

Thanksgiving 2018

Environment Canada recently predicted that we should expect a late and fairly mild winter. The Farmer's Almanac, on the other hand, has predicted this coming winter will be long and cold. Time will tell! In either case, the first signs of the fall are already upon us. The morning air has chilled, and the leaves are beginning to turn. Seeing the trees turn slowly to red and gold brought a few lines of John Clare's famous "Autumn" poem to mind:

Hill-tops like hot iron glitter bright in the sun,
And the rivers we're eying burn to gold as they run;
Burning hot is the ground, liquid gold is the air;
Whoever looks round sees Eternity there.

Those words struck me as particularly apt for the Thanksgiving season. Summer has ended; the harvest is in; and this last blaze of colour reminds us of the stark cold winter to come... through which the bounty of summer, and the fruits of the harvest, will carry us... until the next growing season comes.

There's an obvious metaphor in those musings: like the seasons of the year, life has its ups and downs. We all enjoy good times and, inevitably, we all face challenges as well. And what does this eternal cycle teach us? Some might say that the lesson is: "Hang in there, this too shall pass!" Which is probably true – but which I'm not sure is really the point.

The real lesson, I think, is learned by focussing not on the promise that Winter will end, but on the blessings made real by Summer's growth and Fall's harvest, which provide all that we need when Winter comes.

What do those Summer Blessings look like for you? They might literally be the joys of warm weather, and the chance it gives us for walks on the trails, or playing on the beach, or enjoying a game of golf. Those are the things which nurture our bodies.

Or they might be something more figurative... time spent in the company of friends and family; or enjoying a good book; doing something we love; having the financial freedom to explore our dreams... doing those things which nurture our hearts and minds.

Our times of blessing, whatever form they take, are usually the times which nurture our souls as well. Those are the times we experience love, joy, peace and goodness. Those are the times that help us to catch a glimpse of God's generosity in creation.

So that, when Winter comes, it does not overwhelm us! If we deeply and fundamentally know that we are beloved and blessed by God then, come what may, we will always remain a people of Hope. And, perhaps even more powerful than that, if we deeply and fundamentally know that we are beloved and blessed by God, we discover what it means to be a people of Generosity as well.

Because I'll wager the times when we have most completely understood love, joy, peace, and goodness are not only those times when we have received blessings from others... but those times when we have been a blessing to others in turn, standing by others in the times of their "Winter". Because love, joy, peace and goodness are expressed in giving and receiving together. To love God and love our neighbour are expressions of the same divine spirit within us. To be loved by God and to be loved by our neighbours are expressions of that same divine spirit shared with us again.

So take the time this Thanksgiving to do both. Give thanks for the blessings of the "Summer" in your life. And think about how to share some of the harvest of that bounty with those facing a "Winter", so that they too can give thanks. And remember John Clare's words: whoever truly takes the time to look, and see, and understand, and celebrate the promise of Autumn... sees Eternity there.

A Blessed Thanksgiving to you all,

Fr Doug

Combined Services

How do we celebrate the kind of community we proclaim ourselves to be? One way is by creating opportunities to be together in a spirit of celebration!

The next combined service

All Saints' Day on November 4th

Please do join with us on this day, at **9:30am**, to praise together the God who makes us

Remembrance Day Services – Sunday November 11th

8:30am & 10:30am – Holy Eucharist

Lesson & Carols – Saturday December 15th

3pm

Christmas Pageant Sunday December 16th

At the 10:30am Service

All Saints' Church

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

Monday December 24th

5pm

A service to make Christmas meaningful for children and their families

8pm & 11pm

Traditional Choral Eucharist

Please join us for carol singing 15 minutes before each of the above services

Christmas Day

Tuesday December 25th

9:30am

Holy Communion

32 Elgin Street Collingwood, ON

705-445-3841

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