

Glebe-St. James United Church

Thanksgiving Sunday

October 11, 2026

Please note: the livestream camera only captures the chairs at the front of the church. Sitting in the pews or at the back will keep you off camera. During the theme conversation, only the backs of children's heads are shown. – The Worship Team

Gathered by God

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

"Harvest-Home"

Colin Mawby (1936-2019)

Welcome

Bergeron

Wendy

In the name of the Holy Mystery,
who is Wholly Love,
we welcome you to Creator's House.

Thanks be to God!

Good morning and welcome, everyone, to our worship service at Glebe-St. James United Church in downtown Ottawa on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 11.

My name is Wendy Bergeron and I am Chair of Council here at Glebe-St. James and a member of the ReconciliAction Group.

We're so glad you're here today. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a longtime member, whether you are joining us in person or online, we hope you feel at home. Please remember to wear a name tag if you are here in person – it's so much easier to feel part of a community when we can greet each other by name. Name tags are available at the entrances to the sanctuary.

We are an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada - a place of faith, love and community. You are welcome in our sanctuary. If you

are looking for a place where your soul can breathe, sit back and listen to the inspirational music. If you are looking for community and connection, this is a place of acceptance, friendship and support. If you are looking for somewhere where you can make a difference in your community, this is a place where you can help to feed those struggling to make ends meet. We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities feel loved and supported. Thank you for being here.

Announcements

Jeff Bird plays Hildegard von Bingen – Mark this concert in your calendar for October 24th. This ethereal performance is not to be missed.

Land Acknowledgement

Wendy Bergeron

According to The Canadian Encyclopedia, the first official Thanksgiving in Canada was held on November 6, 1879, and was declared to be held annually on the second Monday of October. To the European settlers, it was a way to give thanks for the fall season and the harvest that it brought by feasting on its bounty amongst the people.

In fact, Indigenous people long throughout history have held seasonal celebratory ceremonies as well, meant for giving thanks to Gichi-Manitou, the Creator in Indigenous culture, for the fall harvest and the survival of the seasons.

Opinions of what we call “Thanksgiving” differ widely amongst Indigenous people. While there are some that celebrate the modern way that is solely influenced by settler colonialism and western society, there are still many that are understandably hurt by its history and the destruction of traditions, language and culture that settlers brought about, and prefer not to celebrate at all.

On this Thanksgiving Sunday, I urge all of us to continue educating ourselves and one another on the traditions of Indigenous peoples. Consider paying respects to those who once were denied the right to practice such traditions on the very land they came from. Even if it’s just one dish. consider feasting on

traditional foods of Turtle Island, such as potatoes, squash, corn, beans, wild game, dandelion for salads, walnuts and chestnuts. And join me in acknowledging with respect and gratitude that this place of worship sits on unceded, unsurrendered Algonquin Anishinaabe territory whose stewardship of the land has enriched us all.

Candle Lighting Our Tears, Falling Down Like Rain

TLUS 89

**Our tears, falling down like rain to the ground
will water seeds of change.
Kyrie, kyrie, kyrie, kyrie, kyrie eleison.**

Call to Worship

We gather with grateful hearts.

We give thanks for the gifts of God.

For food, for family, for friendship, for this beautiful earth—

We give thanks.

For all that we have received, and for all that we are able to share—

We give thanks.

Let us worship the God whose abundance is greater than our own.

Let our thanksgiving become generosity.

Hymn We Plough the Field and Scatter

VU 520

- 1 We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,
but it is fed and watered by your almighty hand;
you send the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
the breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.

All good gifts around us
are sent from heaven above;
we thank you, God, O holy God,
for all your love.

- 2 You only are the maker of all things near and far;
you paint the wayside flower, you light the evening star;

the winds and waves obey you, by you the birds are fed;
much more to us, your children, you give us daily bread. R

- 3 We thank you then, O Maker, for all things bright and good,
the seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food;
accept the gifts we offer for all your love imparts,
and, what from us you long for, our humble, thankful hearts. R

Opening Prayer

Gracious God,
we gather today with thankful hearts.
Open our eyes to the gifts around us—
the beauty of creation,
the love of family and friends,
the gift of this community,
and the many ways we are sustained by one another.
As we worship,
help us not only to give thanks for what we have received,
but to ask how we might share those gifts with others.
Make us grateful people,
generous people,
and people who make room at our thanksgiving tables. Amen.

Prayer for Healing

Would you pray with me:

**God of abundance,
sometimes take our blessings for granted.
We forget how much we have received.
We hold tightly to what is ours.
We overlook those who are standing at a distance.
Heal our hearts when gratitude becomes complacency,
and abundance something we hoard for ourselves.**

**Turn our hearts toward our neighbours,
toward those who are struggling,
and toward the earth that sustains us.
Teach us to receive with gratitude
and to give with open hands. Amen.**

Assurance of God's Love

Hear the good news:

God's love is not something earned or possessed.
It is a gift freely given.
When we turn toward God,
we find love.
When we turn toward one another,
we find community.
And when we open our hands,
we discover that there is enough love to share.
Thanks be to God.

Sign of Peace

Hymn May the Peace of God Be Your Peace MV 222

**May the peace of God be your peace.
May the love of God be the love you show.
May the joy of God be the joy you know,
and may the world that God would see be found in you.**

Listening for Wisdom

Theme Conversation Thanksgiving Sunday

Good morning, everyone!

Today is a very special Sunday.
Does anyone know what special day it is?

Thanksgiving!

That's right!

Thanksgiving is a time when we stop and think
about all the good things in our lives.

So let's play a little game.

I'm going to name something, and if you are thankful for it,
I want you to give me a big **thumbs up!**

Are you ready?

Are you thankful for your family?

[Children: thumbs up]

Are you thankful for your friends?

[Thumbs up]

Are you thankful for food?

[Thumbs up]

Are you thankful for animals?

[Thumbs up]

Are you thankful for trees and flowers and sunshine?

[Thumbs up]

Look at all those thumbs!

We have lots to be thankful for.

Now, I want you to do something with me.

Put your hands together like this.

[Cup hands together.]

Imagine that your hands are holding something very special.

Maybe it's a yummy meal.

Maybe it's a hug from someone you love.

Maybe it's a beautiful flower.

Maybe it's your favourite toy.

We have been given so many good things.

And when someone gives us something, what do we say?

Thank you!

Let's all say it together:

Thank you!

But Thanksgiving isn't only about saying thank you.

Sometimes when we have something good, we can **share it**.

If we have two cookies and our friend doesn't have one, what could we do?

Share!

If someone is lonely, what could we give them?

A hug!

If someone needs help, what could we do?

Help!

That's one of the wonderful things about being thankful.

When we notice how much we have received, we can share some of that goodness with others.

So today, I want you to remember three little things:

Notice.

Say thank you.

Share.

Can you say those with me?

Notice.

Say thank you.

Share.

Wonderful!

Let's finish with a prayer. I'll say a little bit, and you repeat after me.

Dear God,

thank you for all the good things in our lives.

Thank you for our families.

Thank you for our friends.

Thank you for our food.

Thank you for our beautiful world.

Help us to share what we have.

Help us to help others.

Help us to be thankful every day.

Amen.

**Little by little by little.
Little by little by little.
Little by little by little I know,
The tiniest seed will grow.**

**Watered by peace and justice,
watered by peace and justice,
watered by peace and justice:
tools to change our world.**

**Little by little by little.
Little by little by little.
Little by little by little I know,
The tiniest seed will grow.**

Prayer for Wisdom

Be with us, Loving Spirit,
inspire our hearts as we lean into Scripture,
that we might understand
in a new and fresh way,
your Word of Life. Amen.

Scripture Luke 17:11-19

Brad Munro

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men with a skin disease approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” When he saw them, he said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus’s feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, “Were not ten made clean? So where are the other nine? Did none of them return to give glory to God except this

foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

Gift of Music "Celtic Thanksgiving"

Joseph Martin

(incorporated "This is God's Wondrous World")

*I will give thanks to our God
I will give praise to the God of creation
I will give thanks to our God
I will give praise to the Rock of salvation
Thank you, God
Yours is the power and glory
Thank you, God
Yours is the honor and praise*

*This is God's wondrous world
The birds their carols raise
The morning light, the lily white
Declare their Maker's praise*

*This is God's wondrous world
God shines in all that's fair
In the rustling grass, in the mountain pass
God speaks to me everywhere*

*I will give thanks to our God
I will give praise to the hope of the nations
I will give thanks to our God
I will give thanks with a song of glad adoration
Thank you, God
Yours is the power and glory
Thank you, God
Yours is the honor and praise
Thank you, God*

Yours is the power and glory
Thank you, Lord
Yours is the honor and praise
I will give thanks to our God
This is God's wondrous world
I will give thanks

Reflection Thanksgiving: Gratitude That Gives Rev. Dr. Teresa Burnett-Cole

There is something wonderful about Thanksgiving Sunday.

Perhaps it is the smell of turkey and stuffing.
The pumpkins and colourful leaves.
The gathering of family and friends around a table.

For many of us, Thanksgiving is a time to pause
and notice what is good in our lives.
We give thanks for people we love.
For food and shelter.
For friendship.
For the beauty of creation.
For this community of faith.
And yet, the Gospel today asks us a deeper question:
What do we do with our gratitude?

Because gratitude is more than a feeling.
Gratitude can become a way of living.

Jesus is travelling along the border between Samaria and Galilee
when ten people with leprosy call out:
“Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”
They are standing at a distance
because their illness has separated them from ordinary community life.
They are separated from family.

From worship.
From their neighbours.

Jesus tells them:
“Go and show yourselves to the priests.”
And as they go, they discover that they have been healed.
Ten people.
Ten lives changed.
Ten people who can go home.

And then the story takes an unexpected turn.
Only one comes back.
He praises God, falls at Jesus' feet, and gives thanks.
And Luke makes sure we notice:
He is a Samaritan.
That matters.

Samaritans were a distinct community from the Jews.
They had their own religious traditions and identity,
and there was a long history of tension and suspicion
between the two peoples.
So the man who comes back is not simply one of the ten.
He is also an outsider.
And yet Jesus makes him the example.

The person who might have been regarded with suspicion
is the one who recognizes God's grace.
The outsider becomes the teacher.
There is another layer to the story.

All ten are already outsiders because of their illness.
Their disease has pushed them to the margins.
Perhaps that shared experience has brought them together.
But once they are healed, the Samaritan is still,
in another sense, an outsider to the Jewish community.

And he is the one who turns back.
He stops.
He praises God.
He falls at Jesus' feet.
He recognizes that he has received a gift.
And he gives thanks.

Perhaps there is something here for us.
When you have known what it means to be excluded,
belonging can feel like a gift.
When you have lived at a distance,
being welcomed back can be astonishing.
The Samaritan knows what it means to stand outside.
And perhaps that helps him see the gift more clearly.

It is easy to hear Jesus' question—
“Where are the other nine?”—
as a complaint about people who forgot to say thank you.
But perhaps the deeper question is:
What happens when we recognize that our lives are gifts?

None of us is completely self-made.
We have received life from others.
We have been loved by people whose love we did not earn.
We have learned from teachers, friends,
parents, grandparents and strangers.
We benefit from communities we did not build by ourselves.
And every day we receive the gifts of the earth:
Water.
Soil.
Air.
Sunlight.
Food.

Even this congregation is something we have received.
Generations of people have worshipped here,

questioned, struggled, served and hoped.
We have inherited something we did not create.

Gratitude reminds us:

I did not get here by myself.

And that changes the question.

Not simply, "What do I have?"

But:

"What can I do with what I have received?"

That is why giving belongs so naturally with Thanksgiving.

We don't give to buy God's favour.

We don't give to prove that we are good people.

We give because we recognize that our lives
have been enriched by the generosity of others.

And so we become generous ourselves.

The movement is simple:

****Receive.**

Recognize.

Give thanks.

Give.******

And this is where the Samaritan speaks to the church.

Churches can become places

where the people who have been here longest feel most at home.

We know the hymns.

We know the stories.

We know where things are.

We know how things are done.

There is something beautiful about belonging.

But the Samaritan reminds us not to confuse familiarity with faithfulness.

Jesus keeps drawing our attention toward people at the edges.

So perhaps we should ask:

Who is still standing at a distance?

Who has not yet found a place at the table?
Whose experience of exclusion might we not understand?
And what might that person teach us about God's grace?
The person we assume needs to learn from us
may be the person who has something to teach us.

Thanksgiving also asks us to notice that gratitude
does not mean pretending everything is wonderful.
For some, today is a difficult day.
Someone important may be missing from the table.
Some are lonely.
Some are struggling financially.
Some are dealing with illness.
And there are people in our communities who do not have enough food.

So Christian gratitude does not look away from suffering.
It allows us to see both **the gifts and the need**.
There is goodness here.
There is beauty here.
There is enough here.
And because we have received something good,
we have something to share.

And that brings us very close to home.

This past week via e-mail, the staff made you aware
of an urgent need within our congregation.
We did so because we are a community.
When one of us is struggling, we don't simply notice.
We ask:

How can we help?

So, if you are able to help, there are two ways you might do so.
You can make a financial donation
to help meet the immediate need of stopping the eviction.
Or, if you know of employment opportunities,

contacts, or leads that might be helpful,
those would also be deeply appreciated.

Not everyone can give financially.
Not everyone has an employment connection to offer.
But perhaps each of us has something we can contribute.
And that is part of what it means to be a congregation.
We receive from one another.
And we give to one another.

We carry one another when someone is struggling.
We remind one another that no one should have
to face a difficult time entirely alone.
So I invite you to consider what you might offer.

Not out of guilt.
Not because you are expected to solve someone's problems.
But simply as an expression of gratitude.
Sometimes gratitude says:
"Here is what I have. How can it help?"
That is the kind of community we hope to be.
A community where there is room for everyone at the table.
And when someone is in need, we turn around and reach out.
Just as the Samaritan turned around.

So this Thanksgiving, let us enjoy the food.
Let us celebrate the people we love.
Let us notice the astonishing beauty of autumn.
Let us give thanks for this earth, for this community,
and for all the people whose love and labour sustain our lives.
But let us not stop there.

Let our thanksgiving become generosity.
Let it become compassion.
Let it become justice.
Let it become hospitality.

Let it become care for creation.
Let it become a commitment to building a world
where everyone has a place at the table.

Ten were healed.
One turned around.
And the one who came back was the outsider.

Perhaps that is the final surprise of the story.
The person we might expect to stand at the edge
is the one who brings us back to the centre of the Gospel.
He reminds us that grace is not something we possess.
It is something we receive.

And when we recognize that,
we are invited to share it.
Thanks be to God.
And may our thanksgiving become generosity. Amen.

Responding in Thanksgiving

Hymn Grateful

MV 182

Refrain:

Grateful for the life you give us,
thankful for your Holy Son,
joyful in your Spirit flowing over all,
O God of Love.

Grateful for the Bread of Heaven,
thankful for your Holy Word,
joyful in your mercy flowing,
we will praise you.

1. You are more than we imagine,
Ancient, Holy, Living Lord*.
Even when we doubt your presence

you are faithful to your Word.

2. May our lives proclaim your justice,
may our voices sing your praise.
May our hands work in your service
to the glory of your name.

Invitation to Give

On Thanksgiving Sunday, our offering is one way
we turn gratitude into action.
We give because we have received.
We give to support this community of faith,
to care for our neighbours,
and to participate in God's work of love and justice in the world.
As we give today,
let us offer not only our money,
but our time, our gifts, our compassion, and our willingness to help.
With grateful hearts, let us give.

Offering Hymn Who Will Speak A Word of Warning (*Verse 1*)

TLUS 130

**Who will speak a word of warning to a world whose wealth expands,
as the growing wealth is gathered into ever fewer hands?
Christ, you speak a word of warning for the church to know and tell:
greed is death and life is giving; hands that give receive as well.**

Offering Prayer

Generous God,
receive these gifts we offer today.
May they become food for those who hunger,
welcome for those who feel excluded,
hope for those who are struggling,
and care for the world we share.
And as we give our offerings,
remind us that everything we have is gift.

Teach us to live with grateful hearts
and open hands.
Amen.

Prayers of the People Give Peace to Ev'ry Heart

MV 86

**Give peace to ev'ry heart.
Give peace to ev'ry heart.
Give peace, God. Give peace, God.**

Prayer of Jesus

**Our Mother and Father
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Sent by the Spirit

Hymn For the Fruit of All Creation

VU 227

**1 For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.
For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.**

- 2 In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.
In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done.
In our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.**
- 3 For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.**

Sending Forth

Go now with grateful hearts.
Notice the gifts around you.
Give thanks for what you have received.
And look for ways to share those gifts with others.
When you see someone standing at a distance,
turn toward them.
When someone is in need,
ask how you can help.
And wherever you go,
carry the generosity of Christ with you.

May you go with gratitude for all that you have received,
with compassion for those who have less,
and with generous hearts ready to share.

May God's love surround you,
Christ's example guide you,
and the Spirit move through you.

And may your thanksgiving become generosity.

Amen.

Sung Amen

VU 968

Music for the Journey

"Hymn of Thanksgiving"

Richard Lloyd (1933-2021)

End of Worship / Beginning of Service

Welcome to Glebe-St. James United Church.
Thank you for joining with us for our morning worship.

Please join us in Fraser Hall, following the service
for a time of fellowship and refreshments.

Musical Acknowledgements

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This morning's organ prelude is by Colin Mawby (1936-2019), an English organist, choral conductor and composer associated with Westminster cathedral and the National Chamber Choir of Ireland.

The postlude is by Richard Lloyd (1933-2021), a British cathedral organist, choirmaster and composer of Anglican church music.

This week @ Glebe-St. James United

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