



# The Clarion



Editor: Carol Buckhout

Between the Times

November 2008

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## *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances...*

Today, *Between the Times*, happens to be the day after Election Day, 2008. I must say I can't help being amused by it all. For what seems an eternity, the pundits, campaigners, editorial writers, bloggers and spammers have all proclaimed calamity beyond anything in the Book of Revelation should their particular candidate lose. Now that terrible day has passed; and one candidate won, and the other lost. So, today, everybody who is pleased with the outcome is proclaiming the Kingdom of God. The rest are proclaiming Armageddon. And, I'm laughing at the sheer absurdity of the entire show.

Theologically, it borders on good, old-fashioned blasphemy. People are stopping just short of proclaiming the ability of one man, with even a sizeable following, to bring in the Kingdom of God, or else return Creation to chaos. That's giving human beings quite a bit of power. So, I choose to laugh at it. But I also find a genuine theological issue in it all that seems appropriate during the month of November – the month when we will celebrate Thanksgiving.

There has been much more gloom and doom in our world recently than just American politics. Only our senior citizens remember when financial times were more desperate. It's a global issue, and it's frightening. And, no politician – or group of politicians – of any particular philosophy will be able to turn things around soon enough to suit anyone. These times must run their course.

But, we're Christian people, and later this month we are asked to give thanks to God. With everything seemingly falling apart all around us, how shall we do that? The Biblical answer appears absurd on the face of it. Paul tells us: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1Thessalonians 5:16-18).

When Paul talks about hard times, he speaks from personal knowledge. Tradition says he was martyred for his faith, and that he suffered torments

we can't imagine to reach that execution. He did not come to Christianity willingly or easily. He began as a Pharisee, certain that Jesus was the cause of a terrible heresy that had to be stamped out before it undermined Judaism. Jesus changed his mind, but he had to strike Paul blind on the road to Damascus to accomplish it. Paul had to learn the hard way. But, when he learned, he never forgot. And, when he suffered hardships on account of his faith, it only made his faith stronger.

When Paul tells us to give thanks in all circumstances, he means it literally. He is convinced that there is something in every experience that will bring us closer to God and the salvation that God wants his people to have. We may not have to be stricken blind. But, we might lose our retirement fund, or our home. The candidate upon whom we depended for salvation may have lost. But, it makes no difference. Get on your knees and thank God for it. Perhaps that sounds stupid to you. But, I want to bear my own testimony to that truth. I have looked at dark times before. I've been in situations where I was pretty sure there was no way out. But, I also learned that, if I stop my fretting and thanked God for whatever was going on, it changed my focus. It took my attention off what seemed hopeless to me and focused it upon the One who brings salvation to us in all circumstances. And, I know that's God's will for us in Christ Jesus in all times, places and circumstances.

If you've never tried it, just go ahead and do it. If you're coming to the point where you think you have nothing else to lose, then that means you also have everything to gain. As the day of Thanksgiving grows closer, practice the more, because prayer is an art form. God has to teach us how to improve as we practice, and he's perfectly willing to do that for us all ... *Between the Times*.

— FHS

## Giving of ourselves in worship and service...

Crescent Springs Presbyterian Church is called by the Holy Spirit to give ourselves in worship and service, to share the Good News of salvation, to teach and nurture, and to invite all of God's children to experience the love of Jesus Christ.

### Sunday School is for Everyone!

Each week at 9:40 a.m., Sunday School classes for all ages are underway at CSPC.

- **Pre-K through elementary class** meets in the large classroom in the upstairs education wing.
- **Middle School and High School** classes meet downstairs
- **Adult Classes**
  - A study of the gospel of Luke for adults meets upstairs next to the nursery.
  - A study of current topics in Christianity meets in the Gathering Room.
- **Nursery**  
Nursery services are available for infants and toddlers under three years of age.

We hope you will join one of these classes.



## Mark your CALENDARS



### Community Thanksgiving Service

Tuesday, November 25, 7:00 pm at the Baptist Church. Floyd will be preaching.

### Adult Christmas Party

Join us for fellowship and a festive holiday dinner, Sunday, Dec. 14 at Karlo's. Social hour begins at 6:00 with dinner at 7:00. Sign-up sheet in narthax. Contact Jim Burdick at 586-8528 with questions.

### Sunday School Advent Program

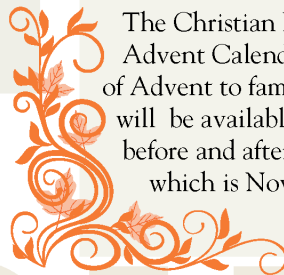
The Sunday School classes will present a program of scripture and music Sunday, December 21. A potluck dinner will begin at 5:30 p.m. with the program at 6:30. Because it is a school night and the program also includes pre-schoolers, our goal is to have the evening end by 7:30.

The CE committee will provide roast turkey and beverages for the dinner. The congregation is asked to bring side dishes to share.

Come join in the fun as we hear and sing the Christmas story.

### Advent Calendars

The Christian Education committee will be providing Advent Calendars with a scripture reading for each day of Advent to families with young children at CSPC. These will be available in Sunday School, and in the Narthex before and after worship, the first Sunday in Advent, which is November 30.



small

# GROUPS

...the heart of CSPC

CSPC members meet together in a number of small groups based on mutual interests. Through these groups, individual members grow closer in their faith and fellowship. Please see the calendar for meeting and contact information.

Covenant Groups determine their own area of study and meeting times. Other small groups include:

- Bound by Books book club
- Chicks with Sticks knitting group
- Piecemakers quilting group
- Lunch Bunch brown bag monthly lunches
- Lord's Adult Supper Club
- Men's Prayer Group
- Moms Bible Study Group
- Toddlers Play Group
- Mary Esther Circle

For more information about any of these groups or if you'd like to start one of your own, please contact the office at 859-341-9337.