have lost an opportunity to respond.

Several times in the last month I have let opportunities slide by. The most recent was at our "Trunk or Treat" activity when a mother and child stopped by to attend our event. I felt I was welcoming and friendly, but later I knew I was not fully awake or ready to respond. I firmly believe we are not to bombard persons when they arrive, but where was my friendly invitation to ask if they had a church family? Where was my invitation to ask them to join us for a free dinner and fun evening on Wednesday? Where was my invitation to deepen our conversation and use my listening skills?

I am ready to take on the dare of the total Mission Prayer. I will try to pray daily to be led by the Spirit and to have courage to go where the Spirit leads. Will you join me, I'm daring you, in making the Mission Prayer a priority in your personal life? Let me know where the Spirit leads you.

Andrea Cooper, Invitational Ministries



A Month of Thanksgiving

In case you haven't noticed, fall has arrived. It was rather subtle; so you may have missed it. It is time to turn back your clocks, grumble about the traffic, and look through your closet for a long-sleeved shirt. Well, maybe it is a little too soon for the shirt, but be prepared, it's time is coming.

Also coming is the return of our northern friends who we welcome with open arms. November also brings the

Thanksgiving holiday, and the last Sunday in the month is the beginning of Advent which leads to the Christmas celebration. Our worship services during this month will lead us toward the Christ story. The scripture readings for the Sundays in November can be found in the books of Mark, John, and Luke.

On Sunday, November 1, all are welcome at the Lord's Table as we partake of the communion sacrament. The lesson learned from the two great commandments given by Jesus is that we are *Commanded to Love*. Elder **Andrea Cooper** and Evangelist **Glenn Day** will remind us of these commandments as we witness the baptism and confirmation of **Joel Rodriguez**.

In the 12th chapter of Mark, Jesus confronts religious leaders in several places. He challenges their generosity and uses this opportunity to teach us about God's generosity. We are called to *Imitate God's Generosity*. The Pastoral Leadership Team will be teaching this lesson on November 8.

What really matters at church? The love and message of Jesus Christ is what matters most. That's what makes us the church! We must *Remain Faithful* in order to accomplish the mission of Christ. On November 15, Priest **Carolyn Deering** and Elder **Jim Deering** will remind us that our task is to proclaim the good news to all people.

November 22 is the end of the Christian year, because the next Sunday is the first Sunday of Advent, when we begin our wait for Jesus to be born. At the end of the Christian Calendar year, it is time for us to remember the truths Jesus taught us throughout his life. Priest **Al Perrin** will be the speaker, and Priest **Charlie Walker** will be the presider as we *Listen to the Truth*.

The Sunday of Hope, November 29, is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means "coming", and the lesson for this day speaks to the coming of God's reign through hope in Jesus Christ. We are encouraged to *Be Alert!* We should be prepared at all times for the coming of Jesus. Elder **Ginger Robertson** and High Priest **Nanette Dizney** will lead us in worship on this Sunday.

As we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday and look to the month of December with special celebrations, be present at these worship services as well as the Wednesday night Prayer and Praise services, using them to grow your relationship with God.

Jo Fenn-Martin for the Worship Team

Reaching Out to Little Souls

For several years now, *Community of Christ* women have actively participated in the Church Women United of Manatee County. This international organization is dedicated to peace and justice ministries, and the joining together women of interdenominational faiths from around the world brings forth positive changes in our global communities. Our local chapter is no exception. We currently give yearly financial support to 13 different nonprofit social service agencies in Manatee County. Many of our CWU women also volunteer their time as well.

After learning of a serious need for shoes for local school children here in Manatee County, our "Soles to Little Souls" ministry was formed. Our goal was to collect as many new pairs of shoes as we could, with a goal of three distributions per year to students in various county schools. Monetary offerings for shoes are used, with the help of Payless Shoes, to purchase shoes at a discounted price.

During the summer months, *Community of Christ* Compassionate Ministries team designated our "Reach In/Reach Out" donations to the Church Women United (CWU) "Soles to Little Souls" ministry. Thanks to our generous congregation, we were able to present CWU of Manatee County a check for \$660.00. That's about 50 pairs of new shoes! CWU is going into their third year of this ministry, and I cannot begin to express the joy on the faces of the students who receive these shoes, and the gratitude of the teachers who see the needs of the children in their classrooms every day. Your pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars have blessed many little souls with new soles!

Ginger Robertson,
CWU Corresponding Secretary



Our Father's Cupboard: Reaching Out with Love

For over twenty years, Bradenton/Sarasota Community of Christ has been providing food for families in our community. While our food pantry has changed in many ways throughout the years, we have continued to look for ways to be a welcoming people who share what we have with love and generosity. The people we serve are our extended family; their lives are important to us. Whether they are struggling with health issues or other concerns, we try not to miss the opportunity to let each one know they are loved and that we care. Hugs are always in abundance!

Although we are open once a month, we serve an average of about 70 households. That adds up to over 300 people who are being fed! Since we pre-bag our food, which is shelf stable, we can accommodate agency referrals for those who are in need of emergency food assistance.

We always welcome extra hands when unloading the truck and stocking shelves, bagging food, and assisting with carrying bags of food to cars. Thanks to Publix Supermarket, we have an ongoing donation of full size paper bags, which hold enough food to feed a family three meals a day for at least three days. Yes, those bags are heavy!

We are the *Community of Christ*. We are dedicated to pursue peace and to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ. Always remember that when we open our hearts to see Christ in others, they will see Christ in you and me. While our goal is to prevent physical hunger, our mission is to make sure that no one leaves without receiving nourishment for their spiritual hunger as

well. Your continued support of food, money and volunteer donations are changing lives in our community.

Ginger Robertson



An Enjoyable Evening for All

At the first **Family Fun Night** we shared a lovely meal together. That was just the beginning of a very enjoyable evening of welcoming a "celebrity", playing games, and making a "manna bag". We were given a large plastic food bag which we were to fill with a great assortment of items and then give the "manna bag" to someone in need. The giving was quite a challenge, for some more than others. Some gave their "manna bag" to someone right away while others are still needing to be given out.



The following are three responses telling their experience.

I was at Wawa with my family, and we were getting gas. A guy asked my Daddy for money (75 cents). My Daddy, Daryl, said "I've got something better for you, and he gave the man a "manna bag". The man walked away and was so happy! **Liam Quinn**, age 6

I gave a lady on the side of the road a "manna bag", and she said "thank you." She also showed me how to say "Jesus" in sign language. **Cole Van Beek**, age 10

I keep "manna bags" in my car all the time. Zoe and Cole help me find people that are in need as we drive around town. It brings me great joy to know that I am helping someone even in the smallest way. **Karla Van Beek**

November 4th's Family Fun Night will again offer you a meal to enjoy as you talk with old and new friends. The entertainment includes more fun games and another celebrity guest! We'll be assembling more "manna bags". If you can, please bring such items as individual packages of peanut butter crackers, instant oatmeal, ramen noodles, bottled water, socks, and toilet paper. Items that will melt cannot be used.

Enjoying **Family Fun Night**

Top picture: **Beth Slasor** and **Bettie Chlebina**

Middle picture: People assembling "manna bags"

Picture on right: **Addison** and **Rebecca Creel** and **Liam** and **Lennon Quinn**





Trunk or Treat

It was an enjoyable time for the young and old!

Pictured above are some of our youth who were waiting to hit the line of open trunks filled with goodies at this year's Trunk or Treat. Spiderman, Audrey Hepburn, a skeleton, a dinosaur, and two nerds were among the group of candy-seeking kids. There were some who even came dressed as themselves. Scary!! Candy-seeking adults were seen roaming the parking lot as well.



Corbin Roehl, the youngest, was a "treat" for all of us who wanted to hold him. He is too cute in his dinosaur costume to be scary.



One of the many frightfully decorated trunks that greeted the "trickers" as they roamed the parking lot. It looks like a wicked witch bit the dust under the left tire of this vehicle!

Get Ready for Chili Cook-off

There may not be a chill in the air quite yet, but there definitely is a "Chili" in our future. The Fund Raising Committee is excited to announce a **Chili Cook-off**. It is scheduled for **Sunday, December 6**, directly following the worship service. We are looking for our best chili chefs to compete for honors and prizes. Along with chili soups, there will be drinks, a salad bar and desserts. We will be asking for donations since this will be a fund raising event. "To Go" meals will also be available. Those who would like to enter the cook-off, please contact **Karla Van Beek** by November 22.

Are You the Looking for a Bargain?

We are looking for items or services that can be bid on for our **Silent Auction**. This has always been a fun and lively event for all. Items and services will be on display in the Information Center and bidding starts **November 22**. Bidding will cease at 12:15 pm on December 6, yes, the same day as the Chili Cook-off. Please contact **Karla Van Beek** or any member of the Fund Raising Committee with any item or service you have to offer for this event.

Knitting as a Ministry

There are many "crafty" women in our congregation and five years ago 13 of them gathered together and became a part of a very special ministry, that of making Prayer Shawls.

Prayer shawls are knitted or crocheted in simple patterns as well as beautiful patterns, but all begin and end in the same way. The yarn is blessed before the shawl is started, and a blessing is offered on the shawl upon its completion. It is then put away until a call for a prayer shawl is received. It is taken or mailed to someone in need of a special blessing.

Our Prayer Shawl group has made over 100 shawls since we began. We have received many lovely thank you notes from those who received a shawl when they were in need of a special blessing. Those making the shawls continue to be blessed as they share their giftedness.

Bona Lee was our organizer in the beginning. **Nancy Peters** has taken over now. If you are interested in being a part of this special ministry, please give her a call. We gather together at the church on the second Saturday of the month at 2:00 pm.

Birthdays to Celebrate



- 01 Jolene Gregg
- 03 Richie Creel
- 03 Charyn Walker
- 09 Jane Kelley
- 19 Kinsley Roehl
- 23 Gloria Chaney
- 25 Johnathan Morgan

Keeping in Touch

After the October *Celebration News* was sent out to our family and friends, I, Elaine Gregg, received a message on my phone from **Sandy Rater**. She and Steve wanted to say thank you for the newsletter and let people know what has been going on in their lives.

They have been sick and in the hospital throughout the last many months. They wanted to let people know how much they have appreciated your cards and calls. Sandy wanted us to know that they always know they have a church family. She said, "We have felt much love and kindness from you all and the Spirit of God. While in the hospital I had wonderful opportunities to minister to others." Sandy also wanted to share the news that she had a great-grandson, Liam, born September 1.

Let us remember the Raters and others in our congregation that are not able to meet with us often because of health limitations.

Church in the Park

Church in the Park was held on October 11 at the Greenbrook Park in east Bradenton. It was a fun day filled with thoughtful worship, delicious food, infectious laughter, and the crashing sound of the jenga tower falling.

People started gathering around 9:30 bringing food to share, lawn chairs, fishing gear, and games. The waiting coffee, juice, breads and muffins satisfied the morning munchies. A group of young adults had planned the short worship service and presented a drama. The lesson for the morning was "All things are possible with God."

After the service, the cooks got busy and soon the smell of hamburgers and hot dogs filled the air. The tables were loaded with salads of all kinds, beans, chips, and desserts. The only thing missing was the mustard and ketchup. How could that have happened? The onion, tomato slices, lettuce and cheese made it there. Where was the mustard and ketchup? Many hamburgers and hot dogs were enjoyed with new toppings!

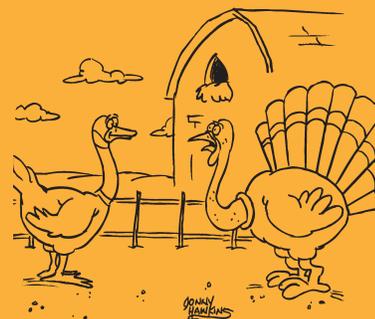


People visited with one another while others played games, went fishing, or played on the playground. The most popular game was the giant jenga. **Heather Devine** is about to pull out a supporting board while **Tim Devine** and **Amy Smeralda** hold their breath. Did she get it out without sending the rest of the tower tumbling down? Crash! *%^@@@ **Bang!&&Boom! **Richie Creel** and **Kaitlyn James** are concentrating on a game of dominoes.



The weather was nice, and we were truly blessed to have such a beautiful experience, worshipping and fellowshiping outside.

Happy
Thanksgiving
to all!



"I'm praying they opt for fast food ...
or that they pray and fast."



DID YOU KNOW ???

- ◆ **Kaitlyn James** can be seen in the full page Spectacular photo on page 23 in October's *Herald*?
- ◆ **Cole Van Beek** was the top salesperson in his school's Fund Raiser as he has been for the last five years, thanks to many of you, and he earned a cruise for his family?
- ◆ **Family Fun Night's Manna Bags** has received \$200.00 that will go towards purchasing items for the "bags" from Florida Mission Center's Two Cents a Meal funds?
- ◆ **Zoe Van Beek** was elected secretary of her school's chapter of the Junior National Honor Society?
- ◆ **Karla Van Beek** was in charge of the Cookie Dough Fund Raiser at Cole's school, and they earned over \$61,000 for the school?
- ◆ **Lee and Nancy Peters** spent most of this past July and August at their home on the church campgrounds in Onset, MA at which time they attended a reunion and reconnected with many old friends. Their sons and daughter also joined them for a restful, productive vacation which rekindled many wonderful memories.



Sharing God's Love

I have been very blessed in the last few months. As a congregation, you have all been teaching me it only takes small steps to show God's love. Inviting people to Family Fun Night, welcoming people to share a meal or a cool drink at the park, and handing out "manna bags" to those less fortunate isn't that difficult. For many of you this is second nature, but for me to reach out to strangers has always been a struggle. I have been pushing myself to step out of my comfort zone and to reach out to individuals.

This reaching out has been such a blessing to me. It was a wonderful opportunity to visit with someone new who attended our Family Fun Night and inviting a father and his children to join us at lunch during Church in the Park. An even better opportunity was witnessing the joy on two gentlemen's faces as Richie gave them the "manna bags" that our young daughters, Rebecca and Addison, were so thrilled to make. These are all very small gestures - making gift bags, handing them out and sitting for a meal with new people, but these small gestures bring great joy not only to those receiving them, but most importantly to those who are providing them. Thank you all for the great examples that I see from many of you. Let us all continue to find ways to share God's love and to push each other out of our comfort zones.

Melinda Creel

Helping Hand Needed

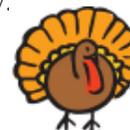
Wanted: Arden Courts, a facility for the elderly in Sarasota, is looking for someone who likes woodworking to help with a birdhouse project. For further information, please contact **Carey Chaney** at 941.924.2721.



Alive and Functioning

A group of ladies is meeting on Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 pm to play a game named MahJongg. We now have a group of 13 ladies presently playing and would like to invite anyone else who might be interested in learning how to play to join us. If you are interested, contact **Fay Beers** for information.

This game is helping to keep our brains alive and functioning well!!!! Periodically we enjoy eating lunch together before we play.



A Special Potluck

December 13th will be a **Christmas Potluck**. Please bring two of your special Christmas dishes: main dish, salad, vegetable or dessert. Come and share in this festive meal to



News for 2016

Our Annual Yard Sale is being scheduled for February, 2016. Even though the date has not been set, it is time to start thinking of any clean, gently used items you may have to donate for the sale. As usual, there will be food and drink (at very reasonable prices) and delicious bake sale items for purchase. Any questions? Ask any member of the Fund Raising Committee: **Jim Brougher, Kayla Smeralda, Kaitlyn James, Ryan Hollenbeck, Carolyn Deering, Stu Skene** or **Karla Van Beek**.