

November 22, 2020

Psalm 65:9-13
Deuteronomy 8:12,17-18a

- ⁹ 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.
- ¹⁰ You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,
and blessing its growth.
- ¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
- ¹² The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
- ¹³ the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

Psalm 65 is one of the readings scheduled to be read for a Thanksgiving Day worship service. It is clearly a song of thanks to God, our Creator, for making the bounties we enjoy possible.

There is a second reading for Thanksgiving Day that is equally as important. It comes from Deuteronomy. It reminds us not to forget the Source of Life, which, in our abundance, we often times tend to do.

Hear, then, these two-and one-half verses from chapter 8 of Deuteronomy:

¹²When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, ... ¹⁷Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth."
¹⁸But remember the Lord your God, for it is God who gives you power to get wealth.

With these words from Deuteronomy in mind your worship team thought it would be a good time for us to hear from some of our members and friends about what they are grateful for. So, rather than have me "preach" at you, today we are going to hear from some of you about gratitude.

To lead the way into thoughts on gratitude, Vaughn found a musical piece that helps us to build grateful hearts, it is called "Thankful."

Gratitude

I, like so many of you, have found the year 2020 to be the longest decade of my life. Also, like many of you, in the midst of illness, exhaustion, frustration, anger, depression, and fear, I have found much to be grateful for.

There are the usual candidates for gratitude: a warm, dry home; full refrigerator; lots of clothes; and a loving family. But COVID-19 and physical distancing have made something I took for granted and put it in a new light:

You, the members and friends of Amicable Church, both as individuals and a faith family.

I have always told you I love you. And, I do.

I have always told you how much I like being in your company. And, I do.

But, in these months of separation, I have experienced what it feels like being separated from you.

OMG! as we are wont to say, when feeling overwhelmed.

You energize me. You inspire me. You motivate me. This has become very clear, when separation has been forced on me.

So, with this new, deeper understanding – with this existential understanding, I can say, but never, ever fully express, how grateful I am for the gift of having you all in my life.

And, I will be even more grateful, but in a new way, when I can be physically present with you again. Until then, with a grateful heart, I thank God for each and every one of you.