

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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THANKS. “But since we belong to the day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love and for a helmet of hope of salvation.” (1 Thessalonians 5:8). The national holiday of *THANKSGIVING* will soon be celebrated with family get-togethers or community meals. For most people this is a festive occasion because of being together with loved ones and friends, sharing scrumptious food and drinks with joy, laughter, and celebration. Yet, at the same time, many will be experiencing loneliness, homelessness, hunger, and family distancing. They will be experiencing a disconnect to society and fear of not being worthy of love or recognition as a child of God. In a nation of plenty, how can we share our blessings and abundance so that all are fed, clothed, and have a safe place to live? How do we give *THANKS* in all conditions of life?

THANKS should be a way of living and attitude, rather than just a day of festivities. Biblical stories remind us that *THANKS* reflects the generosity of God who blesses us abundantly with gifts and graces that are both human and divine. Who we are and what we have are blessings from God, entrusted to us to be responsible for their care and stewardship. The biblical writers were often in awe of the God who embraced them in all conditions of life, and they gave *THANKS* to God for life itself. God’s mysterious Self was continually revealed in their lives of faith, hope, and love. Forgiveness, healing, strength, and comfort were God’s blessings to revive their hearts, minds, and souls.

THANKS creates *THANKS*-giving which becomes *THANKS*-living. Amid and after epidemics, wars, failed harvests, and personal calamities, faith communities throughout history offered *THANKS* to God for embracing them. They lived with the hope that life will continue with God and that nothing would be able to separate them from the love of God. Paul used the word “*day*” to reveal life, not in shadows, darkness, confusion, or distortions, but as it is. God’s armor of faith, love, and hope allows us to have the strength to overcome all that would try to destroy us. *THANKS* be to God for claiming us with the armor of God’s abiding presence. *BLESSINGS ALWAYS*.