



This sermon series uses the image of a tree, from seed to sprout, to sapling, to fruit bearing and back to seedling for the next generation. As First Church ends 2019, we have the opportunity to look ahead to 2020 praying and working for a new vision, a new way of being in ministry at Third Street and Broadway. The year 2020 will be our 150th anniversary. Being good stewards of the gifts of those who have gone before us, means that those who follow us will have the resources available for years to come. When we think about generosity and giving, part of the motivation is leaving a legacy for those who come after us. Last week we celebrated our confirmation class who have been studying and focusing and learning about faith. This week we end the Christian year and our year of gratitude. The challenge was to write a thank you note a week and to focus on different areas in our life each month for which we were thankful. November's prompt was to give thanks in all things. Part of our lifecycle is gratitude and out of gratitude comes grace and giving. As we celebrate Thanksgiving this week, may you find many ways to give thanks.

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **"A Year of Gratitude"**

Daily prayer: **Thank You, Thank You, Generous God!** *Thank You, thank You, thank You, generous God! You have injected life with joy; thus, we know laughter. You have dabbed creation with color; thus, we enjoy beauty. You have whistled a divine tune into the rhythm of life; thus, we hear music. You have filled our minds with questions; thus, we appreciate mystery. You have entered our hearts with compassion; thus, we experience faith. Thank You, God, Thank You. Thank You! - C. Welton Gaddy*

Study Guide

Monday, November 25, 2019 Deuteronomy 8: 6-10

This study guide is using an additional verse that was not read in worship. It puts in context the blessings received. The Israelites were reminded to keep the commandments in order to appreciate the blessings received. The challenge is of course to keep the commandments. The ten commandments are clear; love God and worship God alone, do not harm your neighbor in thought or deed. All the other commandments are basically commentary on how to accomplish those ten. God blesses us and calls us into accountability for those blessings. Don't forget, walk with God, worship God, put God first in your life and be in awe or fear of the One who calls us into relationship. *As you look at this list of blessings, write down some of the blessings God has given you. What are you thankful for today? Give us this day our daily bread, O Father in heaven, and grant that we who are filled with good things from Your open hand, may never close our hearts to the hungry, the homeless, and the poor; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. - from the abbey of New Clairvaux, Viña, California*

Tuesday, November 16, 2019 Deuteronomy 8: 11-16

Now Deuteronomy gets personal. "Take care that you do not forget the LORD your God...when you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them...forgetting the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt." In other words, it is easy to forget and take for granted the food we eat, the clean water we drink, our family, our friends, our homes and even our faith. How often do we arise in the morning and are amazed at the lights, or the warmth or the food available? *What are you thankful for today? Come, Lord Jesus, our guest to be. And bless these gifts bestowed by Thee. And bless our loved ones everywhere and keep them in Your loving care. Moravian Blessing*

Wednesday November 27, 2019 Deuteronomy 8: 17-18

How often do we define success as something we do? It is our talent, our intellect or our hard work that makes us successful. When we define success do we confuse it with being a celebrity? Is success about riches, possessions, status or the way we look? The author of Deuteronomy asks us to remember, remember it is God who gives us all we have and created us unique and unrepeatable. How do you find yourself remembering and in what ways and in what places? Write down your blessings, your talents, your gifts, your possessions. What are you thankful for today? *As you prepare for Thanksgiving Day, pray this traditional grace. Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored. Thy creatures bless and grant that we May feast in paradise with Thee. - John Cennick*

Thursday November 28, 2019 Happy Thanksgiving! Philippians 4: 4-7

Paul writes these words from prison. Paul invites us to pray with Thanksgiving and to find ways to live with grateful hearts. A thankful heart reminds us of what is important. Today, on this holiday, do some things which put you in a "thanksgiving" mood. Watch a bit of the Thanksgiving parade on television, read a portion of your favorite book, say I love you to someone who makes your life deeper and more wonderful. *Write down one thing that you are grateful for today. Write a thank you note to someone, just because you are grateful for their life and spirit. Then recite this Thanksgiving prayer written by Harry Jewell and enjoy the day. Our Father in Heaven, we give thanks for the pleasure of gathering together for this occasion. We give thanks for this food Prepared by loving hands. We give thanks for life, the freedom to enjoy it all and all other blessings. As we partake of this food, we pray for health and strength to carry on and try to live as You would have us. This we ask in the name of Christ, Amen.*

Friday November 29, 2019 Philippians 4: 4-9

In our culture, the day after Thanksgiving is the official "kickoff" for the Christmas season. There are sales and other activities that encourage a glut of spending. In these verses from Paul in prison, he writes words of contentment and gratitude. "Rejoice...don't worry, with thanksgiving give praise to God." Paul encourages us to pay attention to what is important, values that impact the lives of others. *As we finish our "year of gratitude" how will you continue to live a life of thankfulness? What are you thankful for today? For each new morning with its light, for rest and shelter of the night, for health and food, for love and friends, for everything Thy goodness sends.--Ralph Waldo Emerson*