10th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Day Service

Thursday, November 27, 2014
10:00 am – 11:00 am

Congregation Sherith Israel
2266 California Street
San Francisco, CA 94115

Sponsored by
The San Francisco Interfaith Council
Entry into Thanksgiving Day Worship

Please stand if you are able; you are welcome to join the procession from the back of the sanctuary.

Procession of Clergy and Congregation

Mark Winges, organist
Adrienne Kristine, soloist and song leader

Welcome on Behalf of the San Francisco Interfaith Council

Rev. Maggi Henderson, Chair
San Francisco Interfaith Council
Pastor, Old First Presbyterian Church

Welcome on Behalf of the Host Congregation

Rabbi Larry Raphael
Congregation Sherith Israel

Song: Hineh Ma Tov

page 380 of Congregation’s prayer book

Nissim B’chol Yom (traditional morning blessings)

page 36 of Congregation’s prayer book

Thanksgiving Day Reflection

Rabbi Larry Raphael

Reading of President Abraham Lincoln’s Proclamation

Karim N’diaye and Anuraag Janagani
Archbishop Riordan High School

Proclamation by the President of the United States of America
3 October 1863

The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful years and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the Source from which they come, others have been added which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God.

In the midst of a civil war of unequaled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere, except in the theater of military conflict, while that theater has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the field of peaceful industry to the national defense have not arrested the plow, the shuttle, or the ship; the ax has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than theretofore. Population has steadily increased notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battlefield, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart an and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed

A. Lincoln
Texts of Thanksgiving from our World Traditions

Luke 12:22-31

Dr. Niveen Sarras
Divinity Student at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Member, Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, Palestinian Territory

Jesus said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you - you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

A Reflection on Thanksgiving from the Shin Buddhist Tradition

Rev. Ron Kobata
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

(adapted from a saying by Rev. Tatsuo Muneto)

Thanksgiving in the (Shin) Buddhist sense is never an obligation. It is a basic attitude to everything we say and to everything we breathe, eat, touch, hear and see. Nothing can be taken for granted. All is one (interdependent) and one is all (each is different and unique). One without the other and the other without the one cannot exist. This spiritual realization beyond words is the basic ingredient in the (Shin) Buddhist’s awareness and appreciation. We are thankful, from day to day, from moment to moment, for the fact that all forms of animate and inanimate life makes our life’s quest for meaning and worth possible. Everyday is Thanksgiving Day. Every moment, we are appreciative in a sensitive way to all that life has to teach us so that we may become whole and complete in Oneness with Immeasurable Life.

Namo Amida Butsu (I take refuge in the Buddha/Spirit of Immeasurable Light and Life)
Adhan (Muslim call to prayer) followed by first chapter of Holy Qu’ran, Suratul Fatihah

Allahu Akbar: God is Great (said four times)

Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah: I bear witness that there is no god except the One God. (said two times)

Ashadu anna Muhammadan Rasool Allah: I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God. (said two times)

Hayya ’ala-s-Salah: Hurry to the prayer (Rise up for prayer) (said two times)

Hayya ’ala-l-Falah: Hurry to success (Rise up for Salvation) (said two times)

Allahu Akbar: God is Great (said two times)

La ilaha illa Allah: There is no god except the One God

1. IN THE NAME of GOD THE ALL-MERCIFUL, THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE
2. All praise and gratitude are for God, the Lord of the worlds and universes
3. The All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate,
4. The Master of the Day of Judgment
5. You alone do we worship and from You alone do we seek help.
6. Guide us to the Straight Path,
7. The Path of those whom You have favored. AMIN

A Thanksgiving Reflection

Offered by Kaushik Roy, Executive Director, Shanti Project

Exchange of Greeting by All

Call (Rev. Ron Kobata): Peace Be With You

Response: And Also With You

All are invited to share signs of peace with one another.
Offering for San Francisco Interfaith Winter Shelter

Introduced by Michael G. Pappas, Executive Director, San Francisco Interfaith Council  
(Checks may be made payable to the San Francisco Interfaith Council)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Bishop Robert Turley
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Offertory Music: “Come, come ye Saints” (English folk song, text by William Clayton, 1846)

Maryam Mahvi, soprano
Jackie Weitz, piano
Dennis Donovan, San Francisco Stake music chairman
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Prayers of Thanksgiving and for the Needs of the World

Led by Dr. Niveen Sarras, Fatih Ates, and Kaushik Roy

Sisters and Brothers, gathered in this sacred space, God calls us to the privilege of giving thanks and praise. It is right and proper that all people come together to do so. Let us, therefore, give thanks and praise to God for all those gifts so freely bestowed upon us: for the splendor of creation and for the beauty of this world; for the wonder of life and for the mystery of love.

All: We praise you, O God.

We give thanks and praise for our daily food and drink, for warmth and shelter, for the blessings of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side: For minds to think, hearts to love and hands to serve; for health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play.

All: We praise you, O God.

We give thanks and praise to you, O God, for Your call to accompany those who are near us in this city and are struggling to feel included: those who have lost hope; those in poor health; those who seek comfort in addiction; those who are imprisoned or unemployed or just plain lonely. Fill us with your Spirit, so that we may be moved to love and care for all of your children in the same way that you do.

All: We praise you, O God.

We give thanks and praise for your wondrous and diverse creation of traditions, cultures, people and nations, O God. We pray that the leaders of our nations may appreciate your gifts and steward them wisely. We pray that all hearts may be filled with your peace and yearn for the end of violence. We pray for all who are involved in military actions, as well as their families and those who innocently find themselves in harm’s way. May the Spirit of your Wisdom, lead us to know the fullness of her true and lasting peace among all people.

All: We praise you, O God.

We give praise and thanks to you, O God, for our brokenness and failures; for it is through our cracks and our humility that your light heals and fills us. Lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone. Lead us gently on your path, and remind us to work patiently in your service, waiting for the fullness of your time.

All: We praise you, O God.
We give praise and thanks to you, O God, for your faithful gathered here today. Make us a truly united voice of love and compassion, that we may be a reflection of your love and faithfulness for all. Inspire us to be courageous in our faith and hope as we live into your creation. We pray today for one another, as well as ourselves.

All: Fill us with your Spirit, O God, that we may leave here singing your praise.

With these and all the prayers that we bring forward this day, and those that rest in our hearts let us say the prayer attributed to the patron our city, San Francisco:

Prayer of St. Francis

    Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
    where there is hatred, let me sow love;
    where there is injury, pardon;
    where there is doubt, faith;
    where there is despair, hope;
    where there is darkness, light;
    and where there is sadness, joy.
    O Divine Master,
    grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
    to be understood, as to understand;
    to be loved, as to love;
    for it is in giving that we receive,
    it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
    and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life. Amen.
Concluding Song

1 O beau-ti-ful for spa-cious skies, For am-ber waves of grain;
2 O beau-ti-ful for he-ros proved In lib-er-a-tion strife,
3 O beau-ti-ful for pa-tri-tion dream That sees be-yond the years

For pur-ple moun-tain ma-jes-ties A - bove the fruit-ed plain!
Who more than self their coun-try loved, And mer-cy more than life!
Thine a-la-bas-ter cit-ies gleam, Un-dimmed by hu-man tears!

A - mer-i-ca! A - mer-i-ca! God shed his grace on thee,
A - mer-i-ca! A - mer-i-ca! May God thy gold re-fine,
A - mer-i-ca! A - mer-i-ca! God mend thine ev-ery flaw,

And crown thy good with broth-er-hood, From sea to shin-ing sea.
Till all suc-cess be no-ble-ness, And ev-ery gain di-vine.
Con-firm thy soul in self con-trol, Thy lib-er-ty in law.

Benediction

Offered by the Rev. Dr. Christopher Zacharias, Pastor, First AME Zion Church

Postlude and Procession Out into the World

Mark Winges, organist

Special thanks to Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, Education Director, Congregation Sherith Israel, for organization and planning.
"Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving."
W. T. Purkiser

“A little 'thank you' that you will say to someone for a 'little favour' shown to you is a key to unlock the doors that hide unseen 'greater favours'. Learn to say 'thank you' and why not?” Israelmore Ayivor

“The act of praising and giving thanks to God brings untold blessing.” Lailah Gifty Akita

“I know there is poor and hideous suffering, and I've seen the hungry and the guns that go to war. I have lived pain, and my life can tell: I only deepen the wound of the world when I neglect to give thanks for early light dappled through leaves and the heavy perfume of wild roses in early July and the song of crickets on humid nights and the rivers that run and the stars that rise and the rain that falls and all the good things that a good God gives.” Ann Voskamp

“Thanksgiving comes to us out of the prehistoric dimness, universal to all ages and all faiths. At whatever straws we must grasp, there is always a time for gratitude and new beginnings.” J. Robert Moskin

“An ancient cornerstone of prayer is that our desire to thank God is itself God's gift. Be grateful.” Richard Leonard

"I give great thanks to God that he has created a Dalai Lama.” Archbishop Desmond Tutu

"Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us be thankful.” The Buddha

"In prosperity, GOD tests our gratitude; in poverty, our commitment; in darkness, our faith; at all times our obedience! GOD Bless You!” Azgraybebly Josland

"Choose happiness by taking life day by day, complaining very little, and being thankful for the little things that mean a lot.” Ritu Ghatourey

"Gratitude begins in our hearts and then dovetails into behavior. It almost always makes you willing to be of service, which is where the joy resides. It means that you are willing to stop being such a jerk. When you are aware of all that has been given to you, in your lifetime and the past few days, it is hard not to be humbled, and pleased to give back.” Anne Lamott

"We the unwilling, led by the unknowing, are doing the impossible for the ungrateful. We have done so much, for so long, with so little, we are now qualified to do anything with nothing.” Mother Teresa

Next year's Interfaith Service of Thanksgiving Day will be November 26, 2015 10:00 am - 11:00 am