

## Thanksgiving Letter

2016

### Message from Interim Priest in charge

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. John's;

We are at the time of year when people for centuries have returned thanks to God for the harvest. Many of the traditions associated with thanksgiving come from a time when people were far more aware of their connectedness to the land. It is good that we at least at this time of year remind ourselves this and our call to be good stewards of the richness of creation that God has bestowed to us.

I believe that being thankful is a learned response. It requires standing back and recognizing the generosity of the giver. As children we may have been reminded by our parents to say "Thank you" for a gift that was given to us, as we were firmly fixed on the gift rather than the giver. We live in a culture that is consumer oriented. The subliminal message is that we are "in need". Even in our prayers, our "asking" seems to far outweigh our "thanking". If we are not careful, this can lead to a weakness of spirit and of love.

I have made it a habit to think of five things to be thankful for in my morning devotions. It can be as simple as a glass of clean drinking water, or an act of kindness I have received. Over time I have become aware of the profound blessings and richness that has been given to me. Most importantly it has reminded me of how close God truly is, As the Venite says "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving". We become aware of his presence when we are thankful.

I trust that you will have many reasons to give thanks this festive season. I am certain that the life and witness of St. John's will be one of them.

Wishing you God's Peace,  
Gordon Walls  
Interim Priest

### Message from Rector Emeritus

Dear Friends,

On Thanksgiving weekend I am always haunted by the story of the Pilgrims – those, poor, bedraggled settlers in the wild forests of the New World. They had just endured the bitter winter of 1620; nearly half of their colony had perished in its severity. How they recovered their spirits sufficiently to press on and chop down trees, plant seed in unyielding soil, and gather in a harvest, is beyond my imagination. But they did it and then they prepared a meal of thanksgiving to which they invited their often hostile native neighbours. They did it and not in their own strength but in the grace of their faith in a loving Deliverer, Sustainer, Maker, and Saviour. They knew that the Lord had been with them through their frightful ordeal. And when they survived, they didn't turn to self-congratulation but to Him, and in gratitude, following His example, welcomed strangers into their midst. They forgot themselves and remembered God.

May we this Thanksgiving look beyond ourselves and say 'Thank you' to God!

Happy Thanksgiving to all.  
Robert

### Parish Finances

The Treasurer is alarmed that our givings are significantly lower than our budget requires! Let us all with joyful hearts, and in gratitude for God's glorious bounty and goodness to us, make a generous offering this Thanksgiving.

### Sunday School

Thanks to our dedicated teachers, the **Sunday School** will meet each and every Sunday. Parents please take advantage of this opportunity to introduce your children to the inspiring accounts of Biblical revelation. Helpers are always welcome (please speak to Father Walls).

### **Parish Retreat**

Please mark your calendars for our **annual parish retreat** October 15, 9:30 am to 2:30 pm at the home of Chris and Jeannie Houston. This year's retreat will be led by Bruce Hindmarsh, professor of spiritual theology at Regent College, in Vancouver.

<b>SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING SERVICES AT ST. JOHN'S</b>			
<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Time</i></b>	<b><i>Day</i></b>	
Oct 9	9 and 11 am	Sunday	Harvest Thanksgiving
<i>Oct 9</i>	<i>9:30 am</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Harvest Home – Christ Church, Drayton</i>
Oct 15	9:30 am–2:30 pm	Saturday	Parish Retreat
Oct 27	6:30 pm	Thursday	Choral Evensong
Nov 13	11 am	Sunday	Remembrance service
Nov 27	5:00 pm	Sunday	Advent Lessons and Carols (parish choir)