

A Word from Woody . . . **Thanksgiving Top 10 Lists!**

November is a month we especially focus on having a thankful heart. We take our cue from such admonitions in the Bible as, “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). With this in mind, three members of our church family—Laura Smith, Antone Westbrook, and Eddie Lee—have provided their Top Ten Lists (in no particular order) of things for which they are thankful.

Laura Smith gives her list of ten things “for which I am thankful or ‘the little things in life’.

1. A long hot shower - indoors, unlike what our ancestors faced daily.
2. A date with my sweetie.
3. Postcards and letters -- all neatly tied in ribbons, saved next to my heart.
4. Taste and aroma. Salt. Herbs and spices . . . all of which without a meal is flat. And respectively, a fabulous meal at a fancy restaurant with people whose company you truly enjoy. People who are salt and light. Supper from a dive bar to Galatoire's -- time spent with others over a meal can be invaluable.
5. Great music and fun dance.
6. A cool breeze on a hot, muggy day.
7. A new job! Amazing, awesome God, thank You!
8. Solitude and rest. Time in my prayer closet.
9. Flora and fauna; woods, glens, fields and mountains; beaches and blue waters, flowers, and my Lord knows how much I love ferns.
10. Charity and the opportunity to give back. Our great thanks and gratitude to all of our church friends and family who have helped us in times of trial. Truly, there is no greater gift than selfless love and kindness. We are touched. Your prayers and generosity are deeply appreciated. God's provision is quite evident in this church body -- as in others and we are grateful to be a part of God's plan.

Thank you. All glory to God.”

Antone Westbrook, a senior at Ben Franklin High School, provides his list in this way. “(1) God; (2) Family; (3) Close friends; (4) Good health; (5) My education; (6) Weekends; (7) A bed on which to sleep; (8) Music; (9) Freedom of speech; (10) Food to eat.”

Eddie Lee provides the following as his Top Ten List.

“1. Jesus -- without Him to lean on, life would be a challenge. I depend on Him to give me strength and hope through life's challenges.

2. Holy Spirit -- I can feel God's presence through the Holy Spirit. There is a sense of inner peace that passes all understanding, no matter how difficult life can be. I know there is a place far better than this world after we graduate from this life.

3. Church Family -- We have been blessed to find a great church family in LVUMC.

4. Pastor Woody -- We thank the Lord for bringing us together with Pastor Woody. He has been not only a pastor, Bible study leader, prayer warrior, Shephard, but a great friend to have.

5. My family -- I have been blessed to have a supporting family who is God-fearing. I look forward to my children's future. Both my father and in-laws, who are living, have been supportive to my family.

6. Career -- The Lord has been good to me in providing our financial needs and providing me with a career path that have led me to many opportunities, good friends and workers to be around. I feel blessed.

7. Health -- I never took health for granted after being with my mother who suffered through pancreatic cancer before succumbing to it and watching my brothers and uncles battle heart issues.

8. Friends and Neighbors -- Each day I am with my cycling and running friends, I feel blessed to be able to continue exercising as I approach 70 years young. They not only have common interests, but they are all strong Christians.

8. Shelter -- After visiting third-world countries and poverty-stricken areas of New Orleans, I feel thankful that I have a roof over my head and live in a safe area. I have never coveted my neighbors and am always thankful for what we have.

9. America -- Truly this is the land of the free and the home of the brave where we can practice our religion without persecution. However, it seems the Left is always looking for ways to attack Christians. But I feel God's almighty presence when confronted on issues related to my faith and freedom.

10. Bounty -- We are blessed with bountiful food and resources. God provides for our needs so we are not to worry about what we will eat or have in the near future. As mentioned in a recent sermon on Jesus' words, it is better to give than receive (Acts 20:35).

Amen.”

Indeed—Amen! Thank you to Laura, Antone, and Eddie for these wonderful lists. Now it is our turn. Perhaps we could schedule one of our specific daily devotional times to writing out our list to the Lord and giving Him thanks. With such an attitude our God is well-pleased!

Love in Christ,

Pastor Woody