

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

INGRATITUDE

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Have you ever considered the sin of ingratitude? That question might freeze us in our tracks. The “sin of ingratitude”? Is ingratitude a sin? Our Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us that sin is “any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.” That is how we define a “sin” – it is contrary to God’s law – it is lawlessness.

In the Psalms, we often find David expressing his gratitude to God for protection and provision, for safety and for comfort. King David was a thankful person, and an excellent example of deep gratitude. But the Psalms go beyond simply modeling thankfulness. There are numerous places where we are exhorted and

commanded to express our gratitude. One example is Psalm 118:1 *Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.* In other places we are reminded of the propriety of giving thanks, like Psalm 92:1 *It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;*

In view of who God is, what He has done, and how we have benefited from His grace and mercy, we ought always to give thanks. Paul exhorts his readers to this attitude in Ephesians 5:20 *always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;*

So it stands to reason that a posture of ingratitude that refuses to give thanks to God is properly and rightly sin against God. And this is a typical mark of the unbeliever who is given over to sin. In

Romans 1:21 Paul writes about the unbelieving “*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*”

Dr. Albert Mohler observes from this verse that the refusal to give thanks is at the very heart of the fall, and at the heart of human sinfulness. He then suggests that ingratitude is the most fundamental of all sins. “Ingratitude is the primal problem of humanity from Genesis 3 forward,” he states. Every account of human sinfulness is an account of ingratitude to the gracious God who created and sustains us.

This insight helps us to evaluate many things correctly. First, it helps us to properly assess how fallen humanity operates, and the depth and breadth of their sinfulness. Every single time evil is transacted by a human being, it expresses wicked ingratitude to the Maker of all flesh. Fallen men shake their fists in God’s face, rather than kneeling in humble thanks before His throne.

It is particularly helpful for reviewing our own choices and actions. When we choose to do things that are contrary to God’s revealed will, we inherently express ingratitude to the One who holds us in life. To lie, to cheat, to steal, to dishonor a parent, to break the Sabbath day, to murder or commit adultery in our hearts – it is all base ingratitude.

Finally, this enables us to see that although Thanksgiving Day is now past for another calendar year, every day is a day



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Quench Not the Spirit, Pt. 2

By Richard Sibbes

SEEKING ANOTHER SOURCE OF MERCY

And among others, how do they wrong themselves and him that will have other mediators to God for them than he! Are any more pitiful than he who became man to that end, that he might be pitiful to his own flesh? Let all, at all times, repair to this meek Saviour, and put up all our petitions in his prevailing name. What need do we have to knock at any other door? Can any be more tender over us than Christ? What encouragement we have to commend the state of the church in general, or of any broken hearted Christian, to him by our prayers, of whom we may speak to Christ, as they did of Lazarus, 'Lord, the church which thou lovest, and gavest thyself for, is in distress'; 'Lord, this poor Christian, for whom thou wast bruised (Isa. 53:5) is bruised and brought very low.' It cannot but touch his heart when the misery of those so dear to him is spread before him.

MISTREATING THE HEIRS OF MERCY

Again, considering this gracious nature in Christ, let us think with ourselves thus: when he is so kind to us, shall we be cruel against him in his name, in his truth, in his children? How shall those that delight to be so terrible to 'the meek of the earth' (Zeph. 2:3) hope to look so gracious a Saviour in the face? They that are so boisterous towards his spouse shall know one day that they had to deal with himself in his church. So it cannot but cut the heart of those that have felt this love of Christ to hear him wounded who is the life of their lives and the soul of their souls. This makes those that have felt mercy weep over Christ whom they have pierced with their sins. There cannot but be a mutual and quick sympathy between the head and the members. When we are tempted to any sin, if we will not pity ourselves, yet we should spare Christ, in not putting him to new torments. The apostle could not find out a more heart breaking argument to enforce a sacrifice of ourselves to God than to appeal to us 'by the mercies of God' in Christ (Rom. 12:1).

STRIFE AMONG THE HEIRS OF MERCY

This mercy of Christ should also move us to com-

miserate the state of the poor church, torn by enemies without, and rending itself by divisions at home. It cannot but affect any soul that ever felt comfort from Christ to consider what an affectionate entreaty the apostle makes to mutual agreement in judgment and affection. 'If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded' (Phil. 2:1), as if he should say, 'Unless you will disclaim all consolation in Christ,

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labour to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' What a joyful spectacle is this to Satan and his faction, to see those that are separated from the world fall in pieces among themselves! Our discord is our enemy's melody.

The more to blame are those that for private aims affect differences from others, and will not suffer the wounds of the church to close and meet together. This must not be understood as if men should dissemble their judgment in any truth where there is just cause of expressing themselves; for the least truth is Christ's and not ours, and therefore we are not to take liberty to affirm or deny at our pleasure. There is something due on a penny as well as on a pound, therefore we must be faithful in the least truth, when the season calls for it. Then our words are 'like

apples of gold in pictures of silver' (Prov. 25:11). One word spoken in season will do more good than a thousand out of season. But in some cases peace, through having our faith to ourselves before God (Rom. 14:22), is of more consequence than the open discovery of some things we take to be true, considering that the weakness of man's nature is such that there can hardly be a discovery of any difference in opinion without some estrangement of affection. So far as men are not of one mind, they will hardly be of one heart, except where grace and the peace of God bear great rule in the heart (Col. 3:15). Therefore open show of difference is only good when it is necessary, although some, from a desire to be somebody, turn into by ways and yield to a spirit of contradiction in themselves. Yet, if Paul be judge, they 'are yet carnal' (1 Cor.

3:3). If it be wisdom, it is wisdom from beneath: for the wisdom from above, as it is pure, so it is peaceable (James 3:17). Our blessed Saviour, when he was to leave the world, what did he press upon his disciples more than peace and love? And in his last prayer, with what earnestness did he beg of his Father that 'they all may be one', as he and the Father were one (John 17:21). But what he prayed for on earth, we shall only enjoy perfectly in heaven. Let this make the meditation of that time the more sweet unto us.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE BRUISED

And further, to expose offenders of this kind, what spirit shall we think them to be of that take advantage of the bruisedness and infirmities of men's spirits to relieve them with false peace for their own worldly ends? A wounded spirit will part with anything. Most of the gainful points of popery, such as confession, satisfaction, merit and purgatory, spring from hence, but they are physicians of no value, or tormentors and not physicians at all. It is a greater blessing to be delivered from the sting of these scorpions (Rev. 9:5) than we are thankful for. Spiritual tyranny is the greatest tyranny, and then especially when it is where most mercy should be shown; yet even there some, like cruel surgeons, delight in making long cures, to serve themselves through the misery of others. It brings men under a terrible curse that they 'remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man', that they might 'even slay the broken in heart' (Psa. 109:16).

In the same way, to such as raise temporal advantage to themselves out of the spiritual misery of others we must add such as raise estates by betraying the church, and are unfaithful in the trust committed unto them, when the children cry for the bread of life, and there is none to give them, bringing thus upon the people of God that heavy judgment of a spiritual famine, starving Christ in his members. Shall we so requite so good a Saviour who counts the love and mercy shown in feeding his lambs (John 21:15) as shown to himself?

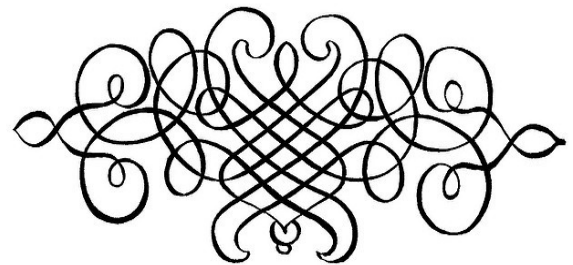
DESPISING THE SIMPLE MEANS OF MERCY

Lastly, they carry themselves very unkindly towards Christ who stumble at his low stooping to us in his government and ordinances, that are ashamed of the simplicity of the gospel, that count preaching foolishness. They, out of the pride of their heart, think that

they may do well enough without the help of the Word and sacraments, and think Christ did not take enough dignity upon him; and therefore they will mend the matter with their own devices so that they may give better satisfaction to flesh and blood, as in popery. What greater unthankfulness can there be than to despise any help that Christ in mercy has provided for us? In the days of his flesh the proud Pharisees took offence at his familiar conversing with sinful men, though he only did so as a physician to heal their souls. What defenses was Paul driven to make for himself, for his plainness in unfolding the gospel? The more Christ, in himself and in his servants, shall descend to exalt us, the more we should, with all humility and readiness, entertain that love and magnify the goodness of God, that has put the great work of our salvation, and laid the government, upon so gentle a Saviour as will carry himself so mildly in all things wherein he is to deal between God and us, and us and God. The lower Christ comes down to us, the higher let us lift him up in our hearts. So will all those do that have ever found the experience of Christ's work in their hearts.

Sibbes, Richard, The Bruised Reed, Chapter 10, Quench Not the Spirit

“What
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Haiti Adventure September 2016

By Don De Troye

"I shall pass through this world but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good things I can do, let me do it now; let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

On September 25, 2016, Jim Smies and I left for Haiti to restore power to the Hopp's residence and travel to the island of LaGonave to make permanent repairs to the OPC Kawasaki Mule. This was going to be a different trip because the Hopp family is on furlough in the US until April of 2017. Since we don't speak any Creole to converse and get around Haiti, Ben and Heather Hopp arranged everything for us from their home in Florida. They arranged everything from our drivers, resort stay in Kaliko, boat ride over to LaGonave, our stay at the WISH compound, and transfer back from the island to Port au Prince. They did a remarkable job and everything went perfectly and as planned.

When we arrived at the airport in Haiti, we were met at the baggage claim by Nader, who is a great Christian man, that Ben employs for transporting teams. Because he is well connected to the airport staff, he escorted us quickly through the airport without our bags being checked and off to his vehicle. He is a very joyful person and speaks relatively good English. We then met Pastor Octavius and his family in the parking lot. He purchased us a cell phone and put minutes on it so we could use this throughout our trip in Haiti. He also gave us the Magnum Inverter that he purchased in Haiti at a better price than what we could have paid in the states. Nader then drove us up north the coast about an hour away to Kaliko where we stayed at a resort on the coast.

The next morning we packed up our gear and planned to walk about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the Hopp's residence. We were fully loaded with tools and trying to carry the 60# inverter when we were met at the resort security gate by Menorce with a wheelbarrow with a solid tire. Ben called him the night before and asked if he could help us carry the equipment up to their home. It brought tears to my eyes when I saw this servant who is such a dear Christian man. He pushed the fully loaded wheelbarrow over the rocky road all the way to the Hopp's house in the upper ninety degree temperature. We were met at the Hopp's gate by their two dogs Copper and Tye who were happy to

see us again. We worked on the solar system and installed the new inverter and had power restored at around 3:30p.m. that first day. The next day we walked back to the Hopp's residence and checked over the solar system and everything was functioning properly. We then got the extension ladder out and trimmed a lot of tree branches that were hitting the house and the roof. By mid morning, we said goodbye to Menorce and Thermoline, his wife, and walked back to the resort to pack up our things. After saying goodbye to the staff at the resort, we were picked up by Dustin, a Wesleyan missionary, who drove us north up the coast about eight miles to their compound. We boarded the Wesleyana wooden sail boat and sailed to the island of La Gonave about 13 miles from the coast.

It was a beautiful sunny day as we crossed the water to the island while watching flying fish sail across the water in our wake. The trip took about two hours to get to the island where we were greeted by Robin Churchill from the WISH compound. Robin and his wife are Wesleyan missionaries but are working for the WISH (West Indies Self Help) organization. They have three grown children in the states and Canada and two adopted Haitian children that are with them. We had the privilege of staying in their guesthouse which was very nice. There was no air conditioning on the island and sleeping at night became a challenge since it was around 98 degrees during the day with very high humidity.

The OPC Kawasaki Mule was stored at the WISH compound and Robin opened up their tools and garage for us to do the necessary repairs to the frame. They had compressed air and a welder for us to use which was necessary to do the repairs. We took along the necessary machined steel plates to replace the broken frame member on the mule that the steering gear fastened to. It took us a day and a half to finish the repairs on the Mule. The next two days we helped Robin on the WISH library that was recently built. This is a beautiful two story cement building that work teams and Haitian workers built and will be used as a teaching center. It will be used by nursing students, agricultural students,

for teaching seminars, and have a Christian internet café. Because the building gets so warm inside, a private donor donated four Fujitsu split system air conditioners for the downstairs rooms. Our job was to try get these installed and working in less than two days. We were able to complete the installation and electrical on three out of the four units before our time ran out. Another team was coming to the island a week after our departure and they were able to finish the fourth unit.

Robin took us on a tour of the WISH/Wesleyan compounds and showed us the exciting work they are doing with the Haitian people. The goal of the WISH organization is to teach the Haitian people the skills they need to do the work. They are teaching them to do electrical wiring, welding, building, and many other skills that they can make a living doing. Most all the workers on the WISH compound are Haitians and they are paid by the hour for the work they do. We had the privilege to get a tour of the new Wesleyan hospital by Marcia, doctor Bob's wife. She is a delightful, passionate woman that mentors the Haitian nurses and has such a gentle spirit. Doctor Bob left his practice in Michigan and came to the island to donate his skills at the hospital for two years. He is a general practitioner and helps the two Haitian doctors on staff. On Friday evening, we walked about thirty minutes through the middle of Anse-à-Galets, a town of about forty thousand people, to an old restaurant. They prepared around twenty-five plates of food that we had no idea of what was on them. It was a great time of fellowship with mission teams from all over town that gathered for a time to share, fellowship, and encourage each other. We walked back in the dark because there is no generated power on the island except those with portable generators.

On our last day on the island, Robin took Jim and I up the mountain about two miles and showed us the natural sand filter water reservoir that WISH gets clean water from. WISH ran two miles of three inch plastic pipe from the reservoir

down the mountain and into the city of Anse-à-Galets and constructed eighteen free running fountains that the people can get clean water from twenty four hours a day. This piping system is gravity fed so no pumps are required to provide the water into the town. This is life changing for the people on the island since they don't have to worry about cholera or other bacterial diseases in the water since it is filtered by natural sand and top soil. Robin then took us to the gravel runway that WISH built and maintains on the island and waited for MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) to fly in to pick us up and fly us back to Port au Prince. We boarded a Cessna 207 and flew directly to the MAF hanger where Nader met us and took us to the international check-in area of the airport.

Our trip was incredible with so many opportunities to meet new people. It was a privilege to see the work that the WISH and Wesleyan missionaries are doing on the island. Their deep compassion and humility was demonstrated as they teach the Haitian people different occupations and give them a chance to work and open small businesses on their own. It was also a real blessing to see Menorce and his wife and able to restore power for them as they watch over the Hopp's house. In God's good timing, we were able to leave Haiti on the second to the last flight out before the hurricane.

Please pray for the spiritual condition in Haiti and for all the mission teams that are working there. I asked Robin, from the WISH compound, what their biggest challenge is in Haiti and he replied that it is spiritual warfare. He mentioned that all the things they are doing and teaching is always being challenged by someone and that only God can break those barriers in the end. This trip was such a blessing as it again demonstrated to me what is important in this life. Thank you again for your prayers on our behalf, and I am anxious to go back again in the near future.

BOWLING & PIZZA

Pastor Brian's annual bowling & pizza party will be held on Tuesday, December 27th. We will bowl from 3:00-5:00 pm at Odyssey Fun Center in Sheboygan Falls, then return to church for pizza and games at 5:30. Bowling will be \$6 per person, and pizza will be \$3 per person. See Pastor Brian for more info!



Pine Haven Craft Sale

Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary will hold their annual holiday craft and bake sale on Saturday, December 3, from 10am-3pm in the front of Catalunya Restaurant in Sheboygan Falls. It's part of the Falls' Main Street Memories event. Get great gifts and goodies for the holidays - while supporting the residents of Pine Haven!



Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

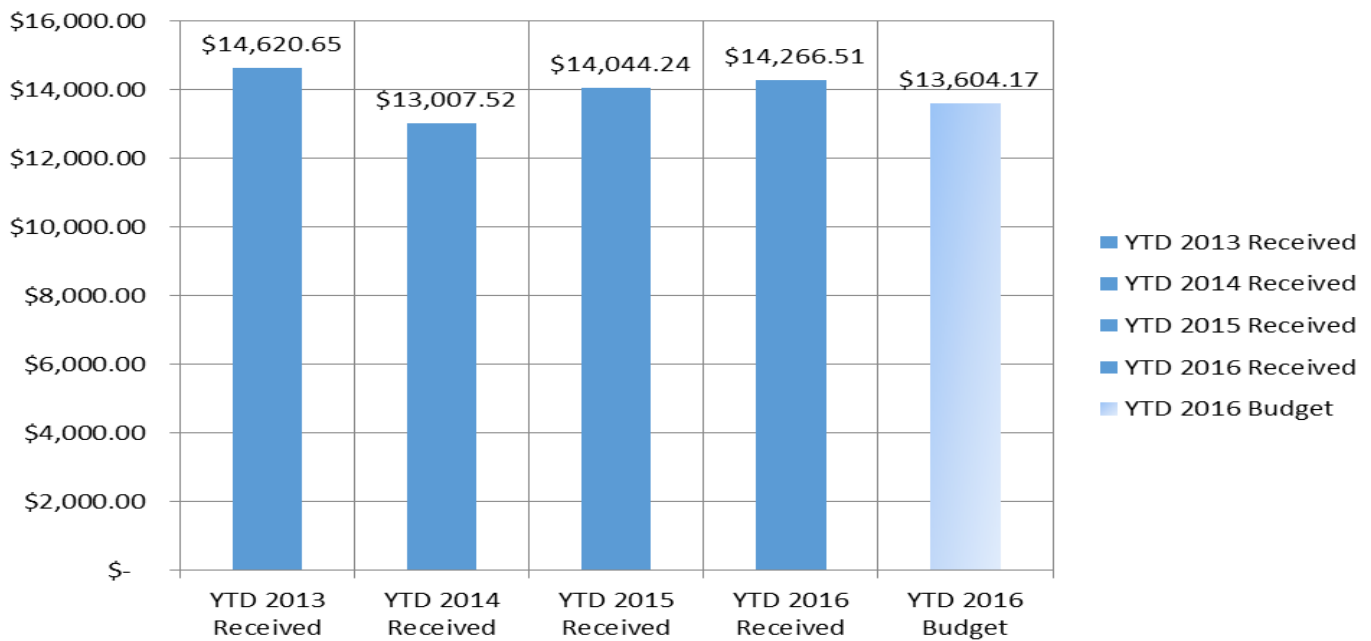
General Fund receipts for October totaled \$16,053.17 as compared to the budget of \$16,117.10, while General Fund disbursements for October totaled \$11,963.31. October year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$141,442.37 as compared to the budget of \$141,830.60 (a shortfall of \$388.23), while October year to date disbursements of \$130,083.06 were \$11,747.54 below budget. Through the end of October, the General Fund has increased by \$11,442.79. Year to date General Fund receipts for October were 10.4% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 0.9% below the prior year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for October totaled \$1,713.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,360.42 (an excess of \$352.58). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through October totaled \$14,266.51 and exceeded budget by \$662.34. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During October, \$500.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WVO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox

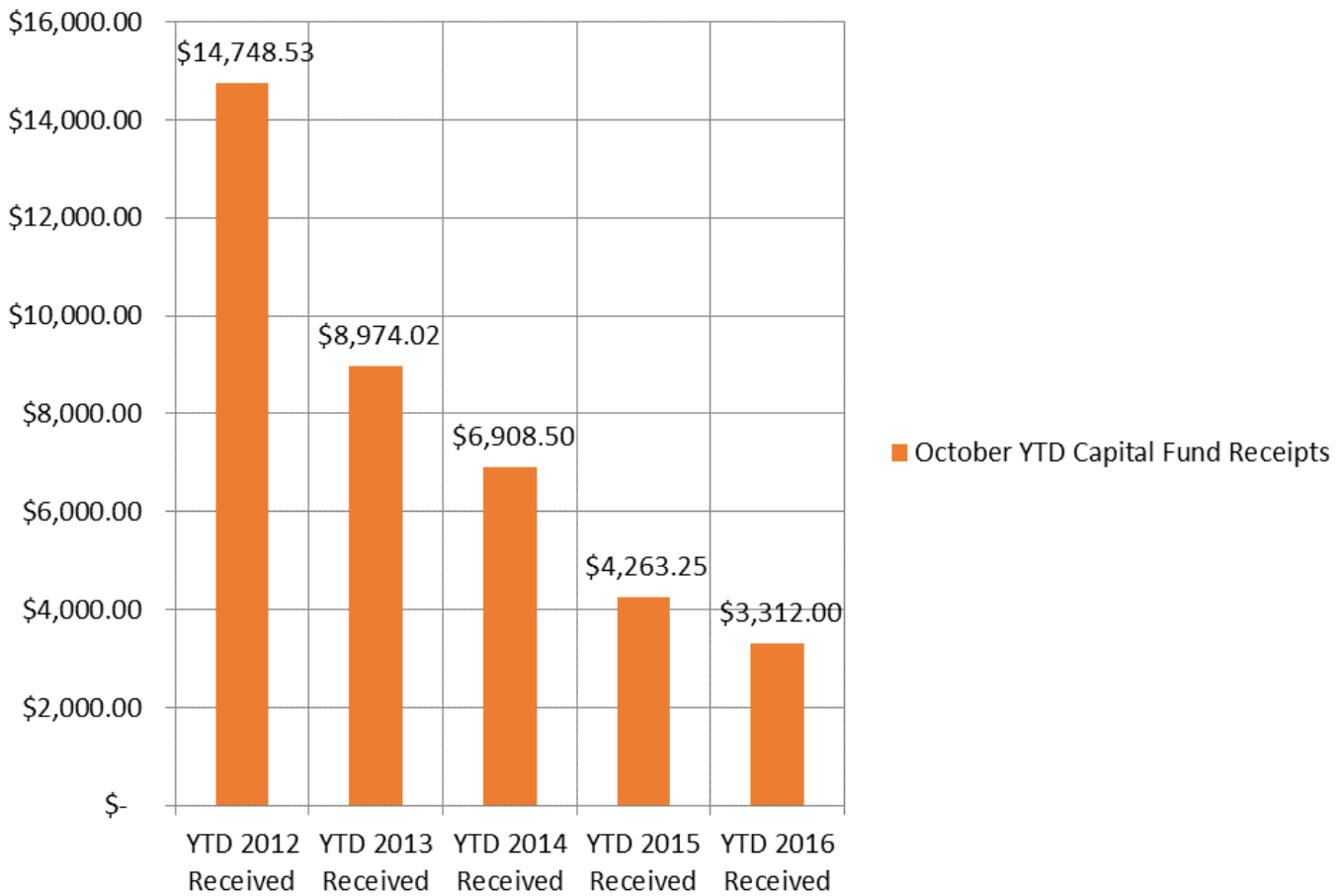
Presbyterian Church and \$200.00 was sent to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee (CHEX). In addition, \$250.00 was sent to AMG for Bundles of Love.

October Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$3,312.00. Please refer to the Capital Fund Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as computers, the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.

October YTD Benevolence Receipts Actual vs. Current Budget



October YTD Capital Fund Receipts



Men's Leadership Breakfast

The final men's leadership breakfast for 2016 will be on Saturday, December 10th at 7:00 a.m. Men and boys of all ages are encouraged to come!





Grace OPC

December 2016

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 Pastor and Wives Dinner	3
4 Meadowview Manor 3:00 p.m.	5	6 Emily Will Baby Shower 6:30 p.m.	7	8	9	10 Men's Breakfast 7:00 a.m.
11	12	13 Session Meeting 6:30 p.m.	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 Lord's Supper PM	26	27 Bowling and Pizza Party 3:00 p.m.	28	29	30	31

Peanut Butter Apple Cookie Bars

- ★ 1/2 cup butter, melted
- ★ 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- ★ 1/2 cup peanut butter
- ★ 2 eggs
- ★ 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ★ 1 tsp. baking powder
- ★ 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- ★ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ★ 2 cups whole wheat flour
- ★ 1 1/2 cups peeled and diced apples

In a large mixing bowl, stir together melted butter, peanut butter and brown sugar until creamy. Add eggs, vanilla, baking powder, baking soda and salt, stirring until well combined. Mix in flour thoroughly. Fold in diced apples. Spread dough into a 9×13 inch baking dish. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until golden. Allow bars to cool before adding the glaze.

Peanut Butter Glaze

- ★ 2 cups powdered sugar
- ★ 1/4 cup milk
- ★ 1/4 cup peanut butter
- ★ 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth. Drizzle or spread over the cooled bars. *(Note: this recipe divides in half very well!)*

Megan Boss



“The eyes
of all look
to You,
And You give
them their food
in due time.
You open
Your hand
And satisfy
the desire of
every living
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

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Spurgeon Corner

“Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.”

(Proverbs 24:33, 34)

The worst of sluggards only ask for a little slumber; they would be indignant if they were accused of thorough idleness. A little folding of the hands to sleep is all they crave, and they have a crowd of reasons to show that this indulgence is a very proper one. Yet by these littles the day ebbs out, and the time for labour is all gone, and the field is grown over with thorns. It is by little procrastinations that men ruin their souls. They have no intention to delay for years—a few months will bring the more convenient season—to-morrow if you will, they will attend to serious things; but the present hour is so occupied and altogether so unsuitable, that they beg to be excused. Like sands from an hour-glass, time passes, life is wasted by driblets, and seasons of grace lost by little slumbers. Oh, to be wise, to catch the flying hour, to use the moments on the wing! May the Lord teach us this sacred wisdom, for otherwise a poverty of the worst sort awaits us, eternal poverty which shall want even a drop of water, and beg for it in vain. Like a traveller steadily pursuing his journey, poverty overtakes the slothful, and ruin overthrows the undecided: each hour brings the dreaded pursuer nearer; he pauses not by the way, for he is on his master’s business and must not tarry. As an armed man enters with authority and power, so shall want come to the idle, and death to the impenitent, and there will be no escape. O that men were wise be-times, and would seek diligently unto the Lord Jesus, or ere the solemn day shall dawn when it will be too late to plough and to sow, too late to repent and believe. In harvest, it is vain to lament that the seed time was neglected. As yet, faith and holy decision are timely. May we obtain them this night.

Evening, November 24th by C. H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded

for giving thanks to our great God and Father through Jesus Christ. It is not hyperbole to say that we ought always to give thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. That is simply the normal pattern that every Christian should follow.

