

# MVCC Voices

The Monthly Newsletter Of  
Moraine Valley Community Church

For the Month of November 2015

## From The Pastor's Desk

By Pastor Derek  
MASON



This month (which celebrates Thanksgiving) I encourage everyone to take some time to really look at **Psalm 30**. *In fact, go ahead and get a Bible right now, so we can look at it together... Ready?* King David wrote this song for the dedication of the Temple (an event which occurred after his death). The song reflects a theme of personal thanksgiving to the LORD for His repeated care and deliverance throughout David's life. I know that life can have many seasons which overwhelm and seem to defeat us but this song calls us to remember that the LORD has always been there and has provided for us. David had multiple occurrences where he faced death and crushing anxieties. Yet he calls all the saints (people of God) to sing praises to the LORD, who is faithful and give thanks to His holy name (v. 4). He declares with confidence that the enemies which come against us will not ultimately prevail. The LORD heals us when we cry out to Him and saves us from the pit of hell. The LORD gives us life, when death inundates us.

Interestingly, David dedicates a section to the discipline of the LORD (vv. 5-7). He says that the LORD's anger is only

for a moment but His favor is for a lifetime. His discipline is to keep us from wandering into places of danger (to keep us close). Even in this world of sin and suffering, we can still have an intimate relationship with the LORD. David was truly a man who walked with God (knew Him) and did many heroic things. He was well aware that his power came from the LORD and not himself. This is where

humanity was meant to be (knowing and reflecting God). David was filled with the Holy Spirit (the power of God) and it enabled him to do amazing things. Likewise, because of Jesus, we all have access to this same power. David brought the presence of God (the Tabernacle) to God's people in a greater measure (the Temple). Jesus magnified this very same concept by making all His believers the Temple of God! *The Spirit of God would not just be among His people but now would live in them!* Discipline keeps the Temple (our bodies) pure / holy, so that the Spirit will remain there and not be a destructive force against us.

Why does God do all this? Why does He spend so much time and effort rescuing us and disciplining us? Verses 8-12 address these questions. David cries to the LORD because he knows that the LORD hears him and is willing to save him (love and covenant). But also, the purpose of the LORD's salvation is because David cannot praise Him and tell others of the LORD's salvation when he is dead. No, David knows that he has a responsibility (an expectation) and an honor to sing to others (tell them) about the salvation of the LORD. He will not be silent but rather will give

thanks to the LORD before all the earth - for as long as life is in him! Our struggles and challenges force us to realize that we need help. The bigger the challenge the quicker we realize that we need a mighty force to help us and hopefully we reach for the LORD (the ultimate power). The LORD absolutely expects us to share with others what He has done for us (His steadfast love to His people). We are to "Sing of His praise and not be silent!" (v. 12). So, no matter what our pain and challenges are – may we cry out to our LORD for His salvation, learn to continually walk with Him and then share what He has done for us with others. May we praise the LORD, for His steadfast love endures forever! Remembering these things should result in the overflowing of thanksgiving in our lives – that we have a trustworthy, powerful and good God whose presence goes with us! We have nothing to fear. Amen.

Many Blessings,  
Pastor Derek Mason

## Church Signs

Those little pearls of wisdom  
found in front of America's  
Churches

Everyone has a knee-mail account, but not everyone uses it.

Exposure to the Son prevents burning.

Forbidden fruit creates many jams.

Forgive your enemies; it'll mess with their mind.

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11-23-2009

I SENSE THAT SOME OF YOU ARE FOCUSED  
MORE ON YOUR THANKSGIVING DINNERS  
THAN ON MY SERMON

## Birthdays Etc.

Wendy Beehn	Nov. 13 (out of town)
Roy Beehn, Jr.	Nov. 16 (out of town)
Marilyn Crettol	Nov. 24
Tom Healy	Nov. 24
Tony Zappa	Nov. 30

## Food For Thought

THE THANKSGIVING  
"SPECIAL" BOUQUET

Sandra felt as low as the heels of her Birkenstocks as she pushed against a November gust and the florist shop door. Her life had been easy, like spring breeze. Then in the fourth month of her second pregnancy, a minor automobile accident stole her ease.

During this Thanksgiving week she would have delivered a son. She grieved over her loss. As if that weren't enough, her husband's company threatened a transfer. Then her sister, whose holiday visit she coveted, called saying she could not come. What's worse, Sandra's friend infuriated her by suggesting her grief was a God-given path to maturity that would allow her to empathize with others who suffer.

"She has no idea what I'm feeling," thought Sandra with a shudder.

Thanksgiving? Thankful for what? She wondered. For a careless driver whose truck was hardly scratched when he rear-ended her? For an air bag that saved her life but took that of her child?

"Good afternoon, may I help you?" The shop clerk's approach startled her.

"I...I need an arrangement," stammered Sandra.

"For Thanksgiving? Do you want beautiful but ordinary, or would you like to challenge the day with a customer favorite I call the Thanksgiving "Special?" asked the shop clerk. "I'm convinced that flowers tell stories," she continued. "Are you looking for something that conveys 'gratitude' this Thanksgiving?"

"Not exactly!" Sandra blurted out. "In the last five months, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong."

Sandra regretted her outburst, and was surprised when the shop clerk said, "I have the perfect arrangement for you."

Then the door's small bell rang, and the shop clerk said, "Hi, Barbara...let me get your order."

She politely excused herself and walked toward a small workroom, then quickly reappeared, carrying an arrangement of greenery, bows, and long-stemmed thorny roses; Except the ends of the rose stems were neatly snipped: there were no flowers.

"Want this in a box?" asked the clerk.

Sandra watched for the customer's response. Was this a joke? Who would want rose stems with no flowers! She waited for laughter, but neither woman laughed.

"Yes, please," Barbara replied with an appreciative smile. "You'd think after three years of getting the special, I wouldn't be so moved by its significance, but I can feel it right here, all over again," she said as she gently tapped her chest.

"Uh," stammered Sandra, "that lady just left with, uh...she just left with no flowers!"

"Right, said the clerk, "I cut off the flowers. That's the Special. I call it the Thanksgiving Thorns Bouquet."

"Oh, come on, you can't tell me someone is willing to pay for that!" exclaimed Sandra.

"Barbara came into the shop three years ago feeling much like you feel today," explained the clerk. "She thought she had very little to be thankful for. She had lost her father to cancer, the family business was failing, her son was into drugs, and she was facing major surgery."

"That same year I had lost my husband," continued the clerk, "and for the first time in my life, had just spent the holidays alone. I had no children, no husband, no family nearby, and too great a debt to allow any travel."

"So what did you do?" asked Sandra.

"I learned to be thankful for thorns," answered the clerk quietly. "I've always thanked God for good things in life and never to ask Him why those good things happened to me, but when bad stuff hit, did I ever ask! It took time for me to learn that dark times

are important. I have always enjoyed the 'flowers' of life, but it took thorns to show me the beauty of God's comfort. You know, the Bible says that God comforts us when we're afflicted, and from His consolation we learn to comfort others."

Sandra sucked in her breath as she thought about the very thing her friend had tried to tell her. "I guess the truth is I don't want comfort. I've lost a baby and I'm angry with God."

Just then someone else walked in the shop.

"Hey, Phil!" shouted the clerk to the balding, rotund man.

"My wife sent me in to get our usual Thanksgiving arrangement...twelve thorny, long-stemmed stems," laughed Phil as the clerk handed him a tissue-wrapped arrangement from the refrigerator.

"Those are for your wife?" asked Sandra incredulously. "Do you mind me asking why she wants something that looks like that?"

"No...I'm glad you asked," Phil replied. "Four years ago my wife and I nearly divorced. After forty years, we were in a real mess, but with the Lord's grace and guidance, we slogged through problem after problem. He rescued our marriage. Jenny here (the clerk) told me she kept a vase of rose stems to remind her of what she learned from "thorny" times, and that was good enough for me. I took home some of those stems. My wife and I decided to label each one for a specific "problem" and give thanks for what that problem taught us."

As Phil paid the clerk, he said to Sandra, "I highly recommend the Special."

"I don't know if I can be thankful for the thorns in my life," Sandra said to the clerk. "It's all too...fresh."

"Well," the clerk replied carefully, "my experience has shown me that thorns make roses more precious. We treasure God's providential care more during trouble than at any other time. Remember, it was a crown of thorns that Jesus wore so we might know His love. Don't resent the thorns."

Tears rolled down Sandra's cheeks. For the first time since the accident, she loosened her grip on resentment.

"I'll take those twelve long-stemmed thorns, please," she managed to choke out.

"I hoped you would," said the clerk gently. "I'll have them ready in a minute."

"Thank you. What do I owe you?" Sarah asked.

"Nothing; nothing but a promise to allow God to heal your heart. The first year's arrangement is always on me." The clerk smiled and handed a card to Sandra. "I'll attach this card to your arrangement, but maybe you would like to read it first."

It read: "My God, I have never thanked You for my thorns. I have thanked You a thousand times for

my roses, but never once for my thorns. Teach me the glory of the life I bear; teach me the value of my thorns. Show me that I have climbed closer to You along the path of pain. Show me that, through my tears, the colors of Your rainbow look much more brilliant."

Praise Him for your roses, thank him for your thorns.

Author Unknown



## From the Elders Table

November is a month for Thanksgiving. Most of the time we are content to simply say "Thank you" to God for good health, our daily meals, a safe home and other human comforts.

As Elders of our church, we want to say "Thank You" to God for sending Pastor Derek to us – first as a guest pastor, then as interim pastor, followed by a call to be our Senior Pastor.

During his time with us, Pastor Derek has helped us establish not only one Bible study, but two Bible studies each Wednesday.

A group of prayer warriors meet regularly to pray for our church and the spiritual and physical needs of our people.

We are thankful that there are two women's groups now – Rachel Circle led by Dorothy Martin and Women of Purpose, led by Edna Miller.

A new men's group is alive and well under the leadership of Rob Thompson and Tony Juarez.

Megan Bustamonte is working to build a Youth Ministry for Jr. High, Sr. High, and yes, even College-age students.

The LORD continues to evolve and add to our worship ministry, and we are grateful that Rob Thompson has accepted the Worship Leader role which was recently offered to him.

There are several other very important ministries which are taking form, and we are thankful for all the leaders which God has provided for us to lead them all.

We are thankful, too, for the welcoming and friendly people of Savior Divine Lutheran Church who work with us on meetings and project requirements, joint services, a combined fellowship time each Sunday, and joint efforts from our congregations concerning Elsie's Pantry.

Elsie's Pantry continues to serve more and more people in the community with not only food for the body, but blood pressure monitoring, flu shots, nutritional advice, and counseling as requested.

Over the past several months we've had our congregation grow as God brings people into our fellowship. If you look around on a Sunday morning, you'll realize that perhaps half our congregation are relatively new attendees and members.

We invite you to also be thankful for all God has done for you.

As Elders, we are especially thankful that God is working here in the lives of all His people, and we ask for the LORD's continued blessings into the future.

We are most thankful for the gift of Jesus Christ, who gave His life to atone for our sins and to bring us into fellowship with Almighty God. What a wonderful thing for which to be thankful.

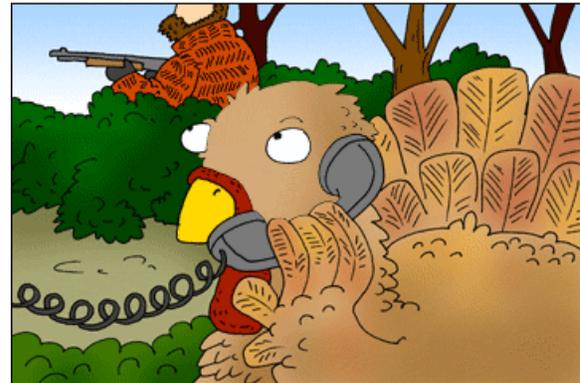
Virginia Beehn on behalf of the MVCC Elders

- Dorothy Martin's brother-in-law (Jeff) – cancer
- Roy Beehn – provisions, strength, for his open heart surgery
- Edna Miller – permanent employment
- Tony Juarez – new job closer to his home
- Pepe's grandson's passing – for all affected
- Russ McGurdy – job & insurance situation, surgery and pain relief
- Gary Rizzo (Lois' son) – police officer injured, healing, recovery
- Kim Healy – work challenges, endurance & provisions, blessings
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## Remember in Prayer...

- Elsie's Food Pantry: provisions/wisdom/protection
- MVCC: wisdom/guidance/protection
  - Hearts to serve – to build our church (formation of ministries)
  - Discipleship/transformation/leadership development
  - Youth and Children's Ministry growth and development
- Tony Zappa – knees/back
- Emmitt Hayes – heart/health/ condo restoration and living arrangements
  - daughter (Jerri) – God's will to be done / His presence
- Pete Delgado – dementia (Sarah – strength)
- Vi Wagner – hip/eyes/strength
- Mark DeBauche: cancer healing / strength /endurance
- Doreen (Mark's sister-in-law): cancer healing
- Edith Martinez – Sister for healing

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Thanks to Jay Benfield

11-24-2005

HELLO, YOU HAVE REACHED THE SALVATION HOTLINE ... ARE YOU READY TO MAKE A DECISION TODAY?

## Great Truths

Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But then I repeat myself.

**Mark Twain**

I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.

**Winston Churchill**

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