

St. John's United Church of Christ

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

Giving Thanks to God

A Feast of Worship

7 P.M. Worship

November 21, 2023

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

Before we make a meal, we have to make certain preparations. Ingredients have to be purchased. Pots have to be dug out. Willing hands have to come together to work in cooperation. And so it is with worship. There is a time of preparation that needs to occur which enables us to enter God's presence, to sit at God's feet to gaze upon Jesus, to open ourselves up to the Spirit, that we might worship God in the right spirit. Let us take a few moments of silence now to prepare our hearts before entering the presence of God..

Prelude

"All Creatures of Our God & King"

arr. Rice

***Call to Worship**

One: Bless God for the good land we have been given. Praise God, who crowns the year with abundance.

All: **We are thankful for the bounty we have enjoyed. God has been good to us through another year.**

One: God chooses to love us and draw us near. God invites us to enjoy the good all around us.

All: **We are grateful for food, shelter and family. God enriches our lives with many opportunities.**

One: Let us renew our vows to God in this hour. May thanksgiving overflow in acts of kindness.

All: **We are here to remember and find renewal. We have come to rejoice and give thanks to God.**

WE PRAISE THE COOK

*** Prayer of Invocation (In Unison)**

What mighty praise belongs to You, O God, for Your acts of love and faithfulness toward us! In Your mercy You hear our prayers, You forgive our sins, You provide for our needs. From one end of the earth to the other, You inspire worship and praise! Even nature celebrates Your goodness. We, too, would offer our praise and thanksgiving for Your mercy and Your faithful love toward us. Receive our adoration, our confession, our thanksgiving. Through the power of Your Holy Spirit make Your presence known among us that we may hear Your Word and know Your will. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn"We Gather Together"*

#276

We gather together to ask for God's blessing,
to turn to a wisdom surpassing our own
the pow'rs that oppress us now cease to distress us.
O God, be present with us, and make your will known.

Beside us to guide us, O God, we perceive you
ordaining, maintaining the power of life
Yes, yours be the glory; let all tell the story
Our God, be ever with us, in gladness and strife.

Offering

Tonight's offering gifts will be given to Circle of Concern.
Please place your offering in plates by door.

Offertory Response"Give Thanks"*

#528

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
give thanks to the Holy One,
give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son
and now let the weak say, "I am strong";
Let the poor say "I am Rich";
Because of what the Lord has done for us.
Give thanks!

***Prayer Asking God to Bless Our Gifts (*In Unison*)**

For food and water, for all the blessings of the land you have given us, for family and friends who enrich our lives, our hearts overflow with thanksgiving to you, O God. We have been sheltered and educated and empowered by your generosity. In Jesus Christ, we have been shown a way to the wholeness you intend for us. Receive these offerings as a joyous expression of our gratitude. Amen.

Special Music*"Give Thanks"***LISTEN TO THE RECIPE**

From the Hebrew Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:7-18

From the Epistles: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

One: Here ends the reading. May God add blessings to the reading and hearing of the scriptures.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

"Remember the LORD your God"

Lorin Cope

***Litany**

One: Today we offer our thanksgiving and gratitude, to the Giver of all good and perfect gifts,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For the tables we share and the bread we partake of within our communities, within our families, and within our homes,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For the hands of friendship that have been extended to us and the grace we have received,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For your churches, tonight uniting our thanksgiving and praise,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For Your continual provision in our lives, and for the embrace of love,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For Your mercies that are new at dawn and sustain us through the day, echoing through the night,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For the gift of Your Son and His example of love,.

All: Thanks be to God.

One: For the new life that beats within us now,

All: Thanks be to God.

One: In all things, we give You thanks and join with creation's song,

***Hymn**

"For the Fruit of All Creation"

#714

**For the fruit of all creation,
thanks be to God;
for the gifts to every nation,
thanks be to God;
for the plowing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping,
thanks be to God.**

**In the just reward of labor,
God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbor,
God's will is done;
in our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing,
God's will is done.**

**For the harvests of the Spirit,
thanks be to God;
for the good we all inherit,
thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us,
thanks be to God.**

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION
A TASTE OF THE FEAST TO COME

A Prayer for Feasting

One: For those who love you, O Lord, is not everything holy, everything prayerful? As we prepare to celebrate any feast, give delight to our hearts and arouse our taste buds.

All: May we truly realize that happy are those times when we can pause in the midst of our labors and share good food and drink, joyful song and story with one another.

One: From the first day of creation, your children worshipped you in the act of eating and drinking together, and beheld therein your divine presence.

All: Each feast is meant to be a taste of that eternal celebration at your table in the cosmic feasting hall.

One: We thank you, Creator of the Feast, for holidays and holy days, for anniversaries and victory celebrations, for homecomings and Thanksgiving feasts, for all these times and many more when we can pray with food and drink, in the company of your people.

All: We thank you, Holy God, that in the holy feast of Passover and especially in the Last Supper of Your Son, Jesus, you gave to us holy signs of your eternal presence at our tables and a promise of the great feast that awaits us in the life to come. May every feast in which we share be praise, honor and glory to you, our Lord and our God. Amen.

The Invitation to Christ's Table

Prayer of Preparation

One: Praise to you, Divine Creator.

All: Thank you for the gift of life, the beauty of nature, the structure of the law and your steadfast loving kindness.

One: Praise to you Divine Redeemer.

All: Thank you for sharing our human existence. From birth through death to everlasting life you have shown us a way worth emulating, bringing healing and hope to those most in need.

One: Praise to you, Divine Sustainer.

All: Thank you for the vision to see beyond the immediate, a calm in the midst of storm, the strength to build an ever expanding community and the courage to bring about any change necessary within our lives.

The Lord's Prayer (*In Unison*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread and the Pouring of the Cup

Prayer of Consecration

The Sharing of the Bread and the Cup

*** Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)**

For the beauty of creation, the gift of life and your presence with each of us, we give you thanks. Work through us so that we might be channels of your mission in the world to build your community on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

SIMMER UNTIL DONE

*** Hymn**

"God of Our Life"

#713

God of our life, through all the circling years,
we trust in you;
in all the past, through all our hopes and fears,
your hand we view.
With each new day, when morning lifts the veil,
we own your mercies, Lord, which never fail.

God of the past, our times are in your hand;
with us abide.
Lead us by faith, to hope's true Promised Land;
be now our guide.
With you to bless, the darkness shines as light,
and faith's fair vision changes into sight.

God of the coming years, thro' paths unknown
we follow you;
when we are strong, Lord, leave us not alone;
our faith renew.

Be now for us in life our daily bread,
our heart's true home when all our years have sped.

Benediction

Postlude

"Come Thou Fount"

arr. Rice

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Circle of Concern
Cyndi Miller, Executive Director

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Ruth Notch, Director of Music Ministries
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St. Thomas United Church of Christ
June Jones, Music Director

Ivy Chapel United Church of Christ
Mike Waller, Minister of Music
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