

Give Thanks  
Rev. Kris Whitby  
LCMS Northern Illinois District

“Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!” Psalm 118:1

Thanksgiving...it's more than a holiday, more than just a day for football, more than a chance to feast with family and friends, as fun as all that may be. Thanksgiving is a mindset that reflects the heart of God. The Psalmist rightly invites us in Ps. 118, “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he good; for his steadfast love endures forever!”

To be sure, there will be many in America this Thursday who will gather around well-set tables with friends and family, and they will offer thanks. Most, if not all (am I being a bit optimistic?), as they give thanks, will reflect on more than the wonderful meal set before them. They'll look around the table and be thankful for their loved ones. They may offer thanks for the ability to put such good food on their table. Related to that, many will offer thanks for the bountiful land in which we live. Many will offer thanks for good health, especially if they or a loved one has come through a serious physical trial this past year. And yes, some might even express gratitude for the blessing of life itself. All these are precious gifts from God because, as the Psalmist writes, “He is good.”

Yet, Psalm 118:1 pulls us deeper with “For his steadfast love endures forever!” After all, if His love endured forever, but we did not, then the temporal blessings wouldn't be all that wonderful if, ultimately, we fade into oblivion. Or worse, we end our days under God's eternal wrath for sin. The second half of this verse reminds us of the greatest gift for which we thank our Lord. His eternal love expresses itself in the gift of salvation which is ours through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We endure forever, because God's love in Christ for us endures forever! Thanks be to God!

As you gather around the table this week, give joyful thanks for all God's temporal blessings. And give thanks that this scene of that table is a reminder that you'll gather around our heavenly Father's table forever.