

The Village Steeple

From the Pastor's Desk:
The healing power of gratitude.



This Week's Lectionary Texts

13th Sunday after
Pentecost

Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

Luke 12:32-40

In seminary it was drilled into my head that the two greatest concepts in the life of faith were “grace” and “gratitude”. It is by grace that we receive all the good things God has to give us, and it is in gratitude that we are called to respond in our daily lives. I wrote about grace and gratitude on just about every theology exam in seminary. It was a second language to me.

Still, the first time someone suggested I make a gratitude list I almost bit their head off. I was going through a stressful patch, and I was focusing a lot on what I didn't have and why things were not going well. The idea of sitting down and writing out all the things I

had to be grateful for was seemed only unhelpful, but offensive.

I resisted it for a long time. My anxiety and worry kept getting greater, and my hope kept diminishing. Then one day I heard someone I respect talk about how they often made mental gratitude lists and how it helped them. I decided that if they did it, maybe it was okay. It got to a point that I wondered, “What could it hurt?”

If you've never made a gratitude list, you're missing out. I won't tell you to do one, because heaven knows I didn't like being told to do one, but I offer (continued)

THIS MONTH'S BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Aug. 2 – Jill Gentilin

Aug. 2 - Nancy Logan

Aug. 8 – Kathy Lorenz

Aug. 11 – Jeff Novy

Aug. 12 - Merrill Mundell

Aug. 20 – Martha Schoonmaker

Aug. 20 - Nelson Bond

Aug. 30 – Carson Fillion

Aug 1 - Barbara Willenbrock & Janet Kierys

August 2, 1988 - Mindy & Andy Childs

August 6, 2000 - Andy & Chris McLean

Aug 6, 1994 – Randy & Robin Johnson

August 29 - George & Laurie Newton

Pastor's Note (continued)

it as a spiritual tool that has very real results. When I made my list for the first time, the change in my attitude and outlook on life was immediate.

There are so many good things that we are given by grace. And sometimes we never even stop to think. Take only a minute and list all of the things that come to mind that you are grateful for, and you will be amazed how rich you are truly.

The same is true of the life of faith. If we look around and see what God has done for us by grace, it is, as the hymn says, amazing. Despite our sometime best efforts to live a life undeserving of God's love, God loves us anyway. And God not only loves us, but God gives us God's grace. We are promised God's care not only in this life, but in the next. Amazing.

But receiving that grace is not our doing. Grace is grace because it

is freely given. When it comes to responding to that grace, however, the ball is in our court. And that's where gratitude comes into the picture.

The main point of the Christian life is living in such a way that your gratitude for God's grace is translated to everyone and everything you touch. We live our lives in response to God's grace. Everything we do, from our work to our home life to our life at church, is a reflection of how grateful we are for God's good grace.

When I write a gratitude list I am almost amazed and humbled. But I am also energized. Energized for going out and trying again. Energized for spreading the good news of God's grace in new ways. Energized for a life of gratitude. And you can be too. All it requires is a pen and paper. And a willing heart.

- Emily

This Week's Link:



Living in Anxious Times

Are you dealing with anxiety as a result of financial, work, or family worries? Check out this list of suggestions from the UCC on how to reduce worry and create hope.

<http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/your-life-better/living-in-anxious-times/>

Calendar

Sunday, August 8

Worship, 9am
Coffee Hour, 10am
Bible Study, following

Thursday, August 12

LKG, 4pm

Saturday, August 14

AA, 8pm

A Reminder:

The Deerfield Valley Food Pantry needs donations in order to supply the growing need in our area. We have designated the first Sunday of the month, Communion Sunday, as a canned food drive day. Please bring soup or tuna if you are able.

STAYING CONNECTED

If you or a loved one are sick, hospitalized or in crisis please call the Rev. Emily Heath at (802) 258-1143 at any time.

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