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**Trinity United Methodist Church**

*We are sharing the love of Christ with ALL*

 Greetings to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! Happy Autumn! For me the most beautiful time of the year.

 As we have all heard and have come to expect - things will not be the same. But I hope you know that the outside world should not dictate what is inside each of us. While we should always be thankful and grateful for all that we have. November seems to be the time when we are, shall I say “forced” to remember to be thankful and grateful.

 “Abraham Lincoln said, "We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us."”

 That is pride folks. Pride gets in the way of recognizing God as the giver and sustainer of all we have. Persisting in that pride will be our downfall. If we remain proud; if we remain focused and fixated on all our blessings and neglect God then he will start to take away the blessings. He will destroy the material abundance; he will strip it away from us to try to get our attention.

 When we focus on the giver of the blessing more than the blessing then we will be blessed. But when our focus is on the blessings rather than on the maker of those blessings then we will be frustrated because we will never be satisfied. We make God obligated to us and his purpose is to bless us. That’s not how it is supposed to be!

 Be thankful. Be grateful. Be blessed. Be a blessing!

 So that’s out of the way - now comes December! Even with the situation this world is in - DO NOT let IT stifle your Christmas! (Whatever IT is)

 I’m sure you are familiar with Charlie Brown in the comic strips. Well, a few years ago the comic strip had Lucy walking up to Charlie Brown just before Christmas & saying to him, "Charlie Brown, since it is Christmas, I suggest that we lay aside all our differences & be friends for this season of the year." Charlie Brown says, "That's a great idea, Lucy, but why does it have to be just at this time of the year? Why can't we be friends all year long?" Lucy looks at him with that look that only Lucy can get & says, "What are you, a fanatic or something?" As followers of Jesus are we to be a bit fanatical about Christmas? Sure, we can, but what are we fanatical about? Are we fanatical about the tree and the decorations? Is Christmas all about the gifts we receive? Is it about getting our way and indulging in things we love to do? To truly reflect our Lord and Savior at Christmas we must strive to demonstrate God’s ideal to all we see this season. They must see how we love and treat one another. They must see people who are willing to serve even when it might be inconvenient or difficult. They must see people who are not perfect, that’s not hard, but are willing to give themselves, blemishes and all to a Lord who loves and forgives them no matter what. They must see people compelled by the love of Jesus to live for Him. To follow in His path that leads to love for God and for all people. They must see people at peace with God. Striving for His ideal that is so much better than our own ideal we may have for ourselves. They must see people who are at peace with others. People whom even when others mock or criticize their beliefs and values do not retaliate with hate and retaliation, but with love and compassion and gentleness and respect. They must see people who are at peace with themselves. People full of Christ in their hearts because of the promise God has made to us all. They must see people who always revere Christ as Lord. They must see people, who are always prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks them to give the reason for the hope that they have. But they must see people who always do this with gentleness and respect. Let us give everyone the reason we have hope, because of this child. And let us do it with gentleness and respect the way this baby child has taught us to do.

 Christmas is about revealing His way not ours. Share the true reality of Christmas this year. Reflect the love of our Lord and Savior. Truly hold onto Christmas this year as you hold onto the promise of God. Hold on to the truth that this child born at Christmas would one day choose a cross to remove our sins. Accept His gift of love and revere this Jesus as your Lord and King.

 I say very humbly and gently Merry Christmas to all and may God’s favor and love rest upon you and yours.

Blessings,

Pastor Leslie

**Poinsettias for Christmas**

If interested contact Pam Heim 473-8144 or information will be in the narthex.

**FREE Thanksgiving Dinner**

Nov 26, thursday, 11am - We will have our yearly Thanksgiving meal but only for pickup or delivery (Northumberland & Sunbury area only).

If you would like to order, please call 570-473-9145.

You MUST leave the following information: Name, contact number, address, number of meals, please say if you are picking it up or having it delivered.

Someone will call you the week of Thanksgiving to confirm your order so it is important to leave your contact number. Thank you.

**Candlelight Christmas Eve Service. 9pm**