

Modified Six Nations Thanksgiving Address

The People :

Genesis 1:27-28

*So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth

"Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as people."

Now we are united in giving thanks for our fellow human beings. (Pass the peace)

Our Planet :

Genesis 1:9-10

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

"We are all thankful for our planet, known to our indigenous sisters and brothers as Mother Earth, for it gives us all that we need for life. It supports our feet as we walk about upon it. It gives us joy that it continues to nurture us as it has from the beginning of time. For our planet, we offer thanks."

Now we are united in giving thanks for our Planet.

The Waters and Marine Life :

Genesis 1:20-23

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

"We give thanks for all the waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength.

Water is life. We know its power in many forms - waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of Water.

We turn our minds to all Marine life in the water. Our indigenous brothers and sisters believe they were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of Marine Life.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for Water and for Marine Life.

The Plants for Food and Medicine :

Genesis 1: 11-12

Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.

“Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of plants and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.

With one mind, we turn to acknowledge and give thanks for all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped us survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and with one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of Plant Food.

Now we turn to all the Medicinal herbs of the world. From the beginning they have been used to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing, and those who are able to develop new medicines. With one mind, we offer thanks for Medicines and to those who bring us healing.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for all plants, especially those that provide us food and medicine.

The Animals :

Genesis 1: 24-25

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

“We gather our minds together to offer thanks for all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. Our indigenous sisters and brothers teach us to honor them when their lives are given up so we may use their bodies as food for our people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of the Animals.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for the Animals.

The Trees and the Birds :

Genesis 1:29-31

God said, ‘See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.’ And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

“We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own characteristics and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many people of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of Trees.

We put our minds together as one and offer thanks for all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. Our indigenous brothers and sisters believe the Eagle was chosen to be their leader. For all the Birds - from the smallest to the largest - we offer our joyful thanks.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for the Trees and for the Birds who nest in their branches.

The Four Winds :

Genesis 1: 1-2

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

“We are all thankful for the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us new days and giving us strength. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of the Four Winds.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for the Four Winds.

The Sun, the Moon and the Stars :

Genesis 1: 14-18

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

“We now offer thanks for the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of the Sun.

We put our minds together to give thanks for the Moon, known to our indigenous sisters and brothers as “Grandmother”. The people of our First Nations believe she is the leader of women all over the world, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. The Moon lights the night-time sky and by her changing face we measure time. She governs the movement of the ocean tides. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of the Moon.

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of the Stars.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for the Sun, Moon and Stars.

The Enlightened Teachers :

1 Corinthians 12:28

And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues.

“We gather our minds to greet and thank the enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. We Mennonites know them as prophets. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we offer thanks for the gift of these caring teachers.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for the Prophets.

The Creator :

John 1: 1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

“Now we turn our thoughts to the creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.”

Now we are united in giving thanks for our Creator,

Benediction

“We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way. We ask God's blessing on all of us, and may we go in peace.”