

An Abundance of Riches

We have a national holiday dedicated to being thankful, but the teachings toward living a good life point to us making gratitude a regular practice and an essential step on the wellness path. You can begin by being thankful that I will postpone my examination of the role of the foods we eat until after our feasting day has past. Today I offer some possible gifts of life at Lathrop.

May we offer gratitude to:

Ourselves for having the insight to step into life in community (or to whomever did the lifting to get us here;)

The **opportunities and resources** that makes it possible to be in a community with so many supportive options (and may we honor the generosity that flows out to those *who do not* have those resources;)

Neighbors, who pay attention and share concern, even when they may step a bit too far into our business;

Resident leaders, initiators, sustainers and “receivers of the torch”, who keep the calendar full and the community dialogue productive;

Volunteers who come from outside the community to enrich our lives, strengthen our bodies and challenge our minds;

Emergency responders in Northampton and Easthampton who are prompt, professional and always willing (remember, just because an ambulance comes does not mean you have to go.) And by the way, management sends a gift basket to both departments on your behalf;

Families of blood and families of the heart, whose lives bring us out of the narrow concern for our own challenges, while perhaps challenging us to take action in our own life. While many of us have the gifts of strong family support when problems arrive, let us be grateful that *in community we need not feel ourselves alone*.

While there is so much possible joy to be taken in this full season of friends and family, for many this season can be hard. Whether from the absence of loved ones or the triggers that come from years of missed opportunity or disappointment, many of us risk slipping in to the darkness that is also a part of this season. Now or at any time of the year, having a simple gratitude practice can help keep us lifted and moving forward with greater ease. Many people add this to their morning routine, but one could just as well do it just before bed, recording a list of 3-5 things in their life for which they are grateful. As you continue through this process avoid repeating things and look out beyond the ordinary, perhaps for the blessings of a random encounter at the grocery store, for a past teacher or perhaps for a hard event from your past that has now become a great lesson in humility or tenacity.

Of course my list of above could go on and on and will hopefully bring much more to your mind. From our grateful thoughts, may we engender real feelings of the heart, and from there find ways to act, sharing our lifted spirits with those with whom we walk this path.

For more on this theme, I share from a favorite organization this article just dropped in my inbox today, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/four_ways_gratitude_helps_you_with_difficult_feelings?

