

Pastor's Ponderings - November 2025

November is the thankfulness month. In many cultures there were traditionally harvest festivals at this time of year with ceremonies of gratitude for the fruits of the earth. For us there is the Thanksgiving holiday and then the Advent season hard on its heels with excitement building toward the gifts of Christmas. It is a good time to remember gratitude.

There are burdens and occasions for sadness in every life, even in every day in greater or lesser degrees, yet there are also always many things to be grateful for and even rejoice in. Choosing to focus on gratitude and joy just plain makes life better. As the book of Proverbs puts it, "A joyful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). Or, in that old *Reader's Digest* adage, "laughter is the best medicine."

We know that feeling grateful and being joyful makes us feel better, but there are also scientific studies giving evidence that gratitude and joy improve one's overall health and can extend one's life. As I said at Fred Shear's memorial service, a little humor goes a long way—Fred had a lot of humor and it took him a very long way. Fred also told me he gave thanks to God every night for another day of life. It is a good way to live, and a way to live well. According to the Apostle Paul, it is the way we are meant to live: "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (Philippians 4:6).

It is easy these days to get discouraged and even feel hopeless. The government is shut down, politicians and political parties seem mired in hatred, atrocious wars drag on, there are devastating natural disasters and environmental worries, inflation, layoffs, rising poverty....

As we move into this season of thanksgiving, let us remember to be always grateful for the good in our lives and in our world—especially for the love and life we share with others and for this good flourishing gift of God's creation that brings forth bounteous life every day.

May it be so.

Ted

*This is the day that
the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in
it. – Psalm 118:24*

