

**Subject: Thanksgiving Service**

**Thanksgiving Service  
Rev. Jane Strem**

We have had a Thanksgiving Eve service for several years. It was a natural extension of our Wednesday evening service. Ours is informal with an invocation and opening comments pertinent to the season or to current events. Some times, the opening comments speak of the historical roots of this holiday and moves into inclusivity of various cultures and the changing of beliefs in a way that honors our Native American neighbors. Those present are then invited to share those things for which they are grateful. Sometimes a person shares several things, sometimes a person may share more than once. When the sharing seems complete, I speak a spiritual mind treatment prayer acknowledging the gratitude spoken and all that remains unspoken as well. I speak of the healing taking place right now for which we will be grateful next year and the expansion of our consciousness so that we are more aware of our current blessings.

Last year, a practitioner arrived noisily after we had begun. She admitted to being rushed and stressed and said she thought she "should" be there because I had asked her to come. We just let her "be in her own space." At the end of the Thanksgiving Service, she thanked me for asking her to come and said she appreciated the relaxing break before going home to begin her baking and preparations for tomorrow's meal.

The musical selections vary. It's wonderful when we have one of our live musicians at the service. Otherwise, we have tapes / CD's playing in the background and sometimes songs we sing as well.

The service ends with a benediction.