

Stories of Thanksgiving

Small Group Discussion Questions

SUNDAY WORSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The global pandemic COVID-19 has forced us to adjust and adapt how we do church and stay connected to one another as a congregation. We're not closed as a church, we're just doing church differently! So, please stay connected to the body at Grantham Church. Join our congregation for worship online at 10:30 am each Sunday morning. Follow the worship liturgy and watch our [Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/granthamchurch) videos at granthamchurch.org/liturgy.

As usual, the sermons will be posted to the [recent sermons page](#) on our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for engaging with us online!

Sunday, November 22nd 2020



Sermon Title: Stories of Thanksgiving (2020)

Scripture Reading: John 10:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:6-8

Sermon Focus: For the past few years, Grantham Church has held a Thanksgiving Service. In this service we sing, we pray, we give thanks, we recognize new members, and we create space for stories and testimonies from folks in our congregation. Each year we've selected a small group of folks who are willing to share how God has been at work in their lives through our church, and give them an opportunity to publicly express their thanks to the Giver of all good things. Listen as Pastor David talks about the power of thanksgiving and resting in feelings of gratitude. And then listen as four people in our congregation share their stories of thanksgiving.

1. Pastor David began by pointing out how historians and experts tell us that human society is far better off than we were in previous generations (e.g. see Hans Rosling's book, *Factfulness*). How do we live with this larger perspective? Why is it so easy to see what's wrong with the world and feel pessimistic? Do you think that news and social media helps or mostly adds to our gloom?
2. Read John 10:10, Philippians 4:6-8, and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 together. These verses talk about experiencing life and peace in Jesus (God), despite our circumstances. How do these verses speak to you where you are right now?
3. The Apostle Paul, who certainly had his share of trials, tells us to be intentional in what thoughts we dwell on in our minds. Our thoughts can access peace or lead to despair. And now we know through neuroscience that *resting* in feelings of gratitude each day can actually lead to greater peace and joy! So, when we're tempted to dwell on the negative, what should we do in that moment?
4. Some may criticize a white, privileged pastor for telling people to "be thankful" and see the good in the world. But remember, everyone in the New Testament who says these things were the persecuted minority. What can we learn from the marginalized who choose to be thankful and rejoice in their trials? In what ways might their plight challenge, convict, and encourage us in how we respond?
5. We have all see how the internet, technology, and social media can add to the unrest and vitriol in our society. But as Vicki Twigg points out in her story, it has allowed us to stay connected and discover the importance of relationships. How have you experienced this during the pandemic? Share specific examples.
6. Erna Bagdasaryan said that she is thankful for a changed perspective. Our congregation accepted her when others didn't. She was surprised by this because this was not her experience with the Church in the past. What specific things in recent days are you thankful for about Grantham Church?
7. Dave Hudson shared about his experience of the devastation in Haiti in 2010, following a major earthquake. Have you ever had an experience that forever changed your perspective and caused you to be more thankful?
8. Eliot Owen shared how is thankful for Pastor Denise and her care. Who has cared for you recently? Share with your group *who* you're thankful for this Thanksgiving. Express your thankfulness before closing in a celebratory prayer.