



The COMMUNICATOR

Middle District Baptist Association



Great Things God Has Done!

November 2016

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www.mdba.org



Blogs

[Living These Days](#)

[Ministry Assistants](#)



Connect 16
Missions Celebration



**Rev. Vern Gilmer,
New Hope Baptist Church
Installation Service**



**Winfree Memorial Baptist Church
celebrating opening
of new building.**




**PCC -
Amelia**



Passion Community Church grand opening of another campus!



Give Encouragement and Hope This Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving as a holiday is slowly but surely disappearing. At the beginning of the fall season, up come the Halloween decorations and before they disappear, the stores are decked out with Christmas decor, unfortunately now known as "holiday" decorations. Never have I gotten used to seeing Christmas reindeer standing beside Halloween haunted houses in the big box stores – and never do I want to get used to such devaluing of Thanksgiving!

At Thanksgiving we take stock of the abundance of good in our lives and sincerely offer prayers of gratitude for our family, friends, health, and material blessings. All well and good; that is the way it should be.

However, this year let me suggest you **go beyond a prayer of Thanksgiving** to an **act of Thanksgiving**. More specifically, I am suggesting you deliberately select someone to personally express appreciation, someone who wouldn't be expecting to hear from you. That person could be:

- someone you barely know but to whom you simply feel impressed to say thanks,
- an individual who is struggling to survive tough times,
- a person who deeply impacted your life when you were a child, youth, or student
- someone who means a lot to you but probably doesn't know it.

You might mail a card, send an email, do some small, unexpected act of kindness, or simply pat this person on the back and quietly express your genuine appreciation.

Thanksgiving in the form of encouragement is easy to give but hard to come by. For that reason the Scriptures talk about encouragement far more than you might think. Even spiritual giants like the Apostle Paul benefit from heartfelt words of affirmation because words matter and have a way of lifting sagging spirits:

"Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people."
Philemon 1:7

Paul also discovered from experience that encouragement from friends is essential and can revive hope when it is grounded in Scripture.

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide, we might have hope." Romans 15:4

With so many churches struggling, encouragement and hope are desperately needed and in short supply. Interestingly, when church leaders are genuinely encouraged, they often regain hope and hope is indispensable in helping a church find new vitality. One of America's premier church consultants, Paul Steinke, says it this way:

"I have yet to work with a congregation that is in conflict or in transition, or for whatever reason, paralyzed in its functioning, that moved notably beyond its present arrangement without the guidance of leaders who inspire hope in others." Paul Steinke, *A Door Set Open: Grounding Change in Mission and Hope*, p.41.

As Thanksgiving approaches, let the Spirit guide you to encourage someone whom you might not normally contact, someone who isn't expecting to hear from you. Be like Paul, who discovered a secret to thanksgiving is surprising your friends with these heart-warming words:

"Every time I think of you, I thank God!"

When you do, Thanksgiving will bring deep joy for you and others -- and certainly mean a lot more than turkey, football, and looking at Black Friday sales ads.

- Jim Hamacher



Staff & Spouses of MDBA

Birthdays

November

- 1 Brian Jones, Second Branch
- 2 Jesse Green, Retired
- 6 **Wayne Windle, Branch's**
- 12 Linda Gardner, Bethel
- 13 Stephanie Gilmer, Second Branch
- 19 Kevin Mann, PCC
- 28 Judy Nay, Friendship
- 30 Matthew Tuck, Friendship



CALENDAR

November

- 6 Daylight Savings Ends
- 8 Election Day
- 10 Ministers/Staff Luncheon, Chesterfield, Noon
- 11 Veterans Day, Office Closed
- 14-16 BGAV Annual Meeting, Roanoke, VA
- 24-25 Thanksgiving, Office Closed
- 28-29 Christmas Store Deliveries, 9 am - 2 pm, Bellwood BC



December

- 1-2 Christmas Store, Bellwood BC
- 4-11 Lottie Moon Offering Emphasis
- 23-30 Christmas Holidays, Office Closed



Ministry Anniversary

November

- Amanda Crawford, Ironbridge 1 yr.
- Kirby Smith, Oak Forest 10 yrs.



Happy Thanksgiving

New Church Plant in Powhatan County



"Praxis Church, a missional-incarnational community, is a new church plant in Powhatan County focused on making disciples and loving Powhatan. Praxis is a church that keeps it simple so that following Jesus remains central in our lives together.

On Monday, October 17th, Praxis held its first gathering, an informational meeting, to address in broad strokes the practices and future of this new church. An overwhelming group of supporters and members packed the room as we discussed the current state of the church in America, and the need for a new posture and perspective among Christians if we are to engage this changing culture. With the support of Middle District and Virginia Baptists, this October, Praxis began the slow, intentional work of gathering a new community to be on mission in central Virginia." - *Sammy Frame*

(If you would like more information about Praxis, contact Rev. Sammy Frame, sammy.frame@gmail.com, Dr. Hamacher, jim@mdba.org or 276-8481.)

Local Missions Offering 2016
Goal: \$11,000
Declaring His glory among the nations,
His marvelous deeds among the peoples.
Psalms 96:3

Received: \$12,298

