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Friends,

Thanksgiving! What does it really mean to us? I remember at one point in my ministry, I decided not to prepare a homily for Thanksgiving. I just went to church, read the gospel and invited everyone to sit. Then I invited members of the congregation to come and say what they wanted to give thanks for. There was dead silence and awkwardness. I could see everyone looking down. I think some would have walked out if it had not been such a small church.

I had to think quickly about what to do. I reminded people that, on this day of all days, it should be natural for us to give thanks to God. Then we surely must have a long list of what to give thanks for. Sometimes people want someone else to list things they should be thankful for. On Thanksgiving Sunday, we expect our minister to list the things we should be grateful for.

So, let's get started. For one thing, I am thankful that we have gone through the pandemic and we are still here. Life is not something to be taken for granted. I am grateful for the vaccines and to God for giving us another Thanksgiving.

Our parish has been affected by cancer in the past couple of years. During illness, just knowing that others are thinking of you can provide great comfort. I pray that, by his presence, God will bring healing, peace and comfort to those in need.

I am thankful at how the young people have grown over the past two years while the church was partially closed. Most of them have come back ready to fully take their place in our St. Stephen's family. Some are servers. Their commission service will be held in November.

I am grateful that St. Stephen's church has received a large number of new parishioners, as witnessed by our last Welcome Service. Many of these people are beginning to make their lives count at St. Stephen's. They are already participating in our ministries. I cannot be thankful enough.

Finally, I am filled with joy as I thank you for the friendship, advice and support that you have given me in my ministry. Both my church family and my own family are my mainstay—and I am grateful.

Now is your turn to count your blessings. Get a piece of paper and write them down so that that you will be able to remember them not only on Thanksgiving, but each and every day of your life. Just look around. We are deeply and richly blessed. No end to God's blessing.

Thanks be to God!

I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.

The Reverend Canon George Kwari.

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GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR EVERYTHING HE HAS DONE FOR US!