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From the Pastor's Desk

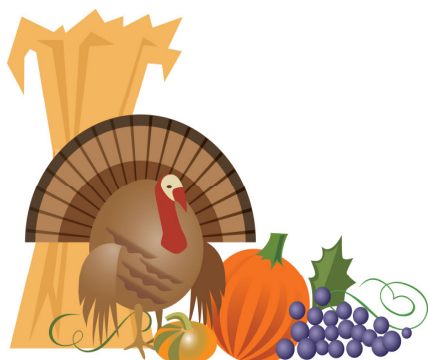


I continue to be amazed at the vibrant ministries here at St. John's Blymire's UCC and of the commitment of you folks to Christian faith, hospitality, and service. And I continue to be honored and humbled to serve as your part-time interim pastor. Among the things that have warmed my heart are the ways that you folks have used the "reverse offering money" that I handed out a few weeks ago. I challenged you to invest it, add it to other monies, or donate it directly to ministries or missions for which you have a passion and which you think are examples of Jesus' caring and compassion. Several of you have asked that I keep your giving anonymous and confidential, which I will certainly do. The recipients of your donations ranged from agencies in the area that minister to grieving families and the hungry and those needing homes and jobs, to Christian counseling, to our own Helping Hands fund and ASAPH and "pig farm" assistance. Thank you for your stewardship of that "reverse offering" and of all your generous giving.

At the same time, I hear from several of you here at Blymire's Church what Rev. Dr. Anna Hall, who is with Convergence and works extensively with small churches, recently wrote: "I hear, 'Our church needs more young families,' 'We need younger folks to serve in leadership roles,' and 'We are declining because of a lack of young families, children, and youth.' I know that this challenge is top of mind for so many of you out there trying to live into God's calling in a time of national church decline. It can be hard when you believe a healthy church is generationally diverse and you look out on Sunday mornings and see only gray hair. While I believe that God has a calling for every church, no matter what color your hair or what your age bracket, I completely understand the anxiety caused by seeing your beloved congregation age."

Rev. Dr. Hall goes on to say: "However, when I read these statements by members of churches that are already struggling to minister to their existing members, much less their community, I have to wonder if they actually know any young families. You see, the young families I know in my networks of friends and relations are struggling. They are stretched so thin they are near the breaking point.

"A recent study by researchers at Ohio State University shows that parental burnout may be at an all-time high these days. Some of this increase is due to the pandemic, but studies as far back as 2017 cite rising burnout rates, simply because of the ever-increasing demands of modern parenting. As many as 66% of parents experienced symptoms of parental burnout during 2021. Mothers were particularly affected along with parents of children who have special needs. Burnout like this is strongly associated with parental depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Parents are more isolated than ever from community and family support, feeling like they have to do everything on their



own. They feel torn between doing a good job at work and being a good parent. Simply put, these parents need help.

“Yet the churches I hear saying the most about young families are also saying that they are tired and wanting to pass the baton of work and leadership to a new generation. They see young families as a source of help to them as they age, without considering the great needs of any family with school-age children right now. Trust me when I say, these young families that I know do not have the capacity to take on one new thing. Some of my friends and acquaintances with young children are or have been involved with churches, and too often I hear stories of them being offered no help and support at all, while being asked to serve in leadership year after year without a break. Can you blame them for taking church off the “to-do” list?

“If there was one question I would ask any church that wants more young families, it would be this: **Why do you want them?** I might go on to ask: **Do you want them simply to help you do your work? Or are you called to minister to them?** If the answer is the latter (and I truly hope it is), I invite you to first consider what the families in your neighborhood actually need. And the best way to do that is to ask them. When was the last time you reached out to your neighbors to simply ask: What do you need? And how can we help?

“Of course, this doesn’t only apply to young families. These are great questions to ask all of our neighbors if we seek to love them as ourselves. The key here is seeing your neighbors as more than fodder for the survival of your church. It means seeing each and every one of them as beloved children of God. It means loving your neighbors, even when their needs far outweigh anything they can offer in time or service.

“This is the great commandment. How will you live into it today?”

These words of Rev. Dr. Hall have resonated with me the last few weeks as I have listened to many of you in our cottage meetings, and as I have prayed about what you folks have shared with me about what you see as the joys and challenges we have here at Blymire’s Church. You folks have pinpointed needs that we have, including (as I shared with you last month) plans for a hybrid of in-person and online worship and meeting/fellowship times, and befriending young people and their families in our area and build on those friendships to help us discern how we as a church can help meet their needs (perhaps by partnering with other churches and organizations to accomplish that).

As I have also shared with you before, we are in the process of answering the all-important questions: **Who are we as St. John’s Blymire’s United Church of Christ? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become as we journey into God’s future? What is our unique niche here in Dallastown?**

I will see you around this month of November. God’s continued blessings on you, Pastor Rick

MORE WORDS FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR:

I have been asked what our Christian obligation is toward the all-important mid-term elections this fall. After I shared during a recent Sunday School class, some of you intimated that I should communicate this with all of Blymire’s Church.

I start with one of my favorite Bible passages, which I shared last month. It is Galatians 2:19-20: ***“For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”***

This biblical passage, and many others, show us that the Christian life involves accepting the salvation that Jesus offers us who are sinners, but who Jesus loves anyway. As we live our lives in gratitude for that undeserved redemption, we open our lives in obedience to Christ and let Him continually fill our hearts with His own nature. As a result, our lives become more and more a pouring out of Christ’s caring and compassion to our world.

So what does that all mean for the upcoming mid-term elections? First of all, we show our Christian values and hopes by voting! But who should we vote for? Gone are the days, thankfully, when Christian pastors would tell their parishioners how to vote! The political party (or no political party) that you align with and the candidates that you vote for are up to you to prayerfully discern. But let me offer my humble take on the state of the world as we approach our mid-term elections. I am definitely not saying that my perspective is the only right one. But it seems to me that the news media and politicians

are appealing more and more to our baser interests of fear, greed, self-service, and revenge. News outlets and politicians seem to think that we are more interested in negative news than positive news. Trash talking and not taking responsibility seem to be the traits more and more of our politicians, whatever their party loyalty is.

I maintain, on the contrary, that there is a lot of good that is being done today, that there are many innovative methods that individuals and companies are using, to tackle the real issues of our day – seeing that all of God’s children receive the basic necessities of food, shelter, health care, safety, and security; that all of God’s children have an equal right to practice their faith, to obtain an education, and to get a job that really supports them and their family; and that all of God’s children can enjoy and live healthily in the creation that God has graciously given us. I believe that we need to hear from our news outlets more and more the positive things that are being done by many creative people who are positively using the gifts God has given them. And I believe that we need to hold our elected officials (of whatever party) accountable to work positively and collaboratively to solve the real issues of our day and to approach their work with a sense of service to others (not self-service that is mostly concerned about how they can be re-elected and stay in power), which is what public service ought to be all about, anyway.

These are just my humble thoughts, as a follower of Jesus, in hopes that they help us all as we approach the voting booth in November.

May we all have a sense of caring toward all of God’s creation, Pastor Rick

November Humor about two biblical characters:

Q. Where was deviled ham mentioned in the Bible?

A. When the evil spirits entered the swine.

Q. When is high finance first mentioned in the Bible?

A. When Pharaoh’s daughter took a little prophet (profit) from the bulrushes.

SPECIAL SERVICES in NOVEMBER

Nov. 6 - Pentecost 22-Daylight Saving Time Ends (don’t forget to turn your clocks back before retiring on Saturday evening)

Gospel: Luke 20:27-38

Sermon: “A Law Against Dying?”

Theme: How does Jesus show that God is God of the living and not the dead?

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton Series, Unafraid, Jeri Jones teaching

Nov. 13 - Pentecost 23-Heritage Sunday-UCC Stewardship Sunday

Gospel: Luke 21:5-19

Sermon: “Put on Your Apocalypse Jacket”

Theme: How can we have hope, whatever comes our way?

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton Series, Unafraid, Jeri Jones teaching

UCC York Association Meeting at Hayshire UCC, 2:00 PM

**Nov. 20 - Pentecost 24-Reign of Christ Sunday-Thanksgiving Sunday
Sacrament of Holy Communion**

Gospel: Luke 23:33-43

Sermon: “What If We Could Change the Ending?”

Theme: What does the ending of Jesus’ earthly life tell us about our lives?

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton Series, The Journey, Pastor Curt teaching

Nov. 27 - Advent 1-UCC United Black Christians Anniversary

Worship service done by Capital City Brass Ensemble

Sunday School: Adam Hamilton Series, The Journey, Pastor Curt teaching

NOVEMBER
BIRTHDAYS



*May God
Bless You on
Your
Birthday!*

2. Susan Sheffer
Lisa Miller
Abigail Michaels
3. Jean McDowell
8. Michael K. Knaub
Lynz Leader
10. Rod Eichelberger
12. Kenneth Miller
Jessica Keller
Barbara McNeal
13. Jean Nelson
14. Stephanie Frey
19. Josh Humbert
23. Ginny Weber
24. Justin McKinsey
25. Carolyn Innerst
26. Chase Matthews
James Barley
27. Peggy Free

CELEBRATING NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Nov. 4 - Joel and Stephanie Frey - 44 years

Nov. 14 - John and Beth Herbst - 24 years

Nov. 28 - Chet & Gwen Wise - 59 years

FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Red Brick Chapel

Cemetery

Month-2022	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense
January	\$9,995.00	\$10,580.71	\$0.46	\$254.37	\$915.03	\$0.00
February	\$8,570.74	\$11,555.09	\$1,000.48	\$390.39	\$0.23	\$294.90
March	\$96,036.48	\$15,958.44	\$0.41	\$563.73	\$0.19	\$845.18
April	\$9,517.87	\$14,766.40	\$1,000.35	\$16,785.27	\$200.20	\$2,370.60
May	\$13,730.24	\$11,108.47	\$808.06	\$153.57	\$818.22	\$2,683.03
June	\$7,499.35	\$14,787.98	\$250.07	\$362.50	\$900.09	\$3,277.10
July	\$8,468.00	\$5,755.87	\$1000.07	\$132.08	\$7.20	\$2,188.88
August	\$10,506.24	\$7,061.85	\$1000.10	\$169.56	\$900.18	\$2,836.40
September	\$8,270.00	\$10,713.23	\$0.11	\$365.24	\$0.18	\$2,624.63
October						
November						
December						
Total	\$172,593.92	\$102,288.04	\$5,060.11	\$19,176.71	\$3,741.52	\$17,120.72

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ October 1, 2022

\$23,063.95

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ October 1, 2022

(Includes \$51,668.66 Endowment)

\$55,733.61

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ October 1, 2022

(Includes \$762,066.16 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

\$766,564.36

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2022

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	Balance
Beginning				\$ 162.74
January			\$ 80.00	\$ 242.74
February	1	\$ 25.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 252.74
March	1	\$ 25.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 238.74
April			\$ 59.00	\$ 297.74
May			\$ 35.20	\$ 332.94
June	3	\$ 75.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 269.94
July		\$ 200.00	\$ 1045.03	\$ 1114.97
August			\$ 12.00	\$ 1126.97
September	1	\$ 25.00	\$ 21.25	\$ 1123.22
October				
November				
December				
Total	6	\$ 350.00	\$ 1310.48	

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

Peggy Luckenbaugh
Room 704B
Colonial Manor Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403



Keeping in our prayers
Dolores Barley
Jeanette Black
Cindie McKinsey
Ginny Weber
Friends battling cancer
Covid 19 patients

Linda Trone
Room 604
Colonial Manor Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403

Carolyn Innerst
Room 123
Senior Commons@Powder
Mill
1775 Powder Mill Road
York, PA 17403



Remember
and pray for
Our Members
in the
Military

A1C Ness, Brandon
6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad
Tucson, AZ 85756

HOMWOOD AUXILIARY

As autumn approaches, we begin to look forward to the holiday season and another successful Homewood Auxiliary Membership Drive. Thanks to you and your commitment to the residents of Homewood's retirement campuses, the Homewood Auxiliary continues to provide that extra special support that makes a difference in the lives of so many. Your continued commitment to the Auxiliary enriches the lives of each and every Homewood resident and means more than words can express.

With each membership donation of \$3.00 (individual), \$5.00 (family) you will receive a special Homewood pen. When Blymire's representative, Stephanie Frey, asks you to join, please say YES!



CIRCLE OF GRACE

The first Circle of Grace Women's Group get together will be held Sunday, November 6, after Sunday School at about 11:30 AM. Lunch will be potluck. We will meet once a month. Our time together will be one of support and discussions led by Ginny Weber. All women are invited—bring a friend.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

This Advent season we will be walking the road to Bethlehem using Rev. Adam Hamilton's book The Journey during our Sunday school time beginning November 20 to December 18 (no class December 4).



The purpose of his book is to explore the story of the birth of Jesus with fresh eyes and ears. We will walk through the Holy Land and retrace the steps of those involved. Each of the four sessions contains a 10-12 minute video of Pastor Adam Hamilton retracing the actual path of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. We'll draw upon insights gained from historians, archaeologists, biblical scholars, theologians, and from walking in the places the story occurred, all in an effort to discover the real meaning of Christmas.

In addition, Pastor Curt will be using the latest national Geographic "HISTORY" magazine which talks about the Herodium, Herod's Desert Palace, which was constructed a few years before the birth of Christ and could be seen throughout the Bethlehem area.

Come join us as we discuss one of the most amazing moments in history, gaining insight into our own journeys with Christ.

EMMANUEL'S CLOSET

November 2022

Clothing and Household Room

Many of our clients have been asking for clothing and household goods, so we have decided to open up that room again beginning in January 2023.

While we were closed, we thoroughly cleaned that section and gave the items that we had in stock to other charitable organizations. Thus, we will be starting from scratch. We are now accepting the following items for our Clothing and Household room:

Stain free clothing (any size)
Toys
Books (kids, teens, adult)
Small household goods

We are also still accepting donations of food, cleaning products and toiletries. Items may be dropped off at Blymire's church on Sunday mornings or weekdays during office hours. They may also be taken directly to Emmanuel's Closet at St. Paul's UCC, Dallastown on Saturday mornings between 9:00AM-Noon. If you have a large quantity of donations, this would be the best option. Please DO NOT leave anything outside the doors at St. Paul's when no one is there. Thank you for helping your neighbors in this time of need.



Christmas Project

Because it worked out well the past few years, we have decided to continue the practice of giving \$50 in gift cards to each eligible child or teen rather than buying them specific gifts. In order to do this we are asking for cash donations in any amount to help purchase the cards. The cards will be given out to the parents on December 10 and December 17.

For both Thanksgiving and Christmas, we will also be giving out grocery gift cards to each family to be used to buy meat and other perishable items for holiday meals.

THANKS FOR CARING!

E.C. Continuing Needs

Juice
Cereal/Oatmeal
Peanut Butter/Jelly
Pancake Mix
Spaghetti Sauce
Boxed Dry Pastas
Helper Meals
Dessert Items
Condiment Items
Canned Tuna/Meats
Canned Fruit/Vegetables
Soap
Shampoo
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Dish Washing Liquid
Laundry Detergent
All-Purpose Cleaners

Please, NO Expired Food Items

Below is a list of items that we are especially in need of right now:

Peanut Butter/Jelly
Chili w/meat
Dinner kits (tacos, pizza, etc)
Hot cocoa mix
Beef Stew
Cookie Mix





MEN'S GROUP

Because our church is a polling place and the general election falls on



our regular meeting night, we have changed the date for our November Men's Group meeting. It will be held instead on **Monday, November 7**, at 7:00 PM at the church. There will be a mystery guest speaker. If you would like to meet the mystery guest sooner, you are invited to join Jeri Jones and the speaker at Parma Pizza, 476 East Main St, Dallastown, at 5:00 PM for food and conversation before the meeting.



CARD and GAME CLUB



We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

We will meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop.

If you have any questions, please call Janie Montgomery at (717) 891-3607 or Diana Myers at (717) 855-4752.



On Saturday, November 26, from 9:00AM-3:00PM we will be hosting a Christmas Marketplace at our church.

It will feature craft vendors (**note: no more spaces available**), a craft supply sale, a book sale, and bake sale. Our Men's Group will be preparing lunch from 11:00AM-1:00PM. The menu will include chicken corn soup, sandwiches and drinks. Come out and get your Christmas shopping done early this year.

MINGLE and JINGLE

Our annual family Christmas Party will be held on Sunday, December 4, immediately after church. There will be no Sunday school that day. Guests are asked to bring a covered (brunch style) dish. Lunch will be followed by games, Make it, take it ornaments, a sing along and a visit from Santa. Invite your family and friends for a fun day. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room.



Cookie Walk



After doing your Christmas shopping at our Marketplace on November 26, we invite you to come back a few weeks later for your Christmas cookies. Our annual Cookie Walk will be held on Saturday, December 10, from 9:00 AM until noon (or sold out). A large selection of all types of homemade cookies will be available. Buy as many as you like, mix and match flavors, all for just \$12.00 per pound.

In order for this to be a success we need lots of cookies, so get out your cookbooks, mixing bowls and cookie sheets. With the cost of ingredients rising, this year we are asking those who are unable to bake to help by donating the following supplies: fresh all purpose flour, sugar (white and brown), fresh butter, eggs, chocolate chips, coconut, nuts, sprinkles, peanut butter or monetary donations.

Cookies may be dropped off at the church that week from 8:00AM—11:00AM on Wednesday, 8:00AM-1:30PM on Thursday and Friday, also Friday evening from 6:00-8:00PM. In addition to bakers, volunteers are also needed to help set up Friday evening and with the sales on Saturday morning. Any questions, call Marti Leader or Diana Myers.

Christmas Services

This year's Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:00 PM in the main sanctuary. The choir will be presenting a cantata and Holy Communion will be served.

Since Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, we will be holding an abbreviated informal worship service at the usual 9:00AM, followed by refreshments featuring a birthday cake for Jesus.

Tree of Lights

As we did last year, we will be including a "Tree of Lights" as part of our Christmas Eve service. You may sponsor a light in memory of or in honor of someone or just as a year end gift to help support our church.



There is a Sponsorship form on the next page of this newsletter or you can pick one up from the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room.



Tree Lighting Service
Saturday, December 24th
7:00 PM

Christmas Eve Service
St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ
1009 Blymire Road
Dallastown, PA 17313

Tree of Lights 2022

*Proceeds benefit the Current Expense Budget of
St. John's Blymire's UCC*

You may sponsor a light on the Christmas Tree:

In memory of a loved one

To honor a family member, mentor or friend

As a gift to help support church programs

Please join us on Saturday, December 24th
in the Church Sanctuary

Please Note! – In order to be listed on the Scroll of Honor in the Christmas Eve bulletin,
light sponsorships must be received by December 18th

\$500 = Red Light

\$100 = Blue Light

\$ 50 = Green Light

\$ 25 = Gold Light

\$ 10 = White Light

(Sponsorship form on back)

Person giving the Light _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

TYPE OF GIFT:

IN HONOR OF: _____

(list name as you would like it displayed on the Scroll of Honor)

IN MEMORY OF: _____

(list name as you would like it displayed on the Scroll of Honor)

YEAR-END GIFT to St. John's Blymire's UCC _____

TYPE OF LIGHT:

_____ \$500 Red Light

_____ \$100 Blue Light

_____ \$ 50 Green Light

_____ \$ 25 Gold Light

_____ \$ 10 White Light

-

Please drop your form and check in the offering plate or mail them to:

St. John's Blymire's UCC

1009 Blymire Rd.

Dallastown, PA 17313

In order to be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin, forms must be received no later than December 18th

Questions? Please call the church office @ 717-244-0655



November
2022



May our lives be filled with
THANKS and GIVING!



In its purest state, Thanksgiving represents a day set aside for the express purpose of praising God the Creator for His many wondrous gifts.

It transcends pilgrims and native Americans; maize and cranberries.

On a social level, it's a day on which we stop our busy lives to sit down with family and break bread together.

And in it's most primal state, Thanksgiving is just a bad day to be a turkey.

**Rejoice in God and give thanks!
Have a blessed Thanksgiving.**

THE RULES!

Human beings tend to feel more comfortable with boxes, because boundaries make us feel secure. We write rules to live by, love by, drive by and succeed by. We sometimes even try to reduce God's Word into a set of rules. We require of ourselves that to be a good Christian you have to do x, y, and z.

When we fail to be perfect, we end up throwing everything out the window. People judge themselves harshly and never go to church again. Words like hypocrite are thrown about as if

God has created a blacklist and we've ended up on it.

God does have a rule and it's anything but damnation. God's only rule is love_ that's the only box He created. The enemy can even hide behind a church system, waiting to throw the book at some of God's children in hopes of discouraging them enough to separate them from the fold. In these times especially, we need to reach out to each other the same way God reaches to us_ with grace, patience, and love. God doesn't make us jump through a single hoop for it. And we should make sure that our church's welcome mat doesn't have a hoop to jump through either.

Devon O'Day



"I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of Life." John 8: 12



Sit with Me, child. Just sit with Me. Let all the flailing thoughts, wanderings and wonderings, of the mind, slide away. Rest with Me. Let Me love you. Trust Me.

I am your Anchor, your Stabilizer, your True North. I lead you Home. I carry you. No need to follow others; just follow Me, Keep Me in sight and keep walking.

Unknown

A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give

Silence is not only golden. It is seldom misquoted.

Bob Monkhouse

We are all, from birth to death guests at a table which we did not spread. The sun, the earth, love, friends, our very breath are all parts of this banquet.

Rebecca Harding Davis

May you know the truth of God's Love — the love that created the universes — the same love that will guide you home
There is so much Peace, Love, and Understanding available to you, and all it requires is your faith, your trust, and a willing heart to say:

"Guide me, dear Holy Spirit — teach me how to know you — show me the opportunities that will lead me to a life of meaning and purpose. "

"Reveal to me a greater understanding of love — lead me that I may recognize the whispers of my heart —to know that it is you that speaks to me this way."

"Hold the key before my grasp and encourage me to take it and unlock the door that leads to eternal life with You, Beloved Father."

Reach out for that key!

"Great occasions for serving God come seldom, but little ones surround us everyday."

St. Francis de Sales

AUTUMN AND LETTING GO



There are many wonderful lessons that we can learn from autumn and the turning of the season. It's heartening to see just how many people see autumn as their favorite season. It's a season of change, of peace, of conversion, and of hope. In its falling leaves and dying flowers and plants we can see the greatest hope, and the greatest faith of all.

The change in season truly does signal a loss in nature. We may notice the spectacular beauty of autumn trees and forget that the next step involves the trees letting those leaves go. As they drop to the ground, they become the carpet that crunches beneath our feet. The trees prepare for winter, and then there's rebirth again in the spring.

Sometimes we forget we are natural beings and our lives also have cycles. There are times we hold on, and there are the times that we have to learn to let go. When we let go of the things that are no longer serving us and the people who no longer bring joy to our lives, we make room for new things to enter our lives. But, while it seems beautiful for the trees to let go of all those lovely leaves, we rarely think of the letting go in our own lives as being beautiful. Often, we simply view it through the lens of loss. It hurts to let go, so we hold on, even if all we have left to hold onto are our memories of those feelings.

Everything that happens in our lives can have lessons for us if we're willing to be taught. Even loss and change can be catalysts for growth if we allow it. I try to remember that I am a student of life. I've had a few tough lessons over the years, and each one taught me that the things I viewed from the perspective of loss alone, were actually growth opportunities that opened the door to some wonderful changes in my life. Every single time I lost something that felt important to me, the universe showed me that there was so much more to my life than the simple things I had intended. I wonder sometimes what blessings and opportunities I've blocked by refusing to let go.

Maybe what we're holding on to is an idea. Maybe it's a life plan or a timetable. Maybe we're holding onto who we were told we should be rather than who we truly are. Maybe we're staying in a relationship that's no longer right for us. Or, spending time with friends who no longer feel like our tribe. Autumn shows us that letting go is beautiful, and yet all we see in our own lives is the loss.

I have spent the last few years actively practicing the art of letting go. I won't say it has been easy. There have been times I've been stuck in the downward spiral of loss, and there were times when I knew that letting go was best, and yet simply refused to do it. But, it is a practice, and each time that we try to hold on, we need to remind ourselves to loosen our grip. It's like a muscle that gets stronger when we use it. We slowly become more adept at letting things (and people) leave us.

Things happen in our lives that don't fit into our carefully constructed plans. There will always be change. We learn to adapt and let things go, or we're forced along by the change, dragging the past with us. The past is a heavy burden to carry. It often keeps us from enjoying the present moment, and it can hinder us from moving toward a better future. Instead, we become lost in old patterns and find our gaze drawn back to the past.

This is the lesson that fall has for us, if we're paying attention. When we allow ourselves to let go and to accept what is, we can open our eyes to this moment now. We join the present moment, and we can let go of the past—and our unhealthy fixation on it.

Crystal Jackson

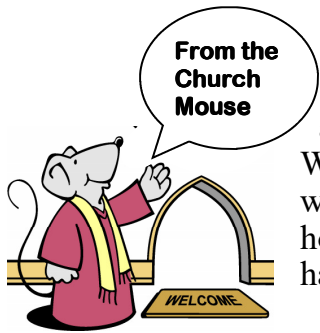


Since there is only one of me, does that make me an endangered species or a limited edition?

If you would get arrested for being a Christian would there be enough evidence to prove it?

President Jimmy Carter





Revelations for NOVEMBER from “Bly Mire” Mouse

Last month I mentioned that Mire and I could hardly catch our breath with all that was going on as the church picked up with activities after the summer. Well, we thought that maybe during October things might slow down a bit so that we could have a little peace and quiet. Boy, were we wrong! Things have been hopping here at Blymire’s Church with things going on almost every day. We hardly have a day that we can sleep in!

Our office administrator Wanda makes sure we’re up each day as she gets into the office bright and early at 8:00 AM. We know, because we have seen her in action, that she is the glue that holds this church together and has picked up the slack since Pastor Lou Ann retired in late May.

As we shared last month, we two and our little ones love the hum of activity around here when we hear Charlie out mowing, Ed and Judy cleaning, Sterling and Joel doing so many things around the building and grounds, Barb and Peggie and Nancy continuing to put the new library together, Nelson and Brenda practicing with the choir (Don’t they sound great?), and Nelson spending time with the new programming of our outdoor sign (someday all of us mice are going to take a lo-oo-nnn-g hike out to the road to take a look at the new sign which we hear people raving about!).

Now you may laugh at us. But we mice need to keep in shape just as you do! So we’ve been joining in with chair yoga and Healthy Steps in Motion on the side. Perhaps you’ve seen us as we’re trying to get more toned muscles! We overheard the women talking one Sunday about an awesome new group – Women’s Circle of Grace, and we look forward to hearing and see more about that group. We wish we were big enough to join in your monthly card games and Men’s Group (We saw through our peep holes that the men this last month met out in the parking lot and looked through telescopes at the galaxies and stars in the sky!). And oh, we’re going to miss the mouth-watering smells and steady stream of people who come for our chicken barbecues. We look forward to them starting up again in the spring.

Two things that we were so stoked about in October were seeing the many people who came for both the Octoberfest and the ASAPH concert with Andy Stump. We could feel the electric energy of the people, the smells of the food served both times, and the vibrations of the music at both events that rocked the building! How wonderful that our church is reaching out in so many ways to neighboring people!

We look forward to Sunday mornings, too, which are so special with our worship, fellowship time, and Sunday School. Who can forget the birthday party for Kari March and our other October birthday people! Our little ones were so happy to see children and young people on a few Sundays. It sounds to us mice that folks are having a good time at the cottage meetings with Pastor Rick, as well. We just want to leave us all with a thought. We two have been reading the Bible to our little ones. We came across some Old Testament passages this month which led us to ask: Are we better off these days than in biblical times? We overhear people from time to time talking about the “good old days”. Our Bible readings have shown us that yes, there were some great things about the past. But there were problems back then, too. From what we can read, the Bible is saying that God is always looking to the future and working to make tomorrow even better than today. We were reading from the book of Haggai that the people of Israel were feeling sad about losing their temple, and God said, “take courage ... I will fill this house with splendor”. We mice think that that means that God was with God’s people, living among them, and God was working to make the future splendor of the temple even better than the past. And we think that means that God is with us today, working to do something good in our church and in the world. We’re taking the time as a family to list things that we know that God is doing in our lives. Is that something you can do, too? Doesn’t that mean that we are never stuck in the past when God is with us, but we are always moving into an even better future? Something for all of us, including us mice, to think about!

We look forward to continue to see you around here in November at Blymire’s!

Love, Bly and Mire and the excited little ones



Links of GRATITUDE

Make this meaningful decoration for your Thanksgiving table.




What you need:

- Construction paper (in fall colors)
- Scissors
- Pen
- Jar
- Stapler
- Adult help

What you do:

1. Cut the paper into strips about 2 inches wide.
2. Place the strips and pen in the jar. Then set it in a prominent place in your home.
3. Throughout November, have family discussions about what you're thankful to God for. Write or draw each item on a paper strip.
4. Make a paper chain by linking and carefully stapling the strips.
5. Keep adding to your decoration and display it during your Thanksgiving meal.

PUZZLE



Piles of praise

Every autumn, the ground is overflowing with leaves.
What does Paul encourage us to overflow with?

Directions: Use the key to match the leaves and complete the Bible passage.

rooted

built

thankfulness

strengthened

continue

faith

overflowing

received

Lord

So then, just as you _____ Christ Jesus as _____ ,

_____ to live your lives in him, _____ and

_____ up in him, _____ in the _____ as you

were taught, and _____ with _____ .

COLOSSIANS 2:6-7, NIV

Answer: received, Lord, continue, rooted, built, strengthened, faith, overflowing, thankfulness