

Thanksgiving & Appreciation (Reissue)

October 10, 2022

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. Services are presented on YouTube, Facebook and our website one week following recording. This week's video is titled Thanksgiving and Appreciation and is pulled from our archive. It was recorded October 10th, 2021. Thank you to Mike, Glynnis and Don for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Psalm 136:1-26.

Welcome, Announcements, and Prayer

Good morning. Happy Thanksgiving. Yes, this is an unusual weekend in Canada where we pause and celebrate with family and friends and especially with God, to be thankful for the country. We do live in and the blessings that come from being a citizen here in Canada. If you are looking from where you are this morning, whether it be near, far away as a time of Thanksgiving is like every day of our lives and realize we are spiritual blessings from God to be thankful so we don't really need a special day or holiday, but Canada marks out for the blessings we receive from the land and around and from others. So thankfulness is going to be more or less the theme of the service. And we're grateful to God. Cause what are you thankful for? Right? As we grow older in the faith, we are thankful. I'm thankful for my dog. I am thankful for my cat. goes into I am thankful for my health. I am thankful for my sight. I'm thankful for my family. I'm thankful for getting through the pandemic a very social, deeper time of reflection. May we give the glory to God, and when we find out things in our lives, we can and should be thankful for and be thankful and help others and show them the same thankfulness that is in our lives. There's only a few announcements.

We have a couple of anniversaries and they're big ones. I saw that on Facebook. John and Jo, 68 years know me and so they've been married for that long like I have does. Wow. I'm like That's like I told my buddy once, well, we were all long time ago, like 25 years. I said, see, 25 years ago, it could have been out by now, but uh in terms of what it could have done time and been. It was just a joke, but that was all. That was a 25 if they last 50 years they deserve each other and they deserve God's blessing. But happy anniversary, those two. And John and Connie, I have no idea how many years have they been married? It's got to be up there, too. So God bless them. And it's a birthday. It was a birthday Tina! Earl better Not forget that one Happy birthday, Tina!

Anyways, may we go to God and our prayer, Dear heavenly Father, we're grateful to you for this weekend, a joyful Thanksgiving from the blessings that we have received and do receive on a daily basis and will receive in the future. We just don't know about what will help us to be powerful instruments of your will, help us to be joyful, not just if we can, but the rest the rest of our journey with you in our lives, in this world, the world needs a lot of thankfulness and joy. For us, it is time for we love all, all people. And people are closely to see the church where they're struggling. And we struggle because they struggle help us to lift each other's burdens to you. Thank you for the blessings that we have and Christ is to be a family of God here and brings all of us to go make a difference. Help us to be your people. Please be with Don as he shares a message this morning. May we gain from it, we learn from it, and we put it into practice in Christ's name, Amen.

Communion

Too many things attached to me as a glasses and more glasses. Masks. So I wanted to talk to you about on Thanksgiving about a special aspect of Thanksgiving that is super important to me. And I'm sure that you'll agree that it's important to you. I wanted to talk to you about being thankful for friends many years ago now. I don't know, 24 or. Yeah, about 24 years ago, my husband died very suddenly, completely unexpectedly. And the first call that I made was to my friend. And the second call that I made was to my friend. And they literally came over and what they were wearing, which was their pajamas, and that was in a day when you didn't go anywhere in your pajamas. And they came and they literally held me together through that unbelievable time. Several years ago, one of my best friends, her husband, was diagnosed with throat cancer and he was hospitalized for a bit, had a tracheotomy, and she took him home. And the next day he he suffocated literally in her arms. It was horrendous. God literally woke me up in the night to take her call to you were saying, darn it, that God does these things and you don't really know how, but it's just God. That was a God thing. Friends held her together all through that time. I have a friend with me today, Terry, who's an amazing friend who works at our house doing amazing things for our family. Probably one of the most amazing things is he makes this fabulous Caesar salad that would make everybody's mouth water if you're even remotely a lover of garlic. But he does very physical things with his hands. He's made a beautiful area downstairs in our basement for my husband. He's helped us renovate two bathrooms and our kitchen. It just it I said to him yesterday, he said, Terry, I was just in my bathroom, which we just finished this week. And it's like, I love my bathroom. And I love my kitchen and I love my upstairs bathroom. They're just so beautiful.

Another friend, Don, it's t, it's teacher. It's Preacher Appreciation Day. He is a teacher. Definitely our teacher. Oh, my goodness. I am so grateful for the way that he inspires us. He loves us and inspires us to keep going, to keep cheerful. I have never known a more cheerful, encouraging and that means so much to me because I've had some not so cheerful and encouraging preachers in my life. And he is. And it has made my faith grow so much. Thank you. When you get together with your friends and you start to laugh. Right, and you laugh and you laugh and it gets bigger and bigger until literally you can hardly catch your breath because you're laughing so hard. Now, you know, science tells us that that releases endorphins and all that stuff. But really, oh, my gosh, what a gift that is. Right. To be able to sit and laugh together lots of times. It's around a meal. Amazing. Sometimes we get disciples by friends. And by discipling, I mean both encouraging us, but sometimes doing exactly what Don said in his message. Sometimes it's that strong. Know when we need to hear it. And I'm so grateful for that. I honestly, my gratitude for that aspect of God and his working in my life is amazing. I was an incredibly negative person and I don't consider myself to be negative anymore. It's a complete transformation, really. The same way that what Terry did with my bathroom and kitchen. It's a transformation and I'm so grateful that I have an optimistic view of of of that because of my friends Thanksgiving dinner.

You know, we hang around and we catch up with pe- with our family or friends, whoever is there. We really are reclining at the table, whether we're sitting in a chair or whether we're sitting on the floor or whether we're sitting out in the backyard with our feet up, which is my favorite place to be hanging out where we're there with friends. We've got we've got closeness, we've got family. I'm just so grateful for that. And and it was interesting. I was looking at the scriptures, reclining at the table because I knew that Jesus did it so long. And it's one of the things that is mentioned in all four gospels. It's my it's Matthew 26:20. Mark 14:18. Luke 22:14. And John 13:23, among others. But it's like, wow, that reclining at the table. And we know most of the time food was involved with that. What an incredible

blessing it is to be able to do that with one another. It's awesome. In John 15 in versus 15 and 17, the Bible says, I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business and said, I have called you friends for everything that I learned from my father. I have made known to you, This is my command. We love each other in verse Peter four, verse eight. The Bible says, above all love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins. So our job is just to respond to one another in love, even when we disagree. And that happens sometimes we need to call ourselves to be thankful for the precious gift that friendship is for the precious gift that is family, for the precious brother and sisterhood that we have, for the precious gift of being sons and daughters, both of those whom God has given us to love our own sons and daughters, but also that we are called sons and daughters of God himself. So today, as we celebrate Thanksgiving and tomorrow, let's remember this incredible gift that both our friends are to offer to us, to support us, to love us, to correct us, to pull us in, to make us laugh, to just cheer our hearts, to relax. We're in sometimes not so relaxing, but okay. But just enjoy that. And remember, we are friends of God. God is our friend. Jesus is our friend, His His life, his death, his burial, and and our acceptance of Him as our Lord and Savior makes us friends with Him.

And so as we celebrate communion, let's, let's pray together just to have this big feeling of gratitude that that both celebrates our, our our oneness with one another, our oneness with God with Jesus, but also our oneness with this incredible gift that we've given of friends, family and loved ones. Let's pray, dearest Lord God, thank you so much for everything that you give us truly. You know what? If we stopped and thought for microseconds, we would be overwhelmed with gratitude. And yet so often we kind of forget that part. And I pray that as we take communion today, as we participate in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus God, that that we can remember that He's our brother. He's our friend, we're each other's friends. We love each other, and we love you so deeply and are so grateful that because of his sacrifice, we are called your friends, we are called your family God. And we are loved and protected and cared for and and nurtured and corrected by you, by your word and God. It's just so overwhelming. Help us to be filled to, I don't know, the fullness. Our cups runneth over with gratitude. God, that that you have chosen us. That you continue to choose us, that no matter what we do, we are your friends. God, we love you. We thank you so much. Please bless our time of communion. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading

And so today's Scripture reading is I think, one of the most interesting scripture readings in that it's a response. And so I'm going to invite you to say the response as I read and I'll indicate that with my hand and your line is his love endures forever. And I would love it if you read it. If you say that line his love endures forever like you really mean it. Okay, this is Psalm 136: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. (His love endures forever) Give thanks to the God of God's (His love endures forever) Give thanks to the Lord of Lords (His love endures forever) to him alone, who does great wonders (His love endures forever), who, by his understanding, made the heavens (His love endures forever) who spread out the earth upon the waters. (His love endures forever) Who made the great lights. (His love endures forever) The sun to govern the day. (His love endures forever) The moon and stars to govern. The night. (His love endures forever) To him who struck down the first born of Egypt. (His love endures forever) And brought Israel out from among them (His love endures forever) with a mighty hand and outstretched arm. (His love endures forever) To him, who divided the Red Sea asunder, (His love

endures forever) and brought Israel through the midst of it, (His love endures forever) but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea. (His love endures forever) To him who led his people through the wilderness. (His love endures forever)

To him who struck down great kings (His love endures forever) and killed mighty kings. (His love endures forever) Sihon, King of the Amorites (His love endures forever) and Og king of Bashan (His love endures forever) and gave their land as an inheritance. (His love endures forever) An inheritance to his servant Israel. (His love endures forever) He remembered us in our low estate (His love endures forever) and freed us from our enemies (His love endures forever) he gives food to every creature. (His love endures forever) Give thanks to the God of Heaven. His love endures forever.

Sermon

I'm grateful for your presence with us today and for those who will be watching this as time goes by. We wish you a very happy Thanksgiving. And today is also been called Preacher Appreciation Day. And so I want to combine both of these today. First, I want to begin by saying that this preacher appreciates you. The song that was sung by this wonderful man who is Luciano Pavarotti called Nessun Dorma is a song of Thanksgiving and appreciation. It tells us to keep loving even when troubles arise and they do. And that love sustains. As believers we receive thanks and we give thanks. And today I want to talk about being people of Thanksgiving and giving and receiving appreciation. It's interesting how on occasion the Holy Spirit works. I was thinking about the sermon that I was going to be preaching, and I'm preaching today, and I just opened up a book that I haven't opened for a while and I came across Chuck Swindell and he tells this story.

Some of you remember Bob Hope and his line constantly was, thanks for the memories. I want to read this article to you from Charles Swindell. While jogging early this morning, I found myself humming the tune Bob Hope, immortalized during several wars. I can still remember his tailor made lyrics fitted to each occasion. He sang them to lonely soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines from steamy jungles to frozen reservoirs, from the decks of aircraft carriers to makeshift platforms on windswept sand dunes. As guys and gals in uniform laughed and cried, screamed and sipped, Pepsi or Coke, they always anticipate an ad hoc finale as he took the mic and crooned. And thanks for the memories. I remember it well. Christmas of 1958 on Okinawa. I was homesick, missing my wife, counting the days. So when the veteran entertainer saying his closing song, I sang along with him in a flood of memories. I recall how grateful I was for that tour of duty, the lessons I had learned, the disciplines I had begun to employ thanks to the navigators, the books that I had read, the missionaries I had met, the places I had visited, the journal I kept, the letters I had written, the verses I had memorized, even sayings I had witnessed inside a marine Corps barracks. And mostly the call I had received from God to enter ministry. Then, all the way through seminary, I pontificated to family and classmates that there were three places I would never minister. I would never minister in Texas, New England and California, especially Southern California. But God knows best because I ended up preaching in Texas, New England and California. Looking back, all I can do is smile and sing. Thanks for the memories. I'm doing that a lot these days. As I recall, the various things God had done in me and through me and for me. And sometimes in spite of me. And I can't help but give him praise in my heart. Pastoring a church has to be the highest of callings in this position.

One has the privilege of touching life at its tenderest points of walking with pain to its darkest valleys, or proclaiming truth in its purest form of confronting sin in its ugliest scenes, of doing your best to model integrity. Though it's hard extremes while everyone is watching as well as when no one is looking. It's no wonder to me why it requires a God given Holy Spirit calling before one can begin ministry and maintain ministry and after all these years, I say a resounding thanks for the memories, for the conversations that have occurred, the addictions that have been conquered, the marriages that have been restored, the fractured lives that have been mended. These memories stay with me and revisit me often as I thank him for his faithfulness. Who knows what other surprises God has over Horizon? I do not know what lies ahead, but for today I pause and praise you and thank you for the memories. So Thanksgiving appears to us in multiple forms. It's not just food, but it's appreciation as well as Thanksgiving. And that was the song by Luciano Pavarotti. Nessun Dorma is a song of love, of Thanksgiving, of appreciation. Today, I want to talk about being people of Thanksgiving and appreciation. And as I said at the start, this preacher appreciates you. First of all, I want to talk about thanking God by looking up. Here's an article I came across.

It talks about thanking God by looking up, thanking God every day, by looking around and thanking God by looking within. It's not a long article, but I found it helpful. Maybe you will too. Looking up, I thank God. I thank you, Lord, for your sovereign control over our circumstances, for your holy character, in spite of our sinfulness, for your commitment to us, even when we wander astray, for your word, that gives us direction for your love, that holds us close for your gentle compassion in our sorrows, for your constant faithfulness to our highs and especially to our lows. For your strong know when we need to hear no. For your surprising yes when we lack the faith to see it or believe it for your wise weight. When we are impatient and rash for your understanding, when we are confused, for your Holy Spirit that enlightens our eyes, for Your Grace, that removes our guilt. Thank you, Lord, for all you are. And all you do and all you say. Looking up, we thank God. And then looking around, we thank God. Thank you, Lord, for our wonderful country. So blessed, so unique for close family times, so affirming, so enjoyable for teachers, mentors, personal heroes who spurs on for an opportunity to be of help and encouragement to others for the embrace of a friend who really cares for the joy of seeing our children and grandchildren grow and laugh and learn for an occupation that enables us to make a living for a place to live close to, where food to eat.

And then looking within, we thank God we thank you, Lord, for the gift of good health, a hidden treasure, easily overlooked for eyes that see the beauty of your creation, for minds that are curious, creative and competent, for memories of past pleasures and recent accomplishments for years that receive the world of sounds surrounding us for the special stimulation of taste and touch for hands to work with and legs to walk with, for heartaches that force us to rearrange our priorities for broken dreams and lingering afflictions. For the courage to tell the truth, though it may hurt for the determination to finish a demanding task for a sense of humor that brings healing and hope. It's Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. So we pause to declare to you, all, Lord, these expressions of gratitude, you are indeed worthy of our highest praise to you goes all the glory.

Well, there's so many scriptures on Thanksgiving in the Bible, as you know. All you have to do is just go to the concordance and look it up. And there are Scripture after Scripture, after scripture. So I wrote down just a few because I like them. And maybe you will too. They're not many, but just a few. Second Corinthians two and 14. It says this, but thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphant procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere where the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

And then in 915, thanks be to God for His indescribable gift. First Thessalonians 5:18. Be joyful. Always. And then it should have a bracket. It's not always easy, but be joyful. Always pray continually. Now we should have another bracket. Remind yourself. Remind yourself. Be always joyful, pray continually and give thanks. And this is so hard in every circumstance for this is God's will for you in Christ. Jesus. Revelation, Chapter four and nine. All the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to Him who sits on this throne and who lives forever and ever. And won't it be amazing? Won't it be beyond appreciation and Thanksgiving when we close our eyes for the last time and then open them again and see the face of God and the face of Jesus and the face of God's Holy Spirit and the face of loved ones who have gone. It'll seem like just that moment, Thanksgiving and appreciation. It's beyond words. Psalm 95 says, Let us come before him with Thanksgiving Extoll him with music and song. Thank you, Mr. Pavarotti. And share his gates with Thanksgiving in his courts with praise, meaning we bring ourselves to the church, praising and singing with appreciation and love, even before we get into the doors of the church.

It's who we are, people of Thanksgiving, because God puts it inside of us. So we enter this gate, these church doors with Thanksgiving, and this court of praise. And Paul reminds us. Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and petition. With Thanksgiving present your requests to God or first Timothy for God created food and it's good to be received with Thanksgiving. That's one of the reasons why we often give thanks before we eat our food to come together today, thanking God for everything He has given to us, how much we appreciate Him and how much we can appreciate others as well. And so for just a couple of comments today, today is sometimes been called well, it isn't called around the World Preacher Appreciation Day. And I said at the beginning, I appreciate you so very, very much beyond words. I started full time preaching in 1978 while I was attending a Bible college in Ohio was really an extension school for what was then called Sunset School of Preaching. But I preached for a lot of years before that. I was quite young. I probably have mentioned this to you before, but even before I started grade 11 at Great Lakes High School, I would sometimes preach in small places, very small groups of people, thank goodness. And I remember the first time I preach was in Peterborough and it was not a church, it was someone's home. The coffee table was our communion table and someone led the prayer and after the prayer was over, it was my turn to preach. The prayer lasted longer than my serve, I can tell you that. And I had stood behind sit in front of the mirror and practiced my sermon over and over and over again.

And I thought, Good, I've got it. I've got it down. It's 15 minutes. I think it turned out to be like 7 minutes. When I was preaching, I'm sure they had no idea what I was trying to say, but they said, Can you come back next week? It's not because they wanted me. I think it's because they wanted to help mold me. And over the years, I've so appreciate it that I've been preaching on a full time basis for 43 years now, and I love it at 26 years here in Beamsville. And I love it. It's it's it's a rewarding experience I don't think it's not in any way an exaggeration. I don't think at all that I've ever not wanted to be part of this congregation. And I'm so grateful for it. So While I was attending Great Lakes High School, especially the teachers who I had, if someone had ever told me and even said to the teachers, I had, that one day you are going to be the preacher of the beams filled Church of Christ and that you're going to be there for 26 years. All of us in unison would say, That's impossible. That's just not going to happen. But God does what God does. How many times in your life have you stopped to think, you know, that was God, whether it was an event, situation, conversation, something else you don't that

was God. Not only was that God, it is God God who was working in each one of our lives this very day.

He has plans for you. Scripture says plans to prosper. You plans to give you hope in the future. That's not just Bible words. That's God's work in your life. And whether we really know it or not, God knew was even before we were born. As you said, he knew the exact time and places in which you would live. So our job is wherever we are, is to honor God and to encourage others. This preacher right here today appreciates you more than I can say. There have been so many mentors for me over the years. So while I was going to Bible College in 1978, it was a community called Troy, Ohio, and this wonderful congregation in Portland, Indiana, was about a 45 minute drive. It was a beautiful Midwestern town and a lovely group of people. And I never once ever thought as a Canadian that I had an accent. So the first time I went and preached in Portland, Indiana, people were smiling and I just thought they were friendly. Actually, what they were doing was laughing because they said, You have such an English accent, you have such a British accent. We Canadians don't think that. But if you're in Midwest, Ohio and Indiana, I think they have an accent. Let's face it, we all have accents. But they became a loving, wonderful group of people. It's the only congregation I've ever known where there was a father and son leadership team Homer Smith was in his nineties. He was a brilliant man and a kind, kind gentleman. He looked like the absentminded professor. He never really stopped to comb his hair. He was already ahead of himself. But when he stood up and spoke, it was like, Wow, this is a profound man. And then his son, Paul Smith, who becomes who was an elder in the church, was also a wonderful man for our first day that I was there, Paul Smith invited me to his home and I got to know him and love him and appreciate it.

And then Barb and I were engaged and then Barb came down to visit me. We went to Paul, Mary Ellen Smith's house that day for lunch. She said, I don't know if I ever told you that I'm a pilot. And we said, No, you didn't. He said, Well, we're going for a ride, one for a ride, we're going to take a flight. I had never been in an airplane before, and it was a small Cessna plane. He took us up and he said to myself, Would you like to fly it? I said, Not on your life. Barb said, I will, and she did. And she flew it wonderfully, so. So she said to me, in the future you're going to buy me an airplane. So that promise is still on hold. So they're wonderful examples of teachers that I've loved over the years. Then, Anderson, of course, who's been with us for Anderson, was a wonderful man, no relation, but a fantastic teacher. He was the one that really helped mold me. When I was in Bible College, my dad, wonderful man, kind man, helpful man. Jim McGuigan firing Irishman. Charles Swindle. Charles Stanley, Landon Saunders and so many others. But I would be remiss and I couldn't do this job without the support and love of my sweet wife, Barb. It's, you know, beyond measure. You can't do this job without the guidance of God's Holy Spirit with a deep love of Scripture, with a love for God and for the presence of Jesus Christ.

So let me conclude these few remarks today, saying Thank you for allowing me as Bob Hope said, thanks for the memories and I hope there'll be some more memories that we can make together. So here's what Paul says Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again. Rejoice, let your gentleness be evident to all the Lord is near Do not be anxious about anything. Sure, that's a tough one. But in everything by prayer and petition with Thanksgiving present your request to God and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding what guard your hearts will guard your minds in Christ. Jesus. And remember, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. Whatever you have learned or received from me or seen in me, put it into practice and the God of

peace will be with you. So from me to you, thank you. And may the God of peace go with you today, tomorrow and forevermore. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Thank you for a wonderful lesson to learn. Like a Preacher Appreciation Day. Well, interesting enough, it was all when I was 11 years old. It was going stand by. I walked into the projects and I lived in the little project goes, Well, I don't want to get into that. But we were very poor and is that. I came every week. I don't know what day it was, but I'm sure they drew more filmstrips on that little projector in your life. But that's where I got my foundation, my introduction, I like to call it LBBJ Life Before Blue Jays, because it wasn't anything. But, you know, his dad gave me the fundamentals when my mom was there. My overall plan when I was 11 years old, I was very interested. And it already invited out to church, not by a Japanese man, which, you know, as Ernie and I still in contact with them. We're still go out. But I mean, I think about what it stands for. I mean, going back in the South, my introduction to the project was the first day where we had a little smash them just walking through the neighborhood.

It was a rough neighborhood. Yet, Don's dad (they called him Rev) But he kind of walked and he walked along was critical. And he brought all those people on a project into the church going and that was one of his ministries. And he was well respected. No, he could walk in there and nobody would bother to come out of that respect program knew that she cared for and so things to be thankful for the people that are instrumental like Don talked about in his life so we're at a point is today be thankful for the legacy of faith that's been handed down to you and thank God for giving us a time of Thanksgiving in our lives are such occasions. So let's go to God in prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father. We're so grateful for the lesson today. The reminders that we have through Scripture and through word, through song. So, so these people in our lives, people may impact to get us to where we are today on the road, on our journey of faith and help us to show gratitude, help us to love deeply. Help us to be thankful and joyful and all. And we all have a story to tell. Help us to live up to the blessings that we have in Christ. Jesus. I share as we go on our daily lives. In Christ's name, Amen.

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