

Hi First Family,

Grace and Peace in Christ our Savior today! Happy Thanksgiving! May God grant you a wonderful celebration of His goodness! While this has been a difficult year in most every regard, as we said on Sunday, we can still thank God IN all circumstances, not FOR all circumstances. As a part of your celebration, take time to read Psalm 100 aloud. It's a keen reminder of the Lord's rightful place in our homes.

A SLIGHT CHANGE FOR US

As you may have seen, the Texas Department of Health has re-instituted a cap of 50% of building capacity for indoor gatherings. For us, based on the last several weeks worth of attendance, that doesn't change anything. However, when you return this Sunday, please expect to see pews marked off again to reflect that change. We'll be evaluating everything on our calendar to make sure we protect our family well. It's been a while now since we've had a Sunday when we didn't have to follow up with Covid contact tracing during the week. Even some of our senior staff have been down with it the last couple of weeks. That's why our Personnel Committee made the decision to close our offices for the week. With God's mercy and kindness, we'll be back in place on Sunday and then back to regular office hours on Monday.

ADVENT GUIDES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE WELCOME CENTER

One of the most significant mistakes people make at Christmas time is preparing their homes and their gift lists but doing nothing to prepare their hearts to honor Christ at Christmas. To assist in that, we are providing you the opportunity to pick up a copy of an Advent guide. Written by our friend Janet Denison, this guide will lead you from Dec 1 through Christmas Day. It is a wonderful way to develop the habit of a daily Bible reading time OR developing a habit of family worship times. I urge you to pick up a copy when you join us for worship this weekend and let it walk with you through the Christmas season. One copy per family, please.

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

As always for this time of year, we begin our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this weekend. This offering is focused on serving our missionaries on foreign mission fields. While a portion of every gift given to FBC goes to missions, ALL of this offering goes directly to international missions. If you'd like to give to the Lottie Moon offering and you're one who gives online, please find Lottie Moon among the choices for where to direct your gift.

In addition to the offering, this week begins the week of prayer for International Missions. On

each of our glass tables (one in the Welcome Center and one in the Chapel Foyer), you will find a prayer guide to lead you through praying for our missionary friends. Pick one up when you pick up your Advent guide.

CHURCH CONFERENCE – DEC 6th – 5 PM

On Dec 6th, we will hold our final Church Conference for this calendar year. Our Banner next week will contain an agenda for the meeting. If you've ever been curious about how we, as a church, make decisions, I invite you to join us. We'll share a time of Bible study and practice stewardship over God's blessings to our church.

ONE FINAL WORD

This week take time to ask the Lord for peace in your home, your family and in our nation. We need it now like we never have before. Pray for revival in our land and pray for it to begin with you. Pray for the grace to listen well to those whom we disagree with and for the kindness of Christ to speak with peace. Pray for our hearts to be united in God's path for us, as a church and as a nation. And above all, put on love and forgiveness, for these two elements of Christ-like character exemplify Christ's work on the cross and his purpose in coming.

Thankful to be your pastor,
Darin

SUNDAY SCHEDULE, NOV. 29TH

8:15 AM	Blended Worship Service (extended care 8:15 only)
9:30 AM	Sunday School
11:00 AM	Worship Service (3 Venues)
5:00 PM	Hope For the Holidays (Chapel)

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE, DEC. 2ND

6 - 6:45 PM	Children's Choir
6:30 PM	Mid-Point for students (student worship room)
6:45 - 7:30 PM	R.A.'s, G.A.'s, & Mission Friends

Stay informed of current & upcoming events:
fbc-midland.org/events

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

The Nov 22 and 29 in next week's Banner.

How to Give Online

A round button link on the website is provided for online giving.



COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

By Dean Rippetoe

Martin Luther wrote in his book, "Table Talk": "The greater God's gifts and works, the less they are regarded." We tend to exhibit a degree of thanksgiving in reverse proportion to the amount of blessings we have received. A hungry man is more thankful for his morsel of food than a rich man for his heavily laden table. A lonely woman in a nursing home will appreciate a visit more than a popular woman with a party thrown in her honor. We're seldom openly thankful for our health when it is good – We fail to appreciate the sunrise or even the air that we breathe. We accept it – but often fail to be truly thankful. If the birds would only burst into song once a year, we would all pay close attention. But because they are singing every morning, we scarcely bother to listen. We often forget to be thankful for the wonder and beauty of nature, for spacious skies and fields of grain, for the privilege of seeing the mountains and the valleys and sparkling rivers and streams. We are truly blessed with loving families, Christian friends and the comforts of life and

seldom have them on the list of blessings. How can we ever forget God's love and grace and for the gift of salvation and the promise of eternal life, but we often do. We have so much to be thankful for – and too often we take these things for granted. In James 1:17 we find, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

One of the lessons that Johnson Oatman, Jr. wanted to teach young people when he wrote the song, "Count Your Blessings" is that it is impossible to be thankful and, at the same time, grumpy, cantankerous, critical or ill tempered. He said that when you are down and out, discouraged and your back is to the wall – count your blessings and be surprised at what God has done. When you have heavy burdens and doubts – count your blessings and you will start singing. When you see others with material things and wealth, look at the things God has given you that money can't buy. So, amid all the world's conflict, don't be discouraged – just count your blessings – angels will gather around to give help and comfort throughout life's journey.

When we stop to be thankful, when we pause to truly count our blessings – it will surprise us at what the Lord has really done. Let me encourage you to take some time during the week of Thanksgiving and give thanks for all that God has done for you, your family, friends and neighbors and your church. And remember our Country, the freedoms that we still have and for those who have worked, fought and died to preserve it. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

May you have a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving Season.



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People are posting about this

Share your Thanksgiving with us on Social Media!

Post photos of your family at the dining room table, watching sports, or outside playing football in the family game. On Facebook use **#fbcfirstfamily**

