

Filling the Empty Spaces

For as far back as I can remember—and that goes back right near the middle of the previous century—fruit salad has been one of the keystones of Thanksgiving dinner. Bits of apple, banana, peach, pear, pineapple and orange joined with grapes, pecans, coconut, small marshmallows and maraschino cherries. Love that stuff! Throughout the years of my growing up, I'd help Mom make it each year. I've tried to pass the tradition down with my own children and grandchildren.

It's just one of the parts that we pass along after those we love have passed on. The homemade rolls, the bread stuffing, the roasted turkey and all the other favorite dishes become a lasting reminder of celebrations passed. Even watching football together before and after the meal is part of those traditions and will remind us of others with whom we shared exclamations and celebrations.

Inevitably, there are the absent voices, the missing plates, the empty chairs. Such is the nature of this life that there is loss, absence, emptiness. And there are adoptions, marriages and grandchildren. New relations, new births and other changes.

It is not that any or all of those can replace a single lost loved one. Nor is our laughter around the table a suggestion that they are forgotten or no longer missed. It is rather evidence that we have chosen to live on, to continue loving and continue appreciating the blessings that continue, along with the aches and losses.

That is the same thing that we did before they were taken. Even when they were with us, there were others already gone. Their parents and grand-parents, their child, perhaps. A friend from many years ago. Going back through the millennia of our existence, we have always lived in the midst of pain and blessing.

It is good that we take time to acknowledge both and pass along the traditions that remind us that through both sorrow and celebration, we love and are loved. And that something as simple as passing a dish speaks of hope.

H. Arnett—11/28/16

<https://docarnett.wordpress.com/2016/12/08/a-tender-helplessness/>

PRAYER LIST

- Pauline Alvarez
- Lauren Babb (health)
- John Beiler (health)
- Jim Carpenter (Cody Chrismon's great uncle—health)
- Cinco Ranch Church of Christ
- Betty Cox (Brent Barnick's sister—homebound)
- Jake Faires (Air Force, deployed to Jordan)
- Steven Faires, and Lexi
- Nelle Hahn (health)
- Cathy Jones (Leanne Mason's mother—broken leg)
- Shirley Kuchykna (recovering from knee surgery)
- Molly Lind (Linds' daughter-in-law)
- Clay Mason (health)
- Beth McElroy (Clay and Mary Mason's daughter—health)
- Norman Pennock (Debbie Fougerat's step-father, health)
- Ada Powell (Sharron Mason's sister—health)
- T.J. Reid (Nelle Hahn's brother—health)
- Julie Rodriguez (Babbs' friend—health)
- Kathy Schumacher (Cody Chrismon's mother—recovering from surgery)
- Wayne Thanheiser (Shirly Kuchykna's brother—health)
- Nancy Tuttle (Peggy Walls's sister—health)
- Catherine Winegeart (Perry's mother—health)

If you have any announcements or prayer requests you wish to have included in the bulletin or to sign up for weekly e-mail updates, please contact Victoria Johnson: 325-518-9205, victoria@gonzaleschurchofchrist.org.

PRAYER UPDATES

Shirley Kuchynka came through surgery well. She was released on Thursday to The Heights, where she will be for rehab for three weeks.

Wayne Thanheiser, Shirly Kuchynka's brother, is on hospice care.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who helped prepare food for the Thanksgiving Dinner at ISF and to everyone who attended the dinner. The residents thoroughly enjoyed the food and expressed great appreciation for our time and effort in preparing this special event for them.



No Wednesday Activities

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no activities at the building **this Wednesday, Nov. 22.**

College Care Packages

Finals are approaching, so it's time to send out our college care packages! We are asking for donations of snack food items for **five (5)** packages. **Please drop off your items no later than Wednesday, Nov. 29.**

Ladies Christmas Party

Mark your calendars! This year's Christmas party will be **Monday, Dec. 11, at 6 p.m.** at the home of Stacia Sweeney. Please bring a dish to share and an ornament to exchange.

Volunteers Needed: Wednesday Night Meals

Volunteers are needed to prepare the entrée for meals on Wednesday evenings. To help, please sign up in the foyer. **If you signed up to prepare a meal, please send Victoria your menu by Wednesday the week before.**

Volunteers Needed: Communion Prep

Volunteers are needed to prepare communion in the coming months. This task takes very little time and is a great service to the congregation. Please sign up on the large bulletin board in the foyer.

Sunday Night Small Group

There is a small group that meets in the annex each Sunday evening from **6-7 p.m.** The Lord's Supper is available.

Tuesday Morning Men's Prayer Breakfast

All men are invited to the annex each Tuesday morning at **6:20 a.m.** for a time of breakfast, prayer and fellowship.

YOUTH ZONE

TUESDAY, NOV. 21
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL
SHINER JV @ SEALY, 6:15 P.M.
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 22
HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS BASKETBALL
SHINER JV V. SCHULENBURG, 11:15 A.M.



Jacy Chrismon—Shiner HS JV Girls Basketball