

November 25, 2020
GUIDANCE FOR US...

To Friends of Earl Palmer Ministry
A Hymn For the Season

Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices...
O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

Verses from First and Second Stanzas
Now Thank We All Our God, Rev. Martin Rinkart c. 1636

As we approach the season of Thanksgiving we are reminded to think of what we are grateful for. Permit us to share our list as we invite you to make your own list – and to join us as we take the steps necessary to reach out with humbleness and let the people in our lives know our gratitude. In this time of threat from the pandemic and civil/social and political unrest we remember the words in this hymn written centuries ago but with meaning for us today.

First, we thank our “*bounteous God who is near us and brings His blessed peace that cheers us, all the while keeping us in His Grace...*” Our list continues with overwhelming appreciation for the delight of being here to meet each day with gladness.

In these days especially we are thankful:

- For the love of our family near and far;
- For the support of friends alongside in our journey in life;
- For the simple joy of seeing eyes that are warm and even smiling above the necessary facemask;
- For the shelter of our home and the fragrance of a hot supper cooking in the oven;
- For the opportunities to care for and serve others less fortunate;
- For the people who work at personal risk relentlessly in midst of the pandemic to maintain health and wellness;
- For the people who search for answers to complex issues and offer solutions based on scientific inquiry and medical data;
- For the people who seek the truth and offer grace in the face of adverse circumstances due to the threat of the novel virus;
- For the people who serve to protect us on the streets and in our neighborhoods from expressions of violence that result in destruction and danger;

For the people who understand that through compassion and caring for others we are stronger together.

And especially, in this time “*Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices*” for the election officials who have worked tirelessly to conduct a fair and impartial election. There is so much to be thankful for, but we would like to share our personal experience relating to this last expression on our list.

On the morning of November 13th we read the announcement by Chris Krebs, Director, on behalf of the Joint Federal and State Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency in the Department of Homeland Security. This bipartisan body reported “America, we have confidence in the security of your vote, you should too...the November 3 election was the most secure in American history.” We are grateful for the courage of this man and the broad base of the many others who were diligent in working together to protect our democracy and confirm the safety of the national election. And yesterday, we learned that the process of certification that honors the vote of the people moves forward. We will continue to pray that people can find common ground in the good that binds us and holds promise for the future well being of the country.

In light of the present reality where the validity of the election is still resisted by some, we return to the hymn for inspiration and repeat “*Now thank we all our God*” with the assurance that He will “*keep us in His grace, and guide us when perplexed.*” On that same date of November 13, in our evening reading, we found guidance in words from a Scottish pastor (1886-1960), John Baillie in *A Diary of Private Prayer*. We commend his prayer – it seems so right for today – “Let the power of the Lord Christ be strong within us and may His peace invade our spirit.”

Your brother and sister in Christ, Earl and Shirley Palmer