



Thanksgiving 2019

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” – Philippians 4.6

In her book, *Help, Thanks, Wow*, Anne Lamott writes:

Gratitude runs the gamut from shaking your head and saying, “Thanks, wow, I appreciate it so much,” for your continued health, or a good day at work, or the first blooms of the daisies in the public park, to saying, “Thanks, that’s a relief,” when it’s not the transmission, or an abscess, or an audit notice from the IRS. “Thanks” can be the recognition that you have been blessed mildly, or with a feeling as intense as despair at the miracle of having been spared. You say Thankyouthankyouthankyouthankyou: My wife is going to live. We get to stay in this house. They found my son: he’s in jail, but he’s alive; we know where he is and he’s safe for the night.

Things could have gone either way, but they came down on our side. It could have been much, much worse, and it wasn’t...

And of course, gratitude can be for everything in between, from the daily break of good luck and found money, to the magical, magnetic force of quiet or exuberant relief when you know that something—God ...—has smiled on you big-time.

Lamott rightly points out here the wide range of impulses for gratitude in an individual’s life. Giving thanks can be for our daily bread, our family and friends, or a myriad of situations similar to Lamott’s examples. But the scriptures also remind us that giving thanks is not merely an individual imperative, but a corporate one as well.

We see this communal aspect of thanksgiving in places such as 2 Chronicles 5:13: “It was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make

themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD, and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD, 'For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever...' " and Nehemiah 12:27: "Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with rejoicing, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres," or even Psalm 95:2: "Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!"

While we often offer to God the individual expressions of gratitude which flow from our hearts, we also recognize the corporate nature of gratitude imbedded in our national day of Thanksgiving. We remember how that first Thanksgiving feast celebrated in 1621 by the Pilgrims and Wampanoag tribe was a communal gathering. The Pilgrim settlers were truly grateful for Divine Providence which had brought them safely to the shores of their new world and kept them alive through a brutal first winter, the first spring planting, the first summer growing, and the first fall harvest.

We continue with our communal gratitude for Divine Providence, but also for Divine Love, Mercy, and Grace each year at Thanksgiving. It is my sincere desire that you will join with us in our community celebration on Tuesday, November 26th at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Reynoldsville as we gather with our ecumenical brothers and sisters in Christ to raise prayers and praise of gratitude to God.

May you all be blessed with a deeply spiritual and festive Thanksgiving Day!

By His Grace,

Pastor Tom