

St. Andrew's (JKP) Monthly Newsletter  
*November, 2010*

Edification: Ah, the Holidays. And No, I'm not including America's apparent new favorite "holiday" Halloween. I mean the traditional holidays we celebrate; Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day- those great celebrations that never seem to diminish even as we diminish. We take time to reflect on the goodness of God; time to reflect on God-Incarnate coming to earth as "*God-Who-Forgives*" (Ps. 99:8). And time to look forward to another year of hopeful growth in grace and godliness for ourselves and our families. And what would the celebrations be without family and friends with which to share them? So much of our planning and prepping for the holidays revolves around others. We consider what "that certain someone" would like to receive, or would like to enjoy on those festive days. We remember who likes what for the Thanksgiving Day meal. We shop specifically with that person in mind, be it for a gift or some simple expression of thoughtfulness we hope they'll notice during a meal. It took me years to recognize that at each family Thanksgiving meal a certain marshmallow salad appeared simply because it was my favorite. I'm thick that way. But in those moments when we're not "thick-that-way", in those moments when we do recognize the thoughtfulness that is directed our way does it not move us and encourage us and draw our hearts closer together? No matter how grand or subtle the expression when we detect genuine sincerity and thoughtfulness lavished upon us we know that we are loved, that we are thought of by another. It's amazing how a small, simple gesture of thoughtfulness can literally improve someone's day or week or month. It truly is the thought that counts. It is in our thoughts we hold others dear. It is in our thoughts we plan ways in which to bless those dear ones. The content and object of our thoughts reveals that which we hold most precious.

Events/Information: We'll be celebrating a time of thanks as a congregation on 11/21/10. We'll gather at 6:00 p.m. at the meeting house (church). Please bring a pie or other dessert to share.

*"So once in every year we throng upon a day apart,  
To praise the Lord with feast and song in thankfulness of heart." Arthur Guiterman, The First Thanksgiving*

Encourage: In Ephesians 4:30, sandwiched between a litany of exhortations the apostle Paul warns; "*And do not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom you've been sealed for the day of redemption.*". Pastor Miranda has lately warned us several times from the pulpit of the same danger, saying to us "*we dare not grieve the Holy Spirit.*". How though do we grieve Him? If the content and object of our thoughts reveals what is most precious to us, where does God and the things of God fit in? If loving others and keeping them close means being thoughtful towards them wouldn't being forgetful and thoughtless towards them produce the opposite effect? If we're to not grieve the Holy Spirit we must be mindful of Him always. We must think His thoughts after Him. We must love what He loves, i.e. holiness. We must hate what He hates, i.e. sin. It isn't complicated. If we're thoughtless towards others will they desire to spend time with us? If we ignore, or are even rude to others will they look forward to spending the holidays or any days with us? Why would it be different with God the Holy Spirit? If we give no thought to His word, no affection to Christ nor love to the Church, if we fail to exercise the faith He poured into us through acts of loving self-denial will this not grieve Him? And what is grief to the Holy Spirit? Lest we think of it in mere humanly emotional terms in the bible it carries a connotation of righteous anger. It angers Him when we neglect so great a salvation. And as Jonathan Edwards powerfully warned the Church of all ages, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. But if we store-up His word in our hearts, believing it and obeying it He is pleased. And as He promised He will make His home with us. What could make for a richer home at the holidays?