

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

A CULTIVATED GRATITUDE

By Pastor Brian De Jong

November’s arrival signals the approach of my favorite holiday – Thanksgiving. While admittedly enjoying the fabulous food and the fun of family time, my real attachment to Thanksgiving is the very nature of the concept. Thanksgiving ideally should be an opportunity for expressing our gratitude to God for all of His goodness to us.

In my experience, I have found that many people do not really know how to “give thanks.” They are adept at complaining.

They’ve learned how to pontificate. They’ve more than mastered arguing. But how do you actually “do” Thanksgiving? What is the action that the verb demands?

In order to give real and sincere thanks to God, you must cultivate and nurture this tender plant over years – even decades. As it is deeply rooted and thoroughly established in your character, then the fruit is relatively easy to produce. But if the habit never becomes engrained in your mind, then most likely you won’t be able to offer the sacrifice of praise that is the fruit of lips that give thanks to God.

So if you want to begin cultivating gratitude, you must start with your understanding of God Himself. Meditate and reflect on passages such as James 1:17 “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”

Submit yourself to Paul’s line of questioning in I Corinthians 4:7 *For who*

regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

The simple reality is that everything we have is a gift from God. He has showered our lives with tokens of His kindness and mercy. We haven’t earned any of it and we never could deserve such lavish treatment.



Next begin to do an inventory of your life – and I’m not talking only about material things. Look at the relationships God has given you – friends, family, a spouse, parents, siblings, children. Examine those connections for God’s fingerprints – those tell-tale proofs that God is prospering your relationships with people who love you and whom you love in return.

Turning your attention on intangibles like health, spiritual growth, contentment, usefulness in your spheres of influence, or productivity in your work. Ask yourself, “Why does my life go as well as it does? What can account for the general success I enjoy is many respects?

Don’t forget to look over your wealth and outward estate. Are your flocks and herds growing? Do you see God making your fields fruitful and your income bountiful? How many true necessities do you consistently lack? How many real luxuries do you regularly enjoy? Which of us can honestly and accurately say, “I am destitute”?

A survey of our country is also instructive. Though there are many things...

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November 2013

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Mnemonics...

- *Harvest Home Supper, 9th*
- *Talent Night, 16th*
- *Thanksgiving Football Game, 28th*

A Remedy for Wandering Thoughts

Chapter 8, Sections 1-3

by Richard Steele

SECTION I *Dispel the Causes*

And if there be such great evil in these distractions, and evil effects of them, what shall an upright heart do to be rid of them? I say, an upright heart, that inquires for means, to use them, and craves a remedy, not to look at, but to apply to remedy the evil. And art thou thus resolved, that readest these lines? For us to spend our skill, and you your time, without full purpose to practise, is labour in vain; nay, it will harden your hearts here, and increase your condemnation hereafter. You will deceive yourselves, and disappoint us, if you rest in hearing, without doing what you hear. Well, then, are you resolved unfeignedly to take the Lord's counsel for the destruction of your distractions? Stop a little and resolve. And now let me put that question to you, "Who is he that hath engaged his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?" Jer. 30:21. Who is this? who will do it? who is thus well advised? that hath engaged not only made a proffer, but engaged and that his heart, to approach unto God, and where, in this congregation, doth that man sit or stand, that out of a deep sense of the hatefulness and hurtfulness of this sin, doth now engage his heart and soul to use all means against it, and that in the uprightness of his heart? The Lord your God sees who yields and cries out, "Through grace I am resolved." Well, on that condition I proceed to direction.

1. Dispel the causes before-mentioned and use the remedies prescribed against them; and here, if you be in good earnest, you will look back and review them, and the helps adjoined, and beg of God, as you read them, "In this, Lord, pardon and help thy servant I" A man of small skill may easily stop the symptoms of diseases, as the present pain in the teeth, or the like; but he is an artist, that removes the causes of them; and it is more easy to turn off two or three of these vain thoughts. than to heal the soul of the thought-evil in the causes thereof. If these remain, atheism, unpreparedness, lukewarmness, worldliness, and the like in the heart, all the rules and receipts under

heaven will never cure you of distractions. For there will still spring up continual supplies from these corrupt causes; as the lopping of the boughs will still have new sprouts coming, until the roots be stocked up; and therefore with thoughtfulness, and resolution, set upon all those remedies that have been prescribed. Beg of God to dry up the spring, else your damming up the streams will do no good. When the causes are dispelled, the cure is wrought.

And here is a plain discovery of a hypocrite in heart: if some light, easy receipt will help him in any case, he may apply it; but if he must go about and take pains; if the way of cure be in any degree intricate or difficult, then he throws it up, and never will go to the bottom of his business; whereas the upright heart doth but desire to know what to do, what is God's method and way, and then, long or short, hard or easy, he never disputes, he demurs not, he falls to work, he knows every inch he goes, he gets advantage, and "in keeping of God's commandments there is great reward." The speediness of his cure he desires, but the soundness of it he insists on, and counts no trouble in the cure like the evil of his sin. Are you resolved in this? else it is to no purpose to proceed. To stumble at the threshold presages ill. But if we be clear thus far, I proceed.

SECTION II *Bewail Your Former Failings Therein*

Bewail your former failings in this respect; this will divers ways conduce to your amendment.

1. Morally, being an argument that you really dislike the sin, and the condition of God's pardon thereof. The ordinary "Lord have mercy," doth herein fall short of pardon, because it is not spoken in tears; if God did but see a man grieve for his sin,¹ a little ado, a few words, should get forgiveness. The publican had but a short prayer, nor David upon his dreadful fall; but they were words that were felt, they were heart-deep, they swam in tears, each word fetched a drop of blood from the heart; and God was

Wandering Continued...

well pleased with them in Christ. When Antipater had written a long letter to Alexander, against his mother Olympia, his answer was, Dost thou not know, that one tear from my mother's eye, can wash away all her faults? So one penitential tear from a believer's eye can prevail much with God in Christ for the pardon of his wanderings; but the most embroidered phrases, without this christian grief, prevail not with God at all. But when your conscience is touched, and the heart melts and bleeds for your faults herein; now, saith God, I see yonder man cannot live with a wandering heart, and therefore he shall live without it. I will never see him drowned in his distractions, that is thus drowned in tears about them; if he really dislike them, I will really dispel them.

And then again, till their guilt be pardoned, our hearts are usually desperate; like a wicked spend-thrift, while hopeless of a discharge from all, treasures up sin unto sin, till that dreadful pay-day come, the day of judgment. Whereas when sin, this sin, is truly grieved for, the Holy Ghost doth ever bring a pardon in one hand, and a remedy in another; at the same time to clear the guilt and cure the disease. Oh, saith the soul, I am defiled, I am wounded in my flight to heaven, I am disappointed in my affairs, my God is angry. I have sinned just then, when I should have washed out my sins. I have sinned against my remedy, and how shall I be cured? Oh I was there ever such a rotten backsliding heart! such a Cain-like wandering frame? what place but hell is fit for that heart that cannot rest in heaven? Ah! Lord, I wonder that the end of my prayer is not the beginning of my punishment. Though these be but small like the sand, yet being many as the sand, how can I stand under them? I am ashamed, yea, even confounded for these reproaches of my duties. Nay, then says God, who hearkens behind the curtain all this while, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is not he a pleasant child? I will remember him, I will have mercy upon him." When thou art ripe for hell in thy own eyes, then art thou ripe for grace and glory in the eyes of God. No man shall ever be overborne with a

sin he hates. Go, my blessed Spirit that has melted him, and mend him, that hast softened him, strengthen him; he that laments his sin shall never languish under it.² The sacrifice of a broken heart do please him, though the sacrifice of a broken Christ alone doth satisfy him.

2. Dispositively, grief at heart doth help forward the cure of distractions, and that by softening the heart and so fitting the same for the impressions of God's will. When the wax is melted, you may turn and mould it which way you will; so when the soul is melted by grief for these sins, God Almighty may easily be heard, and his counsel will be taken. And also godly sorrow, as was before observed, doth so afflict and makes a man's heart to ache and smart, that he will take some pains to prevent the like anguish again. When they knock at the door, you will say, O these are they that cost me dear at such a time; I feel yet the sad impressions of my late affliction for them; I found a pardon no easy enterprise, nor repentance so pleasing a potion to brew for it again. I would not for all the world, much less for one vain thought or two, nor for a thousand worlds together, be under that anger of God, nor feel one drop of his scalding indignation, which I have perceived for these offences. O sirs, where godly sorrow is in the power of it, what carefulness doth it work? what zeal,

what indignation, yea, what revenge? It makes sin lie like a mountain upon the soul, musters up all the aggravations of sin, and sets them home on the heart. to sin in an ordinance! against such a God! in the midst of my greatest business! after such conviction! vows and promises of exactness before him! To offend Father, Son, and Holy Ghost at the same time! heart of stone, dost not thou melt? yea to offend the angels of heaven, which holy spirits turn away their faces at our vanities in the assemblies; yea, and offend the angels upon earth, God's ministers, while that which cost them most serious pains, is spoken to the air! to wound my own soul in the professed act of curing it, and increase guilt when I am professedly getting it cleared! to play the

*“Though
these be small
like the sand,
yet being
many as the
sand, how can
I stand under
them?”*

Wandering Continued...

hypocrite before the face of God, the judge of heaven and earth! wretched man that I am! my sin is exceeding sinful! O rend my heart! thou Most High! A broken heart to-day will be a good if preservative against a wandering heart to-morrow.

SECTION III

Engage the Assistance of the Holy Ghost

Engage the Holy Spirit of God for thine assistance. "Without me ye can do nothing." John 15:5. Supernatural work cannot be done without supernatural help. You may and ought to do what a man can do; that is, compose yourselves, and guard your senses; but you cannot do that which only a God can do; that is fly up, and fix your hearts in heaven. "We cannot pray for any thing, for matter, as we ought, for the manner, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us." Rom. 8:25. The Greek word signifies, the Spirit over and above steps in and helps; or, as others makes vehement intercession for us. We climb up the ladder as well as we can towards heaven; but, alas! it wavers, no stability till the Holy Ghost hold it at the top, and draw, and lift us up, and then we get a sight of heaven. And you have resolved perhaps, and been secure of a good frame; but "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. 28:26, you have found no fixedness or liveliness in your spirits without the assistance of God; he that prays aright, must pray in the Holy Ghost. Jude 20. This also quickens and heats the soul, whereby there is no room, or leisure for distracted thoughts.

Hereby the soul is carried straight up to God and stays at nothing on this side heaven; yea, by the Spirit's blessed assistance, "every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." blessed frame! when every thought is compelled to obey Christ; there is none can deal with our spirits, but the Spirit of God. When the word comes in the hand of the Spirit, there is no avoiding it. Then the reading one

chapter can convert, as that Job 1 did the learned Junius; yea, of one verse as that 1 Tim. 1:15, did Mr. Bilney; yea, one sentence can comfort the heart, as that, Isaiah 62:15, did the afflicted conscience of one that nothing else could satisfy; thereby the soul is carried up, as Mr. Tilleman, the martyr, was in his devotions, so that he saw or heard nobody, till after long search and great noise, his persecutors took him up from his knees. The heart is so carried upwards to God, that all the world looks as inconsiderable as an atom at that time, and not worth the thinking on; and is entertained with that sweet content, that it cannot wish to be anywhere else; and therefore a by-thought is as unwelcome as base company to him that is busy with nobles.

"When thy heart is warm & in tune, then do thy business thoroughly."

Beg therefore of God, with earnest importunity, at the entrance of every ordinance, for his Holy Spirit; and he hath said, "he will give his Spirit to them that ask him." Luke 11:13. Say, Lord, if thy Spirit go not with me, let me not go further. For as the intercession of Christ is absolutely necessary for your acceptance, so the intercession of the Holy Ghost is necessary for your assistance. The Spirit itself also making intercession for us with sighs that cannot be uttered. Promise your heavenly Father that you will never willingly disoblige or grieve away his Spirit again. Art thou dead; cry, "Quicken me, and I will call upon thy name." Is thy heart roving, cry, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Humbly plead his promise, that he will put his Spirit and fear into your hearts, that you shall never, and if never, then not in his solemn ordinance, depart from him; and observe the gracious gales of the Spirit, and when they clash not with the rules of his holy word, lay hold on them, and fall to duty. It is best rowing below, when the wind blows fair above. When thy heart is warm and in tune, then do thy business thoroughly. And beware of grieving him between times; let there be a coherence between prayer and practice; let your whole life be of a piece, lest he withdraw when you

Wandering Concluded...

have most need of him. And remember that to grieve the Spirit often, is the way to quench the Spirit, and to quench the Spirit often is the way to do despite to the Spirit. That is a rare expression, “If ye live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit;” Gal. 5:25, how far is this phrase from general apprehension or feeling! To live and walk by the conduct and quickening of the Holy Ghost, this is the life of a saint. And then he that walks in the Spirit, “prays also in the Spirit, and watches thereunto.” Ephes. 6:18. Whereby those fiery darts of the devil, that

would conquer the strength of a man, are crushed and chased away by the strength of a God.

¹ No man was ever kept out of heaven for his confessed badness, but many have for their supposed goodness. — Chapel.

² To weep for fear is childish; to weep for anger is womanish; to weep for grief is humane; to weep for compassion is divine; but to weep for sin is christian. — Bishop Hall.



Continued from the front

...that are wrong in our nation, there are also good things – things to be enjoyed and appreciated. Even the simple beauty of this corner of God’s creation is worthy of gratitude to the Creator of heaven and earth.

Spiritual blessings are a field white for harvest. Do you own a Bible? Can you understand it when you read? Are you free to pray, and does God hear and answer your prayers? Is your church a blessing to you? Are you learning and growing as a result of the preaching, teaching, and fellowship of believers? Have you given thanks lately for the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper?

Once you have collected ample data (and there is more than enough good cause to give thanks), then you must formulate the expressions of your gratitude to God. I like what my friend Bebo Elkin says, “Use words! Use W-O-R-D-S!” Say something simple, like this: “Dear God, I want to thank you for giving

me...” Or “Lord, please accept my gratitude for helping me in ...”

Perhaps this is where too often the train jumps the tracks. We may think about God’s goodness, and how very much we have received. Grateful feelings may well up in our hearts. And yet, somehow, it never makes it from the brain to the mouth. Our lips are sealed and we forget to say “Thank you.” We end up like the nine lepers in Luke 17. We’ve received healing and help from the Lord, but never made it back to say a polite word of thanks. How shameful to be an ungrateful recipient of God’s goodness.



November Birthdays



Phone Numbers





Grace OPC

November 2013

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	5	6 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	7	8	9 Harvest Home Supper, 5:30 p.m.
10 Missions Sunday	11 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	12 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	13 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	14	15	16 Grace Talent Night, 7 p.m.
17	18 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	19	20 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	21	22	23
24 Lord's Supper (a.m.)	25 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	26	27 Thanksgiving Service, 7:00 p.m.	28 Thanksgiving Day Football Game	29	30



H o s e a 1 4 : 9

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Pizza Fundraiser

The Pine Haven Christian Home Auxiliary will hold a fundraiser at Falls Fire House Pizza (109 Maple St., Sheboygan Falls) on Wednesday, November 6th from 4:00 p.m.– 9:00 p.m. A percentage of all funds raised at this event (dine-in & take-out) will go to benefit the residents of the Pine Haven Christian Communities.



Harvest Home Supper

Harvest Home Supper will be held at the church on Saturday, November 9th. Dinner will start at 5:30 p.m. and a program will follow. ... The first opportunity to contribute toward the Thank Offering will also happen during this time.





Comments on Finance

by Joel Moody

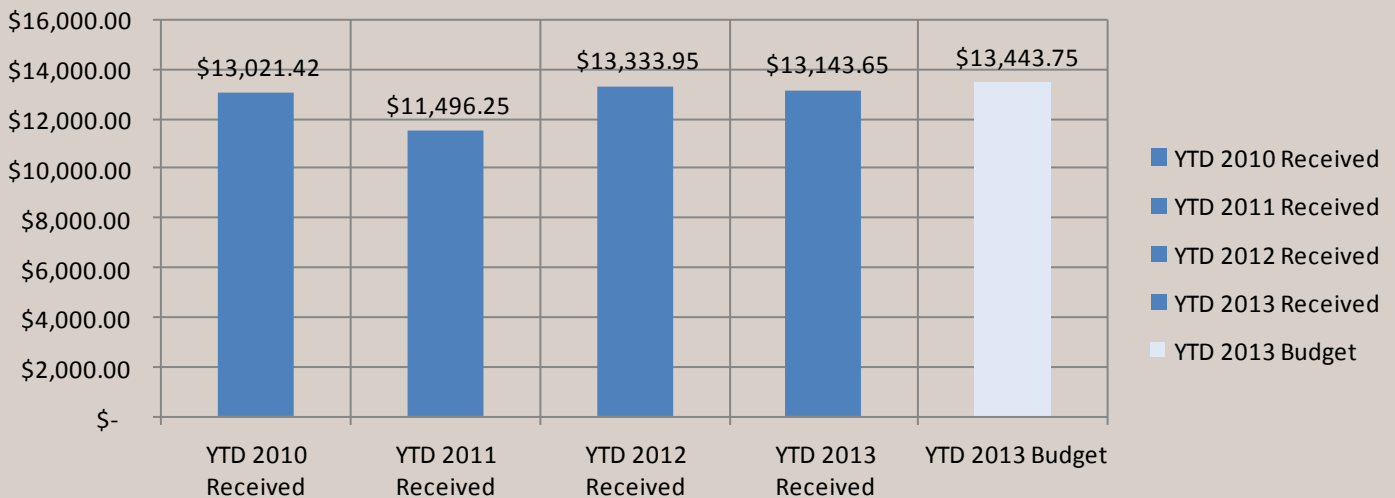
General Fund receipts for September totaled \$15,138.63 as compared to the budget of \$16,312.05, while General Fund disbursements for September totaled \$15,792.63. September year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$125,271.48 as compared to the budget of \$127,233.75 (a shortfall of \$1,962.27), while September year to date disbursements of \$116,178.25 were \$11,055.50 below budget. Through the end of September, the General Fund has increased by \$9,166.77. The increase in the General Fund was due to lower than budgeted disbursements. Year to date General Fund receipts for September were 4.6% above last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 5.6% above the prior year.

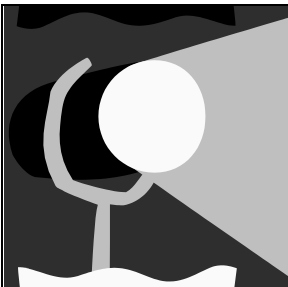
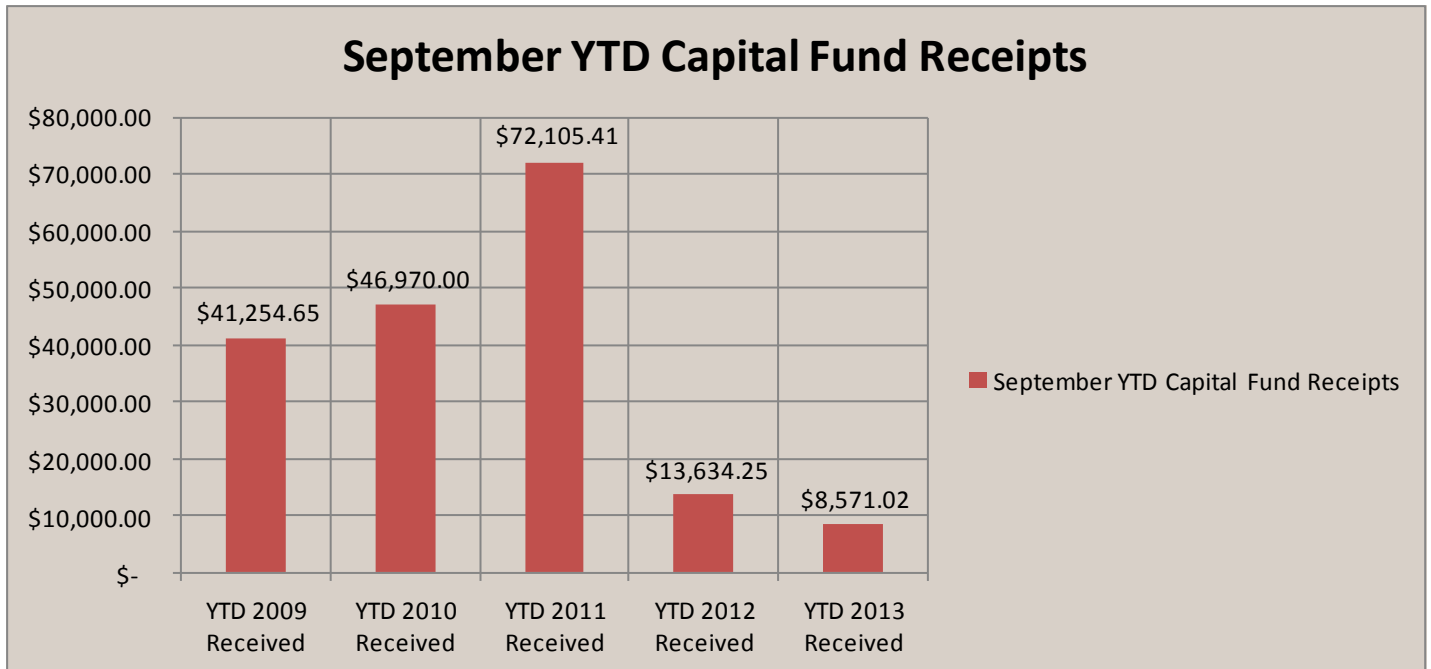
Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Through September, \$736.74 was disbursed from the Capital Fund. Two Wi-Fi thermostats were purchased for a cost of \$386.97, an office chair for a cost of \$159.99, and a baby changing station for a cost of \$189.78.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for September totaled \$1,589.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (an overage of \$95.25). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through September totaled \$13,143.65 and were below budget by \$300.10. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. ...

September Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$8,571.02. Please refer to the Capital Fund

September YTD Benevolence Receipts Actual vs. Current Budget





Grace Talent Night

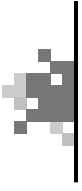
Mark your calendars!

On November 16th, we will have the Grace Church Talent Night.

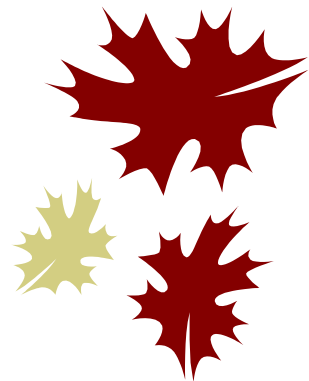
Not just music (although our music talent will be abundant!).
Readings, skits, yodeling, etc. (Speak with Gail Moody to participate)

We will finish the evening with a hymn sing accompanied
by Harlan's daughters!

Come One, Come All!



submitted by Carla De Master



Thank You

)

Auxiliary Thank You

The members of the Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary want to thank all those who contributed to the Fall Festival in any way – entertaining, baking, donating your crafts, working, purchasing items, and/or coming to eat at the hamburger/brat/chicken fry. It was a huge success.

We also want to thank you for your support all year. Thanks to the many hard workers, the generous givers of gifts, purchasers of items, and eating at all our fund-raisers, we have had a really great year. At our October meeting we voted to give monies to Pine Haven to use to purchase needed items for the homes.

We also praise God for His goodness in blessing our events throughout the year. He has

touched the hearts of many people, making them want to work for or attend our events. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.



The Soup Corner



Chili

- ★ 2 lbs. lean ground beef
- ★ 1 (46 oz.) can tomato juice
- ★ 1 (29 oz.) can tomato sauce
- ★ 1 (15 oz.) can kidney beans, drained & rinsed
- ★ 1 (15 oz.) can pinto beans, drained & rinsed
- ★ 1 1/2 cups chopped onion
- ★ 1/4 cup chopped green bell pepper
- ★ 1/8 tsp. ground cayenne pepper
- ★ 12 tsp. white sugar
- ★ 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- ★ 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- ★ 1 tsp. salt
- ★ 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- ★ 1/4 cup chili powder

1. Place ground beef in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until evenly brown. Drain, and crumble.

2. In a large pot over high heat combine the ground beef, tomato juice, tomato sauce, kidney beans, pinto beans, onions, bell pepper, cayenne pepper, sugar, oregano, ground black pepper, salt, cumin and chili powder. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Simmer for 1 1/2 hours. (Note: If using a slow cooker, set on low, add ingredients, and cook for 8 to 10 hours.)

Sanna Vander Waal

“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.”

Creamy White Chili

- ★ 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- ★ 1 medium onion, chopped
- ★ 1 1/2 tsp. garlic powder (or fresh garlic)
- ★ 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- ★ 2 cans (15 1/2 oz. each) great northern beans, rinsed & drained (or 1 heaping cup dry beans, cooked)
- ★ 1 can (15 oz.) chicken broth
- ★ 2 cans (4 oz. each) diced green chilies
- ★ 1 tsp. salt (or a little less)
- ★ 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ★ 1 tsp. dried oregano
- ★ 1/2 tsp. pepper
- ★ 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
- ★ 1 cup sour cream
- ★ 1/2 cup whipping cream

In a large saucepan, saute chicken, onion and garlic in oil until chicken is no longer pink. Add beans, broth, chilies and seasonings. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat; stir in sour cream and cream. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 7 servings

Debbie Boss

Sauerkraut Soup

- ★ 4 Pork Hocks
- ★ 1 onion
- ★ 1 tsp. salt
- ★ 2 potatoes, cubed
- ★ 3 carrots, cut up
- ★ 1 can Sauerkraut
- ★ 1 pint whipping cream
- ★ 1/2 cup flour

1. Cover pork hocks, onions & salt with water. Simmer about 2 hours or till meat comes off the bone easily.

2. Cut meat from bone and put back in water, add potatoes, carrots and simmer till tender. Add sauerkraut, simmer for 10 minutes. Whip the whipping cream & flour just till it gets a little thick, add to soup.

Note: This is better if made the day before. If too thick add a little milk

Ellen McNeese



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

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GRACESHEBOYGAN**

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GRACEOPCSHEBOYGAN.COM



Spurgeon Corner

*“Strengthen, O God, that which though hast wrought for us.”
(Psalm 68:28)*

It is our wisdom, as well as our necessity, to beseech God continually to strengthen that which he has wrought in us. It is because of their neglect in this, that many Christians may blame themselves for those trials and afflictions of spirit which arise from unbelief. It is true that Satan seeks to flood the fair garden of the heart and make it a scene of desolation, but it is also true that many Christians leave open the sluice-gates themselves, and let in the dreadful deluge through carelessness and want of prayer to their strong Helper. We often forget that the Author of our faith must be the Preserver of it also. The lamp which was burning in the temple was never allowed to go out, but it had to be daily replenished with fresh oil; in like manner, our faith can only live by being sustained with the oil of grace, and we can only obtain this from God himself. Foolish virgins we shall prove, if we do not secure the needed sustenance for our lamps. He who built the world upholds it, or it would fall in one tremendous crash; he who made us Christians must maintain us by his Spirit, or our ruin will be speedy and final. Let us, then, evening by evening, go to our Lord for the grace and strength we need. We have a strong argument to plead, for it is *his own work of grace* which we ask him to strengthen—*“that which thou hast wrought for us.”* Think you he will fail to protect and sustain that? Only let your faith take hold of his strength, and all the powers of darkness, led on by the master fiend of hell, cannot cast a cloud or shadow over your joy and peace. Why faint when you may be strong? Why suffer defeat when you may conquer? Oh! take your wavering faith and drooping graces to him who can revive and replenish them, and earnestly pray, “Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.”



Evening, November 15, Morning & Evening, by C. H. Spurgeon

Thanksgiving Day Football Game

The Annual Thanksgiving Day Football game will be held in the field next to the church parking lot on Thanksgiving Day morning. Come to play or to cheer on your favorite team. Participants are asked to bring some orange clothing to help differentiate the teams. Donuts will be available for everyone at half-time.

