

Thanksgiving 2021

The coming of Thanksgiving is, of course, always a good time to pause, step back from the rush of our everyday lives, and consider everything for which we are grateful. That will be a very different list for each of us, but here's something that's recently made it onto my list for this year: our very halting and unusually extended journey toward Canadian citizenship has taken another step forward! After an eighteen month hiatus, caused largely by Canada's immigration services being all but shut down by Covid-19, Vanessa and I were invited to take a citizenship test. You'll be pleased to know (we certainly were) that we both passed with full marks.

I have to admit that I found studying for the test to be a pretty stressful experience, not so much because the material was all that difficult, but because there was so much riding on those results for us. But, with the test behind us, I'm actually really pleased that it was part of the process. Most especially because studying for the test exposed me to some of the founding stories of Canada that I might well otherwise not have read. And being able to step back from the current events that make up most of what I know about our new home, to appreciate the broad sweep of history upon which those events play out, has left me with a far richer appreciation for the story of Canada than I had before.

And it struck me there's something of a metaphorical lesson in that experience for all of us.

It's very easy to get caught up in the 'current events' of our lives. The immediacy of crises; the decisions of the moment; the demands of daily life, all compete for our attention and energy. It's those immediate demands that colour our perception of life. Am I happy, or sad, or content, or stressed? It's usually whatever is going on right now that determines that. And so that's also, very often, where our prayers get directed too: "O Lord, please help me with this need I have right now. Amen!"

And so, this Thanksgiving, it may well be the continuing stresses of Covid-19, and its ongoing impacts on those we know and love, that shape how much or how little we feel thankful for this year.

It's always important to remember, though, that God's ongoing story is much more comprehensive, much more encompassing, and much greater than any passing moment of history.

When we take the time to step back, and think about the story of our whole lives, it becomes that much easier to see the hand of God upon it. When I step back to think about the journey which brought me from my birth in Cape Town to this moment, in which I serve as Priest in the parish of Collingwood Ontario; when I remember those who, in different times and in different places, wove themselves in and out of that journey, teaching me the lessons and instilling in me the values that would help shape who I would become; when I consider all the different moments of peace, and inspiration, and challenge that I knew were the gentle touch of God's Spirit on me...then... I remember that my story has meaning and purpose and direction. I remember that we are called and nurtured by the God who is guiding us, each on our own unique journey, toward a shared Kingdom of God. And I remember that the God who has been with me from the beginning has also promised to be with me to the end.

So this Thanksgiving, take a moment to step back and appreciate the long road that God has already walked with you. Give thanks for those who shared the journey with you, and who helped equip you with everything you need to take the steps that still lie ahead. Give thanks that God is already waiting for you, wherever that next step will lead. For, in the words of Psalm 100: "The Lord is good and his love endures forever, his faithfulness continues through all generations."

A blessed Thanksgiving to you all.
Fr Doug



On behalf of the Wardens, Kathi, Elaine and Penny, may I wish you and your family a very happy and safe Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is a time for celebration, but also reflection. I find the recent discoveries of additional Dead Sea Scrolls fascinating. The first documents translated write about equality and justice for all. Six thousand years later we are still challenged to live up to that goal.

This is especially true as we watch events unfolding in Afghanistan, especially when it pertains to the rights of women. As a youngster, in the Anglican Church, women were not a part of the service as ministers, servers, readers, and certainly not bishops. The Old Testament laws that women were not to speak in church and cover their heads was the norm. Today, I am proud of the progress that our church has made in the equality and justice for women. While we are not perfect, we are making significant progress in other areas too. There is certainly hope for the future.

The challenges in our parish continue. We hope that you will attend our special vestry meeting on October 24th to deal with the issue of our church carpet. While sections of the carpet still look good, there are significant tripping safety issues at joints and by the pews. We want everyone at church to feel safe and be safe.

As we head towards the end of the year, please continue to financial support the church, and please consider what role you might consider for next year.

God bless,

Your Wardens

