



All To Thee

OUR GOD

We Owe

A SERVICE FOR THANKSGIVING

LEADER'S GUIDE

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About the Service

This Thanksgiving service takes its title from a harvest hymn “All to Thee, Our God, We Owe,” which treats our response to God’s bounty as a kind of I.O.U. (and even suggests writing that on your holiday offerings). A new stanza to the hymn “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” states the theme this way: “To fulfill a sacred vow, lay we on God’s altar now promised tithes and offerings which a grateful people brings, gifts that God first gave to us. Let us thank and praise him thus.

This unto our God we owe, source whence all our blessings flow.”



Newsletter/Bulletin Notices

Newsletter Notice

Join us for a very special Thanksgiving service entitled “All to Thee, Our God, We Owe.” The service treats our response to God’s bounty as a kind of I.O.U. (and even suggests writing that on your holiday offerings). A new stanza to the hymn “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come” states the theme this way: “To fulfill a sacred vow, lay we on God’s altar now promised tithes and offerings which a grateful people brings, gifts that God first gave to us. Let us thank and praise him thus.

This unto our God we owe, source whence all our blessings flow.”

Bulletin Notice

Welcome to this Thanksgiving service that takes its title from a harvest hymn, “All to Thee, Our God, We Owe.” The hymns, prayers, Scripture readings and homily in this service treat our response to God’s bounty as a kind of I.O.U. (and even suggests writing that on your holiday offerings). In the process, we will come to realize that we can never repay our God for all the many gifts he has showered upon us. All we can do in response is offer him our grateful praise.



Complete Script For Worship Leaders

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

<https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/ripe-ears-wheat-woman-hands-against-106475480>

- The **Gathering** is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation with verses being sung by the congregation to the tune Dix 77 77 77:

Praise to God, immortal praise, for the love that crowns our days,
Bounteous Source of ev'ry joy, let thy praise our tongues employ.
All to thee, our God, we owe, source whence all our blessings flow.

All the plenty summer pours; autumn's rich, o'erflowing stores,
Flocks that whiten all the plain, yellow sheaves of ripened grain—
Lord, for these our souls shall raise grateful vows and solemn praise.

To fulfill a sacred vow, place we on thine altar now
Promised tithes and offerings which a grateful people brings,
Gifts that first thou gavest us. Lo, we praise and thank thee thus.

As thy prospering hand hath blest, may we give thee of our best
And by deeds of kindly love for thy mercies grateful prove,
Singing thus through all our days praise to God, immortal praise.

P Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase.

C **God opens his hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing.**

P So will your barns be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow.

C **Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.**

P Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase.

C **God opens the windows of heaven, and floods us with blessing after blessing.**

P So will your barns be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow.

C **What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?**

P Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase.

C **You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; my cup runs over.**

P So will your barns be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow.

C **The Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his faithfulness endures forever.**

P Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase.

C **So will your barns be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow.**

P “Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

C **For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.**

• The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P The bounty that you grant us, dear Lord, far exceeds our imagination. For you give all to us—our bodies and our minds, our homes and families, our possessions and our abilities, our food and clothing and everything that keeps us warm and safe and alive. Yet you supply even more to us—you sent to us your very own Son to earth to save us through his suffering, death and resurrection. Help us every day to remember that we owe everything to you, and nothing is ours without your generous provision. In your most gracious name we prayer. Amen.

- The **Children's Message** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: a paper grocery bag filled to overflowing with food

Ⓟ Today we celebrate Thanksgiving. We thank God this day for everything that we have that he has given us. He has given us so much, we can't even hold it all in. Let me show you what I mean with this grocery bag. (*Lift up the grocery bag overflowing with food items.*) Look at all the groceries in this bag. There are so many that I can't even lift it without some of what's inside falling out. (*Allow some items to fall out of the bag.*) See what I mean? God give us more than enough when it comes to so many things. He gives us more and more grace every day. He gives us more and more love every day. He gives us more and more blessings every day. That is what we call God's providence, which means all the good things God provides for us even if we haven't asked for anything.

Our thankfulness in response should be just as abundant, just as overflowing. It should spill out of us, like the items spilled out of the grocery bag. Our gratitude should spill out in songs and prayers and shouts of praise. Our thanks to God should tumble out in who we are and what we say and how we act with one another. People should be able to tell from the way we live how grateful we are to God for everything.

So go out and be grateful today in your words and deeds. Let others know the greatness of the Lord. Be a blessing to others as God has been a blessing to you. Then they can in turn share your joy with others so they will come to know the happiness that our God brings to every part of our lives, especially the happiness of knowing that God sent Jesus to us to die on the cross for our sins so we would be free from sin and death forever. His blood spilled out on the cross so the blessings of forgiveness, life and salvation would spill out forever and ever in our lives today and in the life yet to come in heaven.

May you overflow with thanksgiving not only today because of Christ, but every day of your lives.

- The **First Reading**, Deuteronomy 26:1-11, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering

Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Wie Lieblich Ist Der Maien* 76 76 D:

Sing to the Lord of harvest, sing songs of love and praise;
With joyful hearts and voices your alleluias raise.
By him the rolling seasons in fruitful order move;
Sing to the Lord of harvest a joyous song of love.

God makes the clouds drop fatness, the deserts bloom and spring,
The hills leap up in gladness, the valleys laugh and sing.
God fills them with his fullness, all things with large increase;
He crowns the year with goodness, with plenty and with peace.

Bring to this sacred altar the gifts his goodness gave,
The golden sheaves of harvest, the souls Christ died to save.
Your hearts lay down before him when at his feet you fall,
And with your lives adore him who gave his life for all.

- The **Second Lesson**, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints

but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Hanover 10 10 11 11:

Let thankfulness spring to heaven above,
That each living thing, sustained by God's love,
May sing of God's glory, his goodness proclaim,
And all of creation take up the refrain.

With hearts now made pure, our lips sing God's praise.
With confidence sure our anthems we raise,
That all of our living—each thought, deed and word—
Might be a thanksgiving in praise of our Lord.

- The **Gospel Lesson**, Luke 17:11-19, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

¶ On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Hanover 10 10 11 11:

Thus, Lord, may our praise shine forth as we live
Through all of our days, in all that we give.
Our hearts overflowing to neighbor and friend,
Our lives ever growing in thanks without end.

- The **Homily** is delivered by the pastor:

¶ It's a day for giving—thanks, at least. Besides the giving of thanks in hymns and prayers, in ritual and worship, most churches manage to find other outlets, other ways to express our gratitude to God at Thanksgiving time.

There are grocery collections, for example, things to be distributed by local food pantries. Other collections of other kinds—the giving of clothing, or household items, things to be recycled ... and money, of course, cash donations for various worthy causes. We are moving toward the time of year when the familiar red kettles will remind us of our obligation to give, what we owe.

What we owe? I'm not sure we always think of Thanksgiving like that, as something we owe. I don't suppose you came to church today expecting to be presented with a bill. "It's Thanksgiving, and this is what you owe"—whatever you have brought to offer today, canned goods or offering envelopes or whatever. Right now, do you suppose someone is in a homeless shelter somewhere writing up a list with your name on it, in order to present you with a bill? "Well, it's about time you came through on what you owe. It's Thanksgiving, and I was getting a little anxious."

If that would happen, I suppose some of us would find ourselves resenting the attitude, wouldn't we? "What do you mean—we owe? Specifically, what do you mean, we owe you?" This is charity, after all, thanks-giving. And "giving" usually doesn't mean "paying," certainly not paying off a debt. That kind of takes the fun out of it, doesn't it?

Fun? I'm not sure that when you came in here you were thinking of your Thanksgiving offering as "fun," were you? The hymns, perhaps. The Thanksgiving dinner, certainly, turkey and stuffing and cranberries and pie. The gathering of family and friends, the laughter, and the "Please pass the sweet potatoes."

But probably not the giving—especially if it is cast in the form of a debt, an I.O.U.

But isn't that what the title of this Thanksgiving service says, printed in the bulletin and echoing through the hymns today? "All to thee, our God, we owe." We owe ... to God. Of course we do. Without the providence of God we would have nothing to give. Without the providence of God we would have nothing to receive—beginning with the great love with which he loved us to the point of giving ... his only begotten Son ... into death ... in order that our sins might be forgiven.

But when we approach the Lord, even on Thanksgiving Day, we discover that instead of dealing with us in terms of I.O.U.s, what our heavenly Father has to offer us is more like an IRA. God has invested in us—the price of his only begotten Son—and, the Bible says, that investment is being kept for us, accruing interest, until the day God calls us to claim it as our own!

Are there times when we approach God with the attitude that that is something God owes us? Of course God forgives our sins. Of course God provides us with everything we need ... and almost everything we want besides. God owes us all that, doesn't he?

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Music Guide

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- The **Closing Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Energy SM:

We give you but your own in any gift we bring;
All that we have is yours alone, a trust from you, our King.

May we your bounties thus as stewards true receive
And gladly, Lord, as you bless us, to you our first fruits give.

For we believe your word, though dim our faith, it's true:
What we do for your people, Lord, we do it all for you.

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