

WE TELL OUR STORIES



THANKSGIVING

By Shelby Olive

My very first job right out of college was at the Galveston County Daily News. I worked the night shift as a copy editor and layout designer, and for the most part, it wasn't too bad. That is, it wasn't too bad until the holiday season. I no longer had the luxury of stepping away from work and celebrating these days with my family. On Thanksgiving Day, my mom made a plate of turkey and all the sides for me to take to work, and I cried the entire way to the office.

This one Thanksgiving away from my family reminded me how easy it is to take this holiday for granted. It made me consider the public servants who sacrifice their free time for our safety. It made me consider medical professionals who spend this day saving lives and keeping people healthy. It made me consider the retail employees who meet consumers' needs at the expense of their own time with family. It made me consider those who will be spending their first Thanksgiving after losing a loved one. It made me stop navel gazing and realize what a privilege it is to take this one day and dedicate it entirely to gratitude.

The entire season is marked by fullness, and we get to choose how we fill it. We can fill it with stress, over-committing, overspending and weariness, or we can fill it with joy, hope, peace and thankfulness. Thanksgiving is not only a day marked by stuffing our faces with good food or even by spending quality time with the people we love the most. This day quickly moves us into the Advent season, and I firmly believe that our heart posture on this day sets the framework for how we will celebrate Christmas.

As for me, I will spend this day surrounded by a loving family remembering and praying for those who do not have this luxury. I will spend this day truly thankful for all that is around me, all that is behind me, all that is before me, and all that is within me. This is how I will choose to journey into Advent.



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ST. LUKE'S FIVE HABITS

WE STUDY THE BIBLE



RUNNING. AVOIDING.
WORRYING. GRUMBLING.

SERMON SERIES NOVEMBER 4-25

Matthew 6:25-34 ²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ²⁸ And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³² For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Sermon Notes

Stop Worrying; Start Trusting Third in the Series, *Stop It!*

November 18, 2018

The downside of worry

Set apart by our focus

So consider...

what matters most (v. 25, 32-33)

things you can change (v. 27)

the faithfulness of God (v. 26, 30)

a day at a time (v 34)

Possible next best steps for you

- Make a list of times in the past God has seen you through difficulties.
- Serve on Sundays when you're here for worship. Be an usher, greet families, assist with baptisms, set up for communion, or help in the TV studio. For more information, visit the Connection Center or email Rebecca Alsup (ralsup@stlukemethodist.org).

Key Verse for the Week

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. – Matthew 6:33

Questions for Conversation and Reflection

What do you worry about the most? What is one action you can take to strive for the best thing and not stew about the other thing?

WE PRAY

Sunday, November 18

God of abundance, all good things come from you. You give me all that I need and then some. Give me a spirit of gratitude, so that I want what I have, give to those who don't have, and in all things, send praises up to you, my Creator, my Provider, my Redeemer. Amen.

-Prayer by Rev. David Horton

Monday, November 19

Heavenly Father, from the beginning you gave us the gift of family so that we would not be alone. Thank you, Lord, for loved ones who bless our lives in special ways. Lord, we pray for those family relationships that are broken; show us how to set aside our differences and how to come together in love. Please bring about healing and forgiveness and bless our family time together in the coming holidays. Amen.

Tuesday, November 20

Dear Lord, Thank you for the wonderful choir and Sid's leadership. Amen. -Prayer from Koinonia

Wednesday, November 21

Most Gracious Heavenly Father, We come to you today to praise you for your care. We thank you for always being with us through good and hard

times. Your love never ends. Thank you, Lord. In your Son's holy name we pray. Amen.

Thursday, November 22 Thanksgiving Day

Gracious God, How can I say thank you for all of the ways you have blessed me? How can I say thank you for my gift of salvation of life that is abundant today and eternal forever? I will say thank you with my life. May all I do be done in gratitude for you. Amen. -Prayer by Dr. Tom Pace

Friday, November 23

God of abundance, Thank you for taking care of our needs and blessing us with many things. Especially today, we pray that you would help us keep our focus on you and not the things of the world. Help us to find new ways to serve you and to bless those who are in need of basic things. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Saturday, November 24

Heavenly Father, We thank you for all of the staff and volunteers who serve in the Children's Ministries. Thank you, Lord, for their dedication to growing our children in their faith. Thank you for the countless hours they give to serve our children. Please multiply their efforts and bless them. Amen.

Service of Prayer and Healing

First Wednesday of every month | December 5 | 7-8 p.m. | Chapel

Rev. Thomas Harper will lead this time of prayer and communion where we ask God for spiritual and physical healing for ourselves or a loved one.

Fervent Prayer Partners: Do you have something that is weighing heavy on your heart? Are you in need of one-on-one confidential and consistent prayer? A Fervent Prayer Partner is a trained member of the prayer team who will communicate and pray with you via email as you go through this difficult time. Contact Rev. Thomas Harper at tharper@stlukesmethodist.org.

So many ways to pray...

- ♦ Write your prayer request on one of the leaves found in the pew rack
- ♦ Visit the interactive prayer wall: StLukesMethodist.org/prayer
- ♦ Call the prayer line: 713-402-5088

We are here for you! If you or someone you know needs prayer, a hospital visit or contact from a minister, call Rev. Bill Denham at 713-402-5156.

WE MAKE FRIENDS

United Methodist Women's General Meeting | Tuesday, November 20 12 p.m. | Hines Baker Room

Chase Untermeyer, Former US Ambassador to Qatar will speak. The presentation is followed by a potluck. Spouses and guests are welcome. No reservations necessary.

Thanksgiving Eve in the Chapel | Wednesday, November 21 | 6:30 p.m.

Gather for a special time to thank God through singing, prayer, and Holy Communion. Rev. Bill Denham officiating.

Advent Study | Sundays, November 25 - December 16 | 5-6 p.m. | ES306

Join Alice King and Rev. Katie Montgomery Mears for Justin Coleman's new Advent study: *Home for Christmas: Tales of Hope and Second Chances*. Register at StLukesMethodist.org/Groupfinder.

Advent devotional on Scripture + Shared starts December 2

Download the St. Luke's Scripture+Shared App: Subsplash.com/ScriptureShared/App

Miracle on 34th Street | Sunday, December 2 | 2:30 p.m. | Rotunda Theater

Tapestry Players present this holiday classic transformed into live radio drama. Tickets (\$15) available at TapestryPlayers.org/miracle or at the door.

Be our guest for Dinner | Monday, December 3 | 6:30-8 p.m. | Fellowship Hall

Come learn about St. Luke's Early Childhood Education Project at Gethsemane - Christmas Offering 2018. Childcare available with dinner reservations by November 28: StLukesMethodist.org/ChristmasOffering.

Coffee with Pastor | Sunday, December 2 | 4-5:30 p.m. | ES313

This casual gathering led by Sr. Pastor, Dr. Tom Pace is the perfect way to learn more about St. Luke's and the first step on the path to membership. Sign up online: StLukesMethodist.org/im-new/#jointhefamily

WE GIVE OURSELVES AWAY

in generosity and service.

TODAY: Tree of Angels | Sunday, November 18

Come by the Christmas tree in the Sanctuary Hallway and select a child for whom you can purchase Christmas gifts. This year's recipients are the children of incarcerated men who are turning their lives around through the Prison Entrepreneur Program (PEP.)

March to the Manger | Sunday, December 2 | 9:45 a.m.

Children in grades 2-5 will visit a live nativity with their unwrapped toys for Christian Community Center's (CCSC) Jingle Bell Express.

Friends at Home Advent Poinsettia Delivery

Sunday, December 2 | 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

Spread some Christmas Cheer and deliver a festive plant to a Friends at Home member at their residence.

St. Luke's has exciting plans for 2019. If you have not filled out your commitment card for 2019, you can find one in the pew, or make your pledge online: StLukesMethodist.org/give.

Contributions to the Advent Decorations Fund are a wonderful way to honor or remember loved ones. Forms are available at the Connection Center or the church office. Dedications must be received by Monday, December 3. Contact Amelia Love: alove@stlukesmethodist.org or 713-402-5079.