

The Ven. Anne Germond's greeting for 60th Anniversary Dinner and Dance
on 25th October 2014

Howard Johnson Hotel

Welcome everyone to our 60th Anniversary celebration!

When I began ministry at the Ascension just over 14 years ago I realized that I had joined a church of builders. I heard almost immediately about the many hands that had built the fabric of the church – people who had gone down to Sparks street after work to offer their time and their skills and also their money.

But over the years I have noticed something else – that while we remain a church of builders, that which we are building has changed. Oh, for sure we have made many more changes to the physical space but we have also been working hard at building our relationship with God through our time of worship, with each other in our times of meeting, fellowship, study and prayer, and with our neighbouring churches as we have forged closer ecumenical ties and joined together with our Roman Catholic, United, and Presbyterian friends for worship and outreach. We have built bridges of friendship and opened our arms to welcome members from churches that have closed their doors and ensured that those who joined us from the Church of the Resurrection and St. Mark's Garson soon became part of the brickwork, firmly cemented in. We have built bridges of outreach to those in need both in our back yard or overseas.

In all of the builders I discovered a people who are eager to serve, hardworking, dedicated, friendly, faithful, and generous with their time, talent and money, and for each one of you, I am so grateful.

I know that the Ascension has a very rich and fruitful future ahead as we look to the next sixty years with hope and expectation. Yet, I am also cognizant of the fact that who we are today has a lot to do with our founding fathers and mothers – those early visionaries who took a huge risk and said “Let's go build a church.” And then who committed themselves to that task with Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

So I give thanks for 60 years of faithfulness by clergy and laity alike, and for today's leaders and visionaries who will guide us to tomorrow and will keep us looking beyond our doors to a world that needs Christ's love more than ever.

On a personal note I would like to express my thanks to the wardens and board members, to Fr. Bob and Rev. Rhonda, for their excellent leadership.

And lastly, to all of you for the way in which you contribute to the ongoing life of the parish by your regular attendance at services and for the many ways in which you love and serve God by serving each other. I thank you for supporting and encouraging me in my ministry, for putting up with all many quirks, and for your many acts of kindness to my family.

James Stalker, a Scottish minister and author who lived at the end of the nineteenth century expressed so eloquently in one of his books exactly how I feel about my ministry here with you at the Ascension.

He wrote: "When I first was settled in a church, I discovered a thing of which nobody had told me, and which I had not anticipated, but which proved a tremendous aid in doing the work of the ministry. I fell in love with my congregation. I do not know how otherwise to express it. It was as genuine a blossom of the heart as any which I have ever experienced. It made it easy to do anything for my people." (Taken from John Stott's book 'Basic Christian Leadership')

May our time this evening, in our feasting and dancing, and tomorrow in our time of prayer and worship, join our hearts together in giving thanks to God for the blessing of our community of faith at the Ascension.

May the next 60 years be as fruitful and rewarding as the past 60 years.

Your rector,

Anne