

# The Fairview Disciple



The Mission of the Fairview United Methodist Church is to enhance the spiritual growth of its members and the community by providing sound and meaningful experiences through worship, education, outreach, personal involvement in the ministry of the church, and the general nurturing of the congregation in keeping with the example and teaching of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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Fairview United Methodist Church

Anyone who reads the Psalms knows that these poems cover a broad range of the human experience of God. Some express confident trust in God's watchful care; others cry out in anguish at the seeming unresponsiveness of God. Some offer confession of sin by an individual; others confession for the collective sins of the people.

Psalms are therefore usefully identified by type, though it should be kept in mind that most psalms contain elements of more than one type. Some psalm types are hymns (which is to say, psalms of praise), laments, confession, wisdom, royal psalms, or thanksgivings.

At this time of year it is appropriate to consider the psalm of thanksgiving. An excellent example is Psalm 116. Like other psalms of this type, Psalm 116 begins with a statement of the theme (verses 1 & 2), in which the psalmist acknowledges God's work in his life:

## THE PASTOR'S POUND

*"An ounce of  
common sense is  
worth a pound  
of clergy."*

— John Adams

I love the Lord, because he has heard  
my voice and my supplications.  
Because he inclined his ear to me,  
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

The psalmist gives an account of some of the trouble he experienced, then invites his hearers to trust God in the face of their own troubles (verses 3-11). Following this testimony, the psalmist concludes with a promise to make a thank offering in the Temple "in the presence of all God's people." (verses 12-19)

I see in the structure of this psalm a pattern by which we also may offer our thanks to God:

1. *Acknowledge that God is at work within your life.* "I love the Lord *because...*" God always acts redemptively—especially in times of adversity. Be alert to God's works of providence.
2. *Tell your story.* Give testimony to God's activity in your life. When you recount to others what God has done in your life, two things happen: They are encouraged to trust God; and your own faith is strengthened.
3. *Make your thank offering.* Recognizing that your life is qualitatively different because of what the Lord has done, express your gratitude in the way you live from now on. As the saying goes, thanksgiving is "thanks-living."

Finally, notice that a thankful life cannot be a solitary life. Persons with thankful hearts reach out to others, give them joy, and support them in their own times of difficulty. A thankful heart is a giving heart—giving to God, and giving to others.

My prayer is that Thanksgiving be for us more than a holiday. May it be our way of life.