



FROM THE PASTOR:

Grateful, thankful, blessed.

One of the things we are taught at a young age is the need to express our thanks. We learn to say thank you - gratitude is a choice we make. Gratitude is a response to the blessings of life, but it is also a choice to see those blessings.

And when we give voice to gratitude, there are consequences. For as we express our gratitude, we affect those around us, even shape the reality in which we live.

Think about it. Gratitude is not the only emotion we might choose to express in response to the events of any given day. There are reasons for gratitude, yes, and also reasons for fear, anger, frustration, grief, regret, apprehension.... Especially in 2020. All of these emotions color our experience. As we express them, we give them power in our lives. And that is what is key: we are making choices. We may feel a range of emotions to all kinds of circumstances and situations, but we choose which to give expression.

Paul writes in first Thessalonians, "be always joyful, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances" (1 Thess 5:17,18). In other words, choose to live gratefully, looking for the grace given each and every day.

So if I were to ask you to make a list, what would it include?

Here are some thoughts: I am so very grateful for ALL of you, each of you in this community of faith ... and ANGELS and AWARENESS ... BEAUTY and the BOUNTY of the earth, BLESSINGS named and unnamed, and BOOKS ... CHRIST and CHRISTMAS ... and the CHURCH ... CHILDREN and COMMUNION and COURAGE ... and CREATIVITY ... and CHOCOLATE ... DARING ... trying new things ... and DEEDS done for others ... EASTER and EYES that see, and EARS that hear ... and ENERGY to keep on going ... and ENCOURAGEMENT ... FAITH ...and FRIENDS and FAMILY ... all of which make the world a better place to live in ... and FORGIVENESS ... GOD'S GRACE for daily living ... and GOOD-TIMES ... HEALTH ... and HAPPINESS ... and HOPE for the future ... and HUGS ... INNOCENCE ... and IMAGINATIONS ... JESUS - brother, friend, human like me ... and JOYOUSNESS ... KINDNESS from friends as well as strangers ... and KINSHIP ... LIFE ... and LOVE and LAUGHTER ... and LEARNING, too ... MINDS that seek the MYSTERY of God and the universe ... and MINISTRIES shared ... NOON and NEIGHBORS ...OPENNESS to the world and to others ... PEACE that passes all understanding ... PATIENCE ... QUIET times for reflection and relaxation ... and QUESTIONS, good and honest ... REST ... and RAINBOWS ... and READINESS ... SABBATH and SHALOM ... and SILENCE ... for our STAFF ... for TONJA (more on this later) ... for TRUTH and simple TOUCH and TENDERNESS ... TOGETHERNESS UNDERSTANDING that comes UNEXPECTEDLY from others as a gift ... for all the people who make up UNITED ... VACATIONS and VICTORIES ... WORSHIP ... and WONDER and WILLING spirits ... X, that unknown something that allows life to be such a marvel and joy ... YOUTH and YOUTHFULNESS that stays with us ... ZEAL and ZEST for life ...

As we move into the holidays and their festivities, we are all mindful that this year will be different, and yet there is so much to be grateful for ... it's a choice.

And, may God bless you at this holy time.

A thousand blessings, - Pastor Karen