

The Friendly Times

The Season of Gratitude

As the leaves array themselves in spectacular color before bidding farewell until spring, fall is often when we also turn inward and become more contemplative. In addition to the feasting and football that are hallmarks of Thanksgiving, for many people, November is also a time to think about the people and things they are thankful for. It is the season of gratitude.

When John Donne wrote that "no man is an island," he recognized that our lives do not happen in isolation. Human connections are vital. Current research shows that people often suffer when they are isolated from one another. Nearly every aspect of our lives—from the mundane (like buying groceries) to the more profound (like attending a wedding)—relies on an interconnected web of individuals. And the experiences that we have interacting with others leave an imprint on our lives that shapes who we are.

Yet, even as we emerge from the pandemic, connecting with one another in meaningful ways has been challenging. Even with vaccine availability opening the door to more "normal" interactions, many are struggling with how to

reconnect. Gratitude offers a way to reconnect with our family, with our friends, and with our communities. Why gratitude? For one thing, being grateful for another person automatically means remembering that we are social beings and that we need each other. It reconnects

Contemplating gratitude is beneficial, but expressing it to another person is perhaps even better. As William Arthur Ward wrote, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

us instantly to one another and to the world around us. Practicing gratitude also helps us notice and appreciate the things that are going well in our lives and develop better attitudes about the negative things, potentially changing those negatives into positives.

With age, we experience losses and everyday annoyances that can frustrate us or make us sad, angry, or even resentful. When things are going well in our lives, expressing gratitude daily can be relatively easy. Gratitude comes naturally, whether we express it outwardly or not.

Friends Home 125th Family & Friends Celebration!



Season of Gratitude

However, when things are not going so well, expressing gratitude can become more of a challenge.

Adopting an attitude of gratitude means tackling the negative things and challenging ourselves to find ways to be grateful for them.

Feeling and expressing gratitude does not just make us smile inside; it also has a positive impact on our health. When people have higher levels of thankfulness, they tend to be more socially connected, better able to handle stress, have lower levels of depression, better sleep quality, and more robust biomarkers such as higher rates of good cholesterol. All of these positives could help counteract the dangerous effects of loneliness, especially the loneliness that so many experienced during the pandemic.

Practicing gratitude daily

The best way to practice gratitude over time is to build it into your routine as a habit, much the same way that you

make brushing your teeth a daily habit. Organizations from the National Council on Aging to the American Heart Association encourage the daily practice of gratitude. Here are a few tips to both make gratitude a daily habit and to use gratitude as a way to reconnect with others:

- Write thank-you notes to people who have made a difference in your life. The words thanks and think are directly related. When you thank someone, you are genuinely thinking of them.
- Make a small gift for someone who has helped you out, whether it was recently or several years back. It's never too late to show gratitude.
- Do a random act of kindness for someone.
- Offer to help with a task that you know your friend, family member, neighbor, etc., does not like doing.
- Donate your time to an organization you are thankful for, and use that time to reconnect with others in your community.

Celebrating Friends, Family & Community!



- Similarly, share a photo or positive or interesting news item with your loved ones, explaining why this item makes you feel grateful. Ask them to share positive news items with you that make them feel grateful.

Practicing gratitude in small ways reaps dividends over time. If you like the feeling that you get when you express gratitude to others, consider keeping a gratitude journal for yourself. A journal helps you watch your gifts accumulate over time, which can be a source of both inspiration and solace in your life.

Gratitude grounds us in life and helps us be mindful of our place in the world and our connections to others.

Who or what are you thankful for
in this season of gratitude?



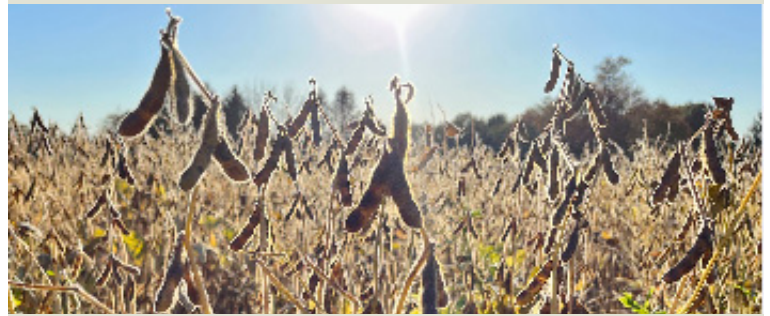
October 16, 2023

Happy November Birthday

November 9 - Mary Brewer

November 21 - Anna Lusvardi

November 25 - Marie Leone



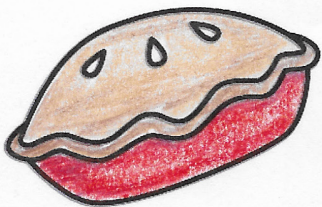
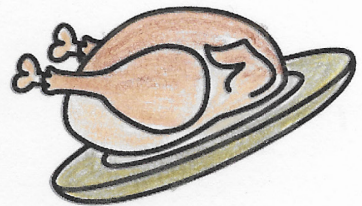
Poetry Corner

Song for Autumn

Don't you imagine the leaves dream now
how comfortable it will be to touch
the earth instead of the
nothingness of the air and the endless
freshets of wind? And don't you think
the trees, especially those with
mossy hollows, are beginning to look for
the fires that will come—six, a dozen—to sleep
inside their bodies? And don't you hear
the goldenrod whispering goodbye,
the everlasting being crowned with the first
tuffets of snow? The pond
stiffens and the white field over which
the fox runs so quickly brings out
its long blue shadows. The wind wags
its many tails. And in the evening
the piled firewood shifts a little,
longing to be on its way.

- Mary Oliver

Thanksgiving Celebration



F	A	M	L	Y	P	I	L	G	R	O	C	K
B	E	R	E	Z	I	U	A	I	L	S	P	R
R	P	I	L	G	R	I	M	S	M	O	O	U
Y	L	N	A	I	Z	E	A	P	E	A	S	T
K	I	M	S	O	C	K	F	U	K	M	B	N
C	E	L	E	B	R	A	T	E	P	I	R	A
O	A	S	S	A	M	S	I	C	E	L	N	T
R	G	E	Z	I	A	A	O	H	L	Y	O	I
H	N	A	L	E	G	R	S	Z	W	I	D	V
T	I	Y	F	C	N	D	A	I	O	K	R	E
U	V	T	M	O	O	I	S	D	F	L	A	A
O	I	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	D	U	P	M
M	G	U	Y	N	E	M	A	H	L	F	Y	E
Y	S	R	F	U	M	T	M	A	I	Z	E	R
L	K	S	L	C	B	Y	F	N	W	I	K	I
P	N	D	O	O	E	E	E	K	I	A	R	C
U	A	A	W	P	R	K	I	F	N	F	U	A
M	H	Y	E	I	S	U	H	U	T	S	T	N
P	T	G	R	A	V	Y	C	L	E	Y	I	S

Feast
 Wild Fowl
 Pumpkin
 Pilgrims
 Native Americans
 Mayflower
 Corn

Thanksgiving
 Celebrate
 Plymouth Rock
 Harvest
 Family
 Thursday
 Ham

Cornucopia
 November
 Turkey Pardon
 Maize
 Chief Massasoit
 Thankful
 Gravy