



Chestnut Street United Methodist Church
161 Chestnut Street
Gardner, Ma. 01440
978-632-1978

November 2026

The Connection

Thanksgiving is more than a holiday; it is a posture of the heart that shapes how we live together as the body of Christ and interact with the community that we live in. In **Colossians 2:6-7** Paul invites us to live rooted and built up in Christ, and to abound in thanksgiving. When we learn to give with thanksgiving, our communities become living expressions of grace, generosity, and gratitude that reflects the gospel to a watching world.

In **2 Corinthians** Paul encourages that we should give cheerfully, "not reluctantly" (as though giving involved a painful loss) or "under compulsion" (because there seems to be no alternative or because of exerted pressure).⁵ Paul was not talking about unlimited prosperity; he was saying that God will provide everything we need so we can give without fear. **2 Corinthians 9:6-8** ⁶Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Generosity is a missional act. It opens doors to proclaim the gospel, meet tangible needs, and unite the church with the world in transformative love. When we invest in the community—sharing food, shelter, spiritual support, education, and opportunity—we become partners with God in healing brokenness. The model in Paul's letters is not just to collect, but to relieve, empower, and multiply generosity so that God's grace reaches far beyond a single church body to the neighborhoods around the church. The result is not a few good deeds but a shared flow of blessing that resources the poor, the church, and the mission of Jesus.

As we give, we participate in a Kingdom economy where generosity opens doors for our neighborhood community. **Luke 6: 38** "Give, and it will be given to you". The measure used in giving determines the measure of return—not merely financially, but in spiritual fruit as the church is strengthened, neighbors are blessed, and lives are transformed. For application, in Paul's letters he advocates giving in proportion to one's means, not giving by any particular percentage. With what we are able to give in funds and in time relationships will build as we first listen, serve, and ultimately earn the right to share the hope we have. Collaborating with local ministries, nonprofits, and neighbors offers the opportunity to align our outreach and multiply the impacts that meets real needs and honors God. **2 Corinthians 9:12** "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God". In giving to meet needs our participation in God's generous mission blesses both giver and receiver, and points hearts to the One who gave His all for us.

Free to give. When we hear those words, they may stir a mix of questions, but at its core lies a liberating truth: generosity is not a burden to bear, but a doorway to blessing and in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul invites the church to lean into missional giving—the kind that blesses others and shapes our own hearts in Christ.



Thanksgiving

Discussion Group 9:15 am

Worship Service 10 am

Sunday School 10 am

All are Welcome!

Inside this issue

Devotion..... 1

Announcements..... 2

Community Supper

Poster3

Children's Page4



FREE
Community
Supper
Wednesday
November 18th
Pizza!



Lots of good
Bargains!
Thrift Store
Wednesday
9-2 pm
Saturday
9-12 pm

Announcements:

Permission to copy this newsletter and share not needed.
Please do and thank you.

Saturday, November 14th
Rail Road Club Dinner



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Sunday November 22nd at 2 pm
At the Chestnut Street United
Methodist Church, 161 Chestnut Street,
Gardner.

A time of worship when the community
comes together for thanksgiving and
prayer for peace, hope, love for one
another, and the joy that passes under-
standing.

Fellowship and dessert treats following.
All are welcome!



****St Paul's Episcopal Church** is teaming up with our supper team to help us provide a free meal on the third Wednesday of every month. This month it will be on Wednesday November 18th for Pizza and Salad
Please share an invitation with your neighbor or a friend for a good meal and friendly faces after a busy day. Have a shut in neighbor or family member?
The team will pack up a home made meal for delivery.

****Reminder:** Church Council will meet on November 8th at 11 am this month.
Please forward concerns or announcements to Debra Stephenson.

FREE COMMUNITY SUPPER

Pizza and Salad

Wednesday November 18, 2026
Serving starts at 5:00pm



Come for a free meal and friendship

In partnership with
St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Chestnut Street United Methodist Church
161 Chestnut St

Gardner MA 01440

www.Gardnerumc.org

Children's Page-

In September 1620, approximately 100 English men and women set sail for the New World aboard the Mayflower. The ship landed on the shores of what we now know as Massachusetts and anchored at Plymouth Rock. It was there that they would form the first permanent settlement in New England. More than half of the original settlers died during the first winter.

The native people who lived in the area around the Plymouth Colony were members of various tribes of the Wampanoag people who had lived in the area for many years. Soon after settling there, the Pilgrims came in contact with Squanto, an English-speaking native. Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn, which became an important crop, as well as where to fish and hunt. Our Thanksgiving holiday stems from a feast held in the autumn of 1621 by the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag to celebrate the colony's first successful harvest. Thanksgiving was proclaimed an official National holiday by President Abraham Lincoln on November 26, 1863.

There are many Thanksgiving traditions, and your family may have one that you can anticipate for your family gathering and meal. Many people follow a tradition of placing five kernels of corn (or candy corn as a modern twist) on the empty plate at each place on the Thanksgiving dinner table. These five kernels of corn serve as a reminder of days when food was scarce and how God provides for our needs. Before the meal, each person removes each of the five kernels of corn from his or her plate and tells five things for which he or she has to be thankful. What would be on your list of 5 things for which you are thankful?

Thanksgiving Top Ten List

You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 2 Corinthians 9:11



F Q G J Y U B H J I I S I C K
F I F Z U X B D R O T K N O W
V F K P X L P F Y N T S D L S
Q A O P G Z Z X E Z E N E D U
A F K O J Y A R Y R Y G N Y Q
C X F L D A A L I P O E V O B
E Q R H I P I O Y L I H C K E
C A U U E M X U F R C L N R N
V Q L S A A Y Z F L L D J I J
O N U F X R L Z B G O C I L B
C O F L T N V T F I T M J C C
H V T N D N B U H H H W E Y O
W K U S E T E A C H E R S L S
X O Z J D E Q I Z W S Y U H L
C N G Y A O X V G Q Y H S K R

JESUS	FAMILY	TEACHERS	HEALTH	FOOD
PARENTS	FRIENDS	COUNTRY	CLOTHES	HOUSE

Why turkey on Thanksgiving?



Believe it or not... there is actually no mention whatsoever of turkeys when reading archives of the "first Thanksgiving" between the Pilgrims and Wampanoag people. Yes, they did indeed have a dinner, but it's not known and potentially unlikely that turkey was served on that day.

The popularization of serving turkeys with meals started at some point in the 19th century, and this was due to a variety of reasons. For one, turkeys were... everywhere! There were at least 10 million turkeys in America at the time of European contact. That's a whole lot of birds for one species. The abundance of turkeys during this time made them a good source for everyday meals—especially given their size, which could easily feed an entire family. Still, while an extremely popular source of food, this wasn't enough to make turkeys the unofficial Thanksgiving mascot. What led to where we are today is slightly debated, but there are quite a few good, informational takes.

Some people credit Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843) with creating the "turkey on Thanksgiving" sentiment, because that's what the characters in this story ate. That's a cute idea! Though, some people are more in tune with crediting the historic author, Sarah Josepha Hale for the turkey movement. She published a novel in 1827 named *Northwood*, where there was chapter all about Thanksgiving in New England. The meals that she described all had turkey in them. While the turkey in itself was not a main point of her book, her campaigns to get Thanksgiving to become an official holiday were. So, when it did finally become a proclaimed U.S. holiday in 1863 under the power of President Abraham Lincoln, the country saw turkey served as the main dish in the first official dinner.

Today, turkeys are practically the *symbol* of Thanksgiving!

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PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

