November 2026 * Issue #3

Preparing for What Matters

November is a month of preparation.

We clean our homes, plan our meals, make room around our tables, and begin thinking about gifts for the people we love. There is so much to do, and somehow, never quite enough time to do it all.

But in the midst of preparing everything around us, how much thought do we give to preparing what is within us?

We can have a house ready for company and a heart too crowded for God.

We make time to clear the clutter from our homes, but what about the clutter in our hearts and minds? The worries we carry. The distractions we entertain. The things that quietly consume the time we once spent in God's Word.

Sometimes it isn't that we've deliberately pushed God aside. We've simply allowed so many other things to move in that we've left Him very little room.

We prepare our tables carefully, making a place for everyone we love. But are we making room in our lives for the fellowship God calls us to? For prayer? For worship? For the people who might need a little of our time and attention?

And just as we make room for the people we love, we put thought and effort into the gifts we choose for them.

We spend time considering what would make someone happy, what they might need, and what would show them how much we care.

But how often do we stop to consider what we're giving to God?

Romans 12:1 calls us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

Not just the time we can spare. Not simply the things we are willing to give up. Not merely what costs us just a little.

God calls us to give Him something far greater.

Ourselves.

Our time. Our abilities. Our opportunities. Our willingness to serve, even when it costs us something.

There is nothing wrong with preparing a beautiful home, a wonderful meal, or a thoughtful gift. These can all be expressions of love.

But none of them should receive the care and attention that we neglect to give our walk with God.

Someone who has no family nearby. Someone who has lost the person they always shared the holidays with. Someone who may spend Thanksgiving alone, not because they want to, but because no one thought to ask.

We cannot change every absence. We cannot bring back the people we miss or always gather those we love around us.

And opening our homes to someone else will not make those empty places disappear.

But we can make someone else's holiday a little less lonely.

The very place that reminds us of someone we love can also remind us that we still have love to give.

And even in the midst of our own longing, we have an opportunity to ease someone else's.

There may be someone who doesn't need to take another person's place.

They simply need a place.

A place at the table. A place to belong, if only for an afternoon. A place where someone is genuinely glad they came.

This Thanksgiving, before we count how many chairs will be filled around our tables, perhaps we should ask ourselves one more question:

Is there someone who is hoping for an invitation?

Someone who would be grateful simply to be remembered. Someone who might otherwise spend the day alone. Someone who doesn't need an elaborate meal or a perfectly prepared home, but simply the warmth of being welcomed.

Because sometimes the most meaningful thing we can place on our Thanksgiving table isn't something we've prepared in the kitchen.

It's another chair.

Ladies' Luncheon

Our first ladies' luncheon was attended by 10, and we had a wonderful time with one another. We hope that you will join us for the next one to be held on January 18 at 11:30 at Two Sisters in Penrose. If anyone does not want to drive, we can meet at the building and carpool. We look forward to more fellowship with our sisters.

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:" Hebrews 10:24

This November, as we prepare our homes for the people we love, perhaps we can also take a little time to examine our hearts.

What has become too crowded? What have we pushed aside? And what needs to change?

Because when the holidays arrive, the house may be spotless, the table beautifully set, and every gift wrapped.

But the most important preparation will never be found beneath the tree or around the table.

It will be found in a heart that is learning, day by day, to put God first.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..." Matthew 6:33

Ladies Class

This month our ladies class study on biblical families will include: **Zacharias and Elizabeth; Joseph and Mary; Mary, Martha and Lazarus; and Lois, Eunice and Timothy**.

As we finish our study of biblical families, we'll see how faith, obedience, and devotion to God can influence not only our own lives, but the lives of those around us. These families remind us that the example we set and the faith we share can leave a lasting impact.

Whether you've been coming to ladies' class for years or haven't joined us before, we'd love to have you study with us!

"When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy other Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

2 Timothy 1:5

In the Word Together

This month we'll finish the book of James with chapter 5 during our first week. Then we'll begin reading Colossians, one chapter each week

The letter to the Colossians was written by the apostle Paul while he was imprisoned, traditionally dated around AD 60-62. He wrote to Christians in Colossae, a city in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey)

Although Paul had not personally met many of these believers, he had heard of their faith and love through Epaphras, who had taught them the gospel (Colossians 1:7-8;2:1).

Paul wrote to encourage them to remain firmly rooted in Christ and to warn against teachings that could lead them away from Him.

As you read, notice how Paul continually brings everything back to Christ. What does he teach us about who Jesus is, and how should that change the way we live?

And watch for Colossians 2:2, where Paul speaks of hearts being encouraged and knit together in love-the very Scripture that inspired the name Linked in Love.

No pressure. No perfect answers. Just time in God's Word together.

The Empty Chair

There is something about the holidays that makes an empty chair feel emptier.

Perhaps it's a chair that once held someone you loved. Someone whose laughter filled the room, whose voice was part of every gathering, whose presence you never imagined having to live without.

Or maybe miles or circumstances have separated your family this year. Maybe life has simply changed, and the table doesn't look quite the way it used to.

Whatever the reason, sometimes the holidays have a way of reminding us of who isn't there.

An empty chair can hold a lot.

Memories. Longing. A voice you still expect to hear. A face you wish you could see across the table one more time.

And sometimes, the ache of what is missing can make it difficult to see much beyond that empty place.

Nothing—and no one—can replace the person who is missing.

But perhaps an empty chair can hold something else, too.

An invitation.

Because while we are looking at an empty chair, someone else may be looking at an empty table.