

DEVOTIONS FOR THANKSGIVING

This year has been difficult on many fronts. We have dealt with a wide spread, world-wide pandemic. We were asked to remain in our homes. We were allowed, and even encouraged to leave them and re-enter society. Now the virus is ramping up once again and some of us are celebrating Thanksgiving with just the people we are regularly with.

At St. John's we began the year searching for a new pastor. The call committee worked hard. The council got a name and approved. All we were waiting for was a chance to meet the candidate and have a meeting to call the new pastor. Then the virus struck and everything changed for weeks. Eventually we did meet Pastor Steve and his family and we elected to call him as our pastor.

There are things for which we can be grateful. Actually there are lots of things. God's presence has been with us this year, not in judgment but in comfort and strength, with peace and hope for all of us.

***O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.
1 Chronicles 16:34***

Since God is with us we can be grateful and live our thanks to him and to one another. On this Thanksgiving, I want to reflect on our gratitude for five things: health, home, family, friends, and food.

Is there anything about your health that you are thankful for?

(allow answers from around the table)

Is there anything about your home that you are thankful for?

(allow answers from around the table)

Is there anything about your family that you are thankful for?

(allow answers from around the table)

Is there anything about your friends that you are thankful for?

(allow answers from around the table)

Is there anything about the food before you that you are thankful for?

(allow answers from around the table)



The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.

Psalm 28:7

This has been a difficult year, and yet it is a year where God's love flows to us all. There is a story of the first American settlers, who gathered together for a meal at the end of their first harvest. At the meal everyone was given five kernels of corn. Not five ears but five small kernels. That was the bounty they celebrated the first year they were in the New World. In spite of that small feast, their gratitude was real. They were grateful for life and for blessings and for the hope that next year would be better. They could have spent all of their time complaining, and I'm sure some of them did, but they gathered in gratitude, remembering what God had done for them.



As we gather on this day of Thanksgiving let us recall the blessings of God and let us recommit our lives to the God of love and try, even if just for today, to seek the kingdom of God, living in thanks and gratitude sharing love and drumsticks as we are able.

PRAYERS FOR THANKSGIVING

We praise you O God, our redeemer creator and with gratitude and love we lift to you our prayer:

- For all of creation, in all its beauty and power, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our salvation and forgiveness, which gives us hope for the future and grace for today, we give you thanks and praise.
- For your daily presence in our lives as we strive to love and serve, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our health in this time of uncertainty, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our home and safety, comfort and security, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our family, those with us, those not, those who have died, and those we have yet to meet, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our friends and neighbors and the love we share, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our work and our learning and our play, we give you thanks and praise.
- For our talents and gifts for the good of all, we give you thanks and praise.
- For the daily opportunities to share and help, we give you thanks and praise.
- For the meal we share, we give you thanks and praise.
- For the time we spend, we give you thanks and praise.
- For the love that binds us to each other and to you, we give you thanks and praise.

Gracious God hear our prayers, bless us with your presence and may we all find ways to make our gratitude our attitude for life. AMEN