



November 26, 2024 Vol. 76, No. 47

Giving Thanks

WATCH

As we prepare for Thanksgiving this week, I have been thinking about all the things for which I am grateful. Many years ago, I started a “gratitude list” on my phone. On this list, I type (or dictate) blessings, good things, people, events, and sights. Whenever I think of these good things, and have enough awareness to appreciate them, I try to write them down. Going back over the list can be overwhelming. Despite the problems of the world, I can see in vivid type-written characters that God is good, God has been good, and, in all likelihood, God will continue to be good.

Do wonderful lists of blessings mean that nothing bad happens? Certainly not. Bad things still happen, but they aren’t the full story. Life is like a roller coaster. It’s full of ups and downs, good and bad, and twists and turns. Our calling is to be faithful—not Pollyannaish (ref. Eleanor Porter’s 1913 novel *Pollyanna*). When we are faithful to God, we can experience the ups and downs and twists and turns, recognizing that they are part of life’s journey.

Instead of focusing on the bad, we can look for the good. It’s always there. When we find something good, we can give God our thanks. Gratitude is a muscle, and the more we exercise it, the easier it gets to be grateful. In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul encourages the new Christ-followers to “give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians within a few months of preaching there. He cared deeply for them, referring to them as “siblings” 14 times in the short book. He wanted them to find the richness of a life in

SERVICE OF HOLY WORSHIP

Sunday, December 1, 2024

11:00 AM

Sermon:

Spring is Surely Coming

Dr. Matthew Tennant

Scripture:

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Anthem:

Advent Canticale

SUNDAY SERVICE

Deacons: Ray Gaines

Ushers: Jen May, Hunter Cooper

College Dinner: Click [here](#) to sign up to provide a dinner for our College students.



Looking for a way to serve University Baptist Church!

Be an Usher! Ushering is a great way to serve the church. You are one of the first people someone sees, when they come into the church. A warm welcome from you will mean so much to members and visitors.

We are in need of more people to do this important job. If you are willing to serve as an usher or would like to know more, contact [Shirley Clark](#).

Christ that he had found. His desire for them was to grow in faith. Part of growth is honing the ability to see the good God is doing all around us. Even in trying times, which Christ-followers in the first century would find often, we can give thanks.

As we get ready to enter the Advent season, we go in with hearts full of gratitude. There's so much good in the world. Sometimes, it's just harder to see. As I hear from people who are discouraged and feeling down, especially in the last month, I try to encourage everyone to see the good. Look for God at work, and when you see it, give thanks.

Peace,
Matt



Recently our Missions Council voted to send a contribution to the informational ministry Baptist News Global (BNG). Our pastor published an article in BNG this week based on this 'On Watch'. You can find it [here](#).



Hey UBCYouth, after our Family Christmas Lights Tour, stay at church ALL NIGHT LONG!!!

December 20-21 is the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. Let's spend it at church! Bring your comfy jammies and a sleeping bag or blanket. After we explore our church building and play some games, we'll settle in with snacks for a holiday movie marathon on the sofas in the Youth Room. When the sun comes up, we'll have breakfast together before we go our separate ways. There is no cost for this event. Friends are welcome! Share this link so they can sign up. [UBCYouth: Longest Night Lock-In](#)

CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, November 27

No Work Team
No Wednesday Night Dinner

THURSDAY, November 28

Church Office Closed

FRIDAY, November 29

Church Office Closed

SUNDAY, December 1

9:30 ESOL/Seekers Class
9:45 Sunday Morning Bible Study
11:00 Morning Worship
12:00 Youth Ministry Council Meeting
4:30 Jubilate Rehearsal
6:00 College Dinner

MONDAY, December 2

7:00 Theology Reading Group

TUESDAY, December 3

7:00 Kittie Colvin Trail Circle
7:00 Voces Laetae Rehearsal

For our most up-to-date calendar, [click here](#).

Advent Devotions

Matt will be sending out Advent Devotions again this year. If you want to receive these daily devotions by email, please let the [office](#) know.

Christmas Poinsettias



This Christmas we will be decorating our Sanctuary with an abundance of poinsettias. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in honor of or in memory of a loved one, please complete an order form. You can find a form in the narthex or the church office.

Qualified Charitable Distributions

Are you familiar with Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)? A QCD might reduce the taxes you owe while helping your church. Here's how it works.

If you have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and are over 73, you are required to take a distribution from that IRA each year based on the value at the end of the previous year and your age. This is called a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), and generally the distribution is fully taxed as ordinary income. The form of the distribution may be in cash or securities.

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian to a qualified charity. This direct transfer can be in cash or securities, and it counts toward satisfying your RMD for the year. A QCD reduces your taxable income by the amount of such distribution since it is not included in your income.

Charitable giving is not about taxes. However, the tax benefit from a QCD encourages charitable giving and could enable you to give more money to what you love. With the recent increase in the Standard Deduction, many taxpayers will find that charitable donations no longer have any tax benefit. A QCD can restore some significant tax benefits for charitable donations.



Children's Christmas Shoppe Mark Your Calendars! Wednesday, December 4

We will have our usual Wednesday night dinner in the Fellowship Hall.

Children will begin with a short UBCKids Choir rehearsal in the Children's Suite and then have the opportunity to "shop" for gifts for their family members, which can be purchased for \$.50 each. All proceeds go to the CBF Global Missions Fund. There will also be fun Christmas-themed activities for the children and a chance to wrap their gifts.

Donations needed: If you have small "treasures" that you would like to contribute, please drop them off in the church office or in the preschool department.

Prayer Requests*

Jack & Jo-Ann Averill

Tony & Patti Barretta

Alba & Pam Beasley

Clara Brown

Leon & Nancy Castle

Johnny & Gail Ellen

David & Linda Hendon

Larry & Lynn Martin

Brian Mulcahy on the loss of his mother, Heide

Paula Price on the loss of her husband, Claude

Kaylee Risell

Melvin & Mildred Spicer

Bob & Joyce Tennant

Barbara Weber

Jack & Anne Wilkerson

*In order to respect privacy, limited information is included here.



Join us for our Holiday Lights Tour and a bus ride around town on Friday, December 20, 6:00-8:00, as we

enjoy the lights of the holiday season. Seats are limited. Watch for more details and to reserve your spot on the bus. We will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30.

WORSHIP+WONDER

In this series of Word articles, [Elizabeth Dowdy](#) explains what *Worship+Wonder* is and how it is teaching our children to engage the parts of our worship services.

At the heart of every church's worship is the story—God's story. We hear it in the Scripture readings. We hear it interpreted through the sermon. We may have it expanded or illustrated in music, image, or drama. Through our worship, God's story is tied to and woven in with the story of us—our congregation, our community, our society, and our world. The broad strokes of God's story as it is told in the Bible become the shared language of God's people at all times and in all places.

For our children to be able to become Christian people, followers of God as revealed in Christ, they must come to know and love God's story. They must come to feel that they know it, not as a biblical expert, but as a deep well of wisdom, full of living water, that will be there for them whenever they are dehydrated by the exercise of making their way in the world. The way to foster that kind of knowledge is through repetition coupled with encouragement to wonder.

Since every Godly Play story is intended to plant and nurture a love of God's story in children, the task of selecting one story to introduce the preciousness of God's overarching story is daunting, indeed! For now, I have settled on the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. This mystifying story turns our modern sensibilities upside down. Why would anyone sell everything they own? What could be worth divesting every last earthly treasure and comfort? Certainly not a tiny pearl, not even the largest in the set!

Children may be better poised to understand this kind of devotion than we adults are. After all, we have had more years than they have to develop an attachment to our things. Who

would know us without our distinctive car? Without our memory-laden wedding ring? Without our favorite shoes no one makes anymore? Things come and go for children, sometimes directly to a younger sibling or cousin right before their eyes! But they still understand the value of attachment, of having something that is theirs, and the pain of being made to separate from that thing. To do that voluntarily, with such willingness and enthusiasm, is a cost they can imagine and appreciate. They can understand that very few things merit that high of a bill, even hypothetically. That the grownups they know might have sacrificed, even in less dramatic ways, for their love of God, made known through God's story, is impressive to them.



Part of growing up as a Christian is the realization that you have been grafted onto God's family tree, and that God's story is your story, too. The gift of this lesson is the child's own Story Box. In the symbology of Godly Play, it is brown, not

gold. That is because it may or may not be used to tell one of the parables told by Jesus. The box resembles a gift because it is ours, even before we are born. The box has a lid, because we can return to it over and over again; it will be there whenever we are ready to hear the story it contains. The contents of the box are generic wooden figures with a yellow underlay. The child can decide which story the box will tell on any day they decide they are ready to open it. It belongs to them.



They could use it to retell the Parable of the Loving Father with two sons. In their version, they can play the part of the older sibling, or the younger

sibling, or the parent, or the pig! They could use it to tell the story of The Holy Family, journeying toward Bethlehem, imagining the conversation between the two expectant parents along the road. They could set the figures



No dinner or program this week. Join us again next Wednesday, Dec. 4.

SWAPsgiving Benefit Meal on Saturday, November 30 in the Fellowship Hall

Come support UBC college student Jaden Bernard as she raises money for her friend Sabriya who was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lymphoma. The meal begins at 5:00 on Saturday, November 30. You can come and provide a supportive presence, bring a dish to share and/or make a donation to contribute to Sabriya's medical expenses.

If you prefer to use text to give by texting Give2ubc to 73256, select SWAPsgiving Benefit in the dropdown menu.

Click [here](#) to RSVP for dinner and/or sign up to bring a food donation.



Global Missions Christmas Post Office

The Christmas Post Office for Global Missions is open for "business", sponsored by the Kittie Colvin Trail Circle. This is a way for you to exchange Christmas greetings with other church members and regular attendees without even knowing their mailing address and to support Global Missions at the same time. The "Post Office" box is located on a table in the first-floor lobby outside the Church Office.

Instructions:

- Write the names of the recipients on your cards and place them in the appropriate alphabet slots. [Please include first names as we have multiple families with the same last name (e.g. Martin, Moore)].
- Deposit \$.73 per card (or round up for any additional contribution) into the container on the table or give it to any Kittie Colvin Trail Circle member.

around a banquet table, improvised out of tree bark or Legos, and imagine Jesus on his last night with his friends. Just as their lives stretch out before them with endless possibilities, so are the versions of God's story, intermingled with their own, they can rehearse and interpret in acts of playful worship.

I wonder...what part of God's story is invaluable to you? I wonder...which person or character in God's story comes closest to you? I wonder...what story do you most need to hear...or to tell...today?



Photos for our Realm Directory

Alaysia will be available Tuesday morning, Dec. 3 and also after church on Sunday, Dec. 1. Stop by and let her snap your picture for the online directory.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Join us in wishing some of our church family a Happy Birthday next week!

- Dec. 4:** Paul Blincoe
- Dec. 7:** Judy Gough
- Dec. 8:** Diane Hogshire, Tommy Deal
- Dec. 10:** BJ Blincoe

- Please do not include cards for people who do not attend regularly or have moved away.
- Pick up any cards addressed to you or your family. Please do not remove any cards except your own.
- Do not place cards in the box after Sunday, December 24.

ALL proceeds go to the CBF Global Missions

Staff Contact Information:

Senior Minister: Dr. Matthew Tennant - matt@universitybaptist.org

Associate Minister for Music and College Students - Megan Sharp - megan@universitybaptist.org

Interim Associate Minister: Rev. Elizabeth Rickert Dowdy - elizabeth@universitybaptist.org

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Education Coordinator: Rev. Tommy Deal—call the church office at 434-293-5106

Organist: Barbara Moore - call the church office at 434-293-5106

Custodian: Thomas Hill - call the church office at 434-293-5106

Sunday Mornings

Worship

Our Sunday morning worship service begins at 11:00 am. We encourage everyone in the congregation to join us in whatever way you feel safe and comfortable at this time, whether in person or virtually. As always, you can listen by radio on WINA (1070 AM and 98.9 FM), or you can join us online for our live broadcast. To view the live video broadcast, visit our [Facebook page](#) or click [this link](#) to watch on YouTube.

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Connect with us

