



December, 2014



Monday morning, coffee please! Jen is sick, dogs are wet, getting Ryan off to school, (1/2 days for a whole week, what were they thinking?)...putting the house back in order from the weekend, laundry, dishes, paying bills (thank you Eileen), ordering books...thinking about the week and the month coming up, **more coffee please.** Thanksgiving this week at the church, meeting I'm missing this morning, another meeting tomorrow, Hanging of the Greens Saturday...thinking back last couple of weeks...Jen's surgery, new car, phone dying, losing entire Calendar, really tough Memorial for Gale this past Saturday. Wow...I think I'll go back to bed.

Just kidding, one last cup please...I'm already late writing this article, so here it goes (sorry Sharon). Looking out the window at Ed and Bev's house (hope your eye is doing well Ed) there is a lot of gray up there, I guess we really had an amazing summer, and fall...lots of sunshine, it had to end sometime, but we really should be thankful. Even now...I do not see 6 feet of snow, or flooding, or fires, or tornados (oh wait, we did have one of those). Our weather has been pretty tame here in the NW and I assume that it will stay that way (thankful). But that gray up there and this time of year, it can really get people down. Holydays can be hard, the stress of family getting together, shortage of money for presents or meals, or the loss of a loved one, those things can add up really fast. I talked to several of you yesterday who are in need of a vitamin D shot and a bright lamp or something. So how can we stay up and positive when things begin feeling a bit gloomy and we are noticing ourselves slipping?

Philippians 4:4 tells us to "Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!" Sounds pretty simple...it's not that simple and it could take some doing, it also might be helpful to find someone to help us get started. Catching ourselves before we lock the house from the inside and throwing away the key because we are never seeing anybody ever again, while devouring all the ice-cream in the freezer, is helpful. The further we let ourselves go down that dark hallway, the harder it is to find our way back out. One thing to remember is, we all worry, it is impossible to never worry, what we could control however is the amount, so try not to worry about too many things at the same time. It is too easy to get buried under a pile of...well...worries, even small ones. Take one thing at a time and deal with it, and if you can't deal with it, find a way to let it go or at the very least put it on the back burner. Remember worrying doesn't change anything. It's stewing without doing.

**Try to stay positive** by paying more attention to the things that we should be thankful for, pray about that, without stopping. Rick Warren tells us that when we pray, pray with thanksgiving. The healthiest human emotion is not love but gratitude. It actually increases our immunities. It makes us more resistant to stress and less susceptible to illness. People who are grateful are happy. But people who are ungrateful are miserable because nothing makes them happy.

They're never satisfied. It's never good enough. So if we cultivate the attitude of gratitude, of being thankful in everything, it reduces stress in our life and helps us focus on the good.

**Speak it out loud**...sharing with others what we are thankful for...even hearing the words said out loud can be so good for our ears and our heart. Make a journal, a gratitude journal makes it easier for us to focus on the positive, while it is also a wonderful tool to help us recognize and remember that we are blessed.

**Do Not Wait Too Long**...let's everybody have a friend put a lifeline on us...so that just in case we are slipping someone will come looking for us before too long...if it lasts too long, goes too deep, there is nothing shameful about getting a counselor, or maybe some meds to help us through...depression is a horrible demon that can strike out in ways we never thought would be possible.

Let us remember that we are loved, that we are not alone, and we should not be afraid to ask for help. My prayer for all of us this season is for joy, peace, a thankful heart and love...most of all love. rene'

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*I have been asked about the meaning of the change of colors in the paraments (altar cloths) in the sanctuary. Many of you come from backgrounds other than Methodist and this is all unfamiliar. I found an excellent article explain all of it. I hope you find it helpful—and Happy New Year! The church year begins with Advent*  
*Sharon*

## **Church Seasons and Their Colors**

The colors of paraments and other sanctuary decorations correspond to the different seasons of the Christian calendar, or liturgical year. These seasons tell the story of our faith year after year and help us structure our worship services.

### **ADVENT**

The first season of the Christian year. It is a season of preparation for Christ's promised coming. Advent begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas.

Purple or blue are the colors for this season. Purple is the color of royalty as we prepare for the coming of Jesus the King. Some churches use blue for Advent because purple is also the color of another liturgical season. Blue is the color of pre-dawn light.

### **CHRISTMAS**

Christmas celebrates Jesus' birth. This season lasts from Christmas Eve until January 5, the day before Epiphany.

White or gold are the colors for this season. These colors together signify celebrations reserved for only the most important Christian holidays.

### **SEASON AFTER EPIPHANY**

The Season After Epiphany marks the arrival of the three wise men and is typically celebrated on the first Sunday of January but technically, it begins on January 6 and continues until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

This season celebrates Christ's divinity (symbolized by frankincense), royalty (symbolized by gold), and sacrifice (symbolized by myrrh, which is used for anointing and embalming). Green is color for this season. It symbolizes growth as we study the life of Jesus as He grows from a child to a man during this season.

*(continued next page)*

## LENT

Lent recalls Jesus' 40 day temptation in the wilderness and His journey toward Jerusalem and the cross. The 40 days (not including Sundays) of Lent begin with Ash Wednesday and continue through Holy Week.

Purple is the color for this season. Even though purple is the color of royalty, it is also the color of penitence.

## EASTER (White)

Easter celebrates Christ's resurrection. The Easter season goes from Easter Sunday until Pentecost.

White or gold are the colors for this season. Like Christmas, this is one of the holiest and most celebrated days of the Christian year, Christ's resurrection.

## PENTECOST

Pentecost commemorates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the establishment of the church. Pentecost is the fiftieth day after Easter.

Red is the color for this season. It is the color of fire, which represents the Holy Spirit.

## ORDINARY TIME (or KINGDOM TIDE)

This season is the time between Pentecost and Advent. It is a time to reflect on doing the work of God's kingdom and growing spiritually.

Green is also the color for this season. It is the color of growth and symbolizes our growth in faith and understanding in the general teachings of the church.

## COMMUNION AND BAPTISM ( White)

Communion and baptism are not seasons but they are represented by the color of white. These sacraments signify the cleansing of the soul through the grace of Jesus Christ.

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## "We have always done it that way".

Our leadership structure is about to change. These upcoming changes are not to be feared. My hope is that they will be greeted with open arms.

Starting in 2015 our church council will meet less frequently. Instead of a meeting every month we will move to one meeting every two months. Our church will be moving to a ministry driven congregation, instead of committee driven. The goal of this change is to give the members of this congregation a larger say in what is happening in the church.

The one thing that will diminish the success of this change is to hang on to the phrase "we have always done it that way". This phrase is dangerous. We should question everything we do, and if the response is simply we have always done it that way, we need to dig deeper to discuss the value of the actions we want to keep.

As questions arise, I encourage you to ask them. Voicing your concerns and thoughts as we proceed through this time of transition shows the leadership that you do care about this congregation and you want this church to continue to be a beacon of diversity in this city.

Garrett Harrison

## The War on Thanksgiving

November 18, 2014 by [Mark Sandlin](#)



Image used with permission: [ThinkProgress / Adam Peck](#)

The “War on Christmas” is nothing more than a distraction. It’s part of a war-on-the-holidays shell game – a misdirect. While the religious right is up in arms about people saying “happy holidays,” the real battle is being fought on Thanksgiving.

You? You’re watching the wrong shell.

We all are.

And we are losing the meaning of Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving and its origins have a long and slightly contested history. The thread that runs through all those histories and origins is the thread of giving thanks for what we have. Hence, “Thanksgiving.”

We Americans are so clever, aren’t we?

The thing is, we are slowly losing that essential ingredient of giving thanks in the way we go about our Thanksgiving celebrations and it’s a big problem.

Thankfulness for what we have is essentially the holiday’s umami. Umami is one of the five basic tastes. It rounds out our culinary experience making it fuller and giving it an enjoyable, lasting aftertaste.

Appreciation for what we have does the same for Thanksgiving: it makes it a fuller experience, and it carries the enjoyment far into the future.

In many ways, it’s a life affirming experience.

Thanksgiving is becoming something much less than that because of consumerism. Consumerism pulls us further and further away from that life-affirming experience. Consumerism is serving as a giant turkey baster, sucking out the essential goodness of our Thanksgivings and basting the bottom lines of big-box stores with it instead.

With so many stores now opening their Black Friday sales on Thanksgiving Day, the irony couldn’t be any clearer.

It’s as if they are taunting us with it.

And us? We are completely buying it.

Literally.

On a day about being thankful for what we have, many people will be rushing out to buy more stuff. Seriously, the irony of it all is thicker than week old, refrigerated gravy.

Rather than enjoying time spent with family or friends, people will rush out to battle strangers in an effort to buy more distractions. Distractions from what they already have. Distractions from what really matters in life. Distractions from time spent with others.

There is a war on Thanksgiving and the average American is slowly losing it and so many of us don't even see that it's happening. The tryptophan-induced malaise from a turkey holds nothing over the disconnect induced by the media's constant bombardment of us with messages telling us we will not be happy unless we are gathering in more stuff.

Thanksgiving as a celebration and as a day of appreciation for what we already have is a threat to all of those who profit from our purchases. They are so threatened that just a single day a year set aside to be satisfied with what we have gives them the heebie-jeebies like a child at the kids' table who's just been served Brussel sprouts.

The profiteers see this Thanksgiving as their D-Day. D-Day on Turkey Day. This is their Normandy. They have finally made landfall and have started to swing the momentum of the battle. In making the comparison, I do not mean to take lightly the lives lost nor the reason for D-Day. I make the comparison to suggest exactly how seriously those who are waging the war on Thanksgiving are taking it.

At the same time, I am aware of those who need to work on Thanksgiving and those who do not get a paid day off. I am equally aware of those who do not have family or friends or much for which to be thankful. The solution, however, is not ramping up a buying frenzy which requires even those who would like to celebrate Thanksgiving at home to come in to work. The solution is to have better hiring practices. The solution is to pay a living wage. The solution is for companies to show their thankfulness for their employees by giving them a paid holiday on Thanksgiving – on that day of all days.

The shell game continues. Shouts of "war on Christmas" started even before cute little ghouls and ghosts made their way around our neighborhoods on Halloween.

As the two sides of that war powered up their bullhorns to shout their messages back and forth (of which, [I too am a contributor](#)), the war machines of Wal-Mart, Target, Best Buy and so many more fired up their printing presses and spat out their consumer propaganda in full color flyers for our Sunday papers.

I choose to be a conscientious objector on this Thanksgiving Day.

I will not take part in the consumerism frenzy – not even the day after. As a matter of fact, instead of giving money to profiteers, I'll be giving a donation to a fair wage or worker's rights organization. I invite you to do the same!

So, on second thought, I'm mounting a protest – a sit-in, if you will. It will take place around my table and around yours. Join us! Let us gather together in chants of "we will not be moved" – and not just because the tryptophan's kicked in.

If we stand, let us stand for those who do not have enough on this day. Let us stand for those who need shelter or companionship rather than standing in line waiting for the store doors to open so that those who already have enough can have more. Let us stand for those who deserve to be paid a fair wage, and let us stand for those who deserve to have time-off to celebrate this day.

More: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thegodarticle/2014/11/the-war-on-thanksgiving/#ixzz3K0i9HVEj>



## **Well done good and faithful servant" *Matthew 25:23***

We are all so deeply saddened at the very sudden and unexpected death of our dear friend Gale Williams.

The Memorial Service held here November 22nd was a beautiful tribute to her life, lived so fully and always showing God's grace.

Gale will be missed by so many of us, but none will feel her loss greater than the husband, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren she leaves behind. Please continue to keep them all in your prayers.

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