

THANKSGIVING DAY



Come, ye thankful people come...

On a Thanksgiving Day in which we cannot gather together in our church home, this devotion is being offered to bring us together in heart, mind, and spirit to give thanks for the bountiful goodness of our loving and gracious God. May this Thanksgiving Day find you and your loved ones safe and well.

HYMN

*Come, ye thankful people come, raise the song of harvest-home:
all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied;
come to God's own temple come, raise the song of harvest-home.*

*All the world is God's own field, fruit unto his praise to yield;
wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown:
first the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear:
grant, O harvest Lord, that we wholesome grain and pure may be.*

*For the Lord, our God, shall come, and shall take his harvest home:
from his field shall in that day all offenses purge away;
give his angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store, in his garner evermore.*

*Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest-home;
gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow free from sin;
there, forever purified, in thy presence to abide:
come, with all thine angels come, raise the glorious harvest-home.'*

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A PSALM

Psalm 136 Verses 1-9 and 23-26

Confitemini

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
For his mercy endures for ever.

Give thanks to the God of gods,
For his mercy endures for ever.

Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
For his mercy endures for ever.

Who only does great wonders,
For his mercy endures for ever.

Who by wisdom made the heaven,
For his mercy endures for ever.

Who spread out the earth upon the waters,
For his mercy endures forever.

Who created great lights,
For his mercy endures forever.

The sun to rule the day,
For his mercy endures forever.

The moon and the stars to govern the night,
For his mercy endures forever.

Who remembered us in our low estate,
For his mercy endures forever.

Who delivered us from our enemies,
For his mercy endures forever.

Who gives food to all creatures,
For his mercy endures forever.

Give thanks to the God of heaven,
For his mercy endures forever.

A reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians (9:6-15) in which we are reminded of the bountiful measure of God's blessings and are called to be cheerful givers in response.

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written,

"He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever."

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

A POEM

This is a poem I wrote when pondering Thanksgivings of the past. I have used this poem at family gatherings during Thanksgiving on occasion.

Thanksgiving in the Dakotas

At the end

When the green growth of prairie pastures has dried to a
rustling, earthen brown, come the harvest moment,
when flaxen and yellow colored grains are gathered up like
Dakota sand,
when the apples, nipped by first frost are gathered in before
the windfall bares the trees,
when the canning garden's produce is preserved in freezer bag or jar
awaiting a tasty comeback.

At the end,

at the very end when all is bare and the ground slumbers under
blankets of frost or snow, resting from the growth it bore,
and bare branches strike a supplicant pose against the chilled slate of
cloudy sky or the ice-blue of a clear one,

then in the swishing hush of the prairie's eternal breeze we gather,
a human bounty, in the steamy warmth of a kitchen filled
with lingering odors whose piercing scents are spiced with grateful
hearts looking back at the hope-filled time of planting,
the rains that drenched, the droughts that dried, the storms that were
survived, and the always astounding harvest that should have
never been, but was.

For all of this, we are thankful. For all of this, we are hopeful
that another moment for thanksgiving will arise.

Norm Wright
November 12, 2008

HYMN

*We plow the fields, and scatter the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand;
he sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.*

*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord fall his love.*

*He only is the Maker of all things near and far;
he paints the wayside flower, he lights the evening star;
the winds and waves obey him, by him the birds are fed:
much more to us, his children, he gives our daily bread.*

*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord fall his love.*

*We thank thee, then, O Father, for all thing bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food.
the gifts we have to offer are what thy love imparts,
but chiefly thou desires our humble thankful hearts.*

*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord fall his love*

(Matthias Claudius 1740-18150

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke (17:11-19) in which we hear the story of Jesus healing ten lepers and the one thankful response of a Samaritan for having been cured; serving to remind us to be thankful for every kindness received.

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

The following prayer was written by Kathy's great-aunt Esther Taskerud. This handwritten prayer was found in a book of poetry she owned and was given to me by one of Kathy's aunts. It, too, has been used for family gatherings during Thanksgiving.

* * * * *

Eternal and ever loving Father, we remember before Thee the weaknesses and sins which so easily betray us in the relationships of the home; but we remember also in gratitude the depth of Thy mercy and the renewing power of that forgiveness which is born of love.

We would be strengthened by Thee that Thy desires for our homes may have fulfillment and that the richness of Thy love find expression in us and in our children.

We dedicate to Thee the homes with which Thou has blessed us:

Our daily life in those homes,
Our words and deed,
Our hopes and aspirations,
Our hearts and wills;

Beseeking Thee to transform them with the touch of Thy divine power, and to bring them into harmony with Thy will. Amen

HYMN

*Father, we thank thee who hast planted
thy holy Name within our hearts,
Knowledge and faith and life immortal
Jesus thy Son to us imparts.
Thou, Lord didst make all for thy pleasure,
didst give us food for all our days,
giving in Christ the Bread eternal;
thine is the power, be thine the praise.*

*Watch o'er thy Church, O Lord, in mercy,
save it from evil, guard it still,
perfect it in thy love, unite it,
cleansed and conformed unto thy will,
As grain, once scattered on the hillsides,
was in this broken bread made one,
so from all lands thy Church be gathered
into thy kingdom by thy Son.*

(Greek 110 CE)

A LITANY OF THANKSGIVING

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us.

For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea,
We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of
Christ,
We thank you, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,
We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,
We thank you, Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,
We thank you, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in
adversity,
We thank you, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,
We thank you, Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,
We thank you, Lord.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in
Christ Jesus our Lord;
*To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and for
ever. Amen.*

HYMN

*Now thank we all our God, with heart, and hands, and voices,
who wondrous things hath done, in whom his word rejoices;
who from our mother's arms hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

*O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us!
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills in this world and the next.*

*All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,
the Son, and him who reigns with them in highest heaven,
eternal Triune God, whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now, and shall be, evermore.*

(Martin Rinkart 1586-1649)



**May our bountiful God bless and
keep us this day and always.
AMEN,**

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