Greetings Avoca Methodist Family! November 2026

I begin with a huge "THANK YOU" for your support during Pastor Appreciation Month. Your gifts and notes of encouragement have been extremely uplifting. We have had 13+ years together, and God has blessed us immensely! I look forward to seeing where He leads us next.

We will soon have our Harvest Service and Dinner. On the day after giving thanks, many in our nation will trample each other as they scramble to get some more on Black Friday. I am sharing portions of two articles that may help us keep our priorities straight as we move through the holiday season:

"This is God's universe, and God does things His way. You may think you have a better way, but you don't have a universe." — J. Vernon McGee

> I have a list of grievances against God, but I keep slamming into that same wall: I don't have a universe. He does. He made it, sustains it, and gets to set the rules—including the rule that I am the creature, and He is the Creator.
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> When I look at it like that, it makes perfect sense that I disagree with God on at least some things. It would be highly suspicious if I didn't. If His every command and judgment lined up flawlessly with my own, it would indicate that I had quietly assembled a god in my own image, instead of getting to know the One, True God. God established what is true, right, and good, and He *has not* changed those standards. But my view of what is true, right, and good *has* changed; and I don't just disagree with the people around me, I disagree with *myself* from a year ago. So, of course, my views don't line up with God's perfectly. The gap between us is exactly what I'd expect if He's a real, unchanging, perfect God, and I'm a limited, still-learning, frequently wrong creature.

This is why Proverbs 3:5 cuts so deep: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

The second article reminds us to "Hold your possessions loosely. After all, ultimately, they belong to God." (Dr. Robert Jeffress) Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5:44) We are called to reach out to those in need, see in them the reflection of God, and meet their needs (financial, physical, spiritual, emotional).

During this holy season of giving thanks to God and celebrating Jesus's birth, hold fast to the understanding that our worth is not measured in material things or bank account balances, but in the gift of presence that only YOU can give. I may not remember what I got for Christmas when I was 5, but I remember the time that my parents spent with me.

This season is also a wonderful time to share your faith – says "Thank God" and "Merry Christmas." It's all part of AMC's call to "**Bee A Disciple**!

Pastor Barre