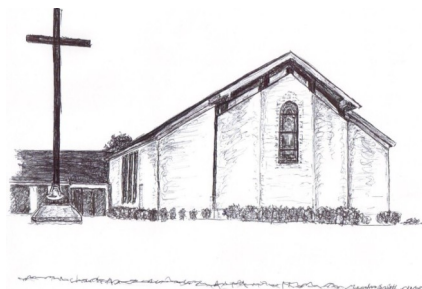


Presby News

November 2017



FROM THE PASTOR . . .

Because of Thanksgiving, I think we sort of naturally begin to think more about things for which **we are grateful** in the month of November. And, different things stand out for all of us.

I would like to share with you a few ways in which **my thinking has changed** over the years for which I am grateful. I am not sure when all of these changes took place--I just know that they did.

The first big change in my thinking has been in the way I see God. In my earlier years, I was overwhelmed by His justice and power. I did not see him smiling. He was more **like a heavenly bookkeeper** recording all of my deeds, good and evil, for which I would have to give an account one day. I believed doctrinally that He was a God of love but somehow that **did not translate into my inner being.** When I sinned, I was overwhelmed by a sense of guilt and remorse and fearful of His punishment. It was difficult to relax when contemplating what I conceived as a **somewhat harsh and hard God to please.**

I now see God as a **smiling Heavenly Father of unconditional love and grace for all people.** The longer I have affirmed this, the more this truth has become practical and applied to me personally **in the depths of my being.** It is a truth which is real to me **not only intellectually but emotionally as well.** I really do believe He is like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, **eager to forgive, accept, and restore** me no matter how far I have wandered into some far country. Believing this has helped me to be **more positive and enthusiastic** about life. It has, also, helped me to value **all other people** with whom I come into contact. I envision them as recipients of a Savior's sacrificial love for them on a cross as He died in an act which culminated a life of self-denial.

The second big change has been in the way I see myself. I grew up in a religious environment which **emphasized human sinfulness.** I sort of felt that it was really spiritual to feel as sinful and unworthy as I could. With this kind of theology, I (not necessarily everyone) developed a very **negative self-image.** Although the gospel of salvation, being saved by grace through faith was preached and taught, I felt it very important to do as many good works as possible. I think, maybe in my boyhood mind, I felt like this proved to God that my faith was genuine and sincere. I was always striving to be the best I could be in everything I did whether school studies, band, or church activities. **But it never seemed to be quite enough!** My self-esteem was extremely low.

Now, I see myself very differently. To be sure, I still readily acknowledge my sinfulness. But I have come to claim my worth on the basis of two truths which the Holy Spirit has helped me to internalize: (1) I, like every other human, am **made in the "image of God"** and (2) I, like every other human, must be **worth something for God to send His Son to die for me.** Learning to accept myself as I am because I am loved and accepted by a God who loves me unconditionally has helped me to value myself.

The third big change has been in the way I see my purpose in life. There was a time when I thought it was my destiny to eventually be the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, TX (at one time the largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention) or to take over for Billy Graham when he became too old. I was concerned about image, prestige, fame, reputation, and everyone knowing who I was. But somewhere along the way, thanks be to God, **I learned that the Kingdom of God is all about service!** And so my desire and my prayer has increasingly been: "Lord, where can I best serve You and your people?"

As I enter into this Thanksgiving season, I offer a multitude of thanks to our Heavenly Father for the changes that have occurred in my heart and life over the years. I think we refer to this as **"growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

Thank you, too, for allowing me to continue to serve here at First Presbyterian Church. And please pray that I --& you--will **continue to grow and change** as the Holy Spirit works in our lives!

Jim

SPECIAL DATES

November 1	All Saints' Day
November 5	Brookdale Worship
November 5	Communion (Every First Sunday)
November 5	Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 11	Veterans' Day
November 21	Healthworx Meal
November 23	Thanksgiving Day

Dr. Heath in office on Thursdays 10 am to 2 pm





10 THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR



In our life, we sometimes spend too much time complaining about the things we do not like or have. Today and every day we need to take time to be thankful for the blessings we do have. Take a look at this list of 10 things we should be thankful for:

1. Be thankful for the family that raised us.

We are all where we are today because our parents or guardians raised us. Hopefully, we have taken all the positive lessons from them and are applying them to our lives.

2. Be thankful for the families we have.

If you are married and have children, be thankful for the blessing of your family. If you are single, be thankful for your parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents.

3. Be thankful for your friends.

True friends encourage us, motivate us and push us to do better. Take time to call them and thank them for all the great things they have done. Show your gratitude by also being a great friend to others.

4. Be thankful for the roof over your head.

If you have a home, be thankful you have a place to rest and relax. Hopefully your home is also a place of safety and encouragement. Truly show you are thankful for your home by helping organizations who help those who have no homes.

5. Be thankful for laughter.

Laughter is a gift from God, which can bring great joy. Be thankful for the laughter of children, a spouse or friends.

6. Be thankful for a job.

A job is a great blessing, whether we are happy in the job we are in or not. Take the time to list the reasons you are thankful for your job. If you find this hard, don't look at your job just as a means to make money, but look at it as a way to help people.

7. Be thankful for the freedoms you have.

We have so many freedoms other countries do not have, and it has cost some men and women their lives. This freedom continues to cost others time away from family and bodily injuries. Take time today to say "thank you" to someone who helped or is helping protect those freedoms.

8. Be thankful for those who have made a positive impact in your life.

All of us have had people in our lives that have made a positive impact. It may be a teacher, coach, pastor, youth worker, Sunday School teacher, and, hopefully, family members. Be thankful these people were placed in your life and give to others as they have given to you.

9. Be thankful for nourishment.

We should all be thankful we have the opportunity to eat on a daily basis. If you have plenty, please show your thanks by helping to support agencies who try to care for the hungry.

10. Be thankful for your health.

If you are reading this, you are probably a person in good health. Be thankful for that. However, there are probably people in your family and community not as fortunate. Take time to help them sometime this week.

November Responders Schedule

	Usher Narthex	Monitor	Communion Servers
November 5	Robert Kennedy	Jim Hockensmith	Elder Liturgist: Jim Hockensmith Communion Team: Roger Best, Jim Hockensmith
November 12	Annelize & Dirk Benade	Dirk Benade	
November 19	Robert Kennedy Elizebette Kennedy	Bill Higgins (May-Oct) Roger Best (Oct-May)	
November 26	Jim Hockensmith Robert Kennedy	Jim Smolenski	



Barbara Ware 11/20

Jack Ready 11/22

Rebecca LaPrairie 11/25

UPCOMING NOVEMBER EVENTS

Saturday, November 11: Veterans' Day

Monday, November 13: Church Office Closed for
Veterans' Day

Sunday, November 19: Stewardship Commitment Day
Christmas Tree Decorated
(Following morning worship)

Thursday, November 23: Thanksgiving Day

Sunday, November 26: First Sunday of Advent
Hanging of the Greens



LIFE LINE SCREENING
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20

9:00 AM

Fellowship Hall

(Mark your calendar)

First Presbyterian Church

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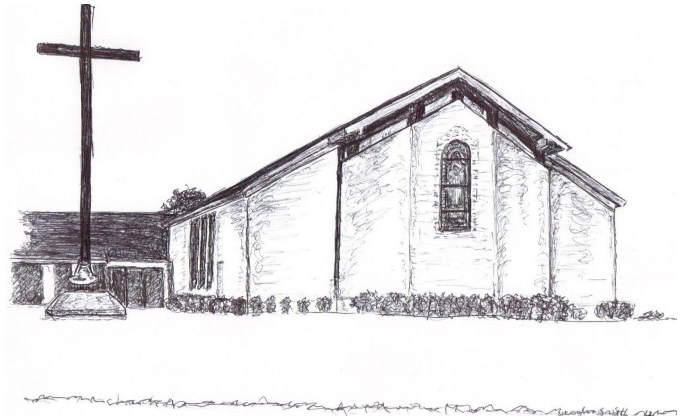
Jim Heath, *Stated Supply Pastor*

Aaron Rogers, *Choir Director*

DeAnna Brister, *Pianist*

Carolyn Sterne, *Secretary*

Charles Bell, *Sexton*



WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE

5:00 pm Prayer Service

First Presbyterian Church

357 Windermere Blvd.

Alexandria, LA 71303

Come experience God's love at First Presbyterian Church

Sunday School—9:45 a.m., Worship—11:00 a.m.