

Thanksgivings Past:  
Happy Thanksgiving!

I will begin with true confessions of the newly ordained.  
THIS is the first time I have gone to church on Thanksgiving.

Last year I was bundled up in the Cold Big Apple watching the Macy's parade and eating a traditional chinese feast.

The year before we were running the Turkey Trot "So Others Might Eat" 5 K. Jogging past the Capitol Building in the company of thousands.

But THIS is nice. We are gathered today to truly give thanks.  
Meanwhile we are surrounded by beautiful harvest decorations and music- and for that alone we can be thankful!

Window into Kingdom:

And that's the very spirit of Thanksgiving. Thanking God for the abundance of his creation. An abundance that sustains us and quite often amazes us with its beauty. It was in this spirit that the Pilgrims and Native Americans gathered. Thankful for the food that would sustain them through the winter and keep them from starving.

What stands out is that for a brief moment in history these two groups put their differences aside and worked together, appreciated each others gifts, looked past greed and power, and gathered around a common table in fellowship. Giving thanks for food is easy... giving thanks for "The Other" is the remarkable part of this day.

Dark Endings:

I think of this as a little window into the kingdom of God... for we all know how this story ends, and it is no fairytale. These ancestors to many of us would eventually walk away from that fellowship, fall back

into greed, fear and power and would treat the native American people with little to no respect driving them to reservations far away. Having lived on a reservation in S. Dakota for a couple of summers with my youth group, I witnessed first hand the broken relationships between these two groups- still to this day.

This week we have witnessed similar broken relationships between races and cultures. Relationships torn by centuries of fear, oppression, greed, and negligence.

No matter how you react to Ferguson, there is no denying that something is broken, not just in the original incident but in the way in which we as a society are acting in response. Wherever in the aftermath we need to figure out how to come together in response instead of becoming further divided.

### What Now?

IN contrast today we celebrate what once was, and what can be again. It's a good day for a reminder from a group of colonists and native americans from the beginning of our history.

People of great diversity crossing the divide to gather around a common table to work together and eat together and give thanks in peace.

People who looked beyond themselves to notice and to celebrate the goodness in each other, the goodness in the land, and the goodness in God's creation.

We do it every Sunday. Our Eucharist itself is called the Great Thanksgiving. Christians around the globe reenact, practice, remember what it is like to gather, and to come together around one table in Thanksgiving for God's immeasurable love for us... as shown in his leading Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, as shown to us in the salvation of his Son, Jesus Christ.

In focusing on the gifts from God, we are able to move beyond ourselves, our differences with those around us, and to gather around one table in Thanks.

### Conclusion

Many years ago a group of Pilgrims and Native Americans got it right and provided us all with a window into God's Kingdom.

And although we have fallen short of this many times since, we as God's people do our best to open that window each Sunday as we celebrate our Great Thanksgiving. We practice looking beyond ourselves, we practice looking beyond our own selfish goals, our fears, our insecurities & all the distractions of this life, and we gather as God's people around one common table for common feast. Our goal now is to take that feast out into the world and invite others to join in the celebration!