



First United Methodist Church
504 Jackson Street
Reynoldsville, Pennsylvania 15851-1356
www.fumcreynoldsville.org
(814) 653-8593

November 15, 2017

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;
teach and admonish one another in all wisdom;
and with gratitude in your hearts
sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
to God. - Colossians 3.16



The more I think about the life of faith, the more it seems to me that our very first movement toward God is not so much an act of submission (as in, "Okay, God, you win" or "You have saved me, Lord, so now my life is yours"), but rather an act of gratitude (as in, "Thank you, Jesus!" or "My heart sings with gratitude for your mercy, Lord!").

I cannot help but notice that the very first movement of prayer in Saint Ignatius' Daily Examen is Thanksgiving. Indeed, it comes before Asking for Insight, Looking for God, Expressing Repentance and Gratitude (how interesting that we again offer thanks to God just after our confession and repentance, as if to underscore the essential nature of gratitude to our whole relationship with God), and before Receiving Help and Guidance for Tomorrow.

Maya Angelou wrote, "Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good." (Celebration: Rituals of Peace and Prayer, 2006).

Gratitude.

Thanksgiving.

Let the word sink from your mind into the depths of your heart. Let it become more than a word or even a thought; let it be the very expression of your soul's gladness and love for your Maker, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Let us join together in gratitude to God as sisters and brothers with Christ. Let us sing and pray and hear again the life-giving, life-renewing, and life sustaining Word which rises from our hearts to our lips bearing the gratitude of our souls to the ends of heaven and earth that the Lord may hear and know and rejoice with us.

Our community Thanksgiving Service will be Tuesday, November 21 at 7:00 pm at the Presbyterian Church on East Main Street. Father Bill Barron will be preaching.

Together, "with gratitude in (our) hearts (we will) sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

By His Grace,
Pastor Tom