



**Council of Religious Leaders
of Metropolitan Chicago**

**Interfaith
Thanksgiving
Prayers and Readings**

2020

Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago

African Methodist Episcopal Church
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
American Baptist Churches of Metro Chicago
Archdiocese of Chicago
Armenian Orthodox Church
Bahá'ís of Chicago
Baptist General Convention of Illinois
Buddhist Council of the Midwest
Chicago Area Unitarian Universalist Council
Chicago Board of Rabbis
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Church of God in Christ
Council of Islamic Organizations of Greater Chicago
Episcopal Diocese of Chicago
Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago
Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago
Metropolitan Chicago Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Orthodox Church in America
Presbytery of Chicago
Religious Society of Friends
Serbian Orthodox Church
Sikh Religious Society
Ukrainian Catholic Church
Ukrainian Orthodox Church
United Baptist State Convention of Illinois
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church
Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago
Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago
Catholic Theological Union
Chicago Theological Seminary
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
McCormick Theological Seminary
Meadville-Lombard Theological School
University of Saint Mary of the Lake
Community Renewal Society
Illinois Hispanic Pastors Coalition
Partners for Sacred Places

A Different Thanksgiving

For almost four decades, the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago has conducted the Interfaith Thanksgiving Observance. Hosted and co-sponsored by the Chicago Temple at First United Methodist Church, this annual program featured prayers and music from the many faith traditions in our region.

This year the COVID-19 pandemic prevents us from gathering to celebrate together in person. The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago has prepared this compilation of prayers and readings for use at your Thanksgiving service or table.

Please accept our best wishes for a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving. Our hope is for a better year to come.



The basic needs of our neighbors remain during the pandemic. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, The Council is collecting funds to be shared with direct meal providers affiliated with our Members.

Please remember our neighbors during this season. Make your contribution at

<https://www.crlmc.org/interfaith-thanksgiving-observance.html>

or send a check payable to **CRLMC** at:

Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago
5401 S Cornell Ave, Ste 223
Chicago, IL 60615.

All proceeds will be shared. Thank you.

KATERI CENTER OF CHICAGO

Great Spirit of Light, come to me out of the East (red) with the power of the rising sun. Let there be light in my words, let there be light on my path that I walk. Let me remember always that you give the gift of a new day. And never let me be burdened with sorrow by not starting over again.

Great Spirit of Love, come to me with the power of the North (white). Make me courageous when the cold wind falls upon me. Give me strength and endurance for everything that is harsh, everything that hurts, everything that makes me squint. Let me move through life ready to take what comes from the north.

Great Life-Giving Spirit, I face the West (black), the direction of sundown. Let me remember everyday that the moment will come when my sun will go down. Never let me forget that I must fade into you. Give me a beautiful color, give me a great sky for setting, so that when it is my time to meet you, I can come with glory.

Great Spirit of Creation, send me the warm and soothing winds from the South (yellow). Comfort me and caress me when I am tired and cold. Unfold me like the gentle breezes that unfold the leaves on the trees. As you give to all the earth your warm, moving wind, give to me, so that I may grow close to you in warmth. Man did not create the web of life, he is but a strand in it. Whatever man does to the web, he does to himself.

Chief Seattle, Prayer to the Four Directions

AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF METRO CHICAGO

Our Father, we thank thee for the food of our body, and for the human love which is the food of our hearts. Bless our family circle, and make this meal a sacrament of love to all who are gathered at this table. But bless thou too that great family of humanity of which we are but a little part. Give to all thy children their daily bread, and let our family not enjoy its comforts in selfish isolation. O Lord, we pray for thy presence at this meal. Hallow our joys, and if there is anything wanton or unholy in them, open our eyes that we may see. If we have ever gained our bread by injustice, or eaten it in heartlessness, cleanse our life and give us a spirit of humanity and love, that we may be worthy to sit at the common table of humanity in the great house of our Father.

*Walter Rauschenbusch
For God and the People; Prayers of the Social Awakening*

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

In Thanksgiving for Blessings Unknown

God, our protector, God our hope,

We turn to you in times of hardship,
but in our struggles and fears,
We often forget to thank you
For the Grace you have given us to overcome hardship.
For countless unknown blessings,
we give you thanks.

For walking with us as we have prepared for storms
And for sharing our joy when disaster is averted,
we give you thanks.

For the crops that have flourished,
And the child who now knows nothing of hunger,
we give you thanks.

For all the nights we spent in fear,
But by your grace saw mornings filled with hope,
we give you thanks.

For all the joys of this year,
The moments when light shone through the darkness,
When angels stood triumphant,
When we saw past our sin and strife
And glimpsed beyond the veil
At what the kingdom of God truly could be,
we give you thanks.

*Catholic Relief Services
Prayer by Edward O'N. Hoyt/CRS.
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BAHÁ'ÍS OF CHICAGO

O Thou compassionate Lord, Thou Who art generous and able! We are servants of Thine sheltered beneath Thy providence. Cast Thy glance of favor upon us. Give light to our eyes, hearing to our ears, and understanding and love to our hearts. Render our souls joyous and happy through Thy glad tidings. O Lord! Point out to us the pathway of Thy kingdom and resuscitate all of us through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Bestow upon us life everlasting and confer upon us never-ending honor. Unify mankind and illumine the world of humanity. May we all follow Thy pathway, long for Thy good pleasure and seek the mysteries of Thy kingdom. O God! Unite us and connect our hearts with Thy indissoluble bond. Verily, Thou art the Giver, Thou art the Kind One and Thou art the Almighty.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

BUDDHIST COUNCIL OF THE MIDWEST

Metta Sutra

May every creature abound in well-being and peace.
May every living being, weak or strong, the long and the small
The short and the medium-sized, the mean and the great
May every living being, seen or unseen, those dwelling far off,
Those nearby, those already born, those waiting to be born
May all attain inward peace.

Let no one deceive another
Let no one despise another in any situation
Let no one, from antipathy or hatred, wish evil to anyone at
all.
Just as a mother, with her own life, protects her own child
from hurt
So within yourself foster a limitless concern for every living
creature.
Display a heart of boundless love for all the world
In all its height and depth and broad extent
Love unrestrained, without hate or enmity.
Then as you stand or walk, sit or lie, until overcome by
drowsiness
Devote your mind entirely to this, it is known as living here life
divine.

The Buddha

CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION

God of every gift,
on this Thanksgiving day we praise you,
the source of all we have and are.
Teach us to acknowledge always
the good things your infinite love has given us
and strive to use these blessings
to build a more just and compassionate nation.

CHICAGO BOARD OF RABBIS

Worship Adonai in gladness, come before God with joy.
Enter God's gates with thanksgiving; with gratitude sing out
God's praise.
Adonai, Creator of the heavens and the earth, provides food
for the hungry with mercy, and brings justice to the op-
pressed.
Praise the Creator who works great wonders, who ennobles
us from birth, who treats us with compassion.
God covers the sky with clouds, sending rain, bringing forth
bread from the earth to sustain us, providing wind to gladden
the human heart.
God has brought peace to our borders and has satisfied us
with choice wheat.
God has blessed us with liberty, with noble dreams, and with
the pursuit of happiness.
Give thanks to Adonai, for God is good. God's love endures
forever.
God crowns the year with goodness, and the fields yield a rich
harvest.
The hills are covered with happiness, and the meadows are
clothed with sheep; the valleys, adorned with corn.
How shall we thank God for our blessings?
Let us share our bread with the hungry; let us not turn away
from the needy.
Clothe the naked and shelter the homeless, help those who
have no help.
Let us not take our blessings for granted. Let us share them
with others, with thanks.
Sing a new song for Adonai.
Where the faithful gather, let God be praised.
God's love endures forever.
Let us share in that love with our life.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes in “principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer” and “make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture... For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.” (Psalm 100)

As important as a single holiday is to celebrate giving thanks to God, we also believe that we should all “live in thanksgiving daily” (Alma 34:38). The other 364 days determine our true attitude of Thanksgiving and recognizing God’s hand in our blessings.

“Cease not to give thanks” is a commandment for and a blessing to us. (Eph. 1:15–16) It is reflected in our daily lives. “When thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God” (Alma 37:37), and this, at the very start, will do more to arrange the day for us, than anything else. If we “live in thanksgiving daily” (Alma 34:38) we will find those troubling aspects of life as dew on grass and opportunities to learn, grow and serve.

COUNCIL OF ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS OF GREATER CHICAGO

Duah (Prayer for Thanksgiving)

May we bow and submit our hearts and souls to our Creator. We praise You Lord, who has granted us all that which we have received. On this day of thanksgiving we pray that our words and deeds exemplify Your spirit of graciousness and compassion in our interactions with humankind, particularly with those who have sought refuge in the United States from Syria and Myanmar. They are our brothers and sisters who call upon us for help in this, their time of need. May we keep in remembrance the bounty You have given us; may we be thankful for the blessings You have bestowed upon us; and may we be compassionate to our neighbors in need, whether they be here or abroad.

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Collect for Thanksgiving Day

Almighty and gracious Father, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 246

A Prayer for Social Justice

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 823

GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

We give thanks unto You O Lord, who has gathered us this day and has put into our mouths words of praise. We glorify You O Sovereign One, knowing that You are ever-mindful of Your children who are in need of Your mercy and philanthropy. We entreat You O God of our salvation, send down Your aid upon us who stand before the presence of Your Holy Glory, and implant in us the love of Your blessed commandments so that we may both think and do such things as are well-pleasing in Your sight. For You are our sanctification, and unto You we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto the ages of ages.

from the order of Matins

JAIN SOCIETY OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

May the sacred stream of AMITY flow forever in my heart

May the universe prosper, such is my cherished desire

May my heart sing with ecstasy at the sight of the virtuous;

May my life be an offering at their feet.

May my heart bleed at the sight of

the wretched, cruel, and the poor;

And may tears of compassion flow

from my eyes.

May I always be there to show the

path to the pathless wanderers of life;

And if they should not harken to me,

may I abide patiently.

May the spirit of goodwill enter into

our hearts; May we sing altogether;

The Immortal song of Brotherhood,

The immortal song of Sisterhood.

Brotherhood, Sisterhood.

LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO

Litany of Thanksgiving

We celebrate in gratitude to God for this life abundant that we share in community...

...for the gifts we have already received and those 'unknown blessings on their way'*; we give thanks from our hearts, our lips, and with our deeds.

We acknowledge the false narrative of the first Thanksgiving, ignoring the atrocities done to Native people ...

... We reclaim the values of generosity and compassion shown by Native people to sustain the lives of strangers.

Recognizing that our attitude toward the earth has often been one of consumption, scarcity, or waste...

...we turn toward proper stewardship, trusting in the abundance of the earth's resources as we work with creation.

Where we have faced our cultural and religious differences with fear and suspicion...

...we come with curiosity and interdependence, discovering that in facing both joys and challenges, we can do so better together than apart.

Where this holiday has come to represent over-eating, consumerism, or a duty to spend time with family...

...we come seeking peace; celebrating work, rest and play; standing in awe of the turn of the seasons; and feeling the 'deep, deep connection of all these things with God.'**

Where we equate the fullness of life with our own personal rights or desires...

...we recognize that 'we are all of us, from birth to death guests at a table which we did not spread.'***

For the products of the harvest and the grace given us; for hope, forgiveness and a new beginning...

... we shout a resounding "THANKS!" to you, God, our Provider.

* *Native American saying*

** *Ray Stannard Baker*

*** *Rebecca Harding Davis*

McCORMICK THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Grip of Grace

Hold me in grace God until my heart is free from the constant breaking and filled with consistent hope instead.

Hold me in grace God until I can believe that this too shall pass.

Hold me in grace God until the moment I remember I have not been consumed.

Hold me in grace God until I can grasp Your steady, unchangeable hand.

Hold me and all those who call You God in the undeniable grasp of grace,

The grasp of grace that reminds us You will answer!

Ase' and Amen.

submitted by Nannette Banks

SIKH RELIGIOUS SOCIETY

Sorat'h, Fifth Mehl

He did not take my accounts into account; such is His forgiving nature.

He gave me His hand, and saved me and made me His own; forever and ever, I enjoy His Love.

The True Lord and Master is forever merciful and forgiving.

My Perfect Guru has bound me to Him, and now, I am in absolute ecstasy.

The One who fashioned the body and placed the soul within, who gives you clothing and nourishment

- He Himself preserves the honor of His slaves. Nanak is forever a sacrifice to Him.

Sri Guru Granth Sahib 619

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST MINISTERS ASSOCIATION, CHICAGO CHAPTER

We give thanks this day:

For the expanding grandeur of Creation, worlds known and unknown, galaxies beyond galaxies, filling us with awe and challenging our imaginations.

For this fragile planet earth, its times and tides, its sunsets and seasons.

For the joy of human life, its wonders and surprises, its hopes and achievements.

For our human community, our common past and future hope, our oneness transcending all separation, our capacity to work for peace and justice in the midst of hostility and oppression.

For high hopes and noble causes, for faith without fanaticism, for understanding of views not shared.

For all who have labored and suffered for a fairer world, who have lived so that others might live in dignity and freedom.

For human liberty and sacred rites; for opportunities to change and grow, to affirm and choose.

We pray that we may live not by our fears but by our hopes, not by our words but by our deeds.

Reverend O. Eugene Pickett

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE

A Prayer of Thanksgiving (Psalm 139)

God, we cannot escape your love. We can find no place to hide.

You search us out wherever we may be. Your love is like a mother's blanket, protecting us wherever we go. Your love shields us from evil.

We may travel to the moon or to the depths of the ocean; your love is there.

We may think ourselves to greater levels of sophistication; your love is there.

We may fall into the pits of sin: your love is there.

Thank you, Lord God, for steadfast mercy.

Thank you for being there, wherever we may be.

Amen.

*From Touch Holiness,
edited by Ruth C. Duck and Maren c. Tirabassi*

ZOROASTRIAN ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

Prayer for Thanksgiving

In the name of the Lord who is divine, who is gracious, giver of life, and who is merciful. Here we praise the Lord Ahura Mazda for giving us to till this land, for giving us the Law of righteousness, for giving us water, for giving us the food and vegetation, for giving us the beneficent light, for giving us the mother earth, and for giving us all things that are good. We praise God on this special occasion of Thanksgiving.

Truth is good

Truth is best

Truth is happiness

Happiness comes to those who are good for the sake of being good.

VIVEKANANDA VEDANTA SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

Oh Lord, lead us from the unreal to the Real,
Lead us from darkness to Light,
And lead us from death to Immortality.

May all be free from dangers,
May all realize what is good,
May all be actuated by noble thoughts,
May all rejoice everywhere.

May all be happy,
May all be free from disease,
May all realize what is good
May none be subject to misery.

May the wicked become virtuous,
May the virtuous attain tranquility,
May the tranquil be free from bonds,
May the freed make others free.

May good betide all people,
May the sovereign righteously rule the earth,
May all beings ever attain what is good,
May the worlds be prosperous and happy.

May the clouds pour rain in time,
May the earth be blessed with crops,
May all countries be freed from calamity,
May holy men live without fear.

May the Lord, the destroyer of sins,
The presiding Deity of all sacred works, be satisfied.
For, He being pleased, the whole universe becomes pleased,
He being satisfied, the whole universe feels satisfied.



Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago

The Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago, a non-profit organization, is comprised of the head religious leadership of practically every major religious tradition in the broader Chicago area, representing nearly six million people. Through its activities, The Council speaks with a unified moral voice on issues of the day; creates a climate of better interfaith understanding and cooperation; and works to advance the common good.

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