

“Give Thanks For _____”

Every Thanksgiving, after watching the National Dog Show, my family sits down to a pretty traditional turkey dinner. Before eating we each take a turn saying something we are thankful for. This is a pretty normal “Thanksgiving Day” ritual, but in my family, we frequently engage in this thankfulness practice throughout the year. I tell my kids that gratitude is like a muscle; it must be used, exercised, for it to work well. When we don’t practice our gratitude it is very easy to lose sight of all there is to be grateful for; too easy to become overly discouraged by what one does not have. At least, for me it is.

This year, when there has been so much loss, so much disappointment, so much grief, and so much turmoil, this practice has certainly been tested.

In the Pacific Northwest Conference, well before the first case of Covid, we have been prioritizing relationship. For years now, we have been learning how to listen, how to share, how to be vulnerable and authentic, how to weave ourselves more tightly together. We have done these things because relationship is at the core of who we are as a conference. We have done these things *so that* we have a greater capacity for doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God. In the time of Covid, we have seen pretty much everything tested. But we have also seen our relationships, and our gratitude, continue to strengthen.

This month we will lean even more into relationship and gratitude, as we seek to increase support of the PNC with a year-end appeal for Friends of the Conference. Each year, more of us discover that an individual gift to the Pacific Northwest Conference reflects the gratitude we feel for a Conference that is vital, camps that change lives, and leaders who impact our congregations in so many positive ways. These gifts have helped close the deficit in our annual budget and enabled us to increase programs and Conference vitality.

This year our theme is “Give Thanks For _____” and we are inviting everyone to reflect on what they give thanks for in this time. Also, this year we are participating in the world-wide generosity movement called Giving Tuesday. This is an opportunity for us, and our gratitude, to be in connection with the gratitude and generosity of so many, across the globe.

Giving Tuesday is always the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Between now and then, I ask you to consider a few things...

First, and most importantly, what do you give thanks for? Please consider sharing your gratitude with others.

Second, if you don’t already, please follow the Pacific Northwest Conference on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pncucc>. Giving Tuesday is primarily a social media movement, and if you’re on Facebook we want to participate with you. But don’t worry, that is not the only way to participate and we are committed to sharing through other means as well.

Third, consider if you are feeling called to give a financial gift in response to your gratitude. More information will be coming out, throughout the weeks of November, leading up to Giving Tuesday on December 1. (Spoiler alert, Giving Tuesday donors will also receive gifts as a part of this alternative giving model. Keep an eye out for more information - coming soon!)

Finally, know this — I give thanks for you. For each one of you. I am so grateful to be here, in the Pacific Northwest Conference, with you all.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Courtney', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Courtney

PS. If you love the idea of Giving Tuesday, or are simply looking for more ways to express your gratitude, we are still receiving sponsors for this campaign. Be in touch with me (courtney@pncucc.org), or Ron Patterson (roncharnley@gmail.com), for more information on becoming a sponsor.