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For Children: Our first **Cool School video** is available by clicking here: [CUC Cool School Video #1](#) You are welcome to share this with others but please note that you must use the link provided. It is not available by search.

For news and events please have a look at the **Life & Work** insert: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>

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Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The **link for sharing** is: <https://youtu.be/dQvbPx5potq>

A **Table Grace** for your Thanksgiving is offered below.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Thanksgiving Sunday, October 11.

As Thanksgiving approached I found myself thinking about two things that have become part of our annual Thanksgiving celebrations at the church. Neither were planned to be customary but both have simply evolved into part of what we do. They are the gathering of our thankful prayers and the sacrament of baptism.

I'm not sure what year I started pausing in the middle of the Thanksgiving service and walking up the aisle into the midst of the congregation with my notepad and pen and asking you what you are thankful for. I do remember that the first time we tried it I was a little nervous. How would you respond to this interruption in the flow of worship? How comfortable would you be speaking aloud in the sanctuary? I need not have worried. You have always been generous in your offerings and most often I have trouble writing fast enough to include all that you offer.

The prayers you have offered over the years have tended towards a few themes. You are a people who easily express gratitude for nature. We almost always have prayers for water, gardens, trees, and animals. Frankly, this is one of those times we really show our colours as prairie people! Always, and easily, you offer prayers for the people with whom we are in relationship, for families and friends, for church and neighbours. And invariably, the third theme is gratitude for the society of which we are a part. Someone will always pray for those who work in health care and schools. For all of its shortcomings and frustrations, all the work that remains to be done in the creation of a just and reconciled nation, we seem to recognize that Canada is a remarkable country. And we are thankful.

The second tradition that has become part of our Thanksgiving is that we almost always celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism on this Sunday. This has partly been for practical and pastoral reasons, namely that a long weekend is a good time for families to gather especially if travelling is involved for some members. It has the added bonus that baptism brings joy to all of us and lifts up the service in Spirit.

But there is also a faith development and theological reason for celebrating Baptism on Thanksgiving since every time we gather around the font we are doing so as an expression of gratitude for God's grace. I had a professor who taught that Baptism is never solely about the baby, it is also about remembering our own baptism, and by extension the place of faith in our lives, and being thankful. He was an advocate for taking evergreen boughs and dipping the tips in the water and 'sprinkling' the congregation, letting God's people *feel* the water of their baptism and become renewed by it.

I've always been a little hesitant about that but I always try to find ways in the service that emphasizes the invitation to be thankful for our baptism. By our baptism we are renewed.

As with so much else, we will wait and return to these traditions when it is safe to do so. For now, I want to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving in whatever scaled down and cautious form you may be observing it. As a gift to you, I have written a Table Grace you may wish to say along with other members of your church.

But if you do your own thing, I understand. You're quite good at it.

Grace and peace,

Michael

A Table Grace for Thanksgiving 2020 from Charleswood United Church

*God from whom all blessings flow,
You bless us with the beauty and mystery and wonder of creation.
You provide for our needs and invite us to respond with a generous Spirit.
Thank you for the gifts that fill our lives with joy and love.
Thank you for the times we gather around tables as family, friends, or community and share the bounty of the earth.
In this moment when caution may inhibit welcome, let us be no less filled with hope,
And no less grateful for what we have received.
In Jesus name. Amen.*