

I am a Big Proponent of

managing expectations. And normally I feel like I do a pretty good job at it. I try to keep in check what I expect from others from my kids to my wife to my church family and the larger community around me. And I've found that the better I manage those expectations the less angry and frustrated I tend to be. But the negative side of that is it's easy to lower the bar for people in my world then. I don't push my kids as much as I maybe I could. I don't challenge those around me enough. I don't expect much from certain people so that I'm not disappointed.

But, then, there are always those times where my expectations are surpassed. And as much as I enjoy having peace from having more realistic expectations, it is very enjoyable when people surpass what I expect of them.

When Malachi was born, I knew people would take care of us in various ways, from gifts and food to congratulations and shared joy. And I knew who many of those would be, but I've been surprised more than once by those who went above and beyond what I (or even our culture) expected. One example was when we received the monthly delivery of food for The Shelf, the driver (whose name I fail to remember) asked if we'd had the baby yet. When I told him, yes, a healthy baby boy, he went back to his truck and handed me a bag of a couple practical gifts. He'd seen Shaina helping unload the truck the last couple of months and would ask about her due date and apparently took note. And I was more appreciative of his thoughtfulness than anything else.

But, too, my kids continue to surprise me.

Though I try to keep realistic expectations for them at their age and maturity, it is wonderful to see how they exceed those and show love to those around them, especially their family. In the past, I've given each of the kids a couple dollars to spend on each of their siblings so they have a few more presents and to help them learn to give rather than just receive (even if it is my money). Well, the oldest decided, since he had some money, to buy gifts for each of his siblings on his own (and much more than a few dollars for each one). He also included a fairly expensive gift (and something that I would truly enjoy) for Shaina and I. And as much as I am enjoying building this Lego castle, I enjoy it much more knowing his sacrifice and thoughtfulness to get it for us. And I'm not exactly sure what to do with those experiences (and there have been several others this past month for me). In some ways I feel humbled because I'm not sure I deserve them. But part of me also understands the joy I receive when I help others out and take care of them, so I just want to enjoy them as those who provided these experiences enjoy them. But it also makes me feel a little guilty. I questioned whether I am doing for others what these people have done for me. And not to reciprocate exactly what was given or to those people exactly but to do for others those unexpected acts of love and grace. And then I remembered: that's exactly what Jesus is all about. Titus 3.4-5 tells us, *"When God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, he saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit."* (NLT)

And it's a good reminder for our salvation and to simply be thankful for what God did. But, too, we should feel led, directed and pushed to do for others what God has done for us. Not out of guilt but out of the gracious love that we share because of God's work. Serving Him and you, Matthew

THANK YOU!

The Thiner family wants to thank the entire church and the individuals who gave generously for our Christmas gift this year, as well as being able to have time away for the holidays! We also appreciate the time for Matthew to be at home a little more in December, too!

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, January 18th** following our church service. This is a time to vote for board members and consider other business of the church. Please bring any items needing discussion to Steve Trone to be put on the agenda.

Family Night

We will resume regularly scheduled Family Night on **Wednesday, January 14th at 6pm**. We've had a good group coming each week this year and look forward to that even more in the coming months. We have a growing adult class that you're welcome to join, too!

Prayer List

Jody Adkins' brother Bobby – moved to Elms, therapy
Tina Batterton - heart surgery went well
Pat Brieland - broken hip and wrist, surgery went well
Rita Herren – breast cancer, other health issues
Amber Lawson – lung cancer
Melba Lindsey - not feeling well
Rose Lowe (friend of Marion) - blurred vision, swollen optic nerve
Judy Lynn (sister of Jody) - cancer
Bambi Markley (Bonnie Clark's daughter) – leukemia
Sherry Ralston (friend of Fred Fritz) - house burned down
Jaylyn (and Baby) Shaw - in Springfield on bedrest; pregnancy complications
Mark Stoneking – cancer
David Thome (Sam's cousin) - cancer
Sam Thome – heart and back issues
Silas Thiner – broken bone in foot
Praises:
Malachi Thiner born Dec. 11th!
Condolences:
Christine Mauseth family

December Financials

	Weekly Actual	Year-to-Date Actual	Year-to-Date Budget
Dec 7	\$1,026.00	\$50,568.35	\$45,645.46
Dec 14	\$580.00	\$51,148.35	\$46,577.00
Dec 21	\$1,463.00	\$52,611.35	\$47,508.54
Dec 28	\$1,220.00	\$53,831.35	\$48,440.08

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You Are Welcome At
Our Services!

Sunday

Morning Worship.....9 a.m.

Sunday School.....10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Family Night.....6:00 p.m.

Events:

Sun. Jan. 11th – Board Meeting @6pm

Tues. Jan. 13th – Man Up @6:30pm

Weds. Jan. 14th – Family Night
resumes@6pm

Sun. Jan. 18th – Annual Meeting @10:15am

Tues. Jan. 20th – VBS meeting @4pm

Weds. Jan. 21st – Family Night @6pm

Weds. Jan. 28th – Family Night @6pm

All events are subject to change. Please keep up to date by checking the bulletin, Facebook page or website.



Astoria Christian Church



*“For from the rising of the sun to its setting
My name will be great among the nations...
says the Lord of hosts.”*

Malachi 1:11