

# *The Service of Thanksgiving*



*The Joint Worship Service  
of  
Prairie Community Church  
and  
Bethel Lutheran Church*

*Lester Prairie, MN  
November 19, 2017*

## **BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

*Vibrantly open to the spirit, Bethel Lutheran Church serves God and its neighbors by joyfully living and sharing the Good News.*

Sunday, November 19, 2017

Thanksgiving Worship Service

Lester Prairie, MN; 7:00 pm

Aaron Holmgren, Bethel Lutheran Pastor

Alan Fiene, Prairie Community UCC Pastor

Jan Smith, Organist/Pianist

### **The People of God Gather for Worship**

#### **The Prelude**

**The Gathering Hymn** “Now Thank We All Our God” (ELW # 840)

#### **The Prayer of Invocation**

**Generous God, for the abundance of your blessings to us, day by day and year by year, we give you our thanks.**

**For the simple pleasures of life: for garden harvests, coffee conversation, and familiar surroundings, for health and strength to appreciate the wonder of life, for needs met and desires fulfilled, we give you our thanks.**

**For food to nourish body and spirit, for homes which supply shelter, which nurture order and beauty, and offer hospitality, we give you our thanks.**

**With gifts of money which reach farther than we can manage ourselves, with deeds done in service of neighbor and stranger, with family and friends distant and nearby, we worship you, God, with grateful hearts and joyful spirit.**

**Alleluia. Amen.**

#### **The Opening Scripture**

Psalm 107:1-9

### **The Great Thanksgiving**

I

**The Words of Thanksgiving for The Good Earth** (*food, water, trees, air, beach, meadows, mountains*)

**The Hymn** “For the Beauty of the Earth” ELW # 879

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving** (by Walter Rauschenbusch, 1861-1918)

For the wide sky and the blessed sun,

**For the salt sea and the running water,**

For the everlasting hills

**And the never-resting winds,**

For trees and the common grass underfoot.

**We thank you for our senses**

By which we hear the songs of birds,

**And see the splendor of the summer fields,**

And taste of the autumn fruits,

**And rejoice in the feel of the snow,**

And smell the breath of the spring.

**Grant us a heart wide open to all this beauty,**

And save our souls from being so blind

**That we pass unseeing**

When even the common thorn bush

**Is aflame with your glory,**

O God our creator,

**Who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.**

## II

**The Words of Thanksgiving for Citizenship & Freedom** (*country, democracy, peace, international neighbors*)

**The Hymn** "This Is My Song" (ELW # 887)

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving** (adapted from *Lutheran Book of Prayer*)

**Lord Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, on this day we give thanks for the blessings we enjoy in this country. Teach us anew to treasure and appreciate this liberty of thought and freedom of worship, which is an essential part of this nation. Let us at no time misuse our freedom nor neglect to praise Thy holy name. Help us to appreciate the peace and order maintained by our system of government. Give us willingness to share in the processes of this democratic rule; to respect our country's laws, and work to serve our neighbors wherever possible. Above all, we give you thanks for the ultimate freedom found in Christ, our Savior and Redeemer who alone has delivered us from sin and death. In thy name, Amen.**

## III

**The Words of Thanksgiving for Daily Life** (*work, service organizations, schools, etc.*)

**The Hymn** "For the Fruit of All Creation" (ELW # 679)

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving** (*A Thanksgiving Blessing* by Naomi King)

Let us join our hands and hearts in gratitude on this wondrous day, where we have the abundance of our lives before us.

**We remember on this day of bounty all of those who do not have enough, who are afraid, who are lonely, and who suffer. We wish for the abundance of this world to be shared, for fear to become love, for the lonely to feel welcomed, and for the suffering to know rest and joy. For labors, the love, the care that gave us the delights of this and every day, we say "Thanks!" For the nourishment of our spirit, the challenges that strengthen us, and the friends we have on the journey, we sing "Thanks!" For all that is our lives, for these good gifts, we whisper, "Thanks!" Overflowing with gratitude, let us shout, "Thanks!" Amen.**

**The Bethel Choir**      “In Gratitude We Come” (by J. Paul Williams)

#### IV

**The Words of Thanksgiving for Gifts of Faith** (*faith, scriptures, teachers, music*)

**The Hymn**      “God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending” (ELW # 678)

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving** (*The Prayer of Thanksgiving* [excerpt] by Howard Thurman, 1914-1981)

Today, I make my Sacrament of Thanksgiving.

**I begin with the simple things of my days:**

**Fresh air to breathe,**

**Cool water to drink,**

**The taste of food,**

**The protection of houses and clothes,**

**The comforts of home.**

**For all these I make an act of Thanksgiving this day!**

**The Dedication of Food Gifts**

#### V

**The Words of Thanksgiving for Relationships** (*family, friends, diversity, new acquaintances*)

**The Hymn**      “Blest Be the Tie That Binds” (ELW # 656)

**The Prayer of Thanksgiving** (by William Barclay)

Tonight, O God, we bring our thanks to you, and especially our thanks for people.

**For those who are an example to us,**

**and those who in their lives show us what life ought to be;**

For those who are an inspiration to us,

and who fill us with the desire to make of life a noble thing;

**For those who are a comfort to us when life has hurt us;**

For those who are a strength to us, and in whose company we feel fit to tackle any task;

**For those who, although we do not know them personally,**

**have by their words or by their writings influenced us for good;**

For those whose love and care and service and understanding,

we so often take for granted;

**For those who give us loyal friendship, and for those who give us true love;**

**we this night thank you, O God.**

And most of all we thank you for Jesus to be the pattern of our lives,

the companion of our way, and the Savior of our souls.

**The Benediction**      1 Corinthians 4-9

**The Postlude**