

**November 20, 2016**  
**Rev. Diane Monti-Catania**

**Sermon - "What Are You Thankful For?"**

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I was intrigued this week by all the news about 'false news.'

There was grave concern over the idea that people can publish anything they want on Facebook or the internet and not be held accountable for lying.

There was outrage regarding the number of 'false news sites.'

Juxtaposed on this concern over people bending the truth for their own purposes is Paul's argument to his followers that they must not be swayed by false teachings.

From the very beginning, Christian teachings had to compete in a philosophical marketplace with the values and beliefs--religious and secular, often deeply ingrained--that were swirling around the current culture.

Paul wants to make it abundantly clear that Christ is not just one among many competing approaches to life, not just the first among equals:

Christ is at the very center of the meaning of everything, for all people.

The question of Jesus Christ is not of secondary but primary importance in the lives of his followers, not just something we think about on Sunday morning, or when someone asks us what church we go to, but a question that shapes our whole life.

As Christians, we commit to following a way of life that honors God – with our whole heart, soul and mind and our neighbor as ourselves.

I want this to be the context for exploring what we are thankful for this week.

When we gather on Thursday at the Thanksgiving table with family and friends, I hope that you will turn to God first.

I hope that you will use the beautiful grace cards the children made to bring your family's attention to the blessings that you share.

In this time of world tension and uncertainty it is more important than ever that we turn our hearts to God.

We must remember all of the things that God has done – and is still doing – in our lives and give thanks for those.

Let's spend some time now talking about what we are thankful for and what sort of things get in the way of our gratitude.

3 questions:

1. What are you thankful for in your life?
2. What gets in the way of living a life of gratitude – one oriented toward appreciation rather than complaint?

3. What is one thing you and your fellow celebrants on Thanksgiving could do to bring light into the world?

*Time for discussion*

Friends, we have much to be grateful for.

Above all else, we can be thankful that God is part of our lives.

We can celebrate our Christian lives, modeled after Jesus Christ and we can turn to God for comfort and care.

Life is not easy.

There are challenges – things that make us afraid.

But God stands up to those things.

God sends us an eternal message that says:

I am with you – I am always with you – forever and ever and ever.