



# NEWSLETTER

OF THE

**Estancia United Methodist Church**

*600 Williams, Estancia, New Mexico*

<http://www.estanciamethodist.org>



# NOVEMBER, 2013

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Your Church Staff

Chairperson of Church Council	Mel Stephenson
Recording Secretary	Vickie Coburn
Organist	Morrow Hall
Lay Member of the Annual Conference	Marcia Fitzner
Chairperson: Board of Trustees	Bill Simms
Worship Team Leader	Sylvia Levy
Education Team Leader	Melanie Chavez
Care and Outreach Team Leader	Barbara Simms
Chairperson: Pastor Parish Relations	Nick Griffio
Food Pantry	Butch McGee
Financial Secretary	Vickie Coburn
Church Treasurer	Vickie Coburn
President UMM	Jon Shively
McMurry Rep	Marcia Fitzner
Sacramento Camp Rep	Bonnie Hardesty

Bishop: Bishop W. Earl Bledsoe

District Superintendent: Rev. Jeff Lust

To see this newsletter in color, visit our website at:

<http://www.estanciamethodist.org>



**Sunday Worship 9:00 AM**

## From the Desk of Pastor Bonnie...

In the Month of November the Christian Church *celebrates and gives thanks!*

On All Saints Day, the first Sunday of the month, we remembered those who've gone before us, following Jesus to that place which God has prepared so that we might live with Him in eternity. We especially remembered the giants of faith on whose shoulders we stand.

On Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the month, we will celebrate the end of the Christian calendar year and Jesus' Kingship over every earthly power. Christ the King Sunday is a relative newcomer to the liturgical calendar, arriving only in the early twentieth century. At that time, many Christians in Mexico were suffering religious persecution from their anti-religious government, and secularism was rapidly gaining the upper hand in Europe. In 1925, the Roman Catholic Church declared this day as a worldwide celebration of Christ's Lordship over all. The image below is one of many such large monuments in South America, Central America, Mexico, and near the U.S. border with Mexico. Images of Cristo Rey (Christ the King) often show him standing as this one does, in the form of a cross, if not attached to a cross. Recently, during our prayer time at the Estancia Church, Mary Alice suggested we pray for an appreciation of all that God has done for us. True to His Word, almost immediately, God spoke to me concerning this prayer, through a Guideposts article entitled, "Develop an Attitude of Gratitude." In it, the author reminds us of the Psalmist's words: "*Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His steadfast love endures forever.*" (Psalm 107:1)



*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to me." (John 12:32)*

The author went on to encourage development of our capacity for *appreciation*. If we can learn to appreciate, we can learn to be *thankful*. He suggested we begin with the small things – hot coffee, the scent of a rose, the warmth of our beds... for God instructs us to “give thanks in everything.” (1Thes. 5:18) And ALL of us have *something* we can or at least *should* appreciate!

Once we learn to *appreciate*, we can learn to be *thankful*, and being *thankful* *activates* the flow of blessings in our lives. Remember my recent children’s sermon where I proposed that planting apple seeds could result in a crop of pumpkins? The children were quick to point out my error! The seeds of our thoughts are similar... planting seeds of love, seeds of blessing, seeds of gratitude will yield a crop of the same. Planting seeds of anger, seeds of jealousy, or seeds of selfishness will result in more anger, more jealousy, and more selfishness! Holding onto a thought, be it positive or negative is like planting seeds in the soil of your life. Entertaining negative thoughts gives rise to a crop of negativism while putting your attention on the positive gives rise to a crop of appreciation and thankfulness. And the Bible tells us that we won’t just get a 1 for 1 return on the seeds we plant; whether good or bad, they “produce a crop yielding a hundred... times what was sown.” (Matthew 13:23)

As our church prepares to celebrate Jesus’ Lordship and our nation approaches its celebration of Thanksgiving Day; I invite you to join with me in planting good seeds by praying daily:

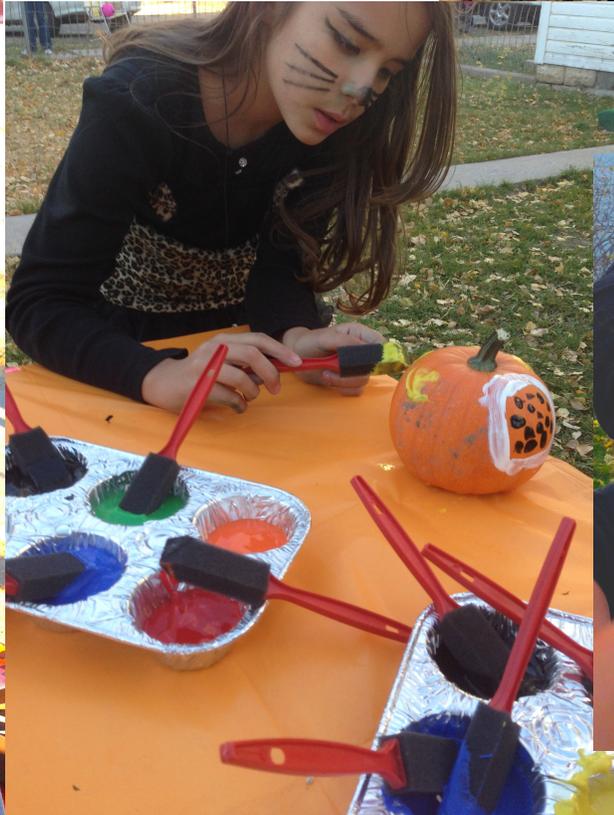
“May the words of my mouth and meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14)

Let us be intentional – planting seeds of love, appreciation, and thankfulness that will spring up into a hundred-fold crop of blessing!

The Mountainair Church was recently invited to coffee with Mountainair High School Principal Eliza Romero. Kent Potter and Pastor Bonnie attended and were greatly encouraged by the path God has blazed enabling Christian influence in this school. Ongoing meetings are being calendared to facilitate a dialogue among members of the church, the school board, and the administration. Particular opportunities seem to be emerging in the area of developing a Fellowship of Christian Athletes and working with Future Farmers of America, so please hold these inroads in prayer. Toward the end of our meeting on Nov. 5, the School Superintendent joined us, prayed God’s blessings upon our efforts, and thanked us for extending God’s love beyond the doors of the church! Stay tuned for more from the Holy Spirit!

The Estancia Church hosted its first annual “Trunk or Treat” this Halloween, October 31; and the turnout was fabulous! 14 brave souls decorated their vehicle trunks (or trucks!) and handed out treats from 5-7pm. Games for children were set up in the church yard and Lee Widner manned the grill, serving up hotdogs, chips and s’mores! Ness Farms supplied pumpkins for painting and a good time was had by all 69 church and 30+ community attendees!







Get Your S'mores Here!!



## ***MOUNTAINAIR Cont'd***

A 3-month pilot program has begun at the Mountainair Church which is serving as the host facility for the distribution of commodities to the needy in our community. Here's how it works: A truck from Roadrunner Food Bank delivers large quantity commodities (breads, fruits and vegetables, frozen foods, canned goods, etc.) to the church. Volunteers from the community off-load the goods; organize it for distribution from the fellowship hall; coordinate, supervise, and help tote food to recipients' vehicles; and then CLEAN UP before leaving! This activity is scheduled for 3:15-6:15pm every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, with distribution to recipients starting at 4pm. November's distribution will take place on Tuesday, the 19<sup>th</sup>. If you know someone in need of food support – or someone who would like to participate in this ministry to the needy in Mountainair and surrounding communities, please refer them to Maribeth Dixon at 702-5798 for additional information.

Recently the Holy Spirit worked through Julie Griffo to encourage attendees in the chilly Estancia sanctuary to all sit together in the center section of pews (if for no other reason, to enjoy one another's warmth!) Speaking from a Pastor's perspective, that move was a real God send. It was amazing to see how the Spirit moved among attendees that morning to visibly build community and promote unity in the Body of Christ! Thank you, Julie, for listening to the 'still, small voice!'

*And within a week, the following article appeared in my inbox, from the Alban Weekly...*

## **Why Do You Sit Where You Do?**

**by Craig A. Satterlee**

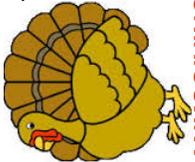
“What do you mean, why do we sit where we do?” The group stared blankly at Pastor Mark. “If the sermon was only about interacting with the preacher,” Pastor Mark answered thoughtfully, “you'd all be sitting in the first few pews, right in front of the pulpit. So why do people sit in the back or in the balcony? Why do some members of our congregation sit together all bunched up, while others spread out and refuse to slide over, even when the place is packed? I think it has something to do with the way people interact with one another in worship.”

Asking about where people choose to sit during the sermon and inviting them to become aware of the implications for that choice may at first appear to be a silly exercise, because it is not something most people ordinarily think about. Yet, reflecting on how people position themselves in relation to others during the sermon, and indeed throughout the entire worship service, provides important clues to how a congregation understands itself as a faith community and an expression of the church. Human behavior communicates meaning. Carefully observing and interpreting how people relate during an event as central to a congregation's life as the Sunday sermon provides insights into the character of their common life. People's interactions reveal how they order their world. Whether the nature of a congregation's common life is explicitly declared in a mission statement and consciously nurtured by its leaders or unconsciously expressed in the way the congregation worships together, the kind of faith community a congregation is has important implications for its mission. For example, congregations that desire to grow frequently have difficulty doing so, because having more members will change the way members interact, how decisions get made, and how the congregation understands itself as an expression of the church. Asking people to observe how they relate to other members of the congregation during important moments in their shared life, especially worship and preaching, can help congregations understand how they must change if they are to grow.

Yet, becoming aware of and reflecting on an interaction as simple as where we sit in church, and teasing out the implications of a congregation's seating arrangement, is not easy. First, everyone in a congregation rarely chooses their seats for the same reason, although some worshipers may appear to have made the same choice. Parents with energetic children choose the last pew for a different reason than the grieving widow sitting alone. But both make a decision about how they will interact with the congregation. Second, as people become conscious of why they sit where they do and how they act in worship, they may alter their behavior, particularly if they are embarrassed by what they are doing. Pastor Mark's comment to Eleanor might stop the church ladies' running commentary, at least for a while. Moreover, Christian worship is designed, in part, to alter people's behavior by bringing it more in step with the congregations' understanding of discipleship and Christian living. People may behave a certain way in church precisely because they are in church. A congregation that warmly huddles together at the coffee hour may sit straight, silent, and spread out during the worship service, because members have been taught that a quiet, formal disposition is appropriate for Christian worship. Finally, we need to be careful how we interpret

*Continued on Back*

# NOVEMBER 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 9 AM Worship 11 AM -Mtair	4	5	6	7 3:30 PM BIBLE GUPPIES	8	9
10 9 AM Worship 11 AM -Mtair	11	12	13	14 3:30 PM BIBLE GUPPIES 6:30 PM TRUSTEES	15	16 7:00 AM Mens Breakfast
17 9 AM Worship 11 AM -Mtair	18	19	20	21 3:30 PM BIBLE GUPPIES	22	23
24 9 AM Worship 11 AM -Mtair	25	26	27	28  THANKSGIVING	29	30



*Sent with a prayer to:*



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### ***Continued From P. 6***

others' behavior. Parishioners who, upon entering church, chat with those around them may intend to engage others in order to worship more fully as the body of Christ. However, they may be perceived by others as casual and even irreverent. Someone who closes his eyes and lowers his head during a sermon may be perceived as sleeping when he is, in fact, seriously concentrating. For members, a congregation sitting close together is warm and intimate; for visitors, the congregation may feel closed. Mindful of these cautions, we can be aware of and attempt to interpret how we interact with the congregation during worship and preaching by reflecting on why we choose to sit where we do.

Why observe where we sit during the sermon as opposed to some other aspect of congregational life, like the coffee hour? As part of the worship service, preaching is an activity in which we claim to be most aware of and committed to our identity as a faith community and the body of Christ. We all have expectations about how sermons ought to connect with us individually. Most Christians also hope preaching will cause or at least help something positive to happen in the life of the congregation as well. For example, Charles Campbell, who teaches preaching at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, argues that the purpose of preaching is to build up the community of faith as "a people who practice the way of God, as embodied in Jesus Christ, in and for the world."<sup>1</sup> Campbell observes that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seeks to constitute the community of the disciples who will embody his way of life in the world.

1. Campbell, "Resisting the Powers," in Childers, *The Purposes of Preaching*, 24.

**So... Why do YOU sit where you do?**