

Dear Avoca Methodist Church Family,

November 2025

"We fear men so much, because we fear God so little. One fear cures another. When man's terror scares you, turn your thoughts to the wrath of God." - G. K. Chesterton

Are you scared of what someone might do to you? Are thoughts of your neighbor keeping you awake at night? Does the news make you anxious? Do the wars in Gaza and Ukraine have you on edge?

If you think this life is bad, have you read about God's judgement? Thank you to everyone who participated in the Max Lucado study "What Happens Next." I think most of us now have a clearer understanding of the end times than ever before. In fact, we got so much out of the study that we're doing it right over again! Knowing the coming events sure lights a fire under us to make sure that our families and friends all know about Jesus' saving grace--and the simple method of accepting God's free gift. (the ABCs)

Being grateful is a terrific way of keeping worry away. Rather than thinking about all the things that could (but probably won't) go wrong in your life, why not start counting your blessings? As we enter the month of Thanksgiving, put it to the test. Pull out a notebook, enter it on your computer or phone, whatever format you like, but list the blessings you have received. Home, family and friends, health, running water, heat, enough to eat, someone who helped you out. Go ahead and list them all. I suspect that you'll be surprised at how long your list is and by how this new "attitude of gratitude" changes your mood and the processes of your brain. When we start to look for the good in life, the more we can see. It's like a self-fulfilling prophecy—we see what we're looking for.

Having developed gratitude in November, it is easier to experience the joy of Christmas. God's incarnation (putting on flesh) is truly something to be grateful for! We should be overwhelmed with joy because God is willing to walk with us in this life, AND to pay the price for us to spend eternity with Him. This season is a great time to share your faith. Your decorations, cards, wrapping paper, and attitude can all demonstrate that you are aware of the real "reason for the season." It can be a stressful season, but you can demonstrate the peace that Christ offers. We often see the best and worst of people during the holiday season. If you can rise above the busyness of the season and "Commit your life to following the example of Christ by serving one another" you will shine like a candle in the darkness.

Yes, there are many things to make us worry, fear, and stress, but God offers something better, something more. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit. Take a deep breath, focus on God and all His good gifts, have a blessed holy season, and don't forget to **Bee A Disciple!**

Pastor Barre

