

GREAT VESPERS FOR THANKSGIVING DAY

“Lord, I have cried unto Thee” in Tone 1 with Six Stichera.

If Thanksgiving falls on Nov.22-25, sing these stichera in Tone 1, then the three for Thanksgiving.

Verse 6: If Thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Let us believers exchange glad tidings,
singing to the Lord with psalms and songs of praise,
honoring His holy tabernacle,
the living ark who contained the uncontainable Word;
for in a supernatural manner is she offered to God as a babe.
And Zachariah the great High Priest receives her rejoicing //
since she is God’s abode.

Verse 5: Because of Thy name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

Today the living temple of holy glory,
the glory of Christ our God,
Who alone is blessed and undefiled,
is presented in the Mosaic Temple, to live in its holy precincts.
Wherefore, Joachim and Anna rejoice now with her in spirit, //
and the ranks of virgins praise the Lord with songs honoring His Mother.

Verse 4: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord.

Thou art the preaching of the Prophets, O virgin Theotokos,
the glory of the Apostles and pride of Martyrs,
the renewal of the whole race of earthly ones.
For through thee we are reconciled to God.
Wherefore, we honor Thy coming to the temple of the Lord,
shouting unto thee and hailing thee with the angel, //
O most honored one; for we are saved by thine intercessions.

But if Thanksgiving falls on Nov.26-28, sing these stichera in Tone 1, then the three for Thanksgiving.

Verse 6: If Thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Rejoice, O Prophets,
For your words have found their fulfillment,
The Messiah draws near.
He for Whom you shed your blood now comes to shed His own,
In order to save His people Israel.
Now we His faithful people join with you in crying to Him, //
O Immanuel our Savior and Redeemer, glory to Thee.

Verse 5: Because of Thy name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

Rejoice, O Righteous of old,
Those around you mocked you for believing in a remote and unseen God.
Now God becomes incarnate to dispel the devil's deceptions.
He comes to liberate you from Hades and return you to Paradise,
To open to all the path to salvation.
Allowing you and the righteous of all ages to cry to Him, //
O Immanuel our Savior and Redeemer, glory to Thee.

Verse 4: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord.

Quake, O Hades,
From the moment Adam and Eve partook of the fruit,
Our nature has been disfigured by sin and we are cut off from God.
Having been cast out of Paradise we were bound by your deceitful and wicked control.
Now the fruit of the Tree of Jesse is coming.
He will make whole those who partake of Him.
Releasing them from your dominion and restoring them to Paradise.
Groan and convulse like the demons possessing the Gadarene,
For your destruction is at hand, //
Immanuel comes to conquer Death by His death.

Then the three stichera for Thanksgiving in Tone 1.

Verse 3: For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all His iniquities.

Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.
Wherefore we Thine unworthy servants offer praise to Thee our Savior,
for Thou hast given all things to us, even our very lives.
Thou hast poured blessings upon us though we are ungrateful and disobedient.
Showing mercy rather than righteous vengeance;
Thou didst even give Thyself as a sacrifice to save us.
Acept our hymns as a thanks offering,
and through them enable us with our whole heart; //
to eternally praise Thee the Creator, Benefactor and Savior of our souls.

Verse 2: Praise the Lord, all ye nations. Praise Him, all ye people.

From nothing Thou hast created all
Nothing exists without Thee.
Despite our fallen nature Thou hast given us every blessing;
life, family, gifts, and the abundance of the earth.
O Father and Creator of All, how can we repay Thee,
All we can do is offer ourselves in Thanksgiving.
Crying from the depths of our souls,
We give thanks to Thee our only God; //

We call on Thy Name and recount Thy wondrous deeds.

Verse 1: For His mercy is great towards us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

The time of the Harvest is here,
Let us offer to the owner of the field as first-fruits our hymns of praise.
For the abundant blessings He has given us.
Let us not be ungrateful to our Benefactor, O brethren,
But let us cry to the Lord of the Harvest;//
O Source of all goodness, glory to Thee.

The Doxastikon in Tone 8

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As we mark the Presentation of Thy Pure Mother in the Temple,
and prepare for Thine own Nativity in the flesh,
the prelude and commencement of our salvation;
we Thine unworthy servants offer Thanksgiving to Thee our Creator.
For were it not for Thy boundless love and mercy,
we sinners would be lifeless dust.
Yet Thou hast seen fit to not only grant us life,
and all we need for the nourishment of mind, heart, body, and soul;
but in Thy incomprehensible compassion,
Thou didst become one of us to save us,//
O gracious Benefactor, Christ our God, glory to Thee.

Also in Tone 8.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

If Thanksgiving falls on Nov.22-25, sing the following.

Since thou art sanctified, O Lady, bride of God,
having proceeded after thy birth to the Temple,
to be brought up in the Holy of Holies,
verily, Gabriel was sent to thee with food.
And all the heavens were amazed
at beholding the Holy Spirit dwelling in thee. //
Wherefore, O pure and spotless Theotokos, glorified in heaven and upon earth, save our race.

But if Thanksgiving falls on Nov.26-28, sing the following.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.
Of old this sign was given to the Prophet Isaiah,
now we behold its fulfillment,
for Mary has conceived a son without knowing a man.
She who entered the Temple of God now becomes His Living Temple,
as He Who formed her and all creation now grows as one of us in her womb.

(continued on next page)

Rejoice O prophets, for the truth of your words is confirmed.
Hear this all peoples even to the uttermost ends of the earth,
your salvation is at hand, //
For Immanuel is about to be born.

The Prokeimenon in Tone 5.

O God, in Thy Name save me, and in Thy strength do Thou judge me.

Verse: O God, hearken unto my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth.

The Three Old Testament Readings for Thanksgiving.

1st Reading: The reading from the 1st Book of Chronicles (1Chr.16: 1-3,7-17,23-24,36,43)

In those days they brought the ark of God, and set it inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD, and distributed to all Israel, both men and women, to each a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then on that day David first appointed that thanksgiving be sung to the LORD by Asaph and his brethren. O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples! Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works! Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his presence continually! Remember the wonderful works that he has done, the wonders he wrought, the judgments he uttered, O offspring of Abraham his servant, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He is mindful of his covenant for ever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant which he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed as a statute to Jacob, as an everlasting covenant to Israel, Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!" Then all the people said "Amen!" and praised the LORD. Then all the people departed each to his house, and David went home to bless his household.

2nd Reading: The reading from the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut.10 :14 –21)

Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the LORD set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him and cleave to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen.

If Thanksgiving falls on Nov.22-25, read the following.

3rd Reading: The reading from the Prophecy of Ezekiel (Ezek.43:27-44:1)

When they have completed these days, then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer upon the altar your burnt offerings and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, says the Lord GOD." Then he

brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. And he said to me, "This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut. Only the prince may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and shall go out by the same way." Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the temple of the LORD; and I fell upon my face.

But if Thanksgiving falls on Nov.26-28, read the following.

3rd Reading: The reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (Isa.7: 10-14; 8:1-4,9-10)

The LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman'u-el. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write upon it in common characters, 'Belonging to Ma'her-shal'al-hash-baz.'" And I got reliable witnesses, Uri'ah the priest and Zechari'ah the son of Jeberechi'ah, to attest for me. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Ma'her-shal'al-hash-baz; for before the child knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Sama'ria will be carried away before the king of Assyria." Be broken, you peoples, and be dismayed; give ear, all you far countries; gird yourselves and be dismayed; gird yourselves and be dismayed. Take counsel together, but it will come to nought; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

The Aposticha in Tone 5.

The earth is the Lord's, the fullness thereof the world and all that dwell therein,
O faithful let us heed the Psalmist's words,
And on this hallowed day let us, humbly, bow down in thanksgiving;
Before the Creator of the universe,
For the inexhaustible gifts He has bestowed on us.
Let us cry aloud with the saints and all creation,//
O most gracious and merciful Trinity, glory to Thee.

Verse 1: What shall I render to the Lord, for all His bounty to me.

The Creator of Heaven and earth,
Gave us the world to use for our salvation and His glory,
All things which we need He has given us.
Now as the season of the Harvest has arrived,
And as we approach the Lord's Nativity,
Let us make use of this day our forefathers have given us,
To reflect on the abundance of our blessings.
And emulate Mary rather than Martha,
Putting aside distractions from the one thing needful and crying aloud,//
O Source of all things, glory to Thee.

Verse 2: I will offer to Thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and call on the Name of the Lord.

To each different gifts are given,
So says the Holy Apostle Paul.
No one acquires talents or gifts through personal effort.
All gifts are from God.
On this day of special thanksgiving let us show due gratitude,
To the true source of all inventions, discoveries, and wonders,
He who gave us gifts to aid our fellow men.
Let us not squander them like the man who buried his one talent,
Nor ascribe them to our own power like the Rich Fool, //
But use them to the glory of God, Who granted them to us.

The Doxastikon in Tone 6.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Thine own of Thine own we offer ourselves as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Thee,
for the immeasurable mercy you have shown to us sinners.
Granting us all things which are for our salvation,
which Thou didst achieve through the shedding of Thy Blood.
As we unworthily prepare to draw near Thine Altar,
accept our common service as a true Eucharist,
that with boldness we may cry with one accord; //
O our Savior and Benefactor glory to Thee.

Also in Tone 6.

Both now and ever and unto ages of ages, Amen.

If Thanksgiving falls on Nov.22-25, sing the following.

Today let us the crowds of the assembled faithful
celebrate a spiritual feast:
let us reverently praise the Virgin Theotokos and child of God,
as she is brought into the Temple of the Lord!
She was forechosen from all generations
to be the dwelling-place of Christ, the Lord and God of all.
O Virgins, bearing lamps, go before her,
honoring the majestic progress of the ever-Virgin!
Mothers, lay aside every sorrow and accompany them with joy,
singing the praises of her who became the Mother of God,
the cause of joy for the world!
Therefore, let us all join with the Angel,
and joyfully cry out: "Rejoice!" to her who is full of grace, //
and who ever intercedes for our souls.

But if Thanksgiving falls on Nov.26-28, sing the following.

Having celebrated your Entrance O Pure One;
Let us emulate your righteous parents,
For in joyful thanksgiving they offered you their hearts desire back to God.
And in return for act of faith,
They and all creation received you back of the mother of our salvation.
We implore you O Living Temple of God,
Guide us to their state of faith and gratitude, //
That with them we may eternally give thanks at the Throne of your Son

The Apolytikia.

For Thanksgiving in Tone 3.

Unoriginate Father, Incarnate Son and Holy Spirit,
On this revered day as throughout the year,
Accept our sacrifice of thanksgiving,
For all the bounties bestowed upon us,
And in Thy mercy overlook our unworthiness,
That with boldness we may cry to Thee our Creator and Benefactor,
O most gracious Trinity, glory to Thee!

Then, if Thanksgiving falls on Nov.22-25, sing the following festal Apolytikion in Tone 4.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever and unto ages of ages,
Amen.*

Today is the prelude of the goodwill of God,
of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.
The Virgin appears in the Temple of God,
in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.
Let us rejoice and sing to her,
rejoice O fulfillment, of the Creator's dispensation.

But if Thanksgiving falls on Nov.26-28, sing the following Theotokion in Tone 3.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever and unto ages of ages,
Amen.*

Rejoice O universe,
for she who was brought into the Holy of Holies,
now herself becomes the dwelling place of God.
For the pre-eternal Word of the Father has taken flesh from her,
and grows as one of us, in her mortal womb.
Leap for joy O Isaiah and all you prophets,
and with us joyfully cry to the ever-virgin Mary,
behold, all generations call you blessed, O Lady, //
for through you Immanuel now comes to save us.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

DEACON: Again and again on bended knees, let us pray to the Lord.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: O Lord Jesus Christ our God, the God of all mercies and bounties Whose mercy is immeasurable, and whose love for mankind is an unfathomable deep: falling down in adoration before Thy majesty, with fear and trembling, as unprofitable servants, and now humbly rendering thanks unto Thy loving-kindness for Thy benefits bestowed upon us: We thank Thee O Lord for having become one of us, suffering, dying and rising again, by which Thou hast reopened to us, the doors to Paradise. We thank Thee O Lord, Thy One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, Orthodox Church, through which Thy teachings are preserved and practiced, and we are led to Thee. We thank Thee O Lord for the Saints, whom Thou hast given us as role models and as intercessors before Thy Judgment Seat. We thank Thee, O Lord, for having helped us to overcome all difficulties, tensions, passions, temptations and restored peace, mutual love and joy in sharing the communion of the Holy Spirit. We thank Thee, O Lord, for the sufferings Thou didst bestow upon us, for they are purifying us from selfishness and reminding us of the "one thing needed;" Thine eternal Kingdom. We thank Thee, O Lord, for having given us this country where we are free to worship Thee. We thank Thee, O Lord, for our families: husbands, wives and, especially, children who teach us how to celebrate Your holy Name in joy, movement and holy noise. We thank Thee, O Lord, for everyone and everything. Great art Thou, O Lord, and marvelous are Thy deeds, and no word is sufficient to celebrate Thy miracles. Glory to Thee, O God our Benefactor, together with Thine unoriginate Father, the Creator and Source of all things, and Thine All-holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, the Treasury of Blessings, unto the ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

We stand and sing the following thrice in Tone 7.

Who is so great a God as our God; Thou art the God Who doest wonders.

We then conclude with the Great Dismissal, beginning with "Wisdom!"