

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)

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MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

No. 21

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Most Thankful

I invite you to consider what it is that you might be the most thankful for. As I reflect upon my life as a child, I remember asking the people around me questions of theodicy such as “Who is God? Where is God? How was I made? What is heaven?” At about the age of four, no one in my adult world knew how to explain the answers in a way that a small child could understand. One of the things that I am most thankful for is the neighbor that lived behind us. Upon hearing my questions she invited me and my brother Paul to go to church with their family on Sunday mornings. We moved to Lynchburg when I was age 11 and I was absent from the life of the church for about three years. A local pastor heard that a family with children moved in the neighborhood and came by the house shortly after we moved in. He offered us free hotdogs after church if we were to ride the bus. Mama spoke up for us and told him that we were baptized and would like to get back to church. After he left I told mama that there was no way that I would be going to a church that offered me hotdogs for riding the bus after church. This concept just didn't sink in very well with my intuition. After my Aunt and her family moved into the second house up the street from us I began to go to church with them. One of the things that I am most thankful for is the opportunity that presented itself back then for me to get back into the life of the church. When I graduated from High School I went into the Marine Corps. I missed my graduation ceremony because I had to be in Richmond on graduation day. By the time I got back to Lynchburg the graduation ceremony had already started. If my seat was left empty I could have snuck in there. I would not have been embarrassed because I was a bit on the wild side back then. I had to wait until it was all over and then go up to the stage and ask for my diploma. During boot camp I went to church services every Sunday. Unfortunately many Marines went to services to get out of the barracks and away from the drill instructors. As a consequence, the attendance was huge. It wasn't the same spiritual feeling that was alive in the local church. I am exceptionally thankful for the Christian experience that lives in a small neighborhood church.

I am thankful for the long and winding road that leads me into ministry. I think the thing that ranks at the top of the list of things that I am thankful for within the realm of ministry is God calling me to serve. One day a young fellow was standing at the top of the stairs and called down to Brenda telling her that he did not have a Sunday school teacher. My heart sank. I could not understand how or why a Sunday school class would be without a teacher. I immediately volunteered but for reasons that I very well understand, it took a while for me to be able to fulfill that position. One after another, I just simply began filling in gaps of servitude that exist within ministry. These opportunities to serve the Lord with my Christian friends turn out to be some of my fondest memories. There are always gaps within ministry. Jesus teaches us in Matthew chapter 25, the necessity of living a life of faithful servitude. We should all be looking for ways to fill in gaps that exist within ministry.

The most stressful time for me in ministry was when the church was captivated by conflict. During this time period I made several trips to the sanctuary for private prayer and asked the Lord for guidance. I'm not one to say the Lord spoke to me but somehow I already knew the answer. The call to ministry was a matter of filling in the gaps that exist and I just simply had to take the next step. I hope you take the time to reflect on the things that you are thankful for and return your thanks to the Lord by serving the Lord whenever you see an existing gap in the Lord's ministry.

Thank you,

George