

Grace Tidings



A Newsletter of Avalon Grace Church

November - December 2020

Choosing an Attitude of Gratitude

Being thankful is a choice we eagerly embrace on Thanksgiving Day. Anticipating Thanksgiving Dinner is always something to look forward to once a year. It's common to think about the things we're thankful for . . . God's incredible grace, our salvation and freedom in Christ, our apostle Paul, our spouse and family, our health, the freedom to worship in the country we live, our church family, a warm (or cool) comfortable home, food, and many more blessings so numerous that our heart's overflow with joy and gratitude toward God when we think of them.

"In everything give thanks; for this is will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thess. 5:18

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

Colossians 3:17

The truly grateful heart, however, doesn't need a special moment or a particular day; rather it is the fruit of choosing to be thankful over and over again, despite our feelings, or even during difficult times

when it's easy to become discouraged.

As we live our life each day, choosing an attitude of gratitude honors God and is a form of worship.

"He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me."

Psalms 50:23.

It is an act of our will to choose to be thankful. Ask yourself, "Is the gratitude that flows out of my life as abundant as the blessings and grace that flows into my life?"

Cultivating a truly grateful heart is essential to growing a stronger faith. It requires a daily intentional act of our will by rejecting the temptation to complain or wallow in self-pity and embracing an attitude of gratitude and thanksgiving. It honors Our Lord to make the choice today and every day to take our eyes off ourselves and our circumstances, gratefully acknowledging who God is and what He is doing.

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AVALON GRACE CHURCH

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Pastor Phillip McClellan, Jr.

Pastor Emeritus Arthur Sims

Kathleen Smith, Editor

All Are Welcome!

Sunday Worship 10:30 AM

(Sunday Messages available on website)

Children's Sunday School 10:45 AM

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Currently Suspended

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: . . ."

- Ephesians 3:9

Choosing an Attitude of Gratitude

(Continued from Page 1)

Deny yourself the right to complain, embracing instead the deep-seated joy of thanksgiving... in all things. A grateful heart pleases God.

In this holiday season of Thanksgiving and as we approach the season of remembering our Savior's birth, we have much to be thankful for as we gather with family and friends. We have come through a difficult and

challenging year in so many ways.

In a year when much has been given, for some, much has been taken too. So we pause and give thanks for the threads of lives that are no longer present and give thanks for the threads that enrich the fabric of this life we know now.

May your Thanksgiving holiday and



Christmastime be a time of refreshment and your table filled with abundant blessings, good food, loved ones, and those dearest to your heart.

~ Pastor Phil

"Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name. For the Lord is good . . ." (Psalm 100:4-5).

"Let your roots grow down into Him and draw up nourishment from Him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all He has done." (Colossians 2:7).

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

- PSALM 103:2 KJV

"We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown."

- Abraham Lincoln

Now thank we all our God,
With hearts and hands and voices;
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom this world rejoices.
Who, from our mother's arms,
Hath led us on our way,
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today. - Martin Rinkart



Every year, Avalon Grace Church supports and participates in Samaritans Purse worldwide ministry, "Operation Christmas Child." It is wonderful to know that our small fellowship is a part of a greater worldwide ministry in bringing joy to children at Christmas with the good news of Jesus Christ!

Even amid a global pandemic, we want to collect small toys to fill shoeboxes because now more than ever, children need hope and they need to know Jesus loves them and died for them and rose again to bring them to heaven one day. With every shoebox that is filled with toys and practical gifts, we include the gospel message. We never know how God will use His word to reach a young child's heart - or even their parent's heart - but we do know that God's Word will never return void. (Isaiah 55:11).

Thank you for participating in this wonderful ministry with your monetary gifts and little toys, stuffed animals, coloring books, etc. to gladden a young child's heart. Stay tuned for more information in January 2021 about Operation Christmas Child ministry and how many shoeboxes we as a church body send off to little children throughout the world.

Thank you! ~ Pastor Phil



God and Veterans Day: Are there Veterans in the Bible?

Reference: Paula Whidden
www.faithfulchoices.com

Every Veteran's Day on November 11th, we pause to reflect on the heroism, honor and sacrifice of our nation's veterans who served our country and defended our freedom. Did you ever stop to consider that there are many veterans in the Bible? The Bible is packed with battle imagery and history of many mighty warriors who trusted God. The Bible tells of successful combats and battles where there was loss of life and great victory for God's people. Much like our soldiers today, they knew the full content of war. Here are just a few of the many Bible veterans:

David

1 Samuel 16:18 – “One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him.”

David killed Goliath, champion of the Philistines, when David was only a youth and Goliath a giant and veteran warrior. David was victorious because he trusted in God for the victory, not himself. As an adult, David killed many of Israel's enemies in battle, wreaking havoc on his personal life. Often David cried out to God for help and forgiveness. Despite several opportunities, David refused to kill King Saul because he was God's first anointed king, who was pursuing David out of mad jealousy. He became friends, like brothers, with Saul's son Jonathan, setting a model of friendship that everyone can learn from.

Joshua

Deuteronomy 31:6 – “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

As second in command to Moses when Israel left Egypt, he

led the army. He trusted God and yet experienced uncertainty and fear. When he took over the leadership at Moses death, God had to remind him to be strong and courageous several times. He listened to God and trusted God at his Word, however, we can see how even the strongest warrior can still be fearful and face great danger with God's promise to be with him.

Gideon

Judges 6:12 – “When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior.”

Even though Gideon's faith was weak, once convinced of God's power, he was a loyal follower who obeyed the Lord's instructions. The Bible says God called him to face a battle against outrageous odds, a fortified army with greater military prowess than Israel. He served as a judge over his people. He destroyed an altar to the pagan god Baal, earning the name Jerub-Baal, and meaning 'contender with Baal.' Gideon united the Israelites against their common enemies and through God's power, defeated them.

Our God understands the experience and feelings of all veterans, the battles they have fought, the loss of life they've witnessed, and the physical and emotional scars they may carry from times of great peril in serving our country. In the United States, we can accurately say our freedom and our existence comes first from God and then from the veterans He has called to defend that very freedom we cherish. If opportunity provides, let vets know you appreciate them this Veteran's Day and pray for them. They are God's soldiers by land, by sea, and by air, all seeking righteousness, protecting our homeland, and are instruments of His peace. God bless our veterans.



*December 13, 2020
Avalon Grace Church's
Annual Christmas Program*

*A time of reflection, praise, song,
and remembering the birth
Of our Savior,
the Lord Jesus Christ.*



*Please plan to join us on
Sunday, December 13, 2020*

*for our Annual Christmas Program
where we set aside a brief time to
read the Scriptures that chronicle
Our Lord's incarnation and
remember His birth.*

*More details will follow via email
as December 25th draws near.!*

The Work of Christmas Begins

- Howard Thurman, adapted

When the song of the angel is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with
their flocks,
Then the work of Christmas begins:
to find the lost,
to heal those broken in spirit,
to feed the hungry, to release the
oppressed,
to rebuild the nations,
to bring peace among all peoples,
to make a little music with the heart. .
And to radiate the Light of Christ,
every day, in every way, in all that we
do and in all that we say.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."



**The Christmas message is that
there is hope for a ruined
humanity – hope of pardon, hope
of peace with God, hope of glory
– because at the Father's will
Jesus became poor, and was
born in a stable so that thirty
years later He might
hang on a cross.**

~ J.I. Packer

GOD'S GIFT

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



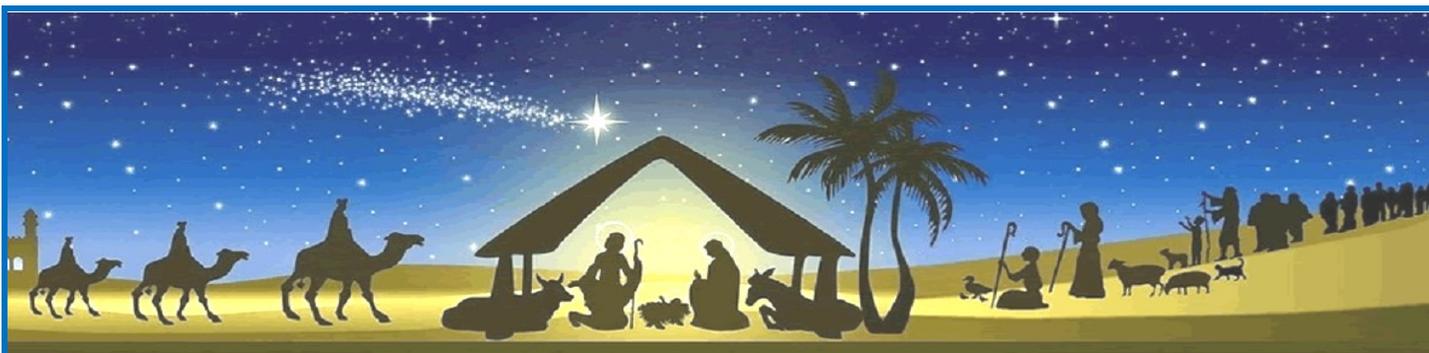
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Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

— 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 NIV

*Who can add to Christmas?
The perfect motive is that God so
loved the world.
The perfect gift is that He gave
His only Son.
The only requirement is to
believe in Him.
The reward of faith is that you
shall have everlasting life.*

~ Corrie Ten Boom



How eagerly children await the promise of Christmas morning. The sight of toys, pretty packages, and bright colored bows tucked under the tree excite the hearts of children and adults on Christmas morning everywhere!

For most of us, it's not hard to describe a gift we may have opened Christmas morning. The gifts we give and receive are tangible, human gifts, created or manufactured by human hands or machines so they are easy to describe.

But how do we describe the gift of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Is it even possible? What words would we use to describe how and why a holy God willingly left His throne in heaven and came to earth, took on the flesh of a helpless baby, fully dependent upon his mother and father to feed Him, bathe Him, potty-train Him.

The Lord of Glory, the one who spoke "Let there be Light" now had to learn how to walk, a young little child who had to learn how to read and write yet was tempted in all points just like us yet never caved into sin.

He shed His precious blood, was beaten and abused, experienced excruciating pain and torture, separation from His Father, and suffered and died for us? How do we describe such a gift?

Our apostle Paul couldn't describe it

either when he wrote to the Corinthian church and referred to the gift of Christ to them - and to us today - by saying, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift." (2 Corinthians 9:15). Even Paul was at a loss for words in describing God's gift to us through Jesus, recognizing that there are no human words adequate to fully describe or understand what our Savior has done for us!

Yet, the message of Christmas is not about the gifts under the tree; rather, it is a reminder of the gift that God has given to each of us at the cross - eternal life in Christ - the only gift that truly keeps on giving . . . Forever!

When you want to give a loved one a special gift, normally you think about it ahead of time. You take into account the needs and wants of that special person who will be the recipient of your gift. In the same way, God made a decision before the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) that He would give us a gift we really needed - His only begotten Son to redeem us.

When you think about it, the gift of Jesus Christ does not depend on whether we are naughty or nice at Christmas or anytime of the year. The truth is we are all sinners and don't deserve this gift at all. Yet, God gave us the priceless gift of His Son when we were His enemies. That's mind blowing. The Bible tells us, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners,

Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

May the joy and peace that settles on you this Christmas season be a blessedness that lingers deep in your heart this Christmas and the coming New Year as we give thanks for God's indescribable gift of Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas Church family!
Richard and Kathleen Smith

Christmas' True Meaning



By Deborah Ann Belka

Let Christmas' true meaning, rise up in you today . . . may you see the real splendor of Jesus' birth on this day.

May His beauty and grandeur, cause your heart to sing may the gift of His excellence become your eternal spring.

May His majesty you behold, with all dignity and honor may the fullness of His truth glorify His heavenly Father.

May the wonder of His grace, reveal its magnificence in you may the gratefulness you feel be in all you say and do.

Let Christmas' true meaning, bring your Savior near today may you see the need for Him today . . . and every day.

The Night Before Christmas

By R B. Thierne, Jr.

'Twas the night before
Christmas
And all through the world
A message was preached,
a challenge was hurled.

Believe on the Son
and thou shall be saved:
The road to heaven
with His blood was paved.

Out of the darkness
of sin and despair
God's salvation —
the fairest of fair.

Was born in a manger;
no room in the inn.
God in the flesh,
He died for our sin.

The angel spoke;
the shepherds rejoiced
Messiah has come!
The message was voiced.

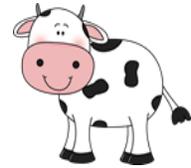
By joyous believers
both far and near
Christmas has come!
Immanuel is here!



All Creatures Great and Small, the Lord God made them all . . .

By R B. Thierne, Jr.

*Here in my warm stable,
Some voices I could hear;
Many people all around
Someone was coming near.*



*Two came into my stable
I head this couple say:
"We're so thankful for this place."
Then they laid down on the hay.*

*Sometime in the night
I do not know what time,
A baby cried—they made a bed
In the manger that was mine.*

*I heard it was foretold.
This is how it was to be.
I'm glad they came to Bethlehem
To share this place with me.*



Comedy Corner . . .

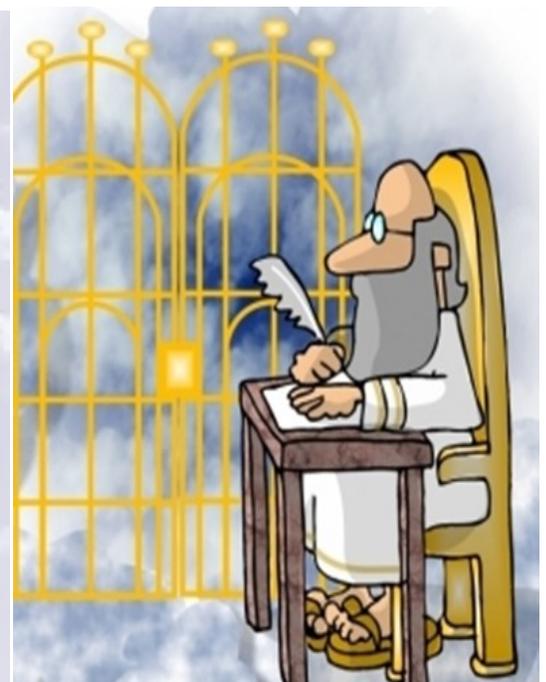


A cab driver reaches the Pearly Gates and announces his presence to St. Peter, who looks him up in his Big Book. Upon reading the entry for the cabby, St. Peter invites him to grab a silk robe and a golden staff and to proceed into Heaven.

A preacher is next in line behind the cabby and has been watching these proceedings with interest. He announces himself to St. Peter. Upon scanning the preacher's entry in the Big Book, St. Peter furrows his brow and says, "Okay, we'll let you in, but take that cloth robe and wooden staff."

The preacher is astonished and replies, "But I am a man of the cloth. You gave that cab driver a gold staff and a silk robe. Surely I rate higher than a cabby."

St. Peter responded matter-of-factly: "Here we are interested in results. When you preached, people slept. When the cabby drove his taxi, people prayed."



Coloring for Jesus

Jesus was born in Bethlehem and Mary and Joseph laid Jesus in a manger because there was no room in the inn.



“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke 2:7



Happy Thanksgiving

November 2020

Avalon Grace Church of Naples, Florida



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

NOVEMBER

- 2nd Jeff Stahl
- 11th Josh Barrett
- 19th Jessica Stevens
- 24th Irene Cunningham

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:45 Breakfast 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	2	3 ELECTION DAY	4	5	6	7
8 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	9	10	11 Veteran's Day 	12	13	14
15 10:30 Worship & The Lord's Supper 10:45 Child. SS	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	23	24	25	26 Thanksgiving	27	28
29 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	30					



December 2020



DECEMBER

- 7th Christian Stevens
- 10th Jordan McClellan
- 18th Willard Barrett
- 18th Barbara Marshall
- 19th Kathleen Smith
- 28th Art Sims
- 31st Jim Asher

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6 9:45 Breakfast 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	7 Pearl Harbor Day	8	9	10	11	12
13 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS Christmas Program	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 10:30 Worship & The Lord's Supper 10:45 Child. SS	21 First Day of Winter	22	23	24 	25 Merry Christmas 	26
27 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		