

**WESTMINSTER CHURCH**  
**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA**  
*Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario P6A 3B5*

*“Trusting God, nurturing disciples for Christ,  
being empowered by the Holy Spirit”*

**October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Thanksgiving**

**...We Gather to Worship God...**

**Call to Worship:** Isaiah 12: 3-6

Give thanks to the LORD!

**Praise His name!**

Tell the whole world what He has done—

**His mighty acts on our behalf.**

Sing to the LORD,

**for He has done wonderful things for us!**

Raise your hearts and voices!

shout and sing your praise!

**For great is the Holy One who lives among us!**



**Hymn:** All creatures of our God and King – 433

**Announcements:**

- **Birthdays:** This week has one birthday - Wanda Rathbone on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup>.
- **Westminster's Anniversary** - will be celebrated on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- **All Saint's and Remembrance Day** - will be on the same Sunday - November 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Guest Preacher on November 13<sup>th</sup>.** John and I will be attending a conference and taking some study leave for that week. Susan Myers will be taking the service.
- **Thanks from Joan Hall:** Hi, everyone. Sorry to be so long in replying. Things around here have been hectic and still are but I wanted to thank everyone for the get together you had for me on September 21st. It was very enjoyable but also sad as I will miss Westminster and friends very much. My family and were members there for a long time and made many friends there. You will be remembered. Things are still hectic here as we are still trying to find pathways through and around boxes but we will persevere. I have become very close friends with 5 cats and 4 skinny pigs (hairless Guinea pigs) but all is well. My human family has also

been very welcoming. I wish all the best for my Westminster family. As my youngest grandson would say, HAPPY DAYS to all of you. Love, Joan

## **Opening Prayer of Adoration and Confession**

How easy it is to praise You, Beloved One,  
For abundance, for cups filled to the brim;  
How can we not delight in Your majesty,  
Your endless blessings to us.

How simple our thanks, Beloved One,  
For laden tables, for gathered families,  
Shoulders touching in the intimacy of the meal  
You have spread before us.

Teach us to thank and bless Your name,  
When cups are empty and thirst is great;  
Put our hands together to replenish,  
Finding blessing in tiny sips.

Beloved One, to thank and bless You,  
We find hope in uncertainty  
And triumph in shaky steps.  
We recreate abundance for Your sake.

May we bless you forever and ever.  
And may we continue to pray as you taught your disciples to pray saying...The Lord's  
Prayer.

**Solo by Marla Pritchard:** Come ye thankful people come - 803

## **...We Listen to God's Word...**

### **Word of God:**

Old Testament: Genesis 1: 1-13

New Testament: Luke 17:11-19, Luke 19: 37-40

### **Choir**

**Hymn:** For the beauty of the Earth 434

### **Message: Thanksgiving**

This is thanksgiving again. The market is full of shiny red apples in bushel baskets, yellow pears ready to eat and beautiful green squash next to bright orange pumpkins of various sizes. There

have been some fantastic fall days to go witness the splendour of the turning leaves. We took Oliver up to Batchewana Bay on Monday to see the leaves and let him swim at the beach one more time. My dog loves the cold water! I remember one year when my brother's family came to Ottawa for Thanksgiving. My sister-in-law was so funny. She packed enough coloured leaves in her suitcase so every child in her class room back in Alberta could have one. She was in awe of the colours and the beauty - Alberta does not have the variety of colour that we have here. I bet security thought the leaves were pretty strange to have with her clothes. The fall is just so beautiful here. It is difficult not to be in awe of what surrounds us every day is it not?

Now, just suppose with me for a minute, just suppose that we went through the harvest season and the rest of the year without voicing a single word of gratitude to God. Suppose there was no special thanksgiving day. Suppose instead of recognizing the Giver of all that we have, we spent the fall boasting about our green thumbs, praising our ingenuity and bio-tech wizardry for what we have. We would exchange congratulatory notes with one another and we would have a motto "My power and the might of my own hand has provided me with this wealth". Instead of Thanksgiving, we would pat each other on the back and bask in our self-satisfaction of what we had done.

What do you suppose would happen? Would God become angry because we did not thank him? Would God recall the harvest because we did not acknowledge him? Would he blight the fields and withhold the winter snow or spring rains to cripple the harvest next year? I know these sound like odd questions but in some ways they are very real.

I remember working on a Thanksgiving service a few years ago and stumbling across this idea that God is thankful. It is one of his characteristics. Just as we say God is love, we also can say God is thankful. I was so excited when I went to hear Patricia Duther- Walls, an Old Testament scholar, speak in Ottawa. She had come to the same conclusion I had - or at least I had thought she had. I remember this event because I was so excited about this that I went up to her afterward to say how much I appreciated her scholarly work and that it was wonderful for her to verify what I had concluded. For you see, I had concluded that God was not only thankful for all of creation He had made, He is thankful for all of creation He has made every day. Therefore, He must be thankful for each one of us that he has created every day. I told Patricia this wonderful conclusion. I wish you could have seen her face. She had not made this conclusion. She had to think about it for a minute or two but then she said it was the obvious extension to her work. God is thankful every day for those he has created.

I bring this to your attention because I want us to take a quick look at the ten lepers who were healed. You know the story - ten lepers call out to Jesus to heal them. Jesus tells them to go to the temple and show themselves to the priest. They scurry away but in a few minutes one returns giving loud praise and thanks to God for the healing that he received. The others were still healed - they did not lose their healing because they did not come back and give thanks but this person was given something special. Jesus says 'Rise and go, your faith has made you well'.

So I am not sure what all of that means but it does say that something stands out about this person

because he came back to give thanks to Jesus. He is a Samaritan, someone sort of on the outside of the Jewish faith. Though Samaritans had Jewish roots, they were not really accepted as Jewish. Yet, this is the man of the group that comprehends what he has been given and I want to argue responds in the appropriate fashion. This person demonstrates his faith in God by giving thanks to Jesus. The Samaritan is acting on the spirit of God that is in him.

You see what I am trying to say is if God is thankful, if giving thanks is part of his character then when we are created in his image, it is part of our character as well. Okay, so it should be part of our character as well. The other lepers who were Jewish and worshipped God all the time were not doing so well in the showing of their faith. They do not give thanks - or it just takes them a long time to remember (I can be like that, have you been there - slow to remember to thank someone?) They are all healed but Jesus does appreciate the one who comes back giving thanks for what has happened.

Now you may be wondering why I had the Palm Sunday passage read at thanksgiving. Well there are a great many disciples praising God and giving thanks for all of the miracles Jesus had done in this passage. Did you see that? They are cheering and dancing and praising and being thankful very loudly. They were laying their cloaks on the ground and waving palm branches. They were saying "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" They were noisy. There was laughter and singing.

Note the Pharisees. Their comment was "Teacher, get your disciples under control!" They strike me as the kill joys of the day. Too much excitement and noise. Calm down, no need for public displays here. The Pharisees saw God in rules and there was no need for this. Jesus saw God in praise and would not discourage them.

Actually, I love Jesus' answer to the Pharisees. "Listen to me, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out". The more I study the Bible and learn about God, the more I tend to think that this is not just a throwaway line. If the people were silenced, the very rocks would cry out. What would that sound like? Could I be serious about rocks singing?

I am serious. After all, the sun sings. I know that sounds kind of silly. I know when Andrew was young - I talked to him about happy flowers. When we watered the impatiens, we would decide that they were very happy! But the singing sun is based on real research. It was presented to the Astronomical Society's National Astronomy meeting in Lancashire, England in 2007. There are, apparently, looping magnetic fields along the Sun's outer regions that carry magnetic sound waves in a similar manner to musical instruments such as guitars or pipe organs. This is how the researchers know that the sun is singing. However, the sun is not singing for humans. We are unable to hear the sound waves that are being produced. It is not a frequency that we can interpret.

So for whom is the sun singing? Singing for itself? Singing for God maybe? Maybe it is not so strange that rocks would sing. Maybe they are already taking our place.

I cannot verify the sun singing or the rocks crying out but I can tell you that we were created to

be thankful people. Thanking someone for doing something is a gift given to us from God.

I guess the extension of this thought is we exhibit our faith when we thank someone honestly for who they are or what they have done. Jesus' image shines through when we are thankful. No wonder thank you notes are so great to receive.

At least, I like them.

So as you spend your thanksgiving with friends and family, express your thankfulness to someone for what you have received, knowing that this is done in the image of God. This is godliness. This is the Holy Spirit present among us.

And then, take this thought with you for the rest of the week. Thank someone for something on Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday as well - and see Christ's light shining through your life. God is thankful he created you, be thankful for this and share this thankfulness with others.

## **...We Respond in Service...**

### **Prayers of the People**

Generous God, on this Harvest weekend, we thank you for all things great and small, for moments of wonder and for ordinary exchanges which fill our lives with meaning and offer us a sense of wellbeing.

May our friends see in us the signs of a grateful heart.

God of all goodness, Receive our prayers.

Generous God, as we give thanks for the harvests of the earth  
and all the goodness that sustains us,  
we pray that you will show us how to live respectfully in creation  
and protect all that is precious to you.

Wherever harvests have been disappointing,  
show us how to share what has been produced so that no one goes hungry.

God of all goodness, Receive our prayers.

Generous God, we pray for the good of your world  
and the common good in our community.

Where there is strife and hostility between peoples and nations,  
inspire leaders to show wisdom and courage in their decision making.

We pray for people and places hard hit by flood or fire, tornado or hurricane,  
epidemic or earthquake

May neighbours with resources maintain generosity and compassion for the long work of  
reconstructing lives and livelihoods.

God of all goodness, Receive our prayers.

Generous God, we pray for our neighbours and those of our number who are facing health challenges or difficult times for any reason...

And we pray for family and friends under stress or in sorrow whom we name in silence before you.....

Make us generous in compassion and understanding for each one. God of all goodness, Receive our prayers.

Generous God, in Jesus Christ we have met your generous love and mercy. Through our lives and by our prayers, reveal his love and mercy to this generation, for the sake of you Holy Name. Amen

**Hymn:** Morning has broken 814

## **Benediction**

## **Prayers - Wednesday October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

*John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

We read Psalm 122 and Psalm 125

### **Birthdays**

We had two birthdays for this week, both from our South Sudanese family, and both on Monday October 3<sup>rd</sup>. David Rial Gau and Samya Gatwech Mawau. We ask the Lord's blessing upon each of them and hope they had two birthday cakes...even in the same household!

### **Praise**

The celebration of life for Carl Meierhoff was a blessing with four speakers and a luncheon to follow. It was informal and as his daughter wanted and Carl had arranged.

For Bonnie Junor getting her apartment!

### **Special Thanksgiving prayer**

We think of Thanksgiving and are humbled by the bounty many of us have while we pray Lord for many who are without food and shelter, some in our own community. We pray

especially for the folks who lost so much and are displaced due to the recent ravages of hurricanes. Lord be with them and the relief workers. Help them in the next steps and provide them with a place to be safe and find a home. Give them hope Lord we pray. Show us how to respond by sharing your generous provision.

We pray for a good and blessed family time for everyone at Thanksgiving this weekend and for any who are traveling.

### **Prayers for comfort in loss**

We pray for Susan and Michael Edwards as their friend, David has passed away. Lord comfort them and David's family in this time of grief. May they know you walk with them during this time of sadness and grief.

### **Lord, we pray for those who are dealing with cancer.**

We pray for Charlotte as her cancer journey continues. Give her and her family strength and courage.

We continue to pray for Peter's sister-in-law who is still battling cancer. Be with her and be with Peter and his family as they try to support her.

We pray for Les Dool as he is now just finishing treatment for cancer. We pray the cancer tumors have shrunk. Lord please draw Les near to you and remind him you love him and have him in the palm of your hand.

Pray for Joan's friend Rose who has been diagnosed with breast cancer. We pray for Your Hand of care and healing to be on her.

We pray for Charlene's friend Rev. Steve Smith, whose cancer has returned. He is to begin treatment in October. May the treatments be successful and may he be able to continue in his work and soon be back with his congregations.

We pray for Dennis as he moves to a maintenance plan on immunotherapy and has had a number of complications. We continue to pray for him to know you are his Great Physician. Give him and his wife rest and stability as this has been a time of challenge.

### **Lord, we pray for those who are facing a variety of other medical issues.**

We pray for Charlene's friend's 7 year old daughter who was having some complications from a surgery and she had to go back in the hospital. She is home and we pray for healing and that she is now home to stay.

We pray for Ursula Hagen as she moves to Maple View long term care. Be with her in this

time as it is a big change her and her daughter Reagan.

We pray for Charlene's friend Gord Walford and his wife who have been having many medical issues. Be with them as they heal and may they find strength in you.

We pray for Penny's friend's sister Nancy who came through surgery, we pray for ongoing healing.

We pray for Susan Myers's cousin Bev who is still suffering from crushed discs in her back and experiencing excruciating pain.

We pray for Karli Dionisi's Aunt, Holley Davison who suffered a stroke in July. We pray for her recovery and rehabilitation.

We pray for Debbie and Neil Matthers as they support their daughter Irene. They know now it is MS. She is losing some mobility. Lord be with her as the changes are coming quickly. Lord may Irene know she is not alone. We ask Lord that you reverse this diagnosis and miraculously heal her. Please give them all your peace.

We pray for Beth's father-in-law who is dealing with Alzheimer's and end of life issues. We ask for comfort for him and his wife and all of the family at this time.

We pray for Adam that he would try returning to school and that he receives help for his ADHD. We pray for his Mom Carol as she supports him. Give her insight and patience.

We pray for Jackie and his ongoing health issues.

We pray for Brendan as he recovers from his broken foot. He has a new cast that will be on for the next three weeks, pray for patience in his healing and that the cast will be removed at that time. We pray he will not have to undergo surgery.

Lord we pray for all of these folks as they journey along. Help guide the medical teams looking after them. Please give them hope, patience and courage as they face these challenges.

### **Other prayers**

Lastly, Lord, we pray for the churches of St. Paul's and Victoria as they face changes again. May they put their trust in you and experience