

Sermon – Thanksgiving Oct. 10 2021

The Rev'd Canon Dr. Lorne Mitchell

Holy God, may our reflections on scripture this day, inspire us to be strong followers of Jesus in both word and deed. Amen.

In spite of the pandemic, nature is working just fine...

One of the benefits to getting out in the woods, the trails and the pastures around Stratford is that you see very clearly that in spite of the pandemic, nature is working just fine...

The sun has shined, the rains have come, the plants and trees and crops have grown, and as I speak to you today, the Harvest is being gathered in. There is much to be thankful for...

We have food; we have shelter; we have clothing...

We have doctors, nurses, caregivers, scientists and teachers...

We have farmers, truckers, grocers and cashiers...

We have government workers and leaders trying to navigate through a storm like no other that we have ever seen...

Nothing is perfect, and yes, there's plenty of contention, but we are blessed to live in a place that has all this...

*I Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms, has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

Countless gifts of love, and still is ours today...

At this time of Thanksgiving, it is so important to remember these countless gifts of love...

“The Countless gifts of love” are not the big fancy flashy things that are constantly thrown at us in Ads... “The Countless gifts of love” are not the things that we buy, and store up for ourselves in a hyper consumerized world...

If you want to focus on the “The Countless gifts of love” that we have been blessed with, you need to focus on the things that you can’t buy or store up. You can’t buy or store up for yourselves a rain that has come just in time for the crop. You can’t buy or store up for yourselves the warmth of the sun that ripens the tomatoes. You can’t buy or store up for yourselves a phone call that you receive from friends and family. You can’t buy or store up for yourselves the feeling you have when sharing what you have with others in need. You can’t buy or store up for yourselves the precious memories of loved ones who have passed on to the next life.

These are just some of the “The Countless gifts of love” that we sing about. These are some of the “The Countless gifts of love” that we have been blessed with from our loving Creator. They are gifts that come to us without asking... Gifts that God knows we need as a part of our lives.

In our gospel reading today, we hear about this from Jesus’ sermon on the mount:

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? (Matthew 6:25-33)

Focus on the simple things in life... God knows what you need... The more you become aware of the simple gifts of love that are coming to you every day of your life, the more you will feel thankful and generous toward others.

One of the sad things about this pandemic is that it has caused quite a bit of contention about how best to control it and bring it to an end. This contention has manifested itself not only in the work place but amidst family and friends. It's really important not to let this consume and smother the many blessings that we all share. We don't have to agree on every news item in order to love one another and be thankful.

I'm going to make a suggestion... This Thanksgiving, turn off your screens and your social media. Be where you are. Be with the simple gifts of love around you right where you are. If you're able to gather in person with family, be with them. Put your smartphones down and be with them, and be thankful that they are part of your life. And if you can't be with family in person, make a phone call and talk to a friend or family member. Hear their voice. Find out what they're happy about. Find out what they're concerned about. Let them know you care about them.

Then take a deep breath, and thank the trees for the air you breathe. Those colourful leaves on the sidewalk have been giving you air to breathe all summer. Then take a sip of water and thank God for our abundant fresh water you have. If you have some turkey, thank the turkey. Thank the farmer and the grocer for raising it and getting it to you...

This Thanksgiving, take time to be thankful for the simple blessings of your life, and be generous in your love toward others... And may God's peace be with you...

*2 O may this bounteous God, through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
and nourish us with grace, and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills, in this world in the next.*

Amen.