



“Give thanks in all circumstances”
1 Thessalonians 5.8

Dear friends in Christ,
Thanksgiving greetings from our home to yours.

As we begin this Thanksgiving weekend, I wish you and those with whom you who will gather all the joys of this wonderful season.

Now, while turkey and all the trimmings and pumpkin pie are a delicious part of our celebrations, this is really a time for us to take stock and give thanks for all the blessings we have received. This celebration at this time of the year is rooted in the belief that it is right to give thanks to God, from whom all good things flow. And just as God loves us and blesses us, we are called to love one another and bless them so that the blessings never end.

Blessing is a big part of our language of prayer. The Bible is seasoned with such language, drawing us into God’s story of blessing. In Genesis, God blesses Adam and Eve, Noah, and Abraham. And then we see the people who God blesses becoming a people who bless others: Isaac blesses Jacob, Jacob blesses his sons, Moses blesses the 12 tribes. We find words of blessing in the Psalms and in Jesus as he reaches out to bless the sick; the children and those who mourn. Blessings continue throughout the Scriptures; peppering

the letters of Paul. Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians by praying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus”. We find seven blessings scattered throughout the text of Revelation ‘salting that magnificent poem’ (Eugene Peterson) and flavouring the entire Scriptures with blessing.

Our liturgy, week-by-week and season-by-season, forms us into a people of blessing and gratitude as we gather around Font, Word, and Table. We bless God: “Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth.” We bless one another: “The peace of Christ be with you.” And we are sent forth as a blessing to the world: “Let us bless the Lord – Thanks be to God!”

Who will you bless this Thanksgiving? Who will be a blessing to you?

Fall is one of my favourite seasons of the year, described by John Keats as a ‘Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, and close bosom friend of the maturing sun.’ The autumn leaves have turned to flame and are a flood of colour everywhere we look. It always takes a little longer to get from here to there in the north as I’m tempted by roadside stalls selling corn and gourds and apples and every kind of produce picked fresh from the earth that morning.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if somehow the joy that rises up within us every Thanksgiving leaves an indelible mark on our hearts, minds, and souls so that our life becomes a continual fountain of joy from now until forever? Imagine Thanksgiving becoming a ‘joy generator’ within us!

This notion isn’t too far-fetched for us Anglicans because at Thanksgiving we have Paul’s reminder to, “Be thankful in all circumstances.” (1 Thess.5.8). I don’t think of his words as a suggestion – more like an imperative, right there along with ‘rejoicing always’ and ‘praying without ceasing’.

There are so many reasons for us to be grateful for God’s goodness to us. Perhaps one of the greatest is the gift of Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, who we receive in the Eucharist, food from heaven that strengthens us on our journey through life. What a blessing it is to receive that gift with Jesus’s blessing and promise, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.” (John 6.56) Let us continually give thanks to God for God’s real presence with us and within us, and bear witness to the love of Christ as we love one another as we have been loved.

May we, in Algoma and Moosonee, nurture within our hearts, homes, churches, and communities a strong and enduring attitude of gratitude, as we remember the words of the Psalmist – “I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall always be in my mouth.” (Psalm 34)

Also, know, from my heart, that I consider the people in the dioceses I serve and those who I know from other places, to be among God's greatest gifts to me. I am truly blessed to be your bishop and I give thanks to God for you.

In the midst of some pretty difficult times over the last little while, you display a resilience and strength that cannot be of your own making, but rather comes from your deep and abiding faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Later this fall, I will be able to extend my gratitude and appreciation to more than 100 of you in Algoma when Liz and I prepare the *Certificates of Appreciation*. The incumbents and wardens in our parishes are discerning three individuals who are deserving of this token of thanks.

From our home and harvest table to yours, Colin and I wish you and your loved ones a happy and blessed Thanksgiving.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, starting with a cross symbol and the name 'Colin'.

Archbishop of Algoma and Moosonee

p.s. This is a reminder to incumbents and wardens in Algoma to send the names of recipients for the Certificates of Appreciation to Liz Hamel by October 12th, 2023 which is the cut off date for this year.

P.p.s. The Algoma Synod office is closed on Friday 6th October and Monday 9th October so that our staff may have a break.



Thanksgiving 2022 – hopefully we haven't changed that much!!