

Prayer of Thanksgiving for Thanksgiving 11/26/20

Gracious and merciful Father, We come before you on this Thanksgiving Day with hearts of gratitude. You have blessed us immeasurably and we have so much to be thankful for. As we spend time today reflecting on your blessings, we acknowledge that things are a bit different this year. Maybe the family gatherings we had anticipated are smaller or being done virtually. Maybe in the last year family members have passed away or battled illness. We have all experienced how difficult this year has been. For individuals, for our community and our nation.

In the midst of a challenging year of tensions, sickness, and division we admit that it is sometimes difficult to see your blessings. But the Psalms remind us that even in the difficult times you are faithful, you are with us and your love is everlasting. So with confidence and joy we can join the psalmist in saying we enter your gates with thanksgiving and your courts with praise; we give thanks to you and praise your name. For you Lord are good and your love endures forever; your faithfulness continues through all generations (Psalm 100:4-5).

Thank you Lord for your sovereign faithfulness and the fact that you remain steadfast in difficult seasons. God, thank you for our church community and the technology to still worship and fellowship together in safe ways. We praise and thank you for doctors, nurses, and others who work hard to keep people healthy. In this time of tension and injustice we praise you for organizations and individuals in our city and in our world who work daily for justice and peace. Father, thank you for teachers who continue to work diligently to educate our children in these different circumstances. Thank you Lord for families and friends, for a community that supports one another even from afar. Lord as we reflect today we are reminded of just how much you have blessed us. Help us not to lose sight of that. When the challenges of this season threaten to overwhelm us, may we return to your truths and continue to cultivate a heart of gratitude.

Heavenly Father, this Thanksgiving we pray specifically for those experiencing isolation and loneliness. We think of our brothers and sisters who live alone or in nursing homes, and who are missing personal interactions with people. Lord may they feel your presence today. God, we also pray for those for whom this holiday season is difficult because they have lost a loved one. Be with them in their grief, hold them in your hands, and give them peace. We know many in our own congregation and community who have been touched by this virus or other illness. Lord, we pray that you would walk alongside anyone battling illness. Fill them with your strength and bring them healing.

As we enter into the rest of this day may we cling to your goodness and faithfulness in our lives. We pray that our hearts would be filled with gratitude and love for you not only today but in the days and weeks and months ahead. And as we seek to be a light in the world, may our actions, words, and thoughts bring glory to your name. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who taught us to pray: **Our Father...**