

## Worship at Home for October 11 2020

You may choose to read right through this document, stopping for your own reflection at any time, or only read the prayers or the scripture or reflection. You might read with family or friends, or alone. Links will take you to music that may enhance your experience as you move through the worship, but you might choose to visit them later, or not at all. Feel free to share this with anyone who might be interested.

If you'd like to comment or have a question, please call or email me directly:  
416-951-7911 [minister@applewoodunited.ca](mailto:minister@applewoodunited.ca)

In the Spirit

Rev. Joanne

### Centering Prayer

Holy Source of life and love,  
draw us to thankfulness as we worship today.  
Holy Giver of hope and peace,  
open us to your generous love,  
so we may in turn share with others.  
Amen

Opening Music: "We Plow the Fields and Scatter"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fJlgTWk7Jc>

### Opening Prayer by United Church Moderator Richard Bott

God-of-All,  
we have set aside this day of thanksgiving,  
because we sometimes have difficulty remembering  
to live our thanks-giving.  
We sometimes have difficulty remembering  
to be thanksgiving.  
So – thank you,  
for everything!  
Open our hearts to realize  
where thanks need to be given.  
Open our hearts to share the words.  
Open our lives to be your love.  
As disciples of Jesus we ask this.  
May it be so. Amen.

*Written by Richard Bott. **Gathering**, Pentecost 2 2020, page 46.  
Used with permission.*

Scripture 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'God scatters abroad, and gives to the poor;

God's righteousness endures forever.'

The One who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that has been given you. Thanks be to God for such an indescribable gift!

Reflection

Sowing, reaping – giving. These are images that are familiar to us in this time of harvest, this time of thanksgiving. We celebrate the bounty of creation at this time of year: ripened grains, vegetables ready to be stored or savoured, apples ready to be picked from trees, orange pumpkins dotting fields. In a practical way, even though we are not farmers, our purchases support the farming industry, and can also support the needs of others when we give to our local food bank. After all, as Paul puts it in his letter to the church at Corinth, God loves a cheerful giver.

*Are you always able to give cheerfully? What makes you want to give to help others? How does it make you feel when you give?*

There were practical needs for food, for the sharing of money and resources when Paul wrote, and he is able to remind the church that we give out of the abundance that God has provided for us. In doing so we share not just what we have, but also the grace of God, and we help to create an overflowing of gratitude to God that is far beyond ourselves.

I believe that Paul is also speaking metaphorically about the sowing and reaping of faith, of the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ. This too feeds people's needs, this too is possible because God has blessed us with faith.

So on this Thanksgiving Sunday, where do we see that God has provided us "with every blessing in abundance"? For many, this Thanksgiving will lack the abundance of large family gatherings, for some there will be a shortage of food for the table – not abundance. Others in our community will see an empty place at the table where a loved one sat last year – loss can make it hard to feel blessed.

*How is God providing blessings for you this year?*

Like so many, I will miss having all of my children gather for the Thanksgiving feast, yet I am grateful that they are all healthy at this time, and that we have an abundance of memories of times spent together. I am grateful that we can reach out to each other over the phone, and perhaps share pictures of our cooked turkeys. I thank God for the technologies that make all this possible; I thank God that I can share an abundance of love even at a distance.

In response, I give as cheerfully as I can, as abundantly as I can. Not because I think God has given me more materially than others, but because I gratefully believe that God wants all people to experience abundance, so to live my faith is to share, to do my part to add to someone else's abundance. Share from my financial abundance, share of my faith, share out my love and my compassion. My actions may ultimately encourage others to offer thanks to God – may feed them not just in body but in spirit. To me, that would be a rich and abundant blessing.

May your Thanksgiving be blessed as you need it to be blessed, and be filled with God's presence however you mark the day. May you experience abundant blessings in the celebration of harvest, of God's creation, of community-at-a-distance, and the never-ending love of God. Amen

Music: "Hymn of Grateful Praise" *by Joel Raney*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7jsrpRXjLM>

or if you would like to follow the sheet music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBh4jNITUow>

### Prayers of the People

Holy and Creating God, today we offer up our gratitude  
with our hearts and voices, with our whole selves.

God, hear our prayers.

God of farm and field, God of soil and root,  
we thank you for all that grows – for trees and for children,  
for our spirits and our community.

We offer our prayers for all those who help your creation to flourish:  
farmers and scientists, teachers and healers,  
faith leaders and faith seekers.

We remember those who are using their gifts and skills to help  
us find a safe way through the pandemic – doctors and nurses and researchers and public  
health workers, lab technicians and retail workers following protocols.

God, hear our prayers,

God of water and rock, we thank you for storms and rains  
that can wash away the debris that clutters our lives.  
Remind us that water can be both nourishing and destructive,  
as we offer our prayers for all those who are suffering through unexpected rains,  
severe storms and weather, flooding, drought, and other effects of climate change.  
We pray for all those who live within the storm of exclusion:  
our siblings in the LGBTQ+ community,  
black, indigenous and people of colour who are living with the storm of racism  
and with the harshest effects of the COVID-19 virus,  
all those who experience food or income insecurity,  
all those who experience uncertainty.  
God, hear our prayer.

God of wind and branch, of the Spirit's breath,  
we thank you for resilience and for flexibility,  
for forests that return after fire,  
for monarch butterflies on their journeys to transformation,  
for hearts that find healing after loss and pain.  
Today we lift our prayers for all those experiencing loss –  
the loss of large family gatherings this thanksgiving,  
the loss of a friend or family member,  
the loss of physical or mental health,  
the loss of work or purpose.  
We especially pray for those who have lost hope, lost faith, lost security,  
lost direction in these strange times.  
God hear our prayer.

God of feathered creatures, furry creatures, scaly creatures,  
and our human kindred,  
we remember that we are called to hold all creation in our care,  
just as you care for us.  
We thank you for our families and friends – human and other -  
that shower us in love, comfort us in time of need,  
and laugh with us in times of celebration.  
We pray for those on the margins of our communities:  
the homeless, the hungry, the lonely and misunderstood.  
God hear our prayers.

Loving God, remind us that we are the hands and feet  
of the compassionate and caring Christ in the world.  
May we all learn to offer his radical welcome,  
touch one another's lives and hearts with his healing and hope,  
and offer our grateful praise to you always. Amen

Closing music: "For the Fruit of All Creation"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AusLKhwtiE4>

### Blessing

Go into the rest of your day, into thanksgiving, in peace.

May the Holy God surprise you on your way – even if that is from living room to bedroom, Christ Jesus be your company especially as we miss the company of family and friends, and the Spirit lift up your hearts with gratitude. Amen.

Thank you, Lord *by Don Moen*

Hymn of Grateful Praise

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfBWSA8CESo>