

# COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

*Bethania A.M.E. Zion, Bethania Moravian, Mizpah Moravian, United Baptist Churches*  
5 pm, November 22, 2020 on Facebook Live  
Host Church: Bethania Moravian Church

Prelude

"His Mercy Is More"

MATT BOSWELL; MATT PAPA

Opening and Welcome

PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;  
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.

Opening Prayer

Almighty and gracious God, we enter into your gates with joy and thanksgiving, celebrating your extraordinary love. You have made yourself known to us, in a multitude of ways. Today, we are especially mindful of how you have revealed yourself to African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.), Baptists, Moravians and a multitude of others. And each of those ways invites us to respond to you with grateful hearts.

**You have been present with us even before our thoughts and words and feelings ever turned toward you.**

You created us in your own image, redeemed us with your love, and have always sustained us with your grace.

**When we think of you, gracious God, we think of your compassion and tender mercies toward us all, and we are humbled with gratitude.**

We thank you, everpresent God, for coming to us in your Son, Jesus Christ, for entering into our human flesh and taking the form of a servant.

**We thank you for reaching the least of us while we were yet sinners and for doing all things necessary for our salvation through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.**

We praise and honor you with our hearts and our lives, because we know that we could not help ourselves or earn our own salvation.

**You continue to to rush out to meet us and embrace us while we are yet far off. We marvel at the depth of your forgiving love which always comes to us through the working of your Spirit. We thank you for each new experience and each new reminder of your very constant care.**

WE GATHER TOGETHER

We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;  
he chastens and hastens his will to make known;  
the wicked oppressing now cease from distressing;  
sing praises to his Name! He forgets not his own.

Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,  
ordaining, maintaining his kingdom divine;  
so from the beginning the fight we were winning;  
thou, Lord, wast at our side; all glory be thine!

You have not left us to live alone in this world, but have called us to be members of your body, the church. We thank you for all those in the past who shared their faith with us and for those in the present who help to shape our response to your love.

**We are grateful for the nurture we receive and the mission we have been given to manifest the good news of Jesus Christ to the world around us.**

You have not left us without written and living testimony to your involvement in human history. We thank you for the Holy Scriptures and the insights they provide for us in our mission and ministry.

**We are grateful for the words and stories of judgment and justice, comfort and renewal, salvation and peace that come to us from the Bible and from the ongoing inspiration of your Holy Spirit.**

THY WORD

Chorus: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. (2X)  
When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way  
Still you're there right beside me  
And nothing will I fear as long as you are near  
Please be near me to the end. (Chorus)

We pray:

For the creation itself and the nourishment we receive from its resources,  
For seedtime and harvest, sunshine and rain, oceans and forests,  
For the wondrous way in which we are woven into the environment,

**We give you thanks, Creator God.**

For all the creative things we are enabled to do through the gifts and talents  
you have given to us,

For the good health within our bodies, minds, and spirits,  
For the courage and healing that you provide when we are broken and discouraged in the  
midst of our earthly pilgrimage,

**We acknowledge with thanks your leadership in our journey.**

For the gift of time and the guidance you give for the redemptive use of our days,  
For the satisfaction and renewal that come from our labor and leisure,  
For directing us to do justice and to love mercy,  
For the chance to begin again whenever we falter and fail.

**We are grateful, our Savior, whose faithfulness endures through all generations.**

WE PLOW THE FIELDS AND SCATTER

We thank you then, O Father, for all things bright and good,  
the seedtime and the harvest, our life, our health, our food;  
help us to show thanksgiving for all you freely give;  
to love you in our neighbor, and by the way we live.  
All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above;  
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all his love.

Prayer of Confession

Hear now, gracious God, our words of contrition that we pray in the light of your manifold blessings:

**We confess that we have failed to perceive your glory as it is revealed in creation. We have taken the gifts of this world for granted and have not stopped to marvel at what you have provided for us. Forgive us for rushing through life with reckless abandon. Forgive us for trampling upon other persons, places, and things, and for not understanding how dependent we are on one another and the earth itself.**

**Help us, Creator God, to share the resources of this world as good and faithful stewards. Show us how to tend the land, water, and air and to prevent their pollution and destruction. Teach us the discipline of conserving and of replacing what we have used. Deliver us from exploitation. Keep us from idolizing money and material possessions. And make us compassionate in our concern for the needs of others. Amen.**

God hears our prayers, blots out our transgressions, and creates a new and right spirit within us. Go in peace and joyful service.

The Old Testament Poetry: Psalm 95:1-7a

Meditation

*Paying Attention to God*

Concluding Comments

COME, YOU THANKFUL PEOPLE, COME

Come, you thankful people come, raise the song of harvest-home;  
all is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin;  
God, our Maker, does provide for our needs to be supplied:  
come with all his people, come, raise the song of harvest-home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit unto his praise to yield,  
wheat and weeds together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown;  
first the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear;  
Lord of Harvest, grant that we whole-some grain and pure may be.

Benediction

Officiating:

Rev. Allen W. Stimpson, Bethania A.M.E. Zion Church

Rev. Judy Martin Knopf, Bethania Moravian Church

Rev. William J. Watson, United Baptist Church

Rev. Fran Spier Saylor, Mizpah Moravian Church

Music Director and Student Intern: Scott Rainey

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*Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* TEXT: Thomas Ken (1695), alt. (1709) TUNE: Genevan Psalter (1551),  
original form

*We Gather Together* TEXT: Netherlands folk song, anon., 1625 TUNE: Kremser

*Thy Word* TEXT and TUNE: Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith © 1984 Meadowgreen Music, EMI Christian Publishing

*We Plow the Fields, and Scatter* TEXT: Matthias Claudius (1782). Tr. Jane Montgomery Campbell (1861), alt. TUNE:  
Johann A. P. Schultz (1800)

*Come, You Thankful People, Come* TEXT: Henry Alford (1844 and 1867), alt. TUNE: George Job Elvey (1859)

*Liturgy of Thanksgiving*, 1995 Moravian Book of Worship (see below)

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