

A Few Short Words...

November 2009

by Pastor Phillip Short

The month of November brings Thanksgiving, and the feast of Thanksgiving reminds us to be thankful to God. It is my favorite holiday. Let's be thankful to God for blessings both great and small.

I am thankful to God for His immeasurable love, His scandalous grace, His unfathomable mercy, and for being there. I am thankful to God for the repentant sinner, the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing flood, and the freedom that He both promises and brings. I am thankful for the quickening heart, the fruit of the Spirit, and His love being shared with one-another.

I am thankful for my wife Giova, for her beauty both inside and outside, for the unique creation that she is, and for her shy smile. I am thankful to God for our daughter Carmen, for the joy she brings, for her inner and outer beauty, for her day-making smile, and for every chance I ever get to spend time and to laugh with her. I am thankful to God for both of them putting up with me, which is no easy task, and for them listening to my stories. I am thankful to God for Chloe, (Carmen's dog) for the way she catches the Frisbee, the way she jumps over fences, and for the way she is rough-housing one moment, but is then affectionate and gentle the next.

I am thankful to God for time spent with friends who befriend Christ, and for the special camaraderie that is present when the church is gathered together.

I am thankful to God for rainy days with a good book, for a chance to see dolphins and manatees, and a chance to see fishing poles on the bend.

I am thankful to God for letters from long lost friends, for the gift of love, and for well-tuned guitars being strummed on the back porch. I am thankful to God for sincere words.

I am thankful to God for sunsets over the St. Lucie river, for the fireworks shows over Bessey Creek, and for any chance to drive over the Palm City, or causeway bridges.

Join me in being thankful to God. Let's recognize His presence in providence in all things. May all of our senses be thoroughly engaged in His presence and blessings! Thanksgiving in the only and obvious response!

I want to talk with you about stewardship.

Stewardship is defined as the responsibility that Christian disciples have to take care of their faith, their spiritual and physical health, and their church.

We need to talk about stewardship at the Stuart First United Methodist Church because we depend on Christian disciples to take care of their church. We look to the disciplined and generous stewards who willingly give of both their time and their monetary donations to see to it that we as an institution make ends meet.

We have had much to report on the financial front for this past year. The Finance Committee passed a very strict and realistic budget for the first time in the church's recent memory. It was and still is void of any extravagance. Dr. Susan Schmidt, our Administrative Pastor, has seen to it that frugality is practiced and celebrated. And we have good results to report. While our staff is much smaller, we have managed to provide a growing number of ministries, services, and out-reaches. The staff itself is practicing good stewardship! But we are functioning in a down-turned economy. Giving to the church has fallen by 11%, even while worship attendance has slowly grown in comparison to last year. And this is where there is "not-so-good" news to report. If we were actually spending our budget, we would be in the red by \$175,000. Because we have been good stewards, we have managed to save a surplus that presently stands at a little over \$30,000.

But the year 2010 is on its' way and it will bring new challenges with it. There will be new demands on our budget.

So I am thanking those Christian disciples here at the Stuart First United Methodist Church who have been giving financial support to the church. To those who do not yet have a financial relationship with the church, I invite you to begin one so that I may welcome you to the life of Christian stewardship. And to all, I want to tell you that we need your help and that we are being good stewards of your stewardship!

These discussions will be held, and I thank you for your Christian charity and maturity in advance.

><> Love! Pastor Phillip