

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This week, many of us will celebrate Thanksgiving in a new way. Recent recommendations from the CDC, Gundersen, Mayo, and local health officials remind us to wear masks when we are not with family members from our own household, socially distance, sanitize our hands frequently, and stay home as much as possible.

My midweek letter of November 19, provided several activities that we can do in place of in-person Thanksgiving gatherings with extended family and/or friends. But there is another activity that we can do that takes us to the heart of the Thanksgiving holiday.

When you gather with your family or friends--whether in-person with those in your household, through virtual means, or via a conference call--ask each person to take a few minutes to write down some things for which they are thankful. Then, one-by-one, ask them to share with the group one or more things from their list. Doing so focuses the holiday on the many things that God has given to you and your family/friends for which you give thanks!

But there is another part of this activity: make a list of what you intend to do with some, or all of the things, that you have been given! Think about what you, or perhaps you and your family/friends can do for others with these things. Many people have been struggling during this time of the pandemic. The needs are especially great. Therefore, ask yourself--"How can I share these things that I have been given with others?" and, "What can I do to be a good and faithful steward of what God has entrusted to me?"

God gives us many things, but that does not mean that we are to keep them for ourselves. God asks us to share them, as we demonstrate our love for God and neighbor. When we remember and give thanks to God for all God has given us, our hearts overflow with love and joy. Therefore, let us add "Christian love and joy" to our Thanksgiving lists, as well! Thanks be to God!

Peace,

Pastor Cathy