

Sermon – Thanksgiving, November 25, 2010
Rev Deacon Dorothy ‘Ricky’ Brightman

The widow handed over her offering, a mite, probably the smallest coin there was at the time, and it was all she had.

The immigrant rushed down the gangplank and kissed the soil of his new homeland, while giving thanks for what was before - and what was to come.

The Chilean coal miner ran every day, underground, and, when on-top, entered and finished the New York City Marathon, as he gave thanks for new life.

Bill walked down the street to the large annual thanksgiving dinner sponsored by Johnson and Wales, giving thanks on this windy day for the “new” jacket that actually fit him at the collar and sleeves.

As we come together to worship, rejoice, and praise God – we also explain, apologize and repent, request and promise. Often, the communication is complicated by an inferred subsequent action – we want God to , we need , if I do (this), then will you do what I want.

Thanks-giving is different. There is no bargaining. There is no anticipated reward. It simply is what it is – the recognition and naming of a gift and, for us, thanking God for that, and all other gifts of this life. Imagine what it would be like if there was no recognition or relationship with a God to thank.

Almost four hundred years ago, the Pilgrims and their new Native American neighbors, gave thanks at a time of harvest and as a celebration of “making It” through a difficult year. Each group recognized and thanked God in their own way, and, most importantly, gave thanks in community.

Today, our friends at St. George’s also celebrate and give thanks, for making it through another difficult year of limited finances, few employment opportunities, distrust and disfunction in the educational system, and constant fear of family disruption because of pervasive immigration inquiry. Yet today, on Thanksgiving, our friends will gather together at their home, the Church, to celebrate and give thanks.

And what about us – right now with our church family and later as we probably enjoy a meal together with other family and friendship groups. What are we grateful for that we will share? For me this is work, and health, and new friends I have made as well as friends who have died – Ellen Hill and Fred Williamson and Ruth Jellison and Taffy Anna.

For you, perhaps, finding time to think about how we can do this regularly – with God and also with others. Remember thanks--giving is simply what it is - no bargaining, no anticipated reward. Just the recognition and naming of a gift and thanking God for that, and all other gifts of this life

Perhaps easier for a child who might sing

*If I were a butterfly,
I'd thank you Lord – for giving me wings,*

**And if I were a robin in a tree,
I'd thank you Lord - that I could sing.**

*And if I were a fish in the sea,
I'd wiggle my tail and I'd giggle with glee,*

But I just thank you Lord for making me.

For you gave me a heart and you gave me a smile.

You gave me Jesus and you made me your child

And I just thank you Father for making me me.

It's as simple as that

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