



THE CHICAGO CONNECTION

Connecting Chicago disciples with each other, the Midwest and the world

www.chicagochurch.org

November 19, 2006

Giving Thanks for All of You

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, many thoughts enter our minds. For many of us, the traditional holiday meal conjures up spending time with family we haven't seen for a while and visions of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, rolls and endless desserts. Typically, this abundant feast with our loved ones is followed by football watching, card playing, taking in a movie, napping or all of the aforementioned activities, as well as a decision to never eat that much again (or at least until the next day when the leftovers are reheated). The activities on Thursday are often followed by a mad dash to the stores and malls on Friday morning, looking for the greatest sales available, which is then followed by our admission of the many bad attitudes that lurked below the surface during our shopping experience.

While we all will be busy during the latter part of this week living out some, most or all of these holiday visions (minus the last one, of course), it seems to us, the full-time ministry staff of the Chicago Church of Christ, that now is the perfect time for us to reflect on the many reasons we have to be grateful. We need to look no further than you, our spiritual brothers and sisters, to be inspired to feel deep levels of gratitude to God for many of our greatest blessings. Like the Apostle Paul wrote in the book of 1 Thessalonians, we can easily name the ways in which we are thankful for each one of you. *We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1Thessalonians 1:2-3)

Your Work Produced by Faith

The faith-motivated work of every disciple in the Chicago Church of Christ is amazing. First, we think of the deacons throughout the church who work so hard to meet the needs of the entire body. These spiritual men help with the finances of the church, the formation and teaching of

Christian parenting principles, the oversight of our youth ministries, the coordination of our worship services and many more important responsibilities.

We also think of the incredible ushers. Every Sunday morning, they help to provide a comfortable environment that enables us to worship God and enjoy communion with His Son. These ushers arrive at church services early each

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Sunday and often stand through much of the worship just to make sure everyone else has an excellent experience.

Next, we think of the songleaders, singers and musicians who give of their time and energy to practice throughout the week so that our worship services are pleasing to God and inspiring to every person in attendance.

Similarly, we think of the people who count our weekly contribution. With great integrity, they volunteer their time to count and deposit each week's offering. These men and women ensure that our financial gifts to God are treated with the utmost care.

And the list is endless when we think of all those whose hard work makes this church what it is—those who oversee the lost-and-found articles, those who put together the weekly bulletins, those who set up and run the sound equipment for our services, those who set up the stages, those who prepare communion, those who get the baptistery ready for use and so many others. We understand that it takes great faith in the truths of God and the certainty of our reward in heaven for each of these great men and women to do the incredible work they do for God's kingdom, as they stand upon the promise of Christ—*"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*

Your Labor Prompted by Love

As we look at the labor of disciples throughout the church, we are reminded of the love that motivates so much of this work. Love for our children and for the future of God's

(Continued on page 4)

2006 Baptisms

In the spirit of the Thanksgiving season, we wanted to take this opportunity to express how grateful we are for each individual who has been baptized in the Chicago Church of Christ in 2006. The inspired words of Scripture that appear below best describe how we feel about each of you and how thankful we are to have you as our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. (Colossians 1:3-6a)

Cesar Anzola	Tonja Girten
Allison Arensmeier	James Gorham
Irma Ayala	Beulah Harper
San Juana Balderas	Nia Harris
Keisha Bayliss	Griselda Henderson
Stephanie Benjamin	Jose Herrera
Donna Brouder	Candace Hora
Jennifer Campos	Diana Hunter
Erika Carlson	Edgar Inda
LC Carter	Denae Ivy
Earnest Carthan	Terry Jackson
Vanessa Clay	Brittney Jenneford
Jerome Collins	Yolande Jervier
Luis Cruz	Raymond Johnson
Ginger Cuny	George Jones
Eric DeGraaf	Samera Jones
Lauren Dion	Lin Jousma
Ryan Dubowski	Ann Karly
Peggy Evans	Mike Klump
Vernique Ferguson	Johnathan Konieczki
Shan Ying Figora	Luke Kypr
Jill Fontenot	Andrea Lager
Katherine Freeman	Adam Lane
Adriana Garcia	Latonya Lane
Tierra Gipson	Nicole Lasarsky

While each of these new brothers and sisters have just begun their journey of faith, listed below are the one brother and seven sisters in the Chicago Church who have kept the faith and finished their spiritual race in 2006. While we are saddened that these men and women are no longer with us, we can be greatly comforted with the following reminder found in the Book of Psalms, and greatly inspired by each of them to remain faithful to our great God until our final day on this earth arrives. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His*

And we thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Mildred Lugo	Darin Shea
Jing Hui Ma	Niquia Simbler
Jaime Machin	Arron Smith
Nancy Mamani	Maria Smith
Kali Marsh	Rachel Smith
Stanley McClain	Jennifer Spaulding
Ayla Morris	Jim Stahl
Benjamin Mudiappa	Elyn Stenzel
Nathan Negrette	John Stogin
Christopher Oliver	Marcus Stollenwerck
Tatiana Oriakhi	Erik Svendsen
Alfonso Ortiz	Stanley Syerov
Veronica Ortiz	Samantha Testa
Aaron Orzechowski	Ora Thompson
Mojisola Owolabi	Luis Valentin
Miguel Palomar	Ruby Vance
Jessica Raider	Dimarie Vasquez
Brittany Rawls	Cartier Veal
Eric Relph	Willie Washington
Amanda Roberson	Fredricka Watson
Lanor Ross	Mia Webster
Diana Rubio	Brandon Williams
Zach Savage	Heidi Wilton
Chris Scheffler	Irina Yaina
Linda Sharp	

saints. (Psalms 116:15) And let us be reminded of this incredible promise found in 2 Timothy 4:7-8: *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.*

The eight are Wendy Becker, Catherine Clark, Ginger Cuny, Beulah Harper, Ann Karly, Betty Plaia, Lela Rush and Charlie Smith.

Reviews and Previews

Singles' Christmas Party

There will be a **Congregational Singles' Christmas Party** taking place on Saturday, December 9th from 7:00-11:00 p.m. at the Salvation Army building, located at 4056 N. Pulaski in Chicago. Tickets for this fun-filled event are \$15 and include hors d'oeuvre, dancing and plenty of Christmas celebration. **Important:** Tickets will only be available for one week (Nov. 19-26) and will not be available at the door. Purchase your tickets today after service and join the singles for this great holiday event.

Congregational Christmas Show

Make plans now to attend our **2006 Christmas Show**. This year's event will be held Sunday, December 10th at Oak Park-River Forest (OPRF) High School. In keeping with the traditions of year's past, the variety show will feature the talents of members from throughout the entire Chicago Church. There will be a single performance at 4:00 p.m. There's no cost for the performance. Family and friends are welcome!

Where: OPRF High School is located at the corner of Lake Street and Scoville Avenue in Oak Park. Enter on Scoville Avenue (the east side of the school).

Parking: There will be free parking available in a municipal garage, located at the corner of Lake Street and Scoville Avenue.

Teen Ministry

There will be a **Congregational Teen Devotional** on Saturday, January 20th from 4:00-6:00 p.m. This will be an important devotional focused on guy/girl relationships, purity and dating. Parents are encouraged to attend due to the nature of the topic. The location for the devotional will be announced at a later date.

Teens, be sure to mark your calendars for the annual **Midwest Teen Winter Blast** to be held February 3-4 in Camp Lake, Wisconsin (just north of Antioch, Illinois). It will be a weekend of fellowship, worship and fun with teens from other Midwest churches.

2007 Youth Camp Dates

The dates for the 2007 Youth Camp have been announced. The schedule runs later in the summer to better accommodate students attending summer school. Note that the grade ranges for each camp are new this year.

- **Discover Camp** will be held July 15-21 for students entering grades 5-7 in Fall 2007.
- **Explore Camp** will be held July 29-August 4 for students entering grades 8-11 in Fall 2007.
- **Quest Camp** will be held July 29-August 4 for students entering grades 10-Graduates in Fall 2007.
- **Trip Camp** dates have not yet been finalized.

Looking Forward to 2007

The year 2007 will be a special one for the Chicago Church of Christ, as it will mark the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the congregation in 1982. A number of exciting events are being planned throughout the entire year, and we look forward to a year-long celebration, recounting all that God has done in that time.

We will kick off the celebration with an all-church gathering at Steven's Convention Center on Sunday, January 14th. We are also very excited about a special concert that will be performed by Jon Augustine, a very talented brother from Sacramento, on Saturday, January 13th. More details will be coming in our December bulletin about these and other events.

To the right, you will notice a few of the congregational events that we want for you to be aware of, those that will be taking place in the beginning months of 2007. We look forward to experiencing all that God will do in our individual lives and in our church in the upcoming year. We want to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving, and we pray that the final five weeks of 2006 will bring you much joy and peace.

2007 Calendar Preview

The following events are tentatively scheduled for the beginning of 2007:

January 14 — Congregational Worship Service to celebrate the beginning of our 25th year

January 27 — Singles' Snow Day

February 3-4 — Midwest Teen Winter Blast

February 25 — Singles' Worship Service

March 9-10 — Bible Jubilee entitled, *Lessons From God's History*

March 18 — Congregational Latin Worship

March 31-April 1 — Mother-Daughter Retreat

April 15 — Congregational Worship focused on world missions

Giving Thanks for All of You (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

kingdom has prompted many men and women to give of their time and energy to oversee the excellent Kingdom Kids program that is a shining star in the Chicago Church

Give Thanks!

Let us take a moment to focus on a few Scriptures that are great reminders to all of us in the Chicago Church about our need to give thanks to our incredible God.

- ✦ *Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever. (Psalm 107:1)*
- ✦ *Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and extol Him with music and song. (Psalm 95:2)*
- ✦ *Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name. (Psalm 100:4)*
- ✦ *You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing to you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever. (Psalm 30:11-12)*
- ✦ *Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to His God, just as he had done before. (Daniel 6:10b)*
- ✦ *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. (Hebrews 12:28)*
- ✦ *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)*
- ✦ *But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. (2 Corinthians 2:14)*
- ✦ *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (Colossians 2:6-7)*

of Christ. These loving laborers work tirelessly to ensure that every child in the church has an excellent experience in Bible class and are being taught God's word in a fun and informative way. We sincerely thank each of the regional Kingdom Kids coordinators, and those who serve as class coordinators, Bible class teachers, assistants and Kingdom Kids registration helpers. We dread to think of where our children would be without your serving hearts.

Love for God's kingdom has also prompted many in our number to be house church leaders—brothers and sisters who serve by making sure every disciple can be part of an intimate spiritual family. Through the small-group atmosphere fostered by these hard-working men and women, every disciple can have a place to call "home." We thank you for your labor.

Love for the poor and needy among us and in our communities has prompted many other men and women to serve through HOPE. We especially thank those who serve as HOPE coordinators in each of the regions. Your effort to find ways for us to love the poor has helped us as a congregation to put God's word into practice in a more profound way.

It is also quite apparent to us that love for God and love for one another has prompted more labor among disciples than we could possibly list here. Just to name a few, we think of those who volunteer their automobiles and time in order to give other people a ride to services. We think of those who pray for, visit, call and send cards to the sick. We think of those who organize meals for the sick, new moms and the like. Thank you so very much for your love and your service.

Your Endurance Inspired by Hope

Next year will mark the 25th anniversary of the Chicago Church of Christ. As one could easily imagine, throughout those years, the church has gone through times of great victory and times of great struggle. However, through both the highs and the lows, the one thing that has always endured has been the hope in our Lord Jesus Christ that is secured deeply within the heart of every disciple. As a ministry staff, we are truly grateful for each disciple who has endured and persevered through personal battles, illnesses, family conflicts, struggles with sin, persecution and the like, yet has remained faithful to the Lord. *For now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord. How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? (1 Thessalonians 3:8-9)*

It was hope that inspired a handful of disciples to move to Chicago in 1982 to plant a church, one which they believed would make a great impact on this city. And it is with hope that we approach the future, believing that God has great plans in store for this church and this city. While our nation celebrates a time of Thanksgiving, we thank all of you from the depths of our hearts. Your faith, work and hope inspire us more than you could ever know.

The Staff of the Chicago Church of Christ