

# TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2009

## Grace and Thanksgiving

*Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.*

*1 Peter 4:10*

Are you thankful? What are you thankful for? And if so, how do you show thanksgiving?

In a few weeks many of us will gather with friends and family around large tables and buffets brimming with an overabundance of food and will most likely stuff ourselves. Then while a few of us have the responsibility of clean up duty, many more will lounge around watching football. Thanksgiving as a holiday is a time to celebrate with friends and family and to feast, remembering the autumnal harvest of yore, and once feasted up, to rest, and wait to feast some more. It's a good day. Don't get me wrong. But other than perhaps saying grace before the meal, what makes it *thanksgiving*? How in this holiday do we give thanks, show thanks, demonstrate thanks?

While the national holiday of Thanksgiving has certain religious undertones, and there is that historical element of the Christian Pilgrims and all, Thanksgiving is not a Christian holiday. The practice of thanksgiving, however, most certainly *is* a Christian observance. It is the response to the reality of grace. Thanksgiving is the response to blessing. It is the response to salvation. It is the response to faith. It is the full expression of gratitude. Thanksgiving is what we do in return to what God has first done.

Sometimes thanksgiving takes the form of praise. And while I am a firm believer in the power of words and language, there is that saying about talk being cheap. Thanksgiving may well begin in praise, but that praise, real praise becomes fleshed out in action. Thanksgiving is service. Thanksgiving is giving back to the one from which you have received so much. All that we do is a thanksgiving to God for all that God has done. For God indeed has done so much.

I return to my earlier questions, are you thankful? What are you thankful for? How do you

show thanksgiving?

Do you believe that God has indeed done so much? Grace, faith, salvation? Are these indeed gifts from God? And if so, how do we show God thanksgiving? How do we most appropriately serve God?

The first letter of Peter states that these are most certainly gifts from God and that our response is to use these gifts—and for that matter, whatever gift each has received to serve God by serving one another. Jesus put it in a similar manner in a parable recorded in Matthew 25, that when we serve our fellow man and woman—when we feed the hungry and clothe the naked, when we visit the prisoner, when we do whatever we do to the least of all humanity—we serve Christ himself. That's real thanksgiving.

But there is something else that this message contends, that all that we have is a gift from God, it is a gift of grace itself. But God's grace ultimately is not something that we possess as our own, it is God's. And we are merely (or phenomenally) stewards of that grace. It does not belong to us but is God's. And that is true with all and any good gifts. They are God's and we are the stewards of them.

I want to share what I am thankful for: you. It was exactly one year ago that I began the call here at Trinity Reformed and I am so thankful for you and for all that God has done and is doing. I am grateful for this relationship that has begun and am even more excited for where it may go. In this past month during my various travels and meetings I often speak of you, *my church*. In many ways this is a term of both affection and responsibility, a familial kind of belonging, you are the flock that has been entrusted to me. Yet in that very explanation I become aware of a greater reality, that you are not my church, you are Christ's church. You don't belong to me anymore than the church belongs to any of us. Trinity is not ours, it is God's. It belongs to Jesus and we are merely (but amazingly) stewards of it.

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Our vision is  
to help  
people find  
New Life in  
Jesus Christ!

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So this November I am sincerely thankful not only of Trinity Reformed, Christ's church that God has entrusted to us, but also of this amazing opportunity to steward what belongs to God and to serve one another.

In Christ's Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Tom

p.s. The season makes me particularly mindful of people whom I am thankful to have known. I was on vacation back in July and thus didn't get to say this publicly at her memorial service and wish to do so here; I am thankful to and for Madeline Toth. Madeline was the first person from our Trinity Church family to extend an invitation to Thanksgiving last year. It was perhaps simply a small gesture, but it was very meaningful to me.

I also thank you for bearing with my extensive travel responsibility this past month. To find out more of what I was doing, I encourage you to look on my blog: <http://tomgoodhart.wordpress.com>

While traveling I was not able to officiate at Julius Maichin's funeral. I unfortunately didn't have the pleasure of knowing Julius in his healthier days, however he did share with me some stories of him when he was younger. Sometimes you get to know folks by the experiences you have with them. Other times you get to know people by the stories that are told. Julius told of how he and Ingrid used to have a huge garden in their back yard when they lived on Woodhaven. While I didn't know him then, that is how I picture him. I picture him in his garden. He is now in the garden of the Lord. May grace and peace uphold him and all the saints who have told the story and gone on to another part of the journey of faith.

### Take Time to Pray

A few moments in the morning  
Will put a blessing on your day  
And you will find Him helping  
Your problems on the way.  
Don't ever be too busy  
To talk to Him a while  
And you will find you're facing  
Each problem with a smile.  
Don't let the cares of the world  
Steal your joy from you  
By keeping you too busy  
To see what prayer can do.

A small prayer group meets at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday before the church service. We invite you to join us. Everyone is welcome!

### Sunday School Gets Involved in Community Outreach

Our Junior Church scholars have decided that they want to get in on some of the action. They are presently studying the fruits of the spirit and thinking about what it means to live out love and kindness. They have decided to do their own small part in our Soup Kitchen Ministry. They will be making up toiletry packages for our friends at the Soup Kitchen for the month of December. They would like to include the following items in their toiletry gift packages: toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, hand sanitizer, combs, socks, tissues and disposable razors. The three oldest members of the group, Alexander, Anthony and Gabriel have volunteered to head the project. All the members of the group are enthusiastic about the project and will give a fifty cent donation from their allowance for each packet (Some said they may even clean their rooms at home to earn the fifty cents). The boys also thought it might be nice to include a knitted hat. If you are talented in the knitting department you might want to knit a hat to be included in the packets. Since we have more customers coming to the Soup Kitchen than we have Junior Church Members, we would like to give members of the congregation an opportunity to contribute to the project by making donations of \$5 to support the effort, if they wish. All donations and questions should be directed to Alexander, Anthony and Gabriel. The children are looking forward to making the packets and including a Christmas card. Perhaps, if all goes according to plan, the project can be repeated several times a year.

### Welcome to the Coffee Hour

The coffee hour after the Sunday worship service has proven to be a great success. It is good to gather together in Christian fellowship.

Thanks to all who have volunteered to set up, serve, and clean up. We couldn't do it without you. Special thanks to those of you who have baked and brought cakes and those who have contributed to offset the cost of running the coffee hour. We appreciate all donations and your cakes are always welcomed and enjoyed.

### News Briefs – FYI

The church side door on Palmetto Street was refinished. The front doors on 60<sup>th</sup> Place also received a new coat of marine varnish.

The Ladies Aid/Frauenverein met on October 21 for a meeting and Kaffeeklatsch. They also enjoyed a slide show.

The Couples and Friends Club enjoyed an outing on October 17 to Queens Theater in the Park to see the musical Opa!

**HERBST von Rainer Maria Rilke**

Die Blaetter fallen, fallen wir von weit,  
als welkten in den Himmeln ferne Gaerten;  
sie fallen mit verneinender Gebaerde.

Und in den Naechten faellt die schwere Erde  
aus allen Sternen in die Einsamkeit.

Wir alle fallen. Diese Hand da faellt.  
Und sieh dir andre an: es ist in allen.

Und doch ist EINER, welcher dieses Fallen  
unendlich sanft in SEINEN Haenden haelt.

**Stewardship and Finance Committee Report**

This report is presented as a reminder that as members of Trinity we are responsible for the upkeep of the physical building and the programs run within it. But we also know as disciples of Jesus that these figures are not our only focus. We believe in a God whose love goes way beyond this building and we know that all we have is a gift from Him. We therefore pray for wisdom for our church leaders and congregation that we might all use our gifts (money and otherwise) to accomplish His purposes in our church and our community.

Expenditures for Month of October 2009

Personnel Expenses	7,235.00
Utilities	598.00
Ministry/Supplies	566.00
Maintenance	0.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	0.00
Other Disbursements	1,600.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>9,999.00</b>

Receipts for Month of October 2009

Weekly Envelopes	3,672.00
Weekly Plate	383.00
Benevolences	0.00
Memorial Fund	2,820.00
Special Offerings	762.00
Other Receipts	1,934.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>10,001.00</b>

**5TH GRADE ASSIGNMENT**

A fifth grade teacher in a Christian school asked her class to look at TV commercials and see if they could use them in some way to communicate ideas about God.

Here are some of the results:

God is like..  
BAYER ASPIRIN  
He works miracles.

God is like.  
a FORD  
He's got a better idea.

God is like.  
COKE  
He's the real thing.

God is like.  
HALLMARK CARDS  
He cares enough to send His very best.

God is like.  
TIDE  
He gets the stains out that others leave behind.

God is like.  
GENERAL ELECTRIC  
He brings good things to life.

God is like..  
SEARS  
He has everything.

God is like..  
ALKA-SELTZER  
Try Him, you'll like Him

God is like..  
SCOTCH TAPE  
You can't see Him, but you know He's there.

**Worship Schedule for November**

November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 —Regular Worship Schedule  
10:00 a.m.

- \* Communion will be celebrated on November 1
- \* Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 am