

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

SO MUCH THANKSGIVING

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Though the Thanksgiving holiday is over for another year, the giving of thanks should go on for quite some time. Why so much thanksgiving? Just consider how the Lord was good to us in the past year...

We can give thanks because God fed us weekly through His word of truth. In the mornings we finished the book of Matthew, seeing our Savior in his sufferings and death, as well in His resurrected glory. In the evenings we have profited greatly from our study of Romans. The blessings have abounded through God's word.

Closely linked to that, we should remember that God has granted us much spiritual growth – growth in knowledge, in faith, and in maturity over the past twelve months. Contrary to popular opinion, spiritual growth doesn't just "happen." It is a distinct blessing of God for which we should be grateful. Have you grown this year? Have you said, "Thank You" to the One who granted such progress?

Furthermore, we can thank God for His abundant material provision for all of our needs. Once again He has provided above and beyond what we expected and even needed – as individuals, as families and as a church. The financial health of the congregation is remarkable, especially given the difficult economic times in our country.

We should also show gratitude for numerous special speakers who have come to our congregation over this year –

Rev. Mike McCabe, Pastor Zecharias Abraham, Rev. Murray Uomoto and Dr. Tony Curto. Their ministries in our midst have been good for our spiritual encouragement.

For every prayer that has been answered, we should be appreciative. God has heard and responded with the very best replies to our cries and pleas. How difficult and lonely life would be if God did not listen to our prayers! Give thanks that He does!

We can even give thanks because God has called several of our beloved members to their heavenly homes. His sustaining grace in the loss of Antoinette DeMaster

and Claude Halbach was more than sufficient. How good the Lord was to give these two dear saints to Grace Church for many years, and now to bless them with heavenly happiness.

I personally give thanks to God for our faithful musicians who serve us each Lord's Day. The gift of music is truly a great good from God, and having willing and accomplished musicians makes the music even more uplifting. Likewise I am appreciative of the many covenant children of the congregation – they are a wonderful blessing that we should not take for granted.

And so I guess you've gotten my point by now – we have much for which to be thankful. Have I missed something? Are there more causes for praise to God? Undoubtedly there are MANY more reasons for thanksgiving! So don't give up too quickly on thanksgiving – let it continue!



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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, 14th*
- *Pastor's Pizza & Bowling Party, 29th*

“The Power of Christ”

by J. C. Ryle

“And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

“And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?”

“And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

“And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful. How is it that ye have no faith?”

Mark 4:37-40

...Let us learn, in the fourth place, *the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

You have a striking example of His power in the history upon which I am now dwelling. The waves were breaking into the ship where Jesus was. The terrified disciples awoke Him, and cried for help. “He arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.” This was a wonderful miracle. No one could do this but one who was almighty.

Make the winds cease with a word! Who does not know that it is a common saying, in order to describe an impossibility, “You might as well speak to the wind!” Yet Jesus rebukes the wind and at once it ceases. This was power.

Calm the waves with a voice! What reader of history does not know that a mighty King of England tried in vain to stop the tide rising on the shore? Yet here is one who says to raging waves in a storm, “Peace, be still,” and at once there was a calm. Here was power.

It is good for all men to have clear views of the Lord Jesus Christ’s power. Let the sinner know that the merciful Saviour to whom he is urged to flee, and in whom he is invited to trust, is nothing less than the Almighty, and has power over all flesh to eternal life. (Rev. 1:8; John 17:2) Let the anxious inquirer understand that if he will only venture on Jesus, and take up the cross, he ventures on One who has all power in heaven and earth. (Matt. 28:18) Let the believer remember as he journeys through the

wilderness, that his Mediator, and Advocate, and Physician, and Shepherd, and Redeemer, is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and that through Him all things may be done. (Rev. 17:14; Phil. 4:13) Let all study the subject, for it deserves to be studied.

(a) Study it in His works of creation. “All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:3) The heavens and all their glorious host of inhabitants—the earth and all that it contains—the sea and all that is in it—all creation, from the sun on high to the least worm below, was the work of Christ. He spake and they came into being. He commanded and they began to exist. That very Jesus, who was born of a poor woman at Bethlehem and lived in a carpenter’s house at Nazareth, had been the Former of all things. Was not this power?

(b) Study it in His works of *providence*, and the orderly continuance of all things in the world. “By Him all things consist.” (Col. 1:17) Sun, moon, and stars roll round in a perfect system. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter follow one another in regular order. They continue to this day and fail not, according to the ordinance of Him who died on Calvary. (Psalm 119:91) The kingdoms of this world rise and increase, and decline and pass away. The rulers of the earth plan, and scheme, and make laws, and change laws, and war, and pull down one and raise up another. But they little think that they rule only by the will of Jesus and that nothing happens without the permission of the Lamb of God. They do not know that they and their subjects are all as a drop of water in the hand of the crucified One, and that He increaseth the nations and diminishes the nations, just according to His mind. Is not this power?

(c) Study the subject not least in the miracles worked by our Lord Jesus Christ during the three years of His ministry upon earth. Learn from the mighty works which He did, that the things which are impossible with man are possible with Christ. Regard every one of His miracles as an emblem and figure of spiritual things. See in it a lovely picture of

what He is able to do for your soul. He that could raise the dead with a word can just as easily raise man from the death of sin. He that could give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb, can also make sinners to see the kingdom of God, hear the joyful sound of the Gospel, and speak forth the praise of redeeming love. He that could heal leprosy with a touch, can heal any disease of heart. He that could cast out devils can bid every besetting sin yield to His grace. Oh, begin to read Christ's miracles in this light! Wicked, and bad, and corrupt as you may feel, take comfort in the thought that you are not beyond Christ's power to heal. Remember that in Christ there is not only a fullness of mercy, but a fullness of power.

(d) Study the subject in particular as placed before you this day. I dare be sure your heart has sometimes been tossed to and fro like the waves in a storm. You have found it agitated like the waters of the troubled sea when it cannot rest. Come and hear this day that there is One who can give you rest.

Jesus can say to your heart, whatever may be its ailment, "Peace, be still!"

From Holiness, Chapter 12, by J.C. Ryle



Service of Lessons & Carols

A Service of Lessons & Carols will be held on Sunday evening, December 19th at 5:00 p.m. at the church!



December Birthdays



New E-mail Address





Grace OPC

December 2010

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	9	10 Pine Haven Bake Sale at Oostburg Bank 9:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	11
12 Missions Sunday	13 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i>	14 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	15 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	16	17	18
19 Service of Lessons & Carols, 5 p.m.	20 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	21	22 No Prayer Meeting	23	24	25
26 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	27 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study,</i> <i>1:30 p.m.</i>	28 DeMaster Anniversary Party held at Grace, 7 p.m.	29 Pastor's Pizza & Bowling Party, 3-7 p.m.	30	31	



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Pine Haven Auxiliary Bake Sale

The Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary

Bake Sale will be held Friday, December 10th at Oostburg State Bank from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you have a baked good or craft item to donate, please give them to Ellen McNeese or Kate Nagle or have them to the Bank at 8:30 a.m. that Friday.



Pastor's Pizza & Bowling Party

Everyone's invited...

to Pastor Brian's Bowling & Pizza Party on Wednesday, December 29th. **Bowling** starts at 3 p.m. at Odyssey Fun Center in Falls (Cost= \$5 per person) and runs until 5 p.m.

Pizza will be served at the church 5:15-7:00 p.m. (Cost= \$3 per person). If you have a favorite game or two, you are invited to bring it for the **game time** that will follow the pizza!



Chili Rice Bake

- ★ 1 lb. ground beef
- ★ 1 cup each chopped onion, and green pepper
- ★ 2 cups beef broth
- ★ 1 can tomato paste
- ★ 1 tsp. garlic salt
- ★ 2 Tbsp. chili powder
- ★ 3 cups cooked rice
- ★ 1 cup grated cheddar cheese

Sauté ground beef, onions & green pepper lightly. Blend in broth and paste. Stir—add rice & sprinkle with cheese.

Bake at 350° in a 2 qt. casserole dish for 20-30 minutes to heat thru.

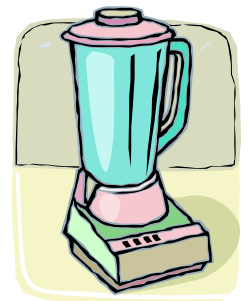
Evie Wilterdink



Rainbow Chiffon Jello Cubes

1. In a saucepan whisk gelatin into water; let stand to soften 5 minutes; bring just to a boil to dissolve:
 - 1/2 cup cold water (room temperature okay)
 - 2 envelopes (4 teaspoons) unflavored gelatine
2. Place in blender; puree thoroughly, about 30 seconds:
 - 12 oz. can unsweetened frozen fruit juice concentrate (used pomegranate)
 - 1 1/8 cups water
 - dissolved gelatine
3. Pour into a lightly greased 8" or 9" square baking pan.
4. Chill until set. Foamy light colored jello will rise to the top, while darker, clearer jello will remain on the bottom for a two-toned effect.
5. Cut cubes with a sharp knife, 8x8.
6. Gently lift out cubes with metal spatula or pancake turner. Fill individual dessert dishes.

Gail Moody



**Recipes
from
the
October
17th
Family
Fellowship
Meal**



Hot Fruit

- ★ 2 cans Mandarin oranges
- ★ 1 can pineapple tidbits
- ★ 1 can peaches
- ★ 1 can apricots
- ★ 1 quart applesauce
- ★ 1 can sugar-free cherry pie filling
- ★ 1/2 cup brown sugar

Drain all of the canned fruits and cut up into bite size pieces as needed. Mix everything together. Cover and heat in oven at 350 degrees, or heat in crock pot until heated through.

Sara TenPas

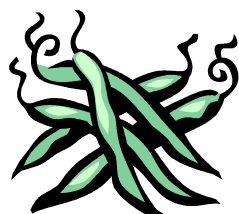
Recipes from the October 17th Family Fellowship Meal

Penny's Apple-Brown Sugar Coffee Cake

- ★ 1 cup plus 2 tsp. gluten-free all-purpose flour, divided
- ★ 2 tsp. baking powder
- ★ 1/4 tsp. salt
- ★ 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar, divided
- ★ 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips (1-1/2 oz.)
- ★ 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- ★ 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ★ 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ★ 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- ★ 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- ★ 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- ★ 2 large apples—cored, peeled and cut into 1/2-in. pieces
- ★ 2 Tbsp. softened (not melted) butter

Preheat oven to 375°. Lightly grease a 9-in. round baking or springform pan. In a large bowl, whisk together 1 cup flour, baking powder & salt. In a small bowl, stir together the remaining 2 tsp. flour, 1/2 cup brown sugar, chocolate chips, walnuts & cinnamon.

In another small bowl, whisk together the eggs, granulated sugar and remaining 1/2 cup brown sugar until smooth. Whisk in the oil and vanilla. Stir into the flour mixture until just combined. Pour half the batter into prepared pan, top with half of the apples and half the crumb mix; repeat with the remaining batter, apples and crumb mix. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 30-35 minutes.



Pumpkin Pie Dessert

Crust:

- ★ 1 pkg. yellow cake mix (reserve 1 cup for topping)
- ★ 1/4 cup melted butter

Combine mix and butter; pat into greased 9x13 pan.

Filling:

- ★ 2 eggs
- ★ 3/4 cup brown sugar
- ★ 16 oz. can pumpkin
- ★ 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ★ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ★ 1/2 tsp. ginger
- ★ 13 oz. can evaporated milk

Beat all filling ingredients until smooth. Pour on crust.

Topping:

- ★ 1 cup cake mix
- ★ 1/4 cup brown sugar
- ★ 1 tsp. cinnamon
- ★ 2 Tbsp. softened (not melted) butter

Mix topping & sprinkle on top of filling. Bake at 350° for 50 minutes or until knife inserted comes out clean.

Emily Boss



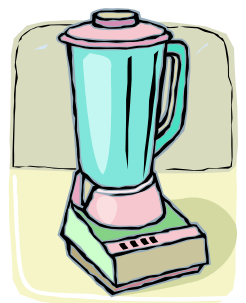
**Recipes
from
the
October
17th
Family
Fellowship
Meal**

Green Bean Casserole

- ★ 2 or 3 cans French style green beans (we added some sautéed zucchini too)
- ★ 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- ★ 8 oz. mozzarella cheese
- ★ 1 can French fried onions

Combine green beans, mushroom soup, 3/4 of cheese and 3/4 of French fried onions and put in casserole dish. Top with remaining cheese and onions and bake at 300 degrees for 20 minutes.

Debbie Boss





Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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CHECK OUT THE AUDIO:

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Spurgeon Corner

Praise!

“O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men .” (Psalm 107:8)

If we complained less, and **praised** more, we should be happier, and God would be more glorified. Let us daily **praise** God for *common mercies*—common as we frequently call them, and yet so priceless, that when deprived of them we are ready to perish. Let us bless God for the eyes with which we behold the sun, for the health and strength to walk abroad, for the bread we eat, for the raiment we wear. Let us **praise** him that we are not cast out among the hopeless, or confined amongst the guilty; let us thank him for liberty, for friends, for family...; let us **praise** him, in fact, for everything...we receive from his bounteous hand, for we deserve little, and yet are most plenteously endowed.

But, beloved, the sweetest and the loudest note in our songs of **praise** should be of *redeeming love*. God’s redeeming acts towards his chosen are forever the favorite themes of their praise. If we know what redemption means, let us not withhold our sonnets of thanksgiving. We have been redeemed from the power of our corruptions, uplifted from the depth of sin in which we were naturally plunged. We have been led to the cross of Christ—our shackles of guilt have been broken off; we are no longer slaves, but children of the living God, and can antedate the period when we shall be presented before the throne without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Even now by faith we wave the palm-branch and wrap ourselves about with the fair linen which is to be our everlasting array, and shall we not unceasingly give thanks to the Lord our Redeemer? Child of God, canst thou be silent? Awake, awake, ye inheritors of glory, and lead your captivity captive, as ye cry with David, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.” Let the new month begin with new songs.

December 2, Morning & Evening, by C. H. SPURGEON



Nominations

It’s once again time for nominations for elder, deacon, and trustees. If you have a nominee in mind, please speak with them first and if they are agreeable, you can either slip their name in the box, or speak to a member of the Session.

