

As I reflected on our annual Stewardship Month with the focus *Thanks-Giving*, I'm counting so many blessings in my life.

I'm thankful for the people in my life: family (biological and chosen), friends (near and far), YOU - my Community of Faith.

- I'm thankful for this Church, for Troy Perry and his continuing vision for US to have a place to worship together. We truly have "safe sanctuary" for all God's children, and, as Troy says, "God doesn't have any step-children!"
- I'm thankful for the ministries at FMCC. Together, in 2023:
- We've celebrated special days like Kwanzaa, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Trans Visibility, Pride, Juneteenth, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Troy's Birthday, Graduation, Women's History, Asian-American Heritage, Latin-American Heritage, Filipino-American Heritage, Dia de los Muertos, Mass of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Trans Day of Remembrance, and our 55th Anniversary.
- We've rejoiced at weddings, graduations, ordinations, retirements, and baptisms, and we've grieved at funerals and memorials.
- We've hired a new Music Director, a new Office Administrator/Personal Assistant, and progressively built up our sound and media teams.
- We've given generously to the churches in the Philippines, AIDS Walk Los Angeles, Ukraine, and the Christine Daniels Scholarship Fund (resulting in thousands of dollars in scholarships for LGBTQ+ students).
- We've expanded our Food Bank ministry, which now feeds over 100 families each week.
- We've continued building relationships in our community with the Trans Chorus of LA, Mariachi Arcoiris de LA, the Lavender Effect, Trans Diaries, and, yes, even Drag Day in WeHo.
- We've gained new church members, celebrated birthdays with cards and cakes, and expanded hospitality.
- We've continued our Interfaith Ministry with monthly online Saturday Night Spiritual services.
- We've made improvements to our building and campus with new lights and hiring a professional cleaning crew.

And...so much more!

All of this is positive, but that doesn't mean we haven't had some challenges:

- We haven't had the \$5000 per month rental income from the pre-school since June, straining our budget further. I'm thankful for all the hard work various teams have done to get the building ready for rental again.
- We also continue to recover on-site worship attendance since the pandemic kept us apart. The domino effect means we have fewer volunteers for worship on-site and off-site.
- Yet, I am still thankful. As you can see, there is MUCH for which to be thankful. Why? Because WE did this; not "I" did this, nor any "one" of us did this. WE made this happen, and I believe it means we're making a difference in our community, and, indeed, our world.

So, THANK YOU. Thank you for being you. And thank you for all you commit to do to move us forward in being the hands, feet, and heart of Christ.

I love you.

Pastor Keith