



October 2024

**Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18**

Dear Sisters and Brothers-in-Christ,

Once again, we are preparing to celebrate another Thanksgiving, generally a chance for people to give thanks for a good harvest and other fortunes in the past year. For us Christians, Thanksgiving is historically a day to praise and thank God for our blessings.

In his first letter to the church in Thessalonica, the Apostle Paul calls on them to "in all things give thanks to God, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus" (5:18)

This instruction from Paul reflects the attitude of gratitude and trust that we Christians should have in God's promises and providence. It is part of a series of his instructions to the church, which also included "rejoicing always and praying without ceasing."

As we plan how we are going to mark this great event with our family and friends, let us remember the number one reason why we celebrate Thanksgiving; to give thanks to God for everything He has done for us over the years, and especially this year because He has allowed us to live to mark another year.

But how do we give thanks to God? We do that by ensuring that we sustain the church whose mission is spreading the Gospel, the Good News of His Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. This mission cannot be achieved without us all giving of our treasure to sustain the church.

I know these are challenging times, but this church is yours. It is the place you come to seek God's blessings, solace, protection and peace. This is where we all come together as a community to raise our voices to make our petitions to God asking for His protection and his provision of our needs so that we can thrive.

You are the church, the body of Christ. You do all you can to maintain your human body. How about doing what you can to maintain your spiritual body? All that you have was given to you by God, so why

don't you cheerfully give Him something in return? It reminds me of the doxology "We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift may be. All that we have is Thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from Thee." 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 tells us that, "Our God loves a cheerful giver."

Whatever you give will be multiplied for you. We are promised this in the scriptures where Jesus tells us the story of the widow's mite, the rich man and his wealth. Proverbs 17:8 tells us that "A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before great men." A gift to God opens the way and brings the giver into the presence of God. "Give, and it will be given to you. (Luke 6:38)" If you want favours from God, take care of His church through your giving. Give out of your gratitude for God's blessings upon you and your family, wherever they may be. Remember the song, "Count your Blessings, name them one by one." The Apostle Paul tells us in his letter to the Galatians (chapter 6) "A man reaps what he sows (7a). Whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life (8b)."

At Thanksgiving, we stop to reflect upon God's abundant provision. It is a time for praising God for his many provisions in our lives and a time to celebrate God's faithfulness. His faithfulness endures until this day, and his children should embrace the celebration.

Throughout the year, you have been called upon to give to your church and you have been generous with your time, talent and treasure because you believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive. For it is in giving that we truly receive. It is in giving that we show our gratefulness to God, and it is in giving that we love God and others through our good deeds. We thank you.

On this Thanksgiving, we call upon your generosity to your church once again, to give of your treasure. Our finances are currently strained and we are not meeting our financial obligations to achieve our mission. Please help your church.

I, your priest, continue to pray for you, that your God grant you the abundance of His Grace, so that you will give back to Him by giving to His church, the Body of His Son. May all your petitions be granted.

A Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving to you and all your loved ones.

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### **A Message from Your Wardens**

Your wardens and parish council have been monitoring our financial position all year with a degree of alarm. While our financial position has somewhat improved as of September 30<sup>th</sup>, most of the improvement can be attributed to non-standard income. St. James is mostly dependant on the generous support from parishioners. This continues to be concerning. The latest figures show that regular donations have fallen from \$29,292 for the same period in 2023 to \$22,232, a decline of almost 25%. This is not sustainable in the long-term. During the remaining three months of 2024, we will welcome additional donations if you are able to afford to do so. Please remember, that all identifiable envelope donations will receive a tax receipt early in the new year.

Your Wardens,

Vic Wootton and Glenn Clark