

Great Thanksgiving
(Gift of a New Pastor)

You are God's gracious gift to me.

And you are to us.

Let us be open to all of God's gifts.

We are open to receive all of God's richest blessings.

Let us rejoice and give thanks.

Yes! For we are expecting God to do great signs and wonders.

Giver of every good and perfect gift,

You have brought into our lives a new pastor.

Your gifts and Your call are irrevocably good.

You are addressing our needs that only You may see
with a wisdom only You can have.

You know the lives You are seeking to touch in new ways through us.

You are the One who gives to us the gifts we need to fulfill Your mission in the world.

You are the One who is seeking to prepare us for the spiritual journey ahead.

Each of us is a gifted part of Your plan of salvation, and as You add the giftedness of others,
You empower us to evolve in our own discipleship, going from glory to glory.

You are inspiring in our lives acts of worship and service we have not even dreamed of.

You are bringing together new lives, in new ways, with different accents, and a new cultural
perspective, bringing forth fresh ministries that will bring salvation to those whom You have
longed to save.

Behold, You are doing something new, and we are joining with heaven and earth to sing a new
song of praise:

Transforming, creative, imaginative Love, God of compassion and grace.

Every life is important to Your ever expanding vision.

You are amazing!

We are all blessed to be part of this saving work.

We are amazed how You use everyone!

You are amazing! And so was and is, and will always be the life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus never turned anyone away, but sought to use all the gifts God brought into his life.

Jesus was blessed by faithful parents.

Jesus was blessed by faithful teachers.

Jesus was blessed even by those who disagreed and by those who worked to support the work.

Jesus knew that God uses us all:

Those who understand and those who don't.

Strangers who cast out demons in the name of Jesus,
as well as those who were trained as apostles.

Jesus ministered to all: strangers seen as unclean, strangers seen as unacceptable,

strangers seen as foreign oppressors and strangers who spoke a language hard to understand.

We are amazed by Christ's acts of inclusion.

When the disciples were acting like strangers.
Arguing about their own greatness.
Jesus responded with humility.
Leaving a place of privilege,
removed his robes of honor,
and knelt before all with towel and basin:
thief and betrayer,
cowards and deniers.
Now embrace your full acceptance.

At the table where none were strangers,
Jesus received the Passover bread with thanksgiving;
the bread memorializing those who were, are, and will be caught in oppression.
Breaking the bread and sharing it with all, Jesus said:
“Take and eat, this is my body given for you.”
Now embrace your full acceptance.

At the table where none were strangers,
Jesus received the Passover cup with thanksgiving;
the cup memorializing the hope that was, is, and is to come.
Sharing this cup with all, Jesus said:
“Drink now all of you, for this is the cup of my blood
poured out for all in testimony to God’s everlasting covenant of grace,
promising you forgiveness for your sins, and for the sins of all who believe.”
Now embrace your full acceptance.

We do embrace this full acceptance,
we have found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
We want no one to feel that they do not belong.
This is why we boldly proclaim this holy mystery we have found in Christ:

When we were yet strangers, Christ died for us.
When we were not his people, Christ was raised for us.
When Christ comes again, none will be strangers for we shall all be like him.

Ever New, Always Becoming,
embrace these gifts of bread and wine,
allow them to become for us the body and blood of Christ,
who alone makes us one.
Ever New, Always Becoming,
embrace the gift of our hearts, our souls, our minds, and our strength,
allow them to become for the world, Your church,
the inclusive body and the diverse bride of Christ,
who alone makes us one.

**Ever New, Always Becoming,
open our hearts to the thrill of new beginnings,
open our minds to understand the opportunities You have set before us,
open our imaginations so we might dream new dreams, and embrace new visions.
We want our church to bring even more glory to Christ.
We want our church to bring even more glory to the Holy Spirit.
We want our church to bring even more glory to our Creative God,
as we embody Their sacrifice, generosity, and provision, today and every day,
now and forever. Amen.**

Now as strangers enfolded by the love of God, let us join with Christ to pray:
**Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

(Prayer after communion)

We thank you for all the many gifts we have received through this Holy Mystery centered in Jesus Christ. You have given us the gifts of assurance and hope. You have given us the gifts of joy and peace. You have given us a gift of a call that is to reach out to all people, of every nation, from every culture, from every language group and to help them feel at home within the one family of God. Now send us out with Your good news of great joy that is for all people. Give us new opportunities to reach more people with Your love and kindness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.