



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

From the Bishop

Crispin and Crispinian 2014

Dear Ascension Friends,

I have been looking forward very much to spending this weekend with you, but have begged off because of the recent death of my father. I appreciate your understanding as I take a bit of time to reflect on the events of the past week, compressed as they have been with my dad's stroke, death, memorial service and the sorting out of his affairs. I appreciate even more the prayers and cards that I have received from many individuals in the congregation, and the card you sent as a community. My experiences this week have deepened my appreciation of the church family, both as a recipient of so much support, and as a witness of the care being offered to my mother. As I write these words, I am also aware of some of the painful losses recently suffered at the Ascension, and I am confident that the Ascension family will continue to share the burdens of those who grieve and be a sign of hope to a disillusioned and disconsolate world.

Of course, an important part of your celebrations this weekend will be the remembrance of many who have devoted themselves to the life and ministry of the Ascension, but who are with us no longer. We tend to attach the physical aspects of the church to these recollections. Canon Morrow was the first incumbent, and made some of the furniture by hand. Archbishop Wright laid the cornerstone in 1958. In his memoirs he mentions the 'dual purpose' of the church as both sanctuary and hall. But what stood out to him was that 'it had a huge kitchen'! There are still members who can cast an eye about the edifice and conjure up the names of those who contributed to its construction, while many of us can identify donors and craftsmen who made enhancements and refurbishments possible.

We give thanks for these individuals and for what they have left behind. But let us not neglect their less-tangible but more-important legacy: you and me. That kitchen, which so impressed Archbishop Wright, has fed us in times of happiness and sadness. The Fellowship Hall has accommodated our personal sharing and hospitality. The renovated Sanctuary has enhanced our worship. Even the new signage and brickwork remind us that we are members of a living and enduring community. These physical 'works' serve a greater purpose in the plan of God: the sharing 'in the gathering work of Christ so that His newness of life overflows into our hearts, homes, churches, and community'.

The Burial Office contains the following quotation from the Book of Revelation: 'I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' As we gather to celebrate God's goodness in the lives of his people, let us acknowledge that we are the works who 'do follow them'.

Gratefully in Christ,

+Stephen