

# Thanksgiving Greetings

October 2014



Dear People of God at the Ascension,

If I were to choose one word to describe the way that I feel as we celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, it would be *Thanksgiving*.

*Thanksgiving – for the founders of the congregation and for the many supporters over the years who have made it possible for this place to serve the present generation with loving and generous hearts.*

*Thanksgiving – for the gifts of clergy and laity who over these 60 years have lead and inspired the people of the Ascension with the good news of God’s love for us in Jesus Christ.*

*Thanksgiving for God’s continuing grace and guidance as we sense God’s blessing this community with the rich gifts we have been given. And witnessing us sharing those with the world beyond our Sparks Street doors.*

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your loved ones. I hope that there is time for each of you to enjoy this beautiful time of the year in feasting or simple pleasures.

Colin and I have just returned from a quick getaway to Maui, Hawaii. It is a magnificent Island and we had a great time. What struck us

though, was that even though they were advertising and discussing the 'fall' season, that there was no difference whatsoever in the vegetation outside – no dramatic changes to the leaves; definitely no drop in temperatures, and the sun set at just the same time as usual. Even if the arrival of fall brings all of those to us, as well as the promise of a long winter, its beauty is really striking. We are really blessed in Canada with the change in seasons.

Thanksgiving is an opportunity for us to pause for a moment and to catch our breath after a summer filled with activities; and after an early fall of getting our own lives back on track as we begin another round of work schedules and all of our home and church commitments.

It is also an opportunity to sit back and to reflect on how God has both challenged and comforted us on our journey in the past year.

How has the last year been for you? Are you one of the people who can say that your life has been richly blessed; or has it been a challenging and difficult one for you? Think on these things.

**The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him (Psalm 126.6)**

My other big question for you to think about this Thanksgiving is this – are you 'filled with joy' in your life?

I find that many people think that life will be better or that they will be truly happy **when** something else happens first. We are not satisfied with what is currently our situation because we have it in our mind that our life won't be happy until something else occurs: **when** I have one more thing I want, **when** I get rid of that personality flaw of mine,

**when** I can finally have life as I have always dreamed it to be, **when** I am successful, **when** I find the right person in my life. **When, when when...**

But waiting for the '**when**' keeps us from appreciating what we now have. Longing for promises and dreaming dreams is not harmful as long as the present moment is not overlooked, as long as gratitude rises for what is already here, as long as we do not base our happiness on what is still wanting. Thankfulness for what has already been given is the foundation for hoping what is not yet.

Today, we need to put aside our "**When this happens**", our "**If only this could be**" and our "**as soon as I have this**".

Let us harvest what we already have, gather all the gifts that are already ours in the granary of our hearts and marvel at the abundance we have been given. You will probably notice that what you are most thankful for are the people who bless your life on a daily basis. This Thanksgiving stand before the heap of blessings in your and then take a long grateful look saying farewell to the '**when**' on our lives and be thankful for what already is today.

*"This is the day which the Lord has made," says Psalm 118. "Let us rejoice and be glad in it"*

See today for what it is, because today will be gone before you know it.

Thank you for all the ways in which you bless and enrich my life. You are a beautiful family of God and I am glad to be part of it.

With every good wish and blessing this Thanksgiving,

*Anne*

# A Thanksgiving Blessing

*May an abundance of gratitude burst forth  
As you reflect on what you have received.*

*May thanksgiving overflow in your heart  
And often be proclaimed in your prayer.*

*May your basket of blessings surprise you  
With its rich diversity of gifts and its opportunities for growth.*

*May you slow your hurried pace of life  
So that you can be aware of, and enjoy what you too easily take for  
granted.*

*May you always be open, willing,  
And ready to share your blessings with others.*

*May you never forget the Generous One  
Who loves you lavishly and unconditionally.*

*(Joyce Rupp)*

