



NOVEMBER

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Issue 45

Pastor Tammy’s Ponderings



Gratitude changes everything!

We all know that it’s good to be grateful. Yet let’s face it, it’s so easy to forget this premise; the gravitational pull of negativity is strong. Unless we’re consciously choosing to focus on what is “true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report” (Phil 4:8), our attention tends to get pulled toward what’s wrong, what’s missing and whom we can blame.

Yet we must recognize that each time our attention is focused on what we *don’t* like in life, we are inadvertently choosing to live in the land of lack. It explains why some of the most joyful people you might meet have so little and why some people with wealth beyond what you can imagine can be so miserable. No matter how many 'blessings' you may have to count, if you’re dwelling on what you don't have or don't like about your current circumstances, you’re living in emotional poverty.

The state of affairs in our communities and world has been full of circumstances that have not been as most of us would like. So, as this Thanksgiving holiday draws close, it's the perfect time to reflect on gratitude, not just in good times, but at *all* times. I’m guessing that you, like me, have had the good fortune to meet people who live from gratitude despite their troubles and life trials. The folks in my life that practice this have taught me that gratitude isn’t something to be practiced just when times are good - but we must always push to practice gratitude. Gratitude strengthens our resilience and lifts our spirits to stay above the waves when life’s storms roll in. (If you haven’t had one lately, watch out—1 is coming!)

Gratitude is not dependent on life being just as we want it to be, but on our decision to find the good in it just as it is.

Sure, life provides a constant stream of situations that don’t conform to our hopes or fulfill our expectations. But when we examine those situations, we’ll find blessings that can easily be taken for granted. **Gratitude takes nothing for granted.** It shines a spotlight on all that is good, highlights its presence, and reframes our ‘problems’ so that we can go through life with more joy and less resentfully.

We must actively choose to practice gratitude - day in, day out. And on the really rough days, when thankfulness is in short supply, “look to the hills from cometh your help; your help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 121:1-2).

Recognize that life itself is a gift, with an expiration date we will not be given, and that our minute- by-minute experiences of each day — from the most pleasurable to the most problem-filled—is shaped by our mindsets.

Therefore, whatever your circumstances are right now, pay attention to what you’re living through. And if you find yourself starting to complain and dwelling on what you *don’t* have, take a deep grateful breath and refocus on all that you do have. Rejoice in the Lord Always. And again, I say REJOICE! (Phil.4:4.)

Happy Thanksgiving!

Come and Join Us for Worship

Every Sunday with worship services at 8:30am & 11am with 5th Sundays @10am (In person & all social media platforms) See Social Media Links Below:

ZOOM Video: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82293573333>, passcode 583845

Audio: Dial [1-929-205-6099](tel:1-929-205-6099), ID [82293573333](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82293573333), passcode 583845

FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsgreensboro>

Grateful, Grateful We Adore Thee



What a time to be alive in the church! Last month I told you that fall is the second-best season. Well, the very best season of the year is now approaching—and I like to start the celebration a little early, ha! We have entered a season of thanksgiving, of gatherings, and of anticipation as Advent quickly draws near. This is a time when crisp autumn air, and a sense of warmth consumes us in a way no other season quite

I am also thankful for our church leaders who helped make our annual Trunk-or-Treat such a success. On October 25th, more than one hundred children filled our space with laughter, joy, and delight as they enjoyed games, activities, and an abundance of goodies. What a blessing to see the church alive with community, fun, and fellowship, practicing love in such a tangible way.

So this Thanksgiving season, I challenge you: love in a more excellent way. Be patient. Be gentle. Outdo one another in showing honor. And let generosity become the melody of our lives. For in doing so, we embody the gratefulness of the Gospel—together.

A collage of 18 photographs arranged in a grid-like fashion. The photos depict various community events and activities. Top row: a man waving in front of a car trunk decorated with white t-shirts; a family of four posing in front of a yellow hedge; a sign that reads "BE THANKFUL. BE Grateful & BE BLESSED."; a car trunk filled with greenery and framed photos; a group of people sitting on a porch; a close-up of a man's face. Second row: a close-up of orange autumn leaves; a car trunk decorated with a green cloth and framed photos; a close-up of a man's face. Third row: a close-up of orange autumn leaves; a group of people standing in front of a lake; a large group of people posing for a group photo; a car trunk decorated with a pink cloth and colorful balloons; a close-up of a heart-shaped sign that reads "i am grateful". Fourth row: a close-up of orange autumn leaves; a car trunk decorated with a pink cloth and colorful balloons; a group of people posing for a group photo; a car trunk decorated with a pink cloth and colorful balloons; a close-up of a heart-shaped sign that reads "i am grateful".

Being Thankful for the “Nots”



As we approach Thanksgiving, we pause to give thanks for all our blessings. It is easy to think about the things we must be thankful for; but we should also be mindful of the things we are blessed NOT to have. The Bible speaks of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican – also known as the tax collector. This story is an example of being thankful for the “nots.” The parable is as follows:

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’



The Pharisee expressed his arrogant gratitude for all that he did and gave. He also expressed his thanks for the things that he was not. In so doing, he exalted himself above other people whom he considered “less than” himself. We should always be grateful to God for our blessings and good fortune. We should not, however, consider ourselves greater than others based on our perception of their misdeeds. Well aware of his wrongdoings, the tax collector did not exalt himself and speak of all the money he collected but asked for mercy instead.

As we look at the pompous prayer of the Pharisee, let us also be grateful for the “nots” in our own lives.



If you have a place to live, be thankful that you are NOT homeless.

If you need and have a job, be thankful that you are NOT unemployed.

If your health is reasonably good, be thankful that you are NOT seriously ill.

If you have healthcare needs that are being met, be thankful that you are NOT without help.



If you have food to eat, be thankful that you are NOT hungry.

If you have managed to avoid trouble with the law, be thankful that you are NOT incarcerated.



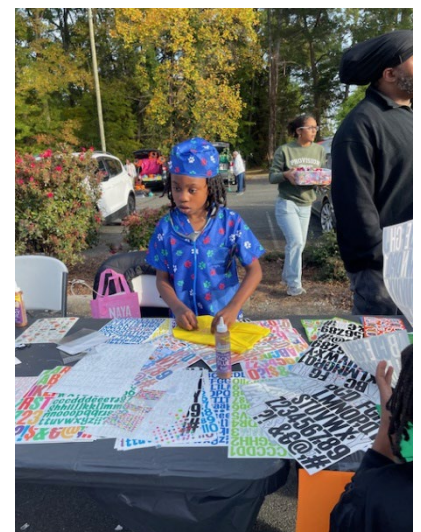
If you can safely walk or drive through town without fear of an artillery attack, be thankful that our country is NOT at war.

If you have family and friends who care about you, be thankful that you are not alone.

The list is endless, but many of us have other “nots” in our own lives. At this Thanksgiving season, let us be grateful for the “nots” and hope they continue as such.

Respectfully submitted

Crystal S. McCombs



Meet our Newest Sanctuary Choir Musician



Freddye Dixon cannot remember a time when music was not a part of her life. A native of High Point, N.C., she began taking piano lessons from her aunt, Helen Cole, at the tender age of five. Her maternal grandmother is credited with instilling in her the philosophy of using her talent for the upbuilding of God’s kingdom on earth. At the age of fourteen, Dixon began her journey as a **church musician** and has never turned back. As soon as her piano/reading skills were fluid, Freddye accompanied her father, Fred, on most of his singing engagements – this would last for years!

An honors graduate of the Illustrious North Carolina A&T State University, Dixon is listed in Who’s Who Among American Women, for her work and dedication in the area of church music. Freddye has served as Musician for several area churches; and is also the immediate past Accompanist for the Bennett College Choir, having served through the tenures of two Choir Directors / four Bennett Presidents.

Now retired from Guilford County Schools, as a Music Educator, Freddye’s life is still saturated with the Performing Arts, especially choral music. Presently, she is Organist at her home church, Memorial UMC (*High Point*); Accompanist for the Twin City Choristers (*Winston-Salem, NC*), and a founding member of the Ebony Gospel Chorale (*Triad*).

Ms. Dixon has recorded two sacred music CD’s: ‘*My Hiding Place*’, an instrumental collection of familiar hymns and gospel songs; and ‘*Listen to Christmas*’.

Freddye became the musician for the St Matthews Sanctuary Choir in June 2025 and completed the required probationary period in September. She was formally introduced to the congregation on September 14 by the SPPRC Chair W. Renee Royal during the 11 am worship service.



Gabby life at Louisiana State University

I wanted to share an update on my first semester at Louisiana State University! Although I am a freshman, I entered with enough college credits to be classified as a sophomore. I am majoring in Kinesiology with a concentration in Human Movement Performance, and my coursework has further deepened my passion for pursuing a career in physical therapy. After completing my undergraduate studies, I plan to attend physical therapy school to continue preparing for a career dedicated to helping others improve their mobility and overall well-being.

College life has definitely been an adjustment. In the beginning, I faced some challenges and a few rough nights as I tried to find my balance. However, through prayer, perseverance, and my support system back home and those around me, I’ve learned to better navigate this new chapter. One of the biggest blessings has been meeting new friends who share similar goals, values, and faith. They’ve truly helped make LSU feel like home.

I’ve also made sure to enjoy some of the fun parts of college life. I’ve been to the football and basketball games, and they truly are as hyped up as people say! The school spirit here is unmatched. I continue to meet so many different people every day single day and it’s such a great reminder for me to take time to enjoy the journey.

Recently, I was selected to join the National Honor Society, a very prestigious organization at our school. This opportunity reminded me that hard work and faith truly does pay off. I’m grateful for how far I’ve come and excited for the journey ahead!

2025 TURKEY DINNER GIVEAWAY: The Outreach Ministry needs your support to prepare for the Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner giveaway. We ask members and friends to donate canned green beans (14.5oz cans or smaller) and boxed stuffing. You may bring your donations to the church after worship services or during Food Pantry hours, there will be a designated receptacle in the Narthex. We also need volunteers to help pack and distribute the turkey dinners on Monday, November 24th. To volunteer please use this link [Turkey Dinner Give Away Volunteers](#)

November is Diabetes Awareness Month - Here’s How to Stay Healthy During the Holidays

November is a month full of celebration as friends and family come together around faith and food. November is also American Diabetes Awareness Month and can be a great time of year to focus on making healthy lifestyle changes just in time for the Thanksgiving festivities!

According to the [NC State Center for Health Statistics](#), diabetes affects over 1 million adults in North Carolina, with African Americans experiencing the highest prevalence among ethnic groups - 12.4%, which is about 1.5 times higher than white adults. Nationally, African Americans are 24% more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and 40% more likely to die from it than the general population. While the statistics may seem grim, adopting, and following healthy habits have been proven to prevent diabetes and help manage diabetes in individuals who already have it. Let’s take a look!

Healthy Habits for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving doesn’t have to derail your health goals. Here are few simple, festive strategies to keep your blood sugar in check:

- Swap smart: Choose roasted sweet potatoes over candied yams and opt for whole grain stuffing.
- Stay active: A post-meal walk with family can help regulate blood sugar.
- Monitor mindfully: Keep track of your glucose levels and portion sizes.
- Hydrate: Drink water instead of sugary beverages.
- Plan Ahead: Bring a healthy dish for gatherings so you always have a safe option.

Prevention is Powerful

Whether you’re at risk or already managing diabetes, *lifestyle changes* make a difference!

- Eat balanced meals with lean proteins, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Exercise regularly, aiming for 30 minutes most days.
- Get screened - early detection can prevent complications.
- Connect with support groups or diabetes educators in the area.

Explore these trusted resources to learn more and take action. Let’s make this November a celebration of health, awareness, and empowerment.

[National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)

[CDC’s Diabetes Prevention Program](#)

[American Diabetes Association](#)

Submitted by: Jennifer Lewis



Know Your Body Basics

1. **Blood Pressure** Less than 120/80 mmHg
2. **Pulse** 60-100 bpm
3. **Temperature** 97-99°F (36.1-37.2°C)
4. **Oxygen Saturation** 95-100%
5. **Blood Sugar** 72-99 mg/dL (fasting)
6. **Iron** 60-170 mcg/dL
7. **Cholesterol** Less than 200 mg/dL
8. **HDL Cholesterol** Greater than 40 mg/dL

9. **LDL Cholesterol** Less than 100 mg/dL
10. **Triglycerides** Less than 150 mg/dL
11. **Waist Circumference** Less than 35" (Women)
12. **Body Mass Index** 18.5-24.9 kg/m²
13. **Resting Respiration** 12-20 breaths/min
14. **Electrolytes (Sodium)** 136-145 mEq/L
15. **Electrolytes (Potassium)** 3.6-5.2 mEq/L
16. **Hemoglobin (Women)** 12.0-15.5 g/dL
17. **Hemoglobin (Men)** 13.5-17.5 g/dL
18. **White Blood Cells** 3.4-9.6 x10⁹/L



THANKFUL WITH A GRATEFUL HEART

This is Gertrude Griffin Pennix (better known as "GG"), and I was born and raised in Greensboro, NC. I was the fourth daughter born to Eddie and Constance S. Griffin. After my birth, came my two brothers, Alvin and James (Yogi).

I am so THANKFUL our mother was able to ensure all 6 of her children attended and graduated from college. Unfortunately, our father was not able to be with us, however, we had our grandparents next door and our mom worked right across the street at the recreation center.

Three girls attended and graduated from Dudley HS and the other three (my brothers and I) were bused to Ben L Smith HS where we graduated. After graduating from Smith, I attended Winston-Salem State University and graduated in 1977 with a BS in Office Administration. Another sister attended WSSU and is now a retired teacher, and my eldest sister became a Psychiatric nurse. And two other sisters became teachers. One brother is a medical doctor, and the other is an administrator at NCCU.

I am thankful and happy that I returned and relocated back to Greensboro from (DMV) Maryland, where I was employed with the Dept. of Justice (Office of Independent Counsel) during the Iran Contra Investigation.

In Greensboro, I met and married my husband Mr. Lewis C. Pennix, and we have been happily married for over 27 years.

BELIEVE ME - I AM VERY THANKFUL - I WENT FULL CIRCLE.
I came back home!!!!!!!!

Thankful and Happy,
Gertrude "GG" Pennix

We should be grateful for what we receive and don't receive, for it all belongs to God. I think of the words of other songs that signify God's giving. More importantly, God gave His Son so that we might have a right to the tree of life. What love! We can't beat God's giving. Let's Be Grateful!
Jean Brown

I am thankful to God for: the support of family, and Friends, the miracle of my nieces recovery from breast cancer, husband's care and recovery, the naming of The Peeler and Hampton Performing and Visual Arts School and the joy of nieces wedding. I'm also thankful for the gathering of the Carver High Class of 65.
Wanda Edgerton

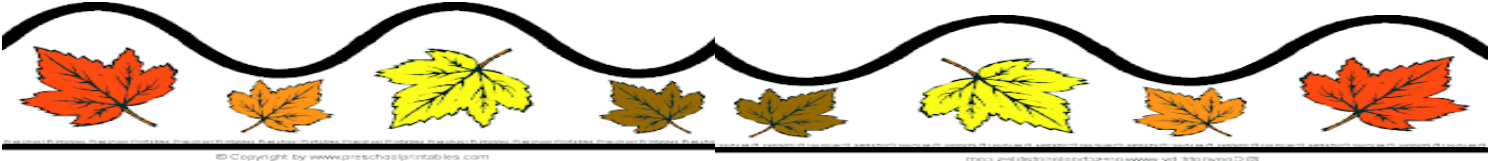


*I've
So much to be*
THANKFUL
for

I am grateful that my son, Johnny Powell, a 3rd year medical student, is sharing his knowledge and experiences to encourage and motivate high school students to become doctors.

The students participated in a Blood Pressure and Hypertension workshop where they discussed the meaning and significance of hypertension, shared common symptoms and risk factors and learned how to take a manual blood pressure.

You can't be what you can't see. Gratefulness
by Tia Hodge Powell



Saturday, October 25, 2025

Reference: Western NC Annual Conference Green Church Initiative, Action Item B-7, "Sponsor a creation care fair in which you invite outside organizations to do displays or booths that will help raise your awareness."

Fall Blessings in Christ with Peace and Love! Thank you for coming out to support the SMUMC 5 the Annual Fall Festival! This year the affair was held in combination with the Children's Ministry's annual, **Trunk or Treat**. While in years past the Creation Care Ministry has welcomed various vendors, in 2025 only two confirmed with the NC Cooperative Extension having not been able to participate due to late verification of zero information "tablers" available.

Notwithstanding, the great news was that we were able to welcome participants who joined us on behalf of *National Drive Electric Month* (NDEM) held this year from September 12th to October 12th! Although the fall festival was held on October 25th, *National Drive Electric Month* offers a way to "plug in" whether you are an Electric Vehicle (EV) enthusiast, a community leader, or just curious about driving electric. The nationwide observance helps to raise awareness about the many benefits of all-electric/plug-in hybrid cars, trucks, and motorcycles; an environment-friendly plus!

What started as a single day celebration in 2011, eventually grew into a week-long communal effort but now has expanded into a month-long campaign! National Drive Electric Month includes a deluge of local community events across the country and beyond - like ours! This campaign is overseen by *Plug in America* in collaboration with a group of national partners and other supporters, volunteers, as well as event organizers.

As a representative of the Creation Care Ministry and in honor of Trunk or Treat, I decorated my car green (of course) featuring Frankenstein and placards that read, **Creation Care**, detailed with pumpkins, spiders, and ghouls! This year, I opted to dress up like a "green" witch instead of my usual scarecrow outfit. Boo! "Make Everyday Earth Day buttons were offered, along with left over vegetable seeds, flower seeds, and a variety of candies for trunk or treaters!

A very special "thank you" to Xander Anderson and Richard Dodd (Charlotte, NC) who attended the fall festival having signed up per the NDEM website, [National Drive Electric Month](#). Mr. Anderson (and companion/nursing major) is a student at Appalachian State University located in Boone, NC. He attended the festival to research EV's, he stated, as part of an assignment for a class, Sustainable Transportation, which delves into the benefits of non-fossil fuel driven modes of travel.



Mr. Dodd made available his **2025 Ford Mustang Mach E Premium RWD Extended Range Electric Vehicle**. It was reported that he drives an estimated 72 miles per day mostly via interstate using approximately 22% of the battery's usable capacity (see below). Dodd charges the vehicle beginning at roughly 1:00 am every morning using a level 2 charger ** (Emporia Pro), he said, which takes about two hours (1 hour 50 minutes). On longer trips Dodd mostly uses Tesla Superchargers (visit, [Electric Cars, Solar & Clean Energy | Tesla](#)) with a Ford NACS to CCS 1 adapter.

As a sustainable energy-driven car owner only since July 5, 2025, Mr. Dodd was surprised to have learned lots about his energy usage, he indicated. One note of potential improvement was that he wished that his Mach E had a spare tire; a feature that is missing from many modern cars, he stressed. In a similar manner, Dodd explained that he had to figure out where and how to charge his car over the first few days of ownership, which was a challenge. I chose a Mach E over a Tesla when electric car shopping because, "some of the control choices in the Tesla (Y Model) are strange", he said.

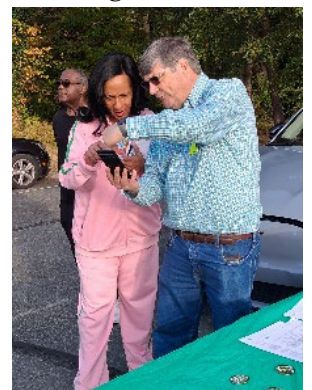
2025 Ford Mustang Mach E Premium RWD Extended Range Electric Vehicle:

Key Features

- Battery Usable Capacity: 88 kilowatts/hr.
- Average miles per kilowatt: 3.85
- Average miles per gallon/ equivalent: 125 mpg
- Range per charge: 320 miles
- Acceleration: 0-60 mph in 5.4 seconds

What I like about my Electric Vehicle...

- One Pedal Driving
- Comfortable Seats
- Stereo Sound System
- Quiet on the Road
- Easy to charge at home



****Typically, Level 2 chargers provide 3.9 to 19.2 kW of power, allowing most electric vehicles, including plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), to fully charge in 1 - 8 hours, depending on battery size and the charger output**
CONTACT: Richard Dodd rydodd@yahoo.com (704) 641 7212

Together, let us aim to accelerate the shift to cleaner, more sustainable transportation! As we continue to function according to the mission of our church; to answer our calling to participate in the redemption of individuals and witness to the Glory of God, may we, too, continue to involve ourselves in acts of earth care...in the healing of creation itself through Jesus Christ our Lord! **2025 SMUMC Creation Care Ministry** Inell Artis, Annette Kirkpatrick, Karlah Burton, Chairperson 'General Board of Global Ministries Earthkeeper WNC Creation Care Team Ministry

		
European, White, Caucasian	African, Angolans, Colored, Negro, Black, Afro/African AM, Person of Color, etc.	Indian, Croatan Mulatto Indigenous People, AM Indian/Native American

IS YOUR SKIN COLOR REALLY WHITE, BLACK OR RED?
 In our world, “race” is a word that is used in reference to people but in the Bible, the word is not used this way. Scripture uses the word race to describe all human beings as beings of one blood. God’s Word mentions families, tribes, peoples and nations when referencing race. Acts 17:26 says, *“And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place...”* From reading this, we know that all humans are descendants of Adam, the first man. First Corinthians 15:45 says, “Thus it is written, *‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit,*” and the first chapter of Genesis tells of our creation story.

Writer Frankie Rodriguez conveyed “that we are all people of the same race, but some have twisted the Bible and made race a source of division,” by intoxicating mankind on a cocktail composed of Race, Racism and Religion. The poisonous R-3 beverage is responsible for sadness, evil abuses, destruction and deaths.

Humans gave the world **Race & Racism** as we know it, these manmade evil twins are not God’s design. “The United Methodist Church defines race as a social construct, not a biological one, that refers to groups of people identified by physical traits, social/cultural/geographic identities, and ancestry. The UM Church views racism as a sin that creates division and injustice, and is committed to dismantling this system through faith, love, and justice, while also celebrating the diversity and gifts that different racial and ethnic groups bring. Though the UMC is classified as an Evangelical religion, we are to confront and eliminate racism in all its forms, both in the church and in society. Our General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR) was established in 1968 after church mergers for the stated purposes by developing intercultural leaders, catalyzing authentic communities and DEI actions. The UMC calls its members to confess their own sins of thought, word, and deed against those of other races and to work for new attitudes, understandings, and relationships.” The Bible reveals the key to unity is LOVE and this word appears in the NIV Bible 500 times.

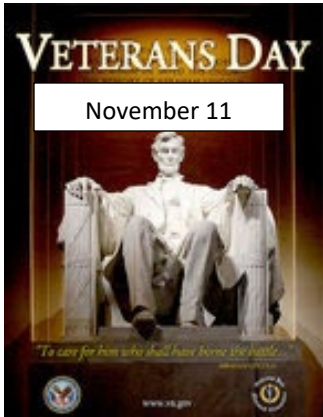
Personally, on applications I have recorded my race as **“HUMAN”** since 1977. When asked why so? my response was/is “All God’s creations are very good, and He made humans/me in his image.” Many personnel managers changed my race from “human” to “black” on their forms because of their false indoctrination, **not my reality**. As a preschooler I questioned, “Why are Negroes called colored and white people are called white?” In a 5-year-olds mind using a box of Crayola crayons, people painted as “Coloreds” were tints and shades of brown, and people painted as “Whites” were tints and shades of pink. Brown and pink are colors recognized by world artists universally, like black and white colors are. Observe news anchors on television wearing white

shirts or brides in white gowns; their clothes and complexions are not identical colors. I asked my parents, grandparents, teachers in school and church, “Who decided Negroes are black, Indians are red, and Whites are white?” Answers I received were all over the place, and nothing was recorded in history books either. Whoever associated black, red and white colors with human complexions infused and indoctrinated the world with untruth. Most disturbing: mankind worldwide pushed aside TRUTH and embraced someone’s false interpretation and teaching of race by “going along to get along” or as described in James 4:17 the sin of omission: “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is a sin”. Accepting wrong as right, has costed mankind a tremendous price for it is my belief that “God made no mistake when He created people of color”.

My great grandfather, affectionately called Papa Andrew, first taught me about race after a child relative called me black. Five-year-old me really did not understand James’ humor or his insult. Papa took me by the hand and led me to a walnut tree in my grandparent’s backyard and said, “See those leaves on that tree girl, they all look the same but no two are alike.” I listened to him but thought, what is he talking about and is this another Br’er Rabbit story? He questioned, “Don’t leaves grow and cover tree branches in spring?” My answer was, “Yes Sir!” Papa Andrew continued: “beautiful green leaves shade people in summer; they house and have food for insects, birds and animals; a leaf will turn colors in its due season, die, and fall on the ground to fertilize the soil. Little Lady--like leaves on a tree--no two people are exactly alike but they all play a part in life no matter what color God made them.” We collected leaves that chilly autumn Sunday. I picked ones that were similar in shape, size, and color to prove my kindergarten-like viewpoint; but Papa collected leaves that were supple to dry, ones with blemishes, ill shapes and many colors. ALL our leaves were from the same tree. We placed our leaf collection under sheets of paper; rubbed over those papers with charred sticks and found differences in our leaves. Papa Andrew’s exercise laid a foundation that shaped my understanding about race. People are not alike; yet we are all HUMANS created by God made with unique complexions, physical features, gifts, talents and acquired ways of doing similar things. Regardless, we all play a part in this world.

I end with a quote passed on by Great Grandpa Herbert: *“A lie is a dangerous thing! I would rather a man strike me than to tell a lie on me cause that lie will travel halfway round the world before the truth gets started; and somebody will believe that lie. A liar would rather “root, pig and die” (go all out), to prove their lie true. Children I tell you, a lie is a dangerous thing and I’d rather for someone to strike me.”* HUMANS nor UNTRUTHS are black, red, white and so on. Christians believe the Genesis creation story **“For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth.”** (Psalm 33:4).

Submitted by: E. A. McGirt, Religion and Race Committee Cochair





Little is known about what was served at the first Thanksgiving meal in 1621, except that it included fowl. Venison, squash, Maize, gouds, root vegetables and maybe berries.. Photo via Getty Images/ GraphicalA.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY TODAY/John O'Rourke by Jae Jones (From a 11/22/2024 Edward Winslow Letter). **“What do we know about the first Thanksgiving and what might have been included on the menu?** From Jones’ interview of Metheny, The “First Thanksgiving,” which took place in the fall of 1621 at the site of Patuxet (present-day Plymouth, Mass.), was reflective of several English traditions: a harvest festival, typically held in the autumn after the harvest was successfully brought in, as well as a religious tradition of fasting and prayer, followed by feasting including fowl, squash, venison, vegetables, etc. The 1621 "Thanksgiving" was a three -day feast that was occasioned by the political alliance between the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims.”

In 1777, when the Continental Congress delivered a decree for the 13 colonies to give thanks for reaching a victory over the British at Saratoga, the Africans also took part in the celebration throughout the region. And, the tradition continued as a custom of rejoicing for rain to break droughts and plenty of harvest.

During the 1619-1863 period, enslaved and Native Americans did not celebrate the colonial "Thanksgiving" in the same way as the 1621 settlers, and their celebrations were shaped by their own traditions and circumstances. Native Americans have always had their own harvest and gratitude feasts, while enslaved people used the period to connect with family, plan escapes, or hold their own celebrations. Our nation was divided relative to the Thanksgiving Holiday; though in the same country: different celebrations because of man’s prejudices.

THANKSGIVING AND NATIVE AMERICANS

- **Harvest feasts:** Native American tribes had their own traditions of celebrating harvests and other events with feasts, which predate the arrival of the Pilgrims.
- **Not a singular event:** For many tribes, this was not a single event but a year-round celebration of life's blessings.
- **Cultural misunderstanding:** The 1621 feast was part of a political alliance, not a joyous meal of friendly strangers as it is often depicted. The Wampanoag tribe, for example, had their own celebrations like [Nikkomosachmiawene](#), or "Grand Sachem's Council Feast".
- **A day of mourning:** Many Native Americans observe this day as a "National Day of Mourning" to commemorate the loss of their land and culture

THANKSGIVING AND ENSLAVES

- **Making the Most of the Day:** Enslaved people were often given passes to visit family members on other plantations, especially after the end of the harvest.
- **Hunting and Gathering:** Enslaved people would hunt wild game and gather food, which would then be cooked to be shared with family and friends and cornmeal cakes were mentioned.
- **A time for Hope and Escape:** In some areas, Thanksgiving became a time when enslaved people could plan and execute escapes, as it marked the end of the crop season.
- It was only after emancipation that African Americans could begin to embrace the holiday as a time for family reunions and to celebrate their freedom.
- The national Thanksgiving holiday was officially proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln in October 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, with the stated purpose of national unity, **Promoting Unity and Healing** between the North and South and focus the nation on shared blessings, hoping to foster a sense of reconciliation and unity once the war ended. Also to **Express Gratitude:** The official proclamation called on all Americans, in every part of the country, to observe the day as one of "thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens" for victories in the war and to **Acknowledge Divine Providence**--offering an opportunity for the nation to collectively acknowledge God's providence and pray for the welfare of the Union

TODAY, MOST AMERICANS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING with family, friends, and where football games and parades are traditional holiday events. Our menus still vary due to a mixture of cultural and ethnic recipes from persons searching for an America “where streets are paved with milk and honey.” ALL citizens beside Native Indians are IMMIGRANTS! We pray for a better life regardless to how or why we came, GIVE THANKS for ALL blessing received and for challenges we overcome. Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV) says, "Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand".Amen..

RESOURCES

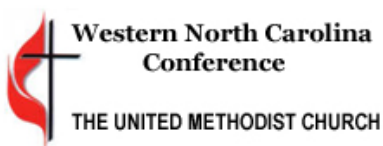
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FUN TIMES AT THE ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL & TRUNK OR TREAT



Deadline for December Newsletter articles is November 20, 2025. Theme is “Joy to the World” Please send your traditions & photos along with any photos to Wanda at ponice1@yahoo.com or Lisa at smumctreasurers@gmail.com .



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