



St. Paul's Journal

Thanksgiving 2011



The Gift of Thanks

Margaret Visser is known for several things: for her devout Christian faith, her professional life as a professor of classical literature, and for her work as the author of popular books. What many folks may not know is that the author of ***Much Depends Upon Dinner*** (1986), ***The Rituals of Dinner*** (1992), ***The Geometry of Love*** (2000), and ***Beyond Fate*** (2002) is also the author of a fascinating book called ***The Gift of Thanks*** (2008). This year, as the Canadian Harvest Thanksgiving weekend approaches, I thought I could do nothing better than let Margaret Visser speak for herself to us about what 'thanksgiving' should look like.

"Gratitude, replacing selfishness, greed, and disregard, will in my opinion have to be called upon to help us surmount the ecological crisis that now threatens our very existence. Fears of disaster and the laws we make to protect the environment will certainly be necessary as both pressure to act and restraint from further abuse. But fear and the law will not be enough. What is required is nothing less than a conversion: a turning-around of our ideas, a change of heart, an agreement to see things from a new point of view. Fear can cause rather than avert abuses, and there are infinite numbers of ways to get away with selfish convenience or greed if people care only for their own personal interests.

We saw earlier how gratitude is necessary for the functioning of a healthy society, precisely because it reaches into areas of life that the law can neither control nor inspire. As Charles Taylor reminds us [in *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*

(Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 516)], 'High standards need strong sources.' One such source is our knowledge of what it is like to be grateful. We have to retrieve now and bring back into the light something that gratitude entails: *respect for what is there*, love for it (for itself and not what we can gouge out of it). Grateful people make good use of the gifts they have been given, out of respect for the giver. To be ecologically aware we shall need to be thankful for what we so continually and lavishly receive, and feel the need to 'give back' and restore the earth's ravaged bounty. It is an attitude to nature that our most 'primitive' forbears intensely understood. We should also remember that we inherited a rich and beautiful earth, which it is 'only fair' to hand on to our children.

G.K. Chesterton speaks of 'the ancient instinct of astonishment': the surprise and wonder that turn quickly into gratitude. A cultivated disposition to be grateful encourages awe in us. Gratitude for the earth arises from a profound belief, an agreement with God, that the world is 'very good', as the book of *Genesis* puts it in the story of Creation. And everyone of us, in person, is responsible for its well-being. The *London Times* once asked a number of writers for essays on 'What is Wrong with the World.' Chesterton's reply was shortest, and most to the point:

Dear Sirs:

I am.

Sincerely yours,

G.K. Chesterton.

If we truly appreciated the earth, we would be able to find, as Chesterton writes, that 'the greatest of the poems is an inventory.' Gratitude occurs when people receive good things which they do not feel are theirs by right, or that they have deserved. And [Chesterton says in *St. Francis of Assisi*] 'there is no way in which a man can earn a star or deserve as sunset.' Believing that the gifts of the earth are of

inestimable value would convince people never to destroy them or waste them heedlessly.

The 'givenness' of the world is apparent even to people who reject belief in God: we human beings are not, after all, the cause of our own existence. We shall need to work together if we want to survive the crisis we have created. And what will connect us in this common endeavour? Grateful wonder at the world's magnificence and vulnerability would certainly help—and justice, which can no longer be dissociated from ecological concerns. Gratitude, the 'cement' of societies, is a visible aspect of love, and the enemy of greed and envy."

*from Margaret Visser's **The Gift of Thanks: The Roots, Persistence, and Paradoxical Meanings of a Social Ritual** (HarperCollins, 2008), p.360-362.*

Paul Friesen

A Word on Welcoming Others

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. I Peter 4:8-10 New International Version

As a new member of the parish family, I have truly been overwhelmed by the richness that St Paul's has been blessed with. There is such a richness of love, community, family and history that I am sure others would be delighted to share in it. Since it is also the season of 'Back to Church Sundays', I thought it would be timely to write an article about welcoming people into the church. Not that I noticed any shortcomings amongst the community at St. Paul's, but rather from the point of view that we have a lot of space for potential parishioners. The need for Christ across our communities is great: we should be ready to meet that need, one newcomer at a time.

I am sure that many of us have had moments in our lives where we tried to defend our faith or our church when we have heard of wrongs done by other Christians. I was recently told by a business associate of my husband's that they would never enter a church again in their life because of what one person had said to them over 25 years ago. That

person was part of a welcoming committee (!) making a home visit to the associate as they had just moved to the area. Let's hope and pray that we never end up as part of someone's excuse not to go to church.

On one of my recent surfs of Christian websites, I found an interesting website that included six things to do to make sure that a visitor came back again and would like to share this advice (taken from *EvangelismCoach.org*) with you.

1. Understand the mind of a guest.

They want to be welcomed. They want to observe our church service and be provided an easy opening if they choose to come again. Most of all, they don't want to be pressured.

2. Welcome everyone.

Not only do newcomers need your warm welcome, regular participant also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake. Be enthusiastic – about the day, the worship that is about to take place, about Christ.

3. Anticipate the newcomers.

When people enter the door whom you do not recognize, approach them by saying something like, 'We're glad to have you here today. I don't recall meeting you before.' Avoid "Is this your first time?" You might embarrass yourself or offend a regular participant.

4. Help newcomers connect.

While you are getting to know them, introduce guests to another regular participant who walks in and suggest they sit together, or feel free to invite first time visitors to sit with you.

5. Say goodbye with warmth.

After the service, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Ask them if they have any questions. Introduce them to other members and to the pastor. After visitors are gone, feel free to visit with people.

6. Avoid Church Business.

Avoid using pre or post service activities to conduct church business that could be done over the phone during the week. Focus on visitors.

While these are great tips, we need to recognize (or remember) that hospitality in itself is a ministry. As someone who was quite shy as a child, I know that greeting others and showing hospitality is something that takes a great effort for some people. However, what a wonderful and affirming ministry hospitality can be! As St. Paul wrote, 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.' *Hebrews 13:2.*

*Bonnie Skerritt
Youth & Children's Education Director*

***Favourite Prayers contributed by
St. Paul's parishioners:***

Psalm 133

Psalm 133 says,
"How good and pleasant it is when brethren live
together in unity.
It is like fine oil upon the head
That runs down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron,
And runs down upon the collar of his robe..."

How to describe such unity today?

"It is like sunshine after rain,
It is like love and life and laughter have all come
Together – it is like a little bit of heaven.

It is like daisies in a field
Under a perfect blue sky;
It is like the stars -
"Clear and lovely in heaven" (St. Francis).

It is like – it IS the peace we've always longed for,
Peace in our hearts, our eyes, our smiles,
Our tears.
It is JOY.

It is like Jesus among us
Bringing peace and joy,
Love and laughter,
His risen life. It is happy thanksgivings,
It is everything I have ever wanted."

Gretchen Gillis

Consecration

Each thought I think, dear Lord, O let it be,
To bring my life in full accord with Thee.
Each step I take, my Lord, may it be mine,
To place my feet in footprints made by Thine.
Each word I speak, O Lord, let it proclaim
My whole desire to glorify Thy name.
What work I do, dear Lord, at Thy command,
Equip me with Thy power, that it may stand.
Use me Thyself in any way, my Lord,
I'll work, or wait, or travel at Thy word.

*From 'Songs of Courage and Hope (1922) by Charles
Sneddon [1871-1935] Baptist Minister in Bo'ness, Scotland*

Submitted by Fiona Day

But let them sleep

But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space
For if above all these my sins abound
'Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
As if thou'dst sealed my pardon with thy blood.

*from the conclusion of John Donne's Holy Sonnet VII
(1572-1631)*

submitted by John & Lorraine Baxter

Te Deum Laudamus

We praise you, O God,
we acclaim you as the Lord;
all creation worships you,
the Father everlasting.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise;
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Ambrose of Milan (Italy/C. 338-397)

Grant Us Your Peace

O Lord my God,
grant us your peace; already indeed,
you have made us rich in all things!
Give us that peace of being at rest,
that Sabbath peace,
the peace which knows no end.

Augustine of Hippo (Algeria/ 354-430)

Prayer for Grace to Desire God

O Lord our God,
grant us grace to desire you with our whole heart;
that so desiring, we may seek and find you;
and so finding, may love you;
and so loving, may hate those sins from which you
have delivered us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Anselm (England/ 1033-1109)

Submitted by Kathleen Higney

O Man Greatly Beloved

'God says this to each of us personally. His love is limitless; it is not quantitative. It is a cosmic force, like atmospheric pressure, all around us, pressing in on every one of us. We can accept or reject it. There is no preferential treatment in the divine love, but a differential acting in a personal way. He loves each as if that person were the only one in the world. He awaits the response as if it were most important to Him.'

Bishop George Appleton, *The Heart of the Bible*
(Zondervan, 1986), p.212.

St. Paul's Ladies Guild

St. Paul's Ladies Guild was established in 1929, with the objective of contributing to the fabric of the church. Over the years, the Guild has had many projects, for example replacing the middle aisle carpet, purchase of the stove and fridge in the kitchen, and more recently, donating towards the

cost of the sound system and contributing towards the restoration of the Hatchments.

Our funds have been raised mainly by the Annual Fall Sale, supported by the Congregation, held each November, and sale of Church calendars in November and December. The Congregation will be approached soon in regard to this year's sale, which will take place on Friday, November 18 at the Community Booth, Halifax Shopping Centre. Please knit, sew, bake or make jams and pickles for the sale. The sale can not be successful without your support. More information will be available in the Sunday leaflet, or please contact Millie Wagner at 429-1322. Thank you!

Though we enjoy each other's company, our Guild has decreased in numbers in recent years, making our projects more challenging. There is ample opportunity for additional ladies to participate in the activities of the Guild and anyone interested in joining would be most welcome. If you don't want to commit yourself just yet, come along to a meeting anyway. Meetings are normally held on the 1st Tuesday of each month, from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Memorial Room from September to May. In December and June we have a Luncheon meeting at various locations. We would love to see you at our next meeting on November 1.

Millie Wagner, President

Friends of St. Paul's

THANKSgiving...GIVINGthanks.

Our Harvest Gathering is a special time of year when we display the fruits of the Season for all to consider.

It has been a lovely, warm and sunny Fall after a very wet and cold summer but all the rains have produced a very lovely Fall foliage as well as the beautiful and colourful blossoms which blooms display.

The forsythia and magnolia colors followed by the lilacs and hydrangea were so abundant in our Public Gardens and have been enjoyed by all who regularly visit this spot.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of The Rev. Harry F. Newman, "A Friend" who was at one time a curate for The Ven. Archdeacon T.W. Savary. At that time he was President of the AYP.A.

We too, will feel the loss of Mrs. Jill Field Alexander, a member of St. Paul's Ladies Guild for many years and a granddaughter of The Ven. Archdeacon W.J. Armitage.

I trust all our Friends have enjoyed a happy summer and look forward to a busy and happy Fall with so much to enjoy.

"Now Thank We All Our God"

Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Dot Kelly

Wednesday at St. Paul's: A Visitor's Reflections

A few weeks ago a mother and daughter from Ontario were touring Halifax and ended up at St. Paul's. They joined in the 11:00 a.m. Eucharist and then the 12:00 noon outreach lunch. It was only half way through the meal I had a chance to speak with them, and the usual questions led to a surprise: we had both graduated from the same High School thirty-five years earlier. We hadn't known each other well, but once revealed we actually recognized each others' names (it was a big school with eight senior classes of about 35 students each) and certainly shared some common friends. A follow up email exchange brought these comments from her: she has kindly since agreed to let us print the relevant parts of her email. Paul Friesen

It was important to me for some reason to speak briefly about what my mother and I feel was the most important experience we had on our trip—our visit to your church.

I am not what one would call a traditionally 'religious' person—I'm sure you hear that often, and are possibly at pains sometimes to explain to people that their definition of 'religious' may be too narrow. I am certainly open to spiritual experiences.

When my mother and I were invited to join the Communion service last Wednesday, my initial response was to politely decline—not only because I

had other plans for our day, but also because I have not participated in a church service of any kind for some time. It is not that I am 'against' what is called 'organized religion'—far from it. In fact my husband is a practicing Roman Catholic who attends mass every Sunday (he's an usher), and my three children are all baptized Catholics who have received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. They all three attended Catholic schools; this was something I wanted, I did not make the choice lightly or unthinkingly.

But for myself, I realized years ago that I was an 'agnostic'. I didn't want to be. I envied one of my very good friends who is a devout Christian, an Anglican who got her degree in Divinity (or Theology, sorry, not sure which it's called) for her faith.

I'll get to the point.

I was unexpectedly moved by that quiet little Communion service last Wednesday. Everything about it—the warm welcoming feeling St. Paul's has, which I felt the moment I walked in, the kind and unpretentious parishioners who invited my mother and I to participate in the upcoming service if we so desired (no pressure, just a simple matter-of-fact invitation), the beauty of the language in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the simplicity and dignity of the Communion ritual, and the short but meaningful sermon you gave (Matthew, an 'outsider', a despised tax-collector, was asked by Jesus to follow him)—all these things moved me, even against my will, to tears. (I like to think I was careful not to reveal this - I didn't want dramatics to become an unintentional addition to this lovely graceful ceremony in which I was participating.)

As I was pondering the thoughts and emotions the service had inspired in me, several people—again, no pressure, just simple kindness and openness—asked my mother and I if we'd like to stay for the lunch. Again, I wasn't sure if I'd be comfortable with this. Surely most of the guests would be 'street people'; what would I say to them, and wouldn't they resent outsiders joining in their weekly lunch time meeting? Besides, what of my 'agenda'; we hadn't yet visited the Maritime Museum, what about that harbour tour, etc. etc.?

But clearly my mother wanted to stay, and I decided that it was important to respect her wishes—also, why not?

I'm so glad I made the decision to stay. First, I realized that that 'us and them' idea (they're 'homeless', I'm not - what would we have in common? What if they were 'weird' in some way, talking to themselves or something? Silly thoughts!) so many have about people who are labelled 'homeless' is just so much bullshit. (Sorry, is that an offensive word to a church rector? It just seemed like the right one.) The people sitting around that table were just people, all of them having thoughts and conversation to offer, just like everyone else.

The experience I had during the Communion service, the warmth and atmosphere of genuine Christian faith and open-heartedness that St. Paul's exudes, and the simple pleasant meal we shared there, were all part of the most memorable and touching moments my mum and I experienced during our time in Halifax. St. Paul's is one of the most Christian churches I have ever been in. And by that I mean the feeling your church possesses: full of the light of Christian love.

Janet (Parker) Lawler

Halifax Humanities 101

When I received a brief, succinct email from Paul Friesen the other day asking me to write something for the St. Paul's Journal, I had a chuckle. He asked if I would reflect on why I love my job. This email came in the midst of a week that was verging on the chaotic as I was attempting to interview, for an hour each, every person who applied to be a participant in Halifax Humanities this year. – 26 in all.

Halifax Humanities 101, of which I am director, is a free, university-level, liberal arts education program offered to adults living below the poverty line. Because we ask such a huge commitment of our students, twice-weekly classes for 8 months, with about 10 hours of reading each week, it is crucial that I have an in-depth conversation with each

applicant to see if the program is a good fit for them and they for it. But even attempting to schedule the interviews can be complicated with many applicants not having phones or emails, or being so caught up in stressful and urgent matters to do with kids, health, substandard housing etc., that they are almost unreachable.

In the midst of what is, at times, admittedly chaotic, tiring, and stressful work, I'm asked to reflect on why I love my job.

It's what I see in those interviews that keeps me going in the work I do. For many of our students, simply filling out the application form for Halifax Humanities is a huge leap of faith into the unknown. Many have not stepped foot in a classroom in decades and for quite a few that last experience with education was not happy. But they take that tentative step to apply for a program that advertises hard work, intellectual challenge, and fascinating discussion within a safe and supportive environment – but no academic credit, job readiness training, or practical benefit. What entices them? I think that it is the opportunity to discuss ideas and books with others. Many of the students I've worked with over the past five years have lived fairly isolated lives, merely getting by on extremely low incomes, yearning for more in life, but unable, for economic reasons to access educational and cultural opportunities. Isolation and life on a low income seem to breed low self-esteem. So to take the step of entering into an admittedly challenging program when life is already difficult, speaks to me of great personal courage. My greatest hope for our students (and it often comes true) is that their courage will be rewarded and their sense of accomplishment will be real.

When applicants show up for their interview, they are often extremely nervous, fearing yet again the harsh treatment that they so often encounter as recipients of social assistance or as minimum wage workers. I try to do each interview with a partner, either a graduate of the program or one of our teachers, and turn that hour into a conversation about books, ideas, life stories, and what to expect in HH101. I love seeing how people relax as the conversation unfolds and in particular how they

respond as their enthusiasm for learning and their intelligence is recognized and welcomed.

As Halifax Humanities is increasingly well known in the community, and because most of our applicants now come to us having had conversations with either former students or our many supporters in the community, I rarely have to turn anyone away. I find that those who apply have looked closely at our website and have a good understanding of the journey they are about to undertake. So those interviews really can become the first conversation of the many to come in their time with us: wonderful conversations about profound books and ideas with other enthusiastic students under the guidance of skilled and engaging teachers.

At the end of one long day of interviewing last week, the graduate of the program who was assisting me said: "You get to make people happy for a living". Nice work if you can get it! And that's why I love my job.

Mary Lu Redden



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Anglican Church of Canada
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Divinity Intern:

Barb Haché

Honorary Assistants:

Neale Bennet

Gordon Redden

Parish Administrator:

Jan Skinner

Submissions to *St. Paul's Journal* are always welcome.
**Why not submit a spiritual reflection, prayer, poem,
or a book review?** The deadline for the Advent
Christmas issue is **November 25, 2011.**

Have you visited
ST. PAUL'S ONLINE
recently?

Get Connected at
www.stpaulshalifax.org

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title "Welcome to St Paul's Anglican Church, an evangelical anglican church in Halifax, Nova Scotia -- - M...". The address bar shows "http://www.stpaulshalifax.org/". The website content includes a navigation menu on the left, a main heading "Welcome to St Paul's Church Halifax, Nova Scotia", a photograph of the church building, and contact information. A banner for "KIDS!" is also visible.

ST PAUL'S
online

- HOME
- WHO WE ARE
- WORSHIP SERVICES
- GETTING CONNECTED
- UPCOMING EVENTS
- FINDING US
- OUR RICH HISTORY
- LINKS
- CONTACT ST PAUL'S
- NEW! SITE SEARCH

An
Historic Church
Serving the
Living God
since 1749

This page was last updated on 21 September 2006

Welcome to
St Paul's Church
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Our doors are wide open
to people from all backgrounds
who wish to join us on our faith
journey of following Jesus Christ.

St Paul's Church is an
evangelical Christian community
which is part of the
Anglican Church of Canada.

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KIDS! Join us at **F.R.O.G. Junction** during the 9 am service ...
St. Paul's Children's Programs have started for another year!

SITE MAP • SERMONS • SIGN OUR GUESTBOOK • ARCHIVE REQUESTS

Done Internet