

I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers . . .
Ephesians 1:16

Giving Thanks

For a long time, I've thought about a Thanksgiving column, and how would I be able to share the gratitude I have for the blessings of the Presbytery of San Gabriel?

Should I have a "Top 10" list of favorite memories, or accomplishments of the Presbytery? Should I thank the people whom I have always relied on, for advice or support? Should I mention the many and varied ways churches showed their gifts—gifts like faithfulness, perseverance, generosity, creativity, or something else? Should I list the people and circumstances that give me hope for the future of the Presbytery?

Any of these approaches are problematic. Some are too specific and subjective—and might even be embarrassing for someone (not only me!). And others would be way too long for any one or a hundred columns. Actually, many of my past columns (and I haven't figured out how many I've written, but I'm guessing about, what, 550?) pointed to events, churches, or individuals who have given me a glimpse of God's realm brought to earth.

In fact, for just about every church in the Presbytery, several totally random memories come up in my head and in my heart. This occurred to me this last Saturday, because I went to a concert that happened to be at Knox Presbyterian in Pasadena. It wasn't a Knox concert; it featured the son of a friend of mine—but it held some wonderful surprises, in the form of the musical group [Mostly Kosher](#), a fabulously hip Klezmer band, and their related [Urban Voices Project](#), that brings together professional musicians and folks from Skid Row and other disadvantaged communities.

As I walked into Knox's sanctuary, I thought about some key leaders at the church, including a dear friend with whom I was a seminary intern 28 years ago and her wise and peacemaking husband; then I remembered one of those "only in church" moments involving the organ and a strange swishing noise; and how Knox is the first of several miracle stories I heard or witnessed in San Gabriel Presbytery; and some of the experiences I've had at Knox.

While Knox is a wonderful church, what hit me was the thought that whenever visiting any church in the Presbytery, I can think of several memories I will take with me as I go into retirement. Some happened before I started, but I was told about. Some I witnessed myself. Some will be impressive and inspiring. Some will be important lessons I learned. Some will make me smile. Some will make me shake my head. But the fact I can do this reflects the rich history of each of our churches, most recently when we worked together in pretty profound ways—not always happily or easily, and we did not always end up with a clear resolution, but I trust we were always faithful. And that is a privilege and a responsibility that I never took lightly.

Yesterday I enjoyed many things in the life of God's people, beginning with an exercise that helped us realize that while we perceive things differently, we are all in the same ark together—and it ended with an interfaith Thanksgiving service in Altadena that reflected the strength of the community that has been revealed in the challenges of 2025. In that service, Mona Morales Recalde shared that there is no word for "thank you" in the Tongva language; the closest corollary is translated as "my heart is full." I cannot count the days when I felt that my heart was not only full, but overflowing—with joy,

with awareness of God's love, with awe, and yes, with gratitude. It has been a supreme blessing to walk this leg of your journey with you.

I pray that you have a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving. And I pray that you may also remember some of the many ways God has blessed you, even in this unusually complicated year. Thanks be to God, for blessings known and unknown.

With thanks, to you and to God,

Wendy