

THANKSGIVING

How do you have Thanksgiving during a Pandemic? It is always difficult for families to travel to get together, this year will be even more difficult. For many it will be a quiet day with no get together and for some there may not be a bountiful meal provided. We are having a far from usual Thanksgiving season. Stores are having sales ahead of time to avoid the crowds associated with Black Friday. I have never been a fan of crowds except at Church on Easter and Christmas and Baseball games but lining up and being crowded to shop, no just no. Thanksgiving has become all about the sales and the food and some have forgotten why we have Thanksgiving. It was begun as a day of giving thanks for the bountiful harvest. God had carried the Pilgrims through a difficult year and the harvest was good. This Thanksgiving will be difficult as we see the Pandemic worsening and numbers increasing even beyond what they were in the Spring. Will we be thankful for a year that has brought us economic difficulties, sickness, job loss, political upheaval, and especially the loss of loved ones? Once again, our church building is closed to protect all of us and this is hard. How do we remain thankful for that? Well, there are the lessons learned as we shift to recorded services and to the drawing together with phone calls, and the realization that we are more than a building. We will miss the gathering, but the love and caring will remain. Will our grace before the meal be one of gratitude? Will we humbly bow and thank our God for 2020? Will our thoughts be consumed by our sorrows? Will we thank God for the food before us, the home we abide in, the country we live in, the church in action, the blessings of our loved ones and the blessings of those that were loved and lost? Will we thank God for being with us and know that he has not deserted us, or will we ask where he has been? We have been assured that he is with us, that he will never leave us and that his love endures forever. Paul was in prison and he wrote to his friends at Philippi:

Philippians 4:12-13 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Oh, to be like Paul, grateful in all circumstances. As Saul he persecuted Christians, witnessed the stoning of Stephen, then on the road to Damascus met his savior and was changed and became new and was Paul. He was blinded and then could see clearly. He became a follower of Jesus.

Lord, we know you are with us in this time of sorrow, upheaval, and plague. We pray for an end to this virus that is attacking our world. Be with us as we offer our thanks for shelter, food and the love of friends and family. Be with those who are fighting this virus firsthand, the nurses and doctors and all those that work in the hospitals. Be with our country Lord, that we may be united. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry, guide him, and give him assurance and strength in all he does. Be with our Leaders and Staff, bless their work and give them guidance and strength. We thank you Lord for our days and our blessings. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Grace Epperson