

By: Rev. Mark Breese

*Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.*

### **Hope and Thanksgiving**

On this Thanksgiving, I know that it will be so hard for some to give thanks. We are enduring a time of fear, struggle and loss. It is hard.



But it is still Thanksgiving, and it is important to remember that there is hope. The Apostle Paul reminds us that, even in the face of death we should not be as those without hope, for there is newness of life promised for us in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). For as certain as it is that darkness comes with the night, the dawn is just as certain to follow. And through all these trials, God continues to sustain us. Life, like hope, is tenacious.

Remember when the world locked down for a time back in the spring, and how the natural world almost immediately began to raise its head? Remember how, because we were forced to stop all our noisy moving, we suddenly noticed that around us the natural world had always been there? As if waking from a fevered sleep, we suddenly noticed squirrels chattering and birds singing. Even the coyotes and deer stepped shyly from the thickets where we had pushed them, looking to see what wonders there were in the sudden stillness and empty roads.

Through all this time, through all the ups and downs of our hopes for a clear road ahead, only to be thrown by pandemic-speedbumps that suddenly kept appearing from nowhere— through all this time, the sun and rain still came and Mother Earth herself continued to nurture the flowers and grains and fruits.

Now it is Thanksgiving! The harvest has come and the bountiful fruit of the Earth have arrived.

And, yes, I know that for many—far too many—there has been struggle and hardship and hunger and tears. I know that there have been reckonings that have revealed the racial and economic inequities in the world. And yet, these reckonings also brought about hope-filled awakenings that caused the raising of many voices (particularly young diverse voices!) to say enough is enough, and

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let's just end all the pointless and ugly racism and violence and economic inequality. Yes, there is still so much work to do to bring to birth true and lasting justice in our society. But the voices were, and are, raised in hope, demanding change!

So, Thanksgiving has come in the midst of many trials, and God's people are not a people without hope! Therefore, we give thanks!

Pastor Mark

A Psalm for Thanksgiving 2020

Psalm 65

<sup>1</sup> Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;  
and to you shall vows be performed,

<sup>2</sup> O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come.

<sup>3</sup> When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions.

<sup>4</sup> Happy are those whom you choose and bring near  
to live in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,  
your holy temple.

<sup>5</sup> By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance,  
O God of our salvation;  
you are the hope of all the ends of the earth  
and of the farthest seas.

<sup>6</sup> By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might.

<sup>7</sup> You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,  
the tumult of the peoples.

<sup>8</sup> Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs;  
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

<sup>9</sup> You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it;  
the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain,  
for so you have prepared it.

<sup>10</sup> You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with  
showers, and blessing its growth.

<sup>11</sup> You crown the year with your bounty;  
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.

<sup>12</sup> The pastures of the wilderness overflow,  
the hills gird themselves with joy,

<sup>13</sup> the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,  
the valleys deck themselves with grain,  
they shout and sing together for joy.

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