

Dear Avoca Methodist Church Family:

November 2023

"When eating fruit, remember the one who planted the tree." - Vietnamese Proverb

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

- William Arthur Ward

"You cannot do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

We're approaching the delightful holiday season again! As the trees drop the last of their magnificent leaves and thoughts turn to decorating our evergreen trees, we are called to be thankful. God blesses us every day—from the first breath of the morning until we settle in for another night's rest. We don't always recognize our blessings. Gratitude is a choice. Most circumstances have an upside if we're willing to see it. Like the optimist and pessimist who argued over whether the glass was half-full or half-empty, we sometimes miss the point that the glass can be refilled!! God's mercies are new every morning.

The day after Thanksgiving, unfortunately, has become a day of greed and commercialism. People are often trampled because someone can save a few dollars and get something they don't really need. The distinction between wants and needs is never more apparent than in the month leading up to the celebration of Jesus' birth! What a wicked twist of fate! God sent The Son to bring peace, to model acceptance and forgiveness, and how do we celebrate? By fighting, by spending money we don't have, by trying to make ourselves feel good through "retail therapy."

This year, please use Thanksgiving and Christmas as opportunities to share your faith. May your gratefulness to God be clearly shown to your family, and your friends. May your Christmas cards, gifts, and parties display your faith. Jesus came to this fallen world to demonstrate God's love to us. As we celebrate with parties and dinners, gifts and baubles, help those around you to keep their focus on God's gift. When asked, "How are you today?" can you answer, "I am blessed."? When someone wishes you "Happy Holidays" will you respond, "And Merry Christmas to you." I looked hard to find some wrapping paper that showed the true meaning of Christmas, but I finally found some. My cards will share the Christian theme. I don't want to overwhelm anyone, but it's a great time of year to invite someone to a Christmas concert, to a church event, or to a worship service.

The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Jesus' saying is still true today, maybe more so now than ever before! May your holidays be merry, your faith be evident, and may God's love flow freely through you.

And don't forget to **Bee A Disciple!**

Pastor Barre

