

Being the Church in Christ:

Wisdom from Pastor Paul

(The Brentwood Sermon Series for 2015)

Memorize & Ponder Text – Philippians 4:8

(Full Reading – Philippians 4:2-9)

Week of Oct 4 – Oct 11, 2015

Paying Attention to God's Peace

Philippians 4:8 (NRSV)

Finally, beloved, whatever is true,
whatever is honourable, whatever is just,
whatever is pure, whatever is commendable,
if there is any excellence
and if there is anything worthy of praise,
think about these things.

(Philippians 4:8)

*Throughout 2015, the Christian community at Brentwood Presbyterian Church will be considering how to be the church in Jesus Christ, guided by the wisdom of Pastor Paul. We invite you to **listen** for what the Spirit is saying in the text, then **question** how those insights might change the ways you see things and act in the world. Share your thoughts during the week on the meaning the Spirit creates for you in this text by posting a comment on our website – www.brentwoodpc.ca.*

A Provocative Pondering

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us provoke one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together ... (Hebrews 10:23-25a)

As I grew up, back in Ontario, Thanksgiving was a big deal.

The primary reason, as I remember back to those times, was that we went up to my Nana's in Georgetown and had an amazing turkey dinner. Church was an important part of the weekend and it was always decorated in those striking fall colours that Ontario does so well – reds, oranges, yellows in rich array. My gratitude in those days was focused on family and food.

I still like family and food. In many ways, that's what the church is all about – a community that nourishes you with the grace of Jesus Christ so you can flourish in his service.

But the focus on my gratitude has shifted. Now I pay far more attention to my participation in God's *Shalom*, God's peace and wellbeing.

I have been included and continue to grow in that participation by God's grace alone. It is a profound gift. The appropriate response is gratitude. Everything involved in my walk of faith arises from that gratitude.

When I begin to feel alone, isolated, fearful, disoriented – separated from that source of wellbeing – I breathe in the word 'grace' and breathe out the word 'gratitude.' It's a very simple act. I can do it anywhere. Its power lies in the way the Spirit uses that simple act to refocus my attention to what really matters – God's gift of a grace that enables me to participate in blessing the world along with God.