



WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS

Prayer Discussion

SUGGESTED SETTING: Lit candle and loaf of bread

SONG – Glory and Praise to Our God (Schutte)

Response – Glory and praise to our God,
Who alone gives light to our days.
Many are the blessings He bears,
To those who trust in His ways.

We the daughters and sons of Him,
Who built the valleys and plains.
Praise the wonders our God has done,
In every heart that sings. (Response)

In His wisdom He strengthens us,
Like gold that's tested in fire.
Though the power of sin prevails,
Our God is there to save. (Response)

Every moment of every day,
Our God is waiting to save.
Always ready to seek the lost,
To answer those who pray. (Response)

LEADER - INTRODUCTION

We walk before God, today and every day,
being thankful for His presence in our lives,
a presence that breathes gentleness,
that heals our brokenness and loves us into wholeness,
that embraces us with goodness so pervasive
that our lives can be but echoes of a continuing hymn of thanks.

FIRST READING: Ephesians 1: 3-10

Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him.

Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his sons and daughters – this was his pleasure and purpose. Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear son! For by the death of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, which he gave to us in such large measure!

In all his wisdom and insight God did what he had proposed, and made known the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

PAUSE TO REFLECT – Let us be thankful for God’s grace and goodness in our lives at this time.

PRAY TOGETHER – PSALM 100

Sing to the Lord all the world!
Worship the Lord with joy;
Come before him with happy songs.
Never forget the Lord is God.
He made us and we belong to him;
We are his people, we are his flock.
Enter the temple gate with thanksgiving;
Go into its courts with praise,
Give thanks to him and praise him.
The Lord is good;
His love is eternal
And his faithfulness lasts forever.

SECOND READING – GRATITUDE (Joyce Rupp)

Can be read by one person or alternately

To be grateful for what is,
Instead of underscoring what is not.

To find good amid the unwanted aspects of life,
Without denying the presence of the unwanted.

To focus on beauty in the little things of life,
As well as being deliberate about the great beauties of art, literature,
music and nature.

To be present to one's own small space in life,
While stretching to the wide world beyond it.

To find something to laugh about every day,
Even when there seems to be nothing to laugh about.

To search for and to see the good in others,
Rather than remembering their faults and weaknesses.

To be thankful for each loving deed of another,
No matter how insignificant it might appear.

To taste life to the fullest,
And not take any part of it for granted.

To seek to forgive others of their wrong doings,
Even immense ones, and to put the past behind.

To find ways to reach out and help the disenfranchised,
While also preserving their dignity and self-worth.

To be as loving and caring as possible,
In a culture that consistently challenges virtues.

To remember to say or send "thank you"
For whatever comes as a gift from another.

To be at peace
With what cannot be changed.

PAUSE TO REFLECT

What are you grateful for in your life?
What phrase of Joyce Rupp's reading speaks most to you?

SHARE WITH EACH OTHER

What will you take from today's reflection into your day to day life?

(After sharing.....break off a piece of bread, if a loaf of bread is present.
Wait to eat until after everyone has shared. Your "blessing of the bread" is in your sharing)

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

God of all blessing, source of all life, giver of all grace;
We thank you for the gift of life;
For the breath that sustains life,
For the food of this earth that nurtures life,
For the life-giving love of family and friends.

We thank you for the mystery of creation;
For the beauty of the earth that eye cannot see,
For the unfolding universe that draws us beyond our imaginings.

We thank you for the communities to which we belong;
For families and friends,
For neighbors and for companions at work.

We thank you for the strangers who welcome us into their lives
And whom we invite to be part of ours.

We thank you for our brothers and sisters
Of all ages, all races, all nations and all faiths.

We thank you for the multitude of ways that you call us
To steward the gifts of creation
And to serve others in your name.

We thank you for this day,
For the companionship we share
And the bountiful goodness of the bread we break together.

God of all goodness,
We pray in thanks for your presence among us as we gather together,
And your promise to be with us now and always. Amen.