

**Bruton Parish Church  
Thanksgiving 2011  
November 23, 2011  
The Reverend Charles A. Robinson**

**“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice...The Lord is near.”**

**I remember when I was a boy, the celebration of Thanksgiving seem to be the beginning of “the holidays.” Having no religious context in my life, that meant looking forward soon to a lengthy break from school, bright lights, festive music in the stores, and holiday foods – not served at any other time of the year. It seems to me that all of the commercial trappings start much sooner now and have become much more inane – the inflatable turkey out on Jamestown Road comes to mind.**

**However, looking beyond all of that, those of us gathered here make a connection between our faith and this holiday. Like all who celebrate, we gather in communities of family and friends, we give thanks and feast on foods that fill us with the joy of remembrance and tradition.**

**Thanksgiving for us, though, carries a vitally important faith context. Each time we gather at our Eucharistic table, we participate in the meal of The Great Thanksgiving. Everything we do here, centers upon that “...food that endures for eternal life,” the “bread of life” for the world found in Jesus Christ, our Lord described in the Gospel this night. In fact, the very word “Eucharist” is founded in the idea of gratitude and thanksgiving for the “...peace of God, which surpasses all understanding (and) (that) ...guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”<sup>1</sup> Here we are strengthened to think on and do those true, honorable, just, and pure things that we have learned and received and heard and seen through Christ.**

**This is a difference in Thanksgiving that we bring to this table and to our tables tomorrow. For us, it is Sacramental – “an outward and visible sign of the Grace of God, commanded by Christ for the continual remembrance of his life, death, and resurrection, until his coming again” (BCP pp.857, 859). How appropriate it is that this Thanksgiving celebration falls in the calendar as we prepare to embark on Advent to reflect upon his coming and his coming again.**

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<sup>1</sup> εὐχαριστία noun dative feminine singular common from εὐχαριστία

[Fri] εὐχαριστία, ας, ἡ (1) as an attitude *gratitude, thankfulness* ([AC 24.3](#)); (2) as an act of giving thanks *thanksgiving* ([1C 14.16](#)); (3) *Lord's Supper* ([1C 10.16](#))

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**As we gather at this table and take this Sacramental meal tonight, we carry it to our tables tomorrow that they too will be that same outward and visible sign of “God with us.” At each table tomorrow, we continue the “Communion, the Divine Liturgy, the Mass, the Great Offering, the Eucharist” (BCP 859). We strengthen our union with Christ and with one another.**

**“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice ...The Lord is near.”**

**Blessed be the name of God!**