

And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace. James 3:18

It's harvest time in apple country. Orchards are abuzz with pickers harvesting a variety of apples—Jonagolds, Honeycrisps, RubyMacs, Yellow Delicious, and others. These skilled laborers work long hours, carefully and swiftly transferring the picked fruit from baskets to large bins for transport to local farm markets, packing houses, and distributors. The journey from tree to market doesn't happen in a vacuum; it requires intentionality, care, and effort. The success of the harvest depends on those who cultivate the plants, tend the orchard, and pick the fruit, and of course the cooperation of weather patterns and successful pest management efforts.

The harvest of our life's efforts is really no different, as the author of James makes clear in this week's epistle lesson. Just as the effort of the grower and pickers is reflected in the bins of lovely, fragrant fruit, so are the works of our life reflected in the fruits of our deeds. If we sow seeds of dissent in soil laden with envy and selfishness, our fruit will end up bruised and rotten from the core. Conflict and disputes leave unsightly pocks and blemishes. Slavish attention to wants and unbridled covetousness are pests every bit as damaging, ugly, and annoying as the common stink bug, infesting our lives and distracting us from the work at hand. I doubt any of us would make it past the "seconds" bin.

This work at hand, of course, is the work of discipleship. We are called to live lives of service, peace, or as James notes, "gentleness born of wisdom." The idea of craving power, ambition, and importance are definitely not part of the divine recipe. Instead, we are commanded to take a different approach, integrating servanthood and humility into our daily walk. Just in case we don't get it, Jesus lifts up a true symbol of first century powerlessness and vulnerability—a small child. "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me" (Mark 9:37).

In welcoming and serving the weak, the marginalized, the poor, and the outcast, we grow toward a righteous harvest where all have a place at the table and an open invitation to enjoy God's plenty. Getting there—from seed to mature harvest—is not easy; it is simple, but not easy. It is much more difficult to yield to others and put aside one's own wants and desires. It is more difficult to sacrifice a branch or discard excess fruit that will crowd out the good. Yet we must prune our selfishness and greed if we are to grow, if we are to produce mature fruit for the table. It is tough and it hurts, but it is a necessary part of the process that will yield fruit full of mercy and a harvest of peace. So dear friends, how's your harvest coming along? Is the servant in you carefully picking the deeds of mercy and the fruits of the Spirit? Or are you allowing your harvest to be spoiled by conflicts, cravings, and calumny? Turn your eyes to the grower. Let Jesus instruct you and guide you so that a righteous harvest of blessings and gifts is assured.

September 23, 2018

CENTRAL TO LIFE



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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Trunk or Treat!** Please join us on **October 28th** from 2:00-4:00pm in the Parking Lot with your car and trunks decorated and full of candy to hand out to neighborhood children. Prizes will be awarded to the trunks with the Best Treats, Best Decorations, and Most Original. **Please contact Pastor Kelly Brooks for questions kellyb@centraltolife.org or 505-243-7834**

ADULT MINISTRIES

- **Sundays:** Sunday School classes meet at 9:45am. Choose from a variety of classes:
- **Monday Bible Study:** Mondays
- **WOW Bible Study:** Wednesdays, 9:30-11:00am
- **Starbucks Bible Study:** Wednesdays, 11-12pm
- **Brewery Study—** In Collaboration with X-Ile Ministries: Wednesdays, 6pm-8pm.
- **Clergy Conversations!** Last Sunday of each month, 9:45-10:45am, Central to Life Center.

Questions? Contact Pastor Kelly at the church office or via email to kellyb@centraltolife.org

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

- **Sundays:** Sunday School classes meet at 9:45am in rooms 105 (Elementary), 107 (ages 3 & 4), and 301/302 (Youth: 6th - 12th grade)
- **Youth:** This week... Bowling from 2—4 today. Join us at Silva Lanes, 3010 Eubank Blvd. NE at 2pm. Text Kathy and let her know you are coming 401-4541.
- Youth Group will get together the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month. Watch this box for the most up to date information.

Contact Pastor Kelly at kellyb@centraltolife.org or Kathy Gough at youth@centraltolife.org for more information.



HOMEBOUND COMMUNION

Four times a year (February, May, August, November) on the first Sunday of the month volunteers deliver and serve communion to our Homebound members/friends. *If you are interested in sharing the Lord's Supper with one of these gracious folks, please contact Pastor Kelly or Anne Downing (717-1020).*

SAVE THE DATE

CUMCs Church Conference:
October 21st, 4:00pm in the Central To Life Center



All announcements for the CTL News are due via email to JesusValdez@centraltolife.org by **Tuesday at 5pm.**

CHURCH STAFF

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Get connected! Sign up for Central Connections, our weekly electronic newsletter, at www.centraltolife.org or send an email to Jesus Valdez at jesusvaldez@centraltolife.org.
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Services broadcast on KAZQ TV-32—Sunday, 11 am & 7 pm