

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24th WORSHIP SERVICE

A SERVICE OF THANKS GIVING

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WORDS OF WELCOME

INTROIT: #12 v.v. 2 & 3 *"I Sing the Mighty Power of God"* (Public Domain)

2. I sing the goodness of our God, who filled the earth with food;
Who formed the creatures with a word, and then pronounced them good.
Oh, how your wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye:
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky!
3. There's not a plant or flower below, but makes your glory known.
The clouds arise and spread their showers by order from your throne.
All life is but a gift from you and ever in your care;
Wherever people gather, you, O God, are present there.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:* (BOW UCC) p. 506

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*L: We thank you living God, that in Jesus Christ you have built a house
not made with hands but of a people among whom you live.*

We thank you that you have called us and that we belong to you.

**C: We come now, longing to know the touch of your Spirit that we may be encouraged
to serve you in the world. Come to us that we may recognize you
and sing your praise through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen**

HYMN: #422 *"Come, O Thankful People, Come"* (Public Domain)

1 Come, O thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home;
All is safely gathered in, as the winter storms begin;
God our Maker does provide for our wants to be supplied;
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

2 All the blessings of the field, all the stores the gardens yield,
All the fruits in full supply, ripened 'neath the summer sky,
All that spring with bounteous hand scatters o'er the smiling land,
All that liberal autumn pours from its rich o'er flowing stores.

3 These to you, our God we owe, Source from whom all blessings flow
And for these our songs we raise, grateful vows and solemn praise.
Come, then thankful people, come, raise the song of harvest home;
Come to God's own temple, come, raise the song of harvest home.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE:

L: This Sunday is Reign of Christ Sunday; it is also the Sunday before Thanksgiving. That being said, too often we fail to turn to God for guidance, wisdom, strength and courage for the living of our days. We also often fail to live with a sense of gratitude for God's presence and blessing in our lives. In doing so we fall short of being the people and creation God created us to be. Let us now pause for a moment of silent confession and reflection.

*Moment of Silence, In Confession, Listening to God &
Reflection on God's Forgiveness, Love, Guidance, Redemption, and Renewing of our Lives*

L: O God we beseech you

**A: For all the ill that we have done and all the good we have left undone;
For our failure to remember to give thanks to you and to others - have mercy on us.**

WORDS OF GRACE & ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

L: Children of God, a cord of love binds us to God. For God so loved the world that God sent Jesus into the world not to condemn but in order that the world might be saved through Christ. God accepts us as we are but doesn't leave us unchanged when we turn to God. Trust and believe that God forgives our sin and through the power of the Holy Spirit, enables us to recommit ourselves to live into all that God created us to be.

A: We will trust and believe that we are forgiven and empowered by the Holy Spirit and by God's love - for us to live life anew. Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 95:1-7 - A Call to Worship and Obedience

¹ O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!

HYMN OF GRATITUDE AND PRAISE: #28 v.v. 1-3 "For the Beauty of the Earth" (Public Domain)

1 For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies.

Refrain: God, of all to you we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light, ***Refrain:***

3 For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild, ***Refrain:***

1 Timothy 2:1-7 NRSV - Instructions concerning Prayer

² First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³ This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, ⁶ who gave himself a ransom for all –this was attested at the right time. ⁷ For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

A TIME OF REFLECTION AND PRAYER:

Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings

Psalm 95:1-7, **1 Timothy 2:1-7**

I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. Instead of me doing a reflection on this scripture I am going to ask that we heed this scripture and do what it says. Let us enter into an extended time of prayer and in doing so may we come to know better our need for God and our interconnectedness with God, with one another, and with creation and gain an understanding of who and whose we are.

As we enter into this time of prayer may we remember Jesus' words from his Sermon on the Mount which says *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."*

Throughout our time of prayer there will be many times for each of you to share your supplications, intercessions and thanksgivings as well. When we pause for reflection for self and others you may do so silently or speak those supplications and prayers aloud. So let us pray!

O God, Eternal Spirit, we thank you that you have called us into relationship with you, one another and all of creation and that you give us a purpose in life, a mission to fulfill. Though at times we only dimly see what that mission is, we thank you that one day we will see in full. Until that day comes, help us to cling to our identity in you, as a beloved part of your divine creation, and called to walk in the ways of Christ empowered by your Holy Spirit. Distribute among us and all people - gifts of prophecy and discernment, love and hope that all may turn to you and in that - each of us may discern our purpose, individually and collectively and live into the fulfillment of who you created each of us to be.

We pray for the leaders of this nation and all nations that they may be guided by your divine will.

Because our vision is still yet dim, we admit that we are merely wayfarers in this world and often prone to erratic changes of course. We thank you God that no matter how far off course we travel, you are there to guide and redirect us to your life-giving ways if we only have eyes to see and ears to hear. We pray for all who know they are lost and have gone astray, may your Spirit sustain, encourage and enable them to find their worth and sense of purpose in you once again, or even for the first time in their lives. (Pause for Reflection for self and others)

We also pray for the ways all have gone astray in different ways, but are too blind to see the errors and harms of those ways, may you grant eyes to see, ears to hear and a willing spirit to change those ways. (Pause for reflection for self and others)

As we enter this festive season of Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas, and a New Year, where we celebrate the bounty of harvest, gather with family and friends and celebrate the coming of your light into the darkness, may we remember there are many who go without food, shelter, or necessary clothing and so we lift them in prayer. God, you know their needs, both immediate and the underlying causes and we entrust these needs into your care. For where you are asking us to be the vessels through whom you will supply those needs, help us to respond with a here I am Lord, may it be as you have said. (Pause for Reflection)

In this time where we celebrate the harvest of bounty help us to appreciate those who made it possible for us to live and celebrate the bounty that is before us because of

- those who plant, and tend, and harvest the crops
- those who buck the seas in harvesting fish
- those who raise cattle, pigs and sheep etc.
- those who process the harvest
- those who transport and stock and sell the harvest

- those who make the machinery and equipment necessary for all of this

Help us to understand and embrace our interconnectedness; as we do may we better live with a sense of gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifices others make for us and we make for others so that all may have life and life to the fullest.

Though this should be a joyous time of year, there are many who weep and sink into the depths of despair for various reasons whether it be mental health stressors, missing loved ones who have died or moved away, broken relationships, loss of stability in one's life from various circumstances to name just a few and so we pray for those who weep and for those who have caused others to weep. We thank you that you are a God of compassion and that you watch the ways of all of us. You are able to weave out of terrible happenings - wonders of goodness and grace. Surround those who have been shaken by tragedy with a sense of your very present love, and hold them in faith. We especially pray for (Pause for reflection and names and circumstances)

Though they are lost in grief, may they be comforted. We may not know exactly what they are experiencing, but we too have had times of deep despair and understand the need for comfort, strength, and hope to move through the grief into life anew beyond despair, anger and/or bitterness with a deeper understanding of your presence with us in good and not so good times and a deeper sense of compassion for others. Where you are calling us to be your vessels of comfort may we respond with Here I am Lord, may it be as you have said. We also pray for those who bring harm to others that those harmful ways may be rooted out of those lives. May that void be filled with your compassion and generosity for we too have both knowingly and unknowingly, at times, brought harm to others and nature and have need for that to be rooted out of our lives.

We thank you that you are a God of healing and realize that often times your healing comes through human hands and so we thank you for those who bring healing to the sick & suffering in so many different ways. May you pour out your blessings upon them and grant them wisdom and compassion and even tough love as they seek to be your vessels of healing in this world. At this time, we especially lift up those who bring healing to others and those who are in need of healing. (Pause for reflection and names and circumstances)

O God, we thank you that you have bound us together in a common life. Help us to remember our interconnectedness and the impact our individual lives have on one another and creation and have an appreciation for that. When struggles and conflicts arise help us as individuals, faith communities and nations to confront one another without hatred and bitterness and to work together to attack the problem with mutual patience and respect in order to bring about a resolution for the good of all and the whole of creation.

God. At this time, we lift up to you any other joys, concerns and thanks that we may have. (Pause for reflection and naming.)

Almighty and most gracious God, whose very nature is to be present

- in good times and bad
- in warm days and in cold
- in wind, rain and sunny life
- in laughter and in pain
- in joy and in despair
- in work and in play

open our minds and hearts to the realities of the present here and now and your presence with us. Help us hold on to the assurance of your companionship and the knowledge of your loving care, both tender and tough so that we may be strengthened by our hope in you and shaped by your love as we pray, embrace and live the words Jesus taught us to pray.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

CALL FOR OFFERING:

L: Our offering is a faith statement.

Throughout the scriptures we see how God blesses people for their benefit

and so that those blessing may flow forth from their lives to be a blessing to others.

James 1:17-18 reminds us that "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created."

By offering our treasure and our very selves to God, through our giving

and stating our intentions to give through our Faith Promise Cards

we believe that God has blessed us with good gifts, that we are blessed to be a blessing,

that what we do here in this church does make a difference in this world

Let us give and state our intentions to give as the Spirit guides.

HYMN OF PRAISE AND THANKS: Hymn #425 "For the Fruit of All Creation"

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1 For the fruit of all creation thanks be to God

For His 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

2 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

3 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

PRAYER OF DEDICATION:* Page 550 [F]

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L: O God, the giver of every good and perfect gift,

All: Accept we pray, this offering of your people. Grant that they may be symbols of our love and of ourselves now offered more fully to you. Use these gifts and us, we pray, to the end that your realm may come and your will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

HYMN OF PRAISE: Doxology #778

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that love has done; Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

SUMM-IT UP:

SENDING HYMN: #419 "Now Thank We All Our God" (Public Domain)

1 Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,

Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices,
Who from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed;
And free us from all ills, in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God our Maker now be given;
To Christ and Spirit too our help in highest heaven;
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

CHARGE & BENEDICTION:* BOW UCC p. 552 [C]

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What endures is not the edifices we build, but the work of God
we accomplish through our ministries in the name of Christ Jesus.
Let us go forth from here with thanksgiving in our hearts,
empowered by the Holy Spirit to be God's instruments
rooted in love to further the work of Jesus
and to move us closer to God's reign of justice and peace.
As we do that may the grace of God, deeper than our imagination;
The strength of Christ, stronger than our togetherness;
Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit;
Guide and sustain us today and in all our tomorrows
And grant us the peace that goes beyond all earthly understanding. Amen.

POSTLUDE: "Give Thanks"

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Verse

Give thanks with a grateful heart, Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son (Repeat)

Chorus

*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 (Repeat)*