

# SPIRIT SOUNDINGS: NOVEMBER 2018



## SAYING "THANK YOU"

Have you ever noticed how many people don't say "Thank You" anymore? It used to be considered an element of common courtesy for small things and big, such as opening a door for someone or helping a person with a really complicated situation. Those two simple words, turned into a phrase, have almost disappeared from common use.

People who don't say thank you are the ones who believe they are not just eligible for whatever good or service required but that actually entitled to whatever beneficence received. They are the same ones who don't yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, weave in and out of traffic at 90 miles an hour, and think they are the center of the universe.

Saying "Thank you" for the smallest courtesies, such as having someone open a door or you when you are loaded down indicates a deeper sense of gratitude for the larger things in life. And there is so much we have or should have to be grateful for.

First there is the very gift of life for which we should be grateful to God, not to mention our parents. Scripture extols us to give thanks to God for the love of God endures forever. Gratitude is at the heart of our interpersonal relationships and that includes our relationship with God. As we feel more deeply grateful our relationship with God is heightened.

Living in a spirit of "thank you" applies to our relationship with others as well. As irritated as we become sometimes with the ones we care for the most, we really are grateful for their presence in our lives. Sometimes just thanking them for being a part of your life is all the other person needs.

We should also be thankful for living in the United States. In spite of our complaints about this or that, we should understand that our Anglo-American legal heritage affords us certain protections that many in other parts of the world do not have. There are times we take our freedom to work for a society that is more inclusive and more open for granted. Our activities to improve our society is a way of thanking our ancestors for their efforts in creating this Nation where we have such freedom.

Saying "thank you" has been part of our national history since the Puritans following a winter when more than half of the original settlers had died but the summer and fall yielded a promise of survival and growth. George Washington called for a national day of Thanksgiving following a Revolution that sharply divided families and communities; Abraham Lincoln did the same during a brutal Civil War that tore our Nation apart.

Saying "thank you" seems simple. It is not for it means that we acknowledge we, individually and collectively, are not the center of the world. Saying "thank you" means we acknowledge not only our dependence on God but on each other. It means that we recognize our debt to our society now and to our heritage; it also means that we recognize our obligation to others.

As we enter this time of Thanksgiving, let us remember to say "thank you" to God and to others for we would not exist without either.

—Rev. Joyce

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Joyce Antila Phipps • Worship 10:30am • Communion 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday • Fellowship Hour, Sundays • Book Club, monthly  
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## MODERATOR'S MESSAGE FOR NOVEMBER 2018

### *Stewardship*

There's a nip in the air this month and stewardship time has come around once again. Stewardship letters are already in the mail. When you receive yours, please be as generous as you can. **Fill out the pledge slips and please return them to the church by December 1st, 2018**. Timely return of the slips enables our Treasurer to create the 2019 budget. Thanks, everyone, for your faithful support of Old First.

### *Missions*

In the coming year, the Old First deacons have been asked to provide Family Promise breakfast juices on a monthly basis, instead of the fewer, quarterly collections we have seen in previous years. With your help, we will do our best to help Family Promise assist the homeless population in our area.

The Calico Cat Christmas program provides gift cards and needed items to help low income families in our Middletown area. Remember, income-challenged seniors are now included in this program. If you'd like to help, **please write out a check made out to OFC Deacons Fund**, with **Calico Cat Christmas** written on the memo line.

### *Christmas for our Church Musician*

Please remember our faithful and talented Church Musician, Dr. Robert Cioffi, at Christmas. Dr. Robert has not missed a single Sunday this year, with the exception of one Sunday when he went to NYC. On that occasion, Robert conscientiously provided recorded music on the sanctuary clavichord during his absence. He is a very special fellow! If you would like to help us give a special gift to Dr. Cioffi for Christmas, **please send a check made out to the OFC Deacons Fund**, with **Dr. Robert Cioffi** written on the memo line.

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## SPECIAL EVENTS REPORTS

### *Pancake Brunch & Holiday Bazaar / Nov. 11 @ 12PM*

Trustee **Mark Bates** served as the Pancake Meister this year at the Old First griddle, efficiently flipping sumptuous pancakes for the crowd. Mark efficiently cooked all kinds of breakfast sausages, too. Yum! Everyone loosened their belts for a feast of pancakes, their favorite toppings and syrups, breakfast sausages, assorted homemade quiches, organic yogurt and fresh fruit, maple and blueberry syrups, jellies and jams, coffee and tea, orange juice, apple cider and a giant pumpkin pie. Everyone was treated to delicious Mimosas this year, thanks to our friend **Dominick Green**, who brought a large bottle of champagne. Ya-hoo! Trustee **Barbara Bates** and Moderator **Elaine Lent** baked breakfast quiches, Treasurer **Mary Pearson** staffed the "money table," brought delicious ciders, and faithful Deacon **Edna Mohr** provided orange juices. **Pastor Phipps** provided her delicious homemade breads for sale. **Marilyn** made up the cute snowmen posters for the event. Deacons **Gretchen Hawkins** and **Diane Eaton** assisted with the setup, helped by Clerk **Barbara Withers** and Deacons **Edna Mohr and Mary Pearson** at cleanup. Everybody pitched in to help.

**Trustee Chair Peter Ahern** helped space the tables more efficiently during setup, and saw to it that our furnace was checked for the winter. On his drive north to Mass. Peter stopped by to devour the last piece of pumpkin pie.

Thanks to all those who turned out, and tallied by Treasurer's Secretary **Alice Batcher**, the event brought in \$234.00 + for the church. Following the feast, Mark Bates brought us two gorgeous palm plants which we can use later on Palm Sunday, and introduced us to his adorable little dog **Petey**.

Moderator Elaine prepared a one-table **Holiday Bazaar** of choice, donated items for sale in Fellowship Hall. The display will remain throughout the holiday season and move to the Parlor following Christmas. Thanks to everyone who donated items. It's never too early to find a special gift for that certain someone. Shop now!

### *Hessian Ghost / Oct. 20 @ 4PM*

Wow! Our *Hessian Ghost* Program on October 20<sup>th</sup> was a smashing success, largely due to Gordon Thomas Ward, our speaker. Mr. Ward was an excellent presenter and a fascinating guide to a paranormal investigation of Old First. We are extremely grateful that the mist machines performed well without setting off the sanctuary fire alarms and that we had a good audience. This event raised \$1,676.00 for the church. Thanks go to the following people:

Church Secretary **Marilyn**, who creatively designed event posters and helped the Moderator with publicity.

Deacon **Edna Mohr**, who helped set up Fellowship Hall, vacuumed the church and provided some yummy cheeses for the reception.

Trustee **Barbara Bates**, who set up the tables and provided some great "ghost" decorations in Fellowship Hall. Barbara and Trustee **Dave Sorber** (assisted by the Moderator) rolled the meatballs for *Dave's Swedish Meatballs*, a culinary hit with the crowd. Barbara brought a delicious homemade ziti dish. **Mark Bates** brought a huge pie for dessert.

**Dave's sister, Judy Sorber**, who made her delicious sausage and peppers for the crowd. Thanks, Judy!

Trustee **Dante Ferrari**, who shopped for and provided a new steam table setup for the event's hot dishes.

**Rev. Dr. Joyce A. Phipps**, who loaned us a brand-new projection screen for the program and baked loads of her delicious breads for sale.

**Bob and Lori Levy**, who cheerfully welcomed and registered folks in the church narthex.

Deacon **Diane Eaton**, who climbed into the balcony to secretly operate the Hessian "Ludwig" skeleton and flashed his red eyes during the program. Hilarious!

Our super deacons, **Mary Pearson** and **Gretchen Hawkins**, who brought food, helped set up for the reception and helped clean up afterwards. Thank you!

Church Clerk **Barbara Withers**, who set up the *EventBrite* registration and event publicity on our church website and *Facebook* and helped out whenever she saw anything that needed doing.

Our hat is off to whoever made the adorable edible "graveyard" for the reception table. It was both creepy and delicious!

**Charles Davidson** and Treasurer **Mary Pearson**, who helped our guests park their cars efficiently.

Treasurer's Secretary **Alice Batcher**, helped out at the event, tallied the proceeds and walked to represent Old First in the big Red Bank **CROP WALK** event the very next day. Go Alice!

As you can see from the list of helpers above, putting on this event was a group effort. We appreciate the willingness with which everyone pitched in to make it a success. A very special thank you goes to those who made a personal effort to bring friends to our event. Everyone enjoyed it and other churches are already calling me to acquire Mr. Ward's contact information so their churches can put forward a similar program.

We wish everyone a blessed and safe Thanksgiving, especially to those who are traveling to see relatives. As we all enjoy the bounty of this harvest season, remember the blessings that God has bestowed on us. Make us mindful of those among us who suffer from illness and accident, poverty, stress and sadness.

—Blessings, OFC Moderator, Elaine Lent



## CALENDAR:

The schedule is subject to change. For the most up-to-date information please view the OFC calendar online: [oldfirstchurchnj.org](http://oldfirstchurchnj.org)

For information on office hours check twitter: [twitter.com/old1stchurchnj](https://twitter.com/old1stchurchnj)

### Sunday, November 18:

- **12:00 PM:** Trustees Meeting
- **2:00 PM:** Riotous Readers discusses *Loving Frank* by Nancy Horan
- **4:00 PM:** United We Sing at Monmouth County Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, West Front Street, Lincroft, NJ

**Sunday, November 25, 12:00 PM:** Church Council meeting

**Tuesday, December 25, Christmas:** No services.

### Please remember these people in your prayers:

- ✝ Jean H.
- ✝ Ruth J.
- ✝ Sandy K.

If you would like someone added to the December 2018 Spirit Soundings prayer list, send an email to [ofc@oldfirstchurchnj.org](mailto:ofc@oldfirstchurchnj.org) with "NOV Prayer List 18" in the subject line.

**Reminder from the Deacons:** We are planning our calendar three months in advance. If there is something special you think the deacons should include, please contact Pastor Joyce or a Deacon.

**Calico Cat Thrift Shop | Community Outreach Group:** Help the Calico Cat Thrift Shop, a store for the community operated by COG that sells gently used items and has a food pantry. If you have a few hours during the week, the Calico Cat could use your help. Call (732) 671-0550 if you would like to help in this important ministry.

**AmazonSmile** is a simple and automatic way for you to support OFC every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2974220](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2974220), you'll find tens of millions of eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages—the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, but with the added bonus of a donation to our church with purchase. 😊

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*Old First Church is dually affiliated with the American Baptist Church and United Church of Christ.  
We are a community of faith, open, welcoming and affirming to all.  
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