



November 19, 2017

Thanksgiving and Our Blessings—Time to Share With All

Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays. It has none of the pressures of Christmas gift giving and all of the pleasures of Christmas feasting. It is the most religious of all our non-religious holidays that unifies people of different faiths and no faith around the simple themes of gathering and gratitude. So, I encourage us to guard ourselves against the consumerism that is transforming it into one more pre-Christmas shopping day. We are a stronger people when we suspend all activity for twenty-four hours to engage in simple but critical acts of expressing thanks.

I would also encourage us to remember that Thanksgiving has at its genesis the coming together of Native American and European Refugees. Our national leaders work to pit us against foreigners and refugees in contravention to the essential character of our country—that we are a collection of people whose ancestors came from somewhere else. We have been blessed with the resources which simultaneously provide for the care of refugees and the protection of the American public. To suggest otherwise diminishes the character and capacity by which our nation has so long endured and the courage and convictions of the faith traditions by which we live.

Our sacred texts declare that each person is made in the image of God and thereby possesses dignity worthy of respect, regardless of the person's status in society. Religious traditions across the time and space are united in teaching that hospitality to strangers is God's will and that we should always and everywhere be mindful of entertaining angel unawares. Some of us may entertain angels around our Thanksgiving tables. All of us will sit with the ancestors of former refugees and receive the blessings that were once extended to them. It's our turn to extend them to others.

God's Peace and Blessings,

Bill

Rev. William P. Worley, Conference Minister

Announcing: New PSEC website!

On Monday, Nov. 13, the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference website got an upgrade! Some highlights of the new website include:

- An updated style that is more user-friendly and accommodating to various devices and screen sizes;
- A large searchable resource library filled with materials to help strengthen your church and support your leaders;
- A News page to keep church members and pastors up-to-date – featuring PSEC stories and newsfeeds from UCC News, Disaster Updates, the UCC Daily Devotional, the PSEC Facebook posts, and a link to Communitas;
- A calendar that is easier to navigate featuring PSEC events, association events, and continuing education opportunities;
- And increased search optimization, to help users find exactly what they're looking for much easier.

Please take some time to explore the new website. If you missed the introduction to the website at the Fall Meeting on Nov. 18 and would like to more information about how the site works, visit psec.org/new-website.

We hope churches will regularly utilize the website and its many resources. These updates were made possible by your support of Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM). **Thank you!**

If you have any difficulty navigating the new website or find an error message or problem, please contact Brea Rarick, brea@psec.org or 484-949-8774 ext. 311.

