

THE UNION PRESS

“To know Him and make Him known”



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**Newsletter
Submissions for
the June issue are
due May 24th**

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

How Good is Good Enough?

God's Grace and Good Works

If you interviewed 100 people and asked them, “What are good works?” you would likely receive nearly 100 different answers. For instance, one person may call generosity “good” if it relieves suffering, while another may call something “good” simply because it feels sincere. But sincerity alone does not make something pleasing to God. Giving to the poor may appear good outwardly, but if it is done for recognition rather than out of love for God, it falls short of true obedience.

This raises the question: What are good works? And more importantly, what makes them good?

We are often tempted to trust our own moral compass, assuming that everyone shares the same understanding of what is good or bad, right or wrong. In reality, we do not. The Fall has distorted our moral compass, and it must be recalibrated by God's Word. Imagine a compass thrown off by a magnet: our sense of right and wrong may still point somewhere—but not reliably to true north.

God alone is good. His ways are righteous; He is perfect in holiness and entirely just. Therefore, we must evaluate good works according to His standards and ask the Holy Spirit to renew our understanding of what is truly good. As Scripture says:

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Good works, then, are those actions that are either explicitly or implicitly commanded by God and that flow from a heart shaped by faith and love, seeking to live in accordance with His revealed will. In short, a person who does good works is one who walks in obedience to the Lord.

The Hard Truth About Our “Good Works”

Now that we know what good works are, we must face the sober truth Scripture teaches: apart from Christ, you and I do not have a single truly good work to our name.

Paul writes, *“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8).*

Unregenerate people may perform actions that appear good in relation to others—they give money to charity, help the elderly, and act with kindness—things most people would label as “good.” Yet love for God is the foundational principle upon which all true obedience rests. If a person is alienated from God—if he does not trust and love Him—then whatever he does will lack the essential element that makes it truly good in God's sight.

This is perhaps the greatest hurdle in understanding good works: our ideas of what is good often differ from God's, and we are called to lay down our opinions in favor of His.

And while it is certainly true that those in the flesh cannot please God, Scripture also teaches that those who are in the Spirit can. As Paul reminds us:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:8-10)

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In Christ We Have Been Redeemed for Good Works

Good works are not the grounds of our salvation; rather, they are the fruit of being born again by the Holy Spirit. James tells us that faith is shown by our works (**James 2:18**).

A tree does not become alive by bearing fruit—it bears fruit because it is alive. In the same way, good works do not produce salvation; they flow from it. These works are expressed in many ways in the Christian life.

Gratitude: Good works express the gratitude of the believer and give evidence of the grace of God at work in them. Jesus teaches that we show our love for Him by keeping His commandments (**John 14:15**).

For example, when a believer forgives someone who has wronged them, they are not earning God’s favor—they are expressing gratitude for the forgiveness they themselves have received in Christ.

Glory to God: Good works glorify God. Since He is their author, they draw attention to His grace rather than our merit. As Jesus taught, we are to “*let our light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*” (**Matthew 5:16**)

Witness to the World: Good works extend God’s grace to others and, in their own way, proclaim the gospel that gives rise to them.

Peter reminds us to be ready to give a reason for the hope within us (**1 Peter 3:9–12**). In a world that often opposes Christ, such lives will seem strange. When a believer responds to insult with kindness instead of retaliation, it raises a question the world cannot easily answer—opening the door for gospel witness.

Building Up the Church: Our works encourage other believers and serve as examples of faithful living. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they became imitators of him and of the Lord, becoming an example to others (**1 Thessalonians 1:4–7**).

Silencing Opponents: Good works silence our opponents. “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.” (**1 Peter 2:15**)

Necessary to Salvation (Properly Understood): Good works are necessary—not as the basis of our justification, nor as something that earns God’s favor—but as essential elements of the salvation God works in us. They are the necessary fruit of sanctification and the path along which God brings us to glorification.

Jesus often uses the illustration of fruit trees to teach that good works are the fruit of faith and repentance. He says, “*A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.*” (**Matthew 3:18**)

A saved soul is a holy soul, and a holy soul is one whose life is increasingly marked by loving obedience. Grace in the heart produces good works as its natural consequence. Put another way, good works do not make us God’s children—but they do testify that we are His. They are not the root of our salvation, but they are always its fruit.

Final Thoughts

As we conclude, we must say that God made us for good works—but good works will not save us from sin and death, nor will they justify us before God. We need the perfect obedience of Christ credited to us by faith.

When we understand that we are forgiven and made right with God through Christ, we see the true place of good works: they are the evidence and fruit of God’s grace in us.

Through them, we express our love for God in obedience to His Word, and our love for our neighbor as a living witness to His never-ending grace.

Who is our model for this? It is Christ Himself. Christ is full of love for His Father and delights to do His will, that the Father would be glorified. And the work Christ does for the glory of His Father is also directed toward us—we are the recipients and beneficiaries of His perfect obedience.

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If we want to see a life well lived—a life lived for the glory of God and the good of others—we must look to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

It goes without saying that we are not Christ. He cannot be duplicated. We are not our own savior, nor anyone else's. But we are His body—the church—called to be witnesses of His grace.

And the way we do that is by abiding—dwelling—in Christ. Apart from Him, we have no life in and of ourselves. But abiding in Him, the church extends His love, grace, and peace into the world.

Jesus says:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." (John 15:5-11)

Let us heed the words of our Lord, that our joy may be full. Abide in Him, and bear much fruit, doing good works—to the glory of God.

NEW MEMBERS

Tyler Zimmerman, Karen Walker Lockett, Robert Holmes



BLANKET CALL



Church World Services sponsors a blanket drive every year. Each blanket costs only \$10, but these blankets can be a vital resource for someone needing a little support, warmth and encouragement. You may do this by donating to Blanket Sunday on Sunday, May 10th or you may send a donation to the church marked "Blanket Sunday".

ORGAN CONCERT

★ ORGANIST BOB TRIMBLE ★

SUNDAY, JULY 5TH
@ 6:30PM





2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 1:30 Kirkwood Growth Groups	2
3 COMMUNION 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship 4:30 Prayer Service @ Union	4 6:30 Octorara Pines Growth Group	5 7:00 Trustee Mtg.	6 10:00 Prayer Mtg 6:30 Union Growth Group	7 1:00 Deacon Mtg. 5:00 Quarryville Growth Group <i>National Day of Prayer</i>	8 1:30 Kirkwood Growth Groups	9
10 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship BLANKET SUNDAY <i>Mother's Day</i>	11 1:00 Bible Study 6:30 Octorara Pines Growth Group	12	13 10:00 Prayer Mtg 6:30 Union Growth Group	14 <i>Ascension Day</i>	15 1:30 Kirkwood Growth Groups 6:00-8:00 pm Family Night	16
17 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship	18 6:30 Octorara Pines Growth Group	19	20 10:00 Prayer Mtg 6:30 Union Growth Group 7:00 Session Mtg	21 5:00 Quarryville Growth Group	22 1:30 Kirkwood Growth Groups	23
24 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship NEWSLETTER DEADLINE <i>Pentecost</i>	25 <i>Memorial Day</i>	26	27 10:00 Prayer Mtg 6:30 Union Growth Group	28	29 1:30 Kirkwood Growth Groups	30
31 8:30 Prayer Meeting 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship <i>Trinity Sunday</i>						

FOOD BANK

Canned beans (pinto, northern, chickpeas, cannelloni) (15 oz cans), refried beans (16 oz can), SPAM, seafood soup/chowder (cans), diapers (size 5, 6, 7 and 3T, 4T, 5T), baby wipes, mayonnaise, mustard, Triscuits/Wheat Thins, pasta sides, pudding cups, granola bars

LECTIONARY PASSAGES

May 3rd

5th Sunday of Easter

Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16;
1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

May 10th

6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35;
1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

May 17th

7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:6-14; Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35;
1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11; John 17:1-11

May 24th

Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21;
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b;
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13;
John 20:19-23

May 31st

Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8:1-9;
2 Corinthians 13:11-13;
Matthew 28:16-20



- 1 Jeanne Hanley
- Lee Ferguson
- 5 Kathy Croyle
- Robin Church
- 6 Christine Pickel
- Kevin Graver
- Jack Huston
- 9 Justine Weber
- 10 Paul Shivery, Jr.
- 11 Dana Nixon
- Diane Shoemaker
- 12 Emily Rose Harrington
- Jacqueline Miller
- 13 Willem Greer
- Gerald Phillips
- Riley McCardell
- Kenna Mullins
- Janet Supplee
- 17 Helen Pugh
- 18 Giselle Wallace Latta
- 22 Daryl Supplee, Jr.
- 23 Carolyn Sacks
- 24 Ronald Scotten
- 25 Ken Miller, Jr.
- Elaine Swinehart
- 28 Joan Whiteside
- 30 Jeffrey Jackson Sr.
- Larry Ray

GREETERS

- 3 Joyce Letterman & Darlene Gray
- 10 (OPEN)
- 17 (OPEN)
- 24 (OPEN)
- 31 (OPEN)

PER MEMBER ASKING

The EPC has changed the "Per Member Asking" (formerly Per Capita), from a flat dollar figure to 1% of our incoming revenue. One percent of our current undesignated revenue would result in an average "per member" contribution of \$23 to the national work of the EPC for this year. As our revenue and membership increase, we might expect slight variations in this number from year to year.

As you may remember, we are also asked to support the local work of our presbytery (The Presbytery of the East). Members are encouraged to give \$13. With these two offerings, the total "Per Member Asking" for this year is \$36.00.

We ask everyone to prayerfully consider contributing this amount, over and above your regular contribution to our church operating needs. This offering will be sent to the presbytery and the GA office. Checks can be made to Union Presbyterian Church with "PMA" in the memo line.

Union Presbyterian Church
5637 Street Road,
Kirkwood, PA 17536

The Union Press

MAY 2026



ICE CREAM Social

Friday
May 15
6-8:00 PM

- Bounce House
- Yard Games
- Fun for everyone

6637 Street Road Kirkwood
717-529-2000
UnionPres.com
follow us on Facebook @unionpckirkood

Union Presbyterian
To Know Christ & Make Him Known



Union Presbyterian Church
Yard Sale
— TREASURE HUNT —

5637 Street Road
Kirkwood, PA 17536

JULY 10 & 11 7:00AM-1:00PM EACH DAY

upc@epix.net ~ unionpres.com
717-529-2000