

Health, growth, completion

Vision



New Apostolic Church USA

District News

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Autumn 2021

Dear brothers and sisters,

As we near the end of this year, I again refer to our recent theme, let us continue to *walk in the newness of life*. One aspect of this newness is to live in the awareness of our almighty Father's greatness.

Recently the Chief Apostle asked that we contemplate God's greatness:

- *His creation is unfathomable* - new facets are constantly being discovered
- *God is omnipresent and omniscient* - He knows the thoughts of every person at every moment, and shares in our joys and sorrows
- *God is perfect* - His work never needs to be corrected or revised
- *His love for all people is limitless* - He created us from nothing and gave us everything. Made in His image, He entrusted us with the earth. Because of the fall into sin, God gave Himself in Christ to save us.
- *God makes new* – He does not just want to repair what has been destroyed, He wants to make us a new being to live in a new world. What a great design, what a great expression of love!
- *God does great things for each of us* - what we have, we owe to His grace. Constantly, He protects us in miraculous ways and takes care of even the smallest details of our lives...

Imagine – the all-powerful Creator of the earth, the universe, and of every living thing *is working* to care and save us! God is working! What then can we say to this? How shall we react? We are thankful!

Walking in the newness of life means being increasingly aware of the love and greatness of our eternal Father and therefore we should also work and live in a state of thankfulness to Him. This understanding impacts our daily life so that we always have a reason to thank God, we always will trust Him because He knows better than we do, and we always will have faith in His love, even if we do not understand His activity.

With such feelings, let us follow the example of our great Father and also actively work towards our salvation by sharing His goodness in our lives with those around us and speaking the gospel message with joy and passion.

Joined with you in love,





Thankful in every moment

Have you noticed that the more you think about something, the more it seems to be true? The more we worry, the more we find things that make us anxious. The more we think about how annoyed we are with a family member, every behavior of theirs begins to bother us. We can easily spiral downward with negative thoughts, however, this methodology can also be applied in a positive way. The more we seek delight and beauty, the more we experience awe and wonder at the world around us. The more we focus on and study God, our Creator, the more we feel His presence accompanying us. The more we look for reasons to be grateful, the more we see opportunities and reasons for thanksgiving in our lives.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.

It may not be realistic to be truly grateful for every thing that is given to us, especially when we consider war, poverty, disease, and suffering. But, *in every moment* we can be grateful.

Even in moments of difficulty, opportunities to grow or change, or perhaps taking a stand for what is right can inspire thankfulness. This is gratitude as a *practice* and a *choice*. We can find this kind of gratitude woven throughout the Psalms. Alongside words of thanksgiving, we find every conceivable human emotion and experience: pain, sadness, injustice, fury, despair.

Yet, gratitude is *insistently expressed*, not in response to the circumstances of the moment, but as an intentional choice *despite* the current situation. One is surrounded by enemies, but recalls how God has sustained him (Psalm 3). Another feels forgotten and sorrowful, but proclaims that the Lord has dealt bountifully with him (Psalm 13). When still another feels threaten, he remembers that God is faithful and the *upholder of his life*, and gives thanks (Psalm 54 ESV). The psalmist in Psalm 109 is poor, needy, feeble, and scorned, yet he gives thanks.

How can we *practice gratitude* like this?

Pause: To be fully open for opportunities of thankfulness, we have to stop and be present in the moment. Rather than being overwhelmed with what we want, or what is wrong, or the next “to do” on our list, we must pause and appreciate the present.

Reflect: What is the unique opportunity for gratitude that this moment gives? Attend to this specific space and time. Do you see the direction of God, or feel His presence in this instant? Do you feel joy at the smile of a friend or stranger? Is there something particularly beautiful about the sun coming in through the window? Does the warmth of a child’s hand in your own inspire tenderness?

Give thanks: How should we respond? Perhaps with a silent prayer of gratitude to God, or a continuation of your constant conversation with Him throughout the day. Maybe voicing your appreciation to another for the joy they brought to you. Further, you could write a note in a planner or journal, to contemplate and remember later.

Psalm 118:24 reads: *This is the day the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.* This verse orients us to the day differently: it is an opportunity for gratitude that is not taken for granted.

Gratitude also makes us aware of our connection and interdependence on each other. As an example, when we give thanks for a meal, think of the creation, the earth, and the animals from which our food comes. Consider the thousands of people that grow, harvest, pack, and deliver our food. In the gift of our meal, we recognize our dependence on God, and also on each other.

Pause to reflect and create moments of gratitude and connection in this Season of Thanksgiving. -KAH



A few points taken from an interview of David Steindl-Rast, author of *Gratefulness*, and *A Listening Heart*

*This is a wonderful day.
I've never seen this one before.*

Maya Angelou



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Join us in this exciting

Season of Advent!

Sunday, December 5

Celebrating the second Sunday of Advent with Chief Apostle Schneider
Divine service webcast from Los Angeles, CA • 10AM PST

Advent Devotional and Family Guide

This year we'll be exploring the *Light of Advent* with a five week song devotional based on what each candle of the Advent wreath represents. This theme will be further explored in a four week family worship and activity guide.



Scan this QR code for instant
access to our Advent resources
starting November 28

