

For many of us, November is the time when our thoughts turn to celebrating the holiday of Thanksgiving and in practicing the habit of gratitude generally. As US Americans, when we hear the word Thanksgiving, maybe we remember making Pilgrim hats or headbands with a construction paper feather, designed to represent Native American culture. Maybe we think about Pilgrims and Native Americans feasting together. Maybe our minds are more focused on family reunions, the food, the parades and football. For some, this holiday will be the first Thanksgiving minus a loved one's presence, and that absence will change the tone of the day.

The Bible is full of stories and words of thanksgiving. Our ancestors in the faith thanked God for deliverance from enemies, the end of disasters, for the beauty of creation, for the gift of life and for the gift of healing, redemption and reconciliation.

Every day can be a thanksgiving day. We don't have to wait for the fourth Thursday of November to give thanks. When we wake up, we can thank God for another day of life and a new day of opportunities. We can be grateful for food, shelter, work, family, friends, our senses, the ability to learn and so much more. We can be grateful for coffee, pets, rain and sun. We can be grateful for all things, large and small, that make life possible or more enjoyable or meaningful.

Take some time to say, "Thanks, God, for giving me the things I need, for providing the basics." Thank God for Jesus. Thank God for the Holy Spirit. Thank God for the gifts of hope, faith, joy, peace, love, companionship, perseverance and strength. Thank God for this church and all the places and people of faith that have nurtured you. Thank God for each other. I thank God for all of you and for the many ways that you share your life and love.

Give thanks with a grateful heart every day.

Happy Thanksgiving,

*Pastor Lynn*