

“Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.”

(Thanksgiving Day Collect, BCP 246)

Dear Holy Spirit Church,

I love Thanksgiving. And I’ll be the first to admit that most of my love for this holiday stems from my love of Thanksgiving food. In good conscience, I could not pretend that I love Thanksgiving because I take so much pleasure in being grateful and expressing my gratitude...maybe I’ll get there some day.

But when I actually do get down to the real Thanksgiving “business” of reflecting upon what I have to be thankful for, I inevitably begin to feel overwhelmed by the sheer abundance of gifts and blessings that I enjoy, and to which the only appropriate response is profound gratitude.

I am thankful for the gift and variety of creation: the seasons, each with their unique beauty.

I am thankful for my family: their love, understanding, and patience.

I am thankful for my church: your dedication, generosity, and care.

I am thankful for abundance: that, despite the persistence of national tragedies, disease, and political division, my daily existence is in no way imperiled to the degree that it would be in so many other places in the world.

I am thankful for Jesus Christ: for his gracious invitation to take up his easy yoke and his light burden.

I am grateful for his Eucharistic (Greek for Thanksgiving) feast: when we are weekly united in and nourished by his Body.

Despite how difficult 2022 has been for so many of us, I am sure that we all have much to be thankful for. I urge you to explore pages 836-841 in the Book of Common Prayer if you are struggling to find sources of joy and words of gratitude during this season.

For those of us who have suffered recent losses, gratitude might be particularly hard to conjure. My sense is that “being grateful” does not mean overlooking or diminishing our sources of pain, anger, sadness, or outrage. But it does mean that we are gently invited to offer all of those feelings and experiences to God as a Eucharistic gift—a memorial to the very real love that lies behind all of our grief, sorrow, and outrage—to lay it before the God whose will it is to reconcile and restore all things. I wish you all a very warm and restful Thanksgiving.

With gratitude to God for you and your love,

Fr. Evan

