



Vestry Voices

The Church Family Newsletter

First Congregational
Church of Clinton

November 2025

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Give Thanks in Every Situation

in everything give thanks,
for this [is] the will of God in Christ Jesus in regard to you

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (YLT)



Rev. Gary Kiontke



The New Testament word for thanksgiving is *eucharisteō*, with a soft “ch” sound made from the back of the mouth and the lips almost closed. It is a combination of the prefix “good” and the noun “grace,” meaning to give freely. Theologically, it means to thank God as an act of worship. The Old Testament word is *tōdah*, meaning either thanksgiving or to give praise. We will see later that thanksgiving and praise are near synonyms.

As an example of thanking God as an act of worship, the apostle Paul’s prayer for the church in Colosse is a good example (Colossians 1:3-14). He begins with the statement that he and his team are always thanking God the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ concerning them. After describing what God has done for them, and asking God to do more, he concludes ... [we are] giving thanks to the Father who, having qualified you all to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light, having rescued us from the dominion of darkness, and he transferred us into the kingdom of His Son He loves, in whom we are having redemption, the forgiveness of sins. In this prayer the Gospel is fully explained as the reason to always thank God the Father. All who are in the process of being made holy by God have been rescued out of darkness and transferred to Jesus’ kingdom by faith in His death and resurrection for them; and, the resulting forgiveness of sins because their redemption has made them fit to inherit His light.

Thanksgiving is a sub-theme in Colossians. In the next two chapters Paul describes how obedience to commands results in thanksgiving.

First, the church is commanded to live in Christ Jesus because they are being rooted and built up in Him and strengthened in the faith they were taught. The result of this is overflowing thankfulness (Colossians 2:6-7).

Then they are commanded to clothe themselves in God’s character qualities, especially love. Then the peace of Christ is ruling in their hearts as they were called to peace. Again, the result is being thankful (Colossians 3:12-15).

In his closing exhortations to the church in Thessalonica, the apostle Paul gives them two commands that are humanly impossible: at all times they must be joyful, and in everything they must give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:16,18). Donald Stamps, in the *NIV Life in the Spirit Study Bible* (this excellent study Bible is still available in the King James Version from Christianbook), makes these straightforward comments on these two verses. First, ... people are naturally happy on some occasions ... but the Christian’s joy is not dependent on circumstances; it comes from what Christ has done, and it is constant. Second, Christians are differentiated from the natural man ... because of what God has done, they are continually thankful whatever their circumstances.

This leads us to an important truth in Peter’s first letter. He says that if Christians are reproached for the name of Christ, they are blessed because the Spirit of glory is resting on them; and, if anyone is suffering as a Christian [that one] must glorify God (1 Peter 4:14-16). The resulting suffering changes a promise into a command to glorify God with the help of the Spirit. But remember, Jesus often commanded His disciples to take up their crosses (dying to themselves) as they follow Him (Matthew 10:38-39; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23). The word for “glory” is the root of the word “doxology,” a song of praise to God. We will now see how praise and thanksgiving are related to each other in a Psalm from Israel’s songbook.

A well-known line to many Christians is: Enter His gates in thanksgiving and His courts in praise. The first word is *tōdah*, which literally means to cast or throw, but by extension it means to throw up gratefulness or thanksgiving to God; and it has the connotation of praise. The second word is *hillah*, from the word *hallah*,

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Give Thanks in Every Situation (... continued from page #1)

both meaning to praise (*halluyah* means praise Yahweh); and it has the connotation of thanksgiving. Both words are used dozens of times in the Old Testament with the same meaning. So, the words for thanksgiving and praise are very close synonyms.

In November, our nation gives everyone a day off from work on the fourth Thursday so people can gather to share a feast and say everything for which they are thankful. But, every day of every month Christians must realize they are commanded, and have the privilege, to thank and praise God for everything, even struggles, insults, and sufferings. ~v~

Sundays in November

We will have Communion on November 2 and 16.

Here are the details on the sermon texts and themes for each Lord's Day worship service in November. (All this is subject to change if Steven Sutton can fit us into his schedule.)

Sunday	Readings	Themes / Titles
November 2	1 Samuel 17:51-58; Psalm 137	Those who forget God, forget everything Let us always remember Yahweh's presence
November 9	1 Samuel 18:1-16; Psalm 32:1-5, 11	Anger and jealousy open the door to evil Confession of sin leads to forgiveness and joy
November 16	1 Thessalonians 5:16-22; Psalm 34:1-7, 17-18	Always give thanks in the Holy Spirit When the afflicted pray with praise, Yahweh saves
November 23	1 Samuel 18:17-30; Psalm 27:1-6	Yahweh delivers His chosen from the plans of evil rulers Those dwelling in Yahweh's presence fear no one
November 30	1 Samuel 19:1-10; John 15:12-17	A spiritual brother rescues from death Obedience to Jesus leads to His friendship

November 23 is the last Sunday of the Liturgical Church Year, also known as *Christ The King* Sunday. November 30 is the first Sunday of Advent.

Thanksgiving Fellowship Dinner Sunday, November 16 at Noon

The annual Thanksgiving Fellowship Dinner this year will be on Sunday, November 16 at noon. Sign-up sheets will be available after worship on October 26 through November 9.

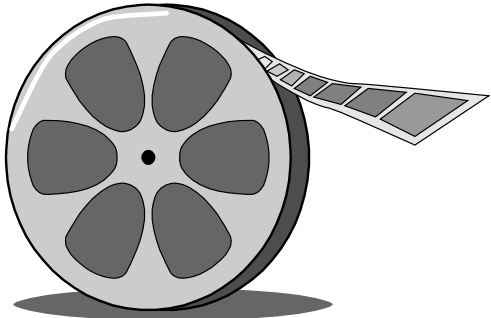
We hope that all who are able, will gather for both worship and a feast of thanksgiving to God. We need thankful worship and fellowship, so make plans to attend November 16.





Movie Night

Friday, November 21 at 7:00 PM



We show a movie once each month, in Fellowship Hall, usually on the fourth Friday (*third Friday, this month*). The movies shown in the past have covered a range of genres, and were usually thought provoking.

We are able to show these movies based on the church's CVLI® license. However, this license does not allow us to advertise or publicize the names of these movies to the general public, and they are always free of charge.

We usually have free snacks available, and you are also welcome to bring your own meal, if you wish.

So, please join us for a night out at the movies!




Advent

Advent begins on Sunday, November 30, 2025.

The December issue of Vestry Voices will have more on Advent.



NOVEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2 Communion Sunday (Note #1) 	3	4	5 (††)	6 (**)	7	8
9 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #2)	10	11	12 (††)	13 (**)	14	15
16 Communion Sunday; Thanksgiving Dinner at Noon (Note #3)	17	18	19 (††)	20 (**)	21 Movie Night (Note #4)	22
23 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after worship; <i>Christ The King Sunday</i> (Note #5)	24	25	26	27 Thanksgiving	28	29
30 FCC Worship; <i>Advent #1</i> (Note #6)	1 December "Vestry Voices" Articles Due (Note #7)	2	3	4	5	6

Calendar Notes:

- #1) 11/2 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM.**
- #2) 11/9 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour / Fellowship after Worship.
- #3) 11/16 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Thanksgiving dinner: **NOON.**
- #4) 11/21 — Movie Night — in Fellowship Hall: **7:00 PM.**
- #5) 11/23 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour / Fellowship after Worship. (*Christ The King Sunday.*)
- #6) 11/30 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM.** (*First Sunday of Advent.*)
- #7) 12/1 — Articles are due for the December issue of "Vestry Voices" (for assembly/mail-out on December 2).
- (††) Wednesday Bible Study: **11:00 AM (but not on 11/26)** (in FCC Parlor).
- (**) Thursday Prayer in Parlor: **3:00 PM (but not on 11/27).**



Daylight Savings Time ends at 2:00 AM on Sunday, November 2nd -- please don't forget to "Fall Back!"