



## November 2020

More often than I care to admit this year, the disruptions and unrest that we have endured in 2020 have left me disappointed and frustrated.

So when I think about Thanksgiving this month, I am really challenged by the words Paul wrote to the Christians at Thessalonica: “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

In these most unusual and difficult times, am I giving thanks in all circumstances? In this year, in 2020, what are you grateful to God for? Isn’t it just good to simply ask yourself that question?

Personally, I thank God for Cindy’s continued good health, and for FaceTime technology that enables me to visit with my Mom and other loved ones who are far away.

In the EPC, I’m grateful to God for you. For your incredible resilience, persistence, and patience as you have confronted circumstances entirely beyond your control. You’ve had no choice but to change. You’ve adapted, adapted wonderfully to a new normal and you’re moving forward. Not exactly the way you thought you would a year ago, but you’re moving forward, faithful to your call to live out and to declare the glorious good news of Jesus Christ!

One of the areas where we are moving forward, where we’re celebrating progress, is in church planting. In our November 9 meeting, almost every one of our 14 presbytery Stated Clerks noted the enthusiasm and support for church planting in their presbyteries.

Our current roster identifies 37 church plants up and running in the EPC, with more in the planning stage. That number is down a bit, but here’s the good news: it’s because church plants are moving to self-sustaining local church status, which takes them off this roster. The most recent example of this is West End Church in Clayton, Missouri, where Eric Stiller is the pastor.

Here’s a very practical way you can support EPC church planting in this season.

The EPC’s Thanksgiving offering this year is designated to provide financial support for EPC church plants that are struggling financially due to the COVID-19 shutdown.



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In a way, this offering this year reminds me of Paul's collection for the church in Jerusalem. Your giving to this offering will help fragile, newly birthed church plants get through this historically challenging time. And it will be a huge boost of encouragement from our denomination to them. I've been told that 4 to 5 of these church plants could really use our help.

As we give, I trust Paul's words will be true of us: "You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

No matter how you are able to celebrate the holiday with friends and family, I hope you have a most blessed and safe Thanksgiving.

God bless you, and remember: He is risen!