

Enews to the St. Mark's Pews
80th Edition October 8, 2021
St. Mark's Anglican Church est. 1792
Niagara-on-the Lake, ON
Hear the Good News! Hear the Good news!

Dear Friends,

On Sunday we'll hear these words from the prophet Joel: "You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied." And we will. This weekend, at Thanksgiving feasts all over town, diets will be forgotten and moderation ignored, while indulgence and excess will not only be permitted but even encouraged.

But maybe I shouldn't call it these annual Thanksgiving dinners "feasts," since the idea of "a feast" conjures up images of decadence, venality, and corruption: Belshazzar serving food off the Hebrew's sacred vessels; Henry VIII munching furiously on a turkey leg; the Shah of Iran hiring Maxim's of Paris to cater his 10-day spectacular commemorating the 2500 anniversary of the Persian kingdom. Feasts and feasting have often lead to no good: be it gout or the guillotine.

Yet feasting is Biblical. "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of fat things," Isaiah writes. And the psalmist sings, "They feast upon the abundance of your house." In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul says it with his usual directness: "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast." And finally, right at the end of scripture, John the Divine, being granted a vision of the consummation of all things, writes, "Let us rejoice and triumph and give him praise: the time has come for the wedding-feast of the Lamb."

Now, I'm not normally one for proof-texting from the Bible, but in this instance, I make no apologies. We are *meant* to gorge ourselves on the goodness of the Lord. Yet this is something we have difficulty accepting. Good manners and modesty suggest that we don't order the most expensive thing on the menu when we've been invited to dinner. No—we've been taught to be modest and not to risk raising our host's eyebrows.

But the divine host—who is at one and the same time Father, Friend, and King—the divine host's eyebrows go up when we *won't* accept his invitation to have as much as we want, *can't* believe that there are no strings attached to this invitation, and *don't* understand why ordinary folk like ourselves would even be invited.

Isn't it strange that we Christians have difficulty accepting the invitation or seeing ourselves as worthy? We talk about the wonderful things God has done for us, yet somehow we can't quite believe that there aren't some serious strings attached to those great things. And the odd thing is, we know how distressing it is for someone to refuse *our* genuine offers of hospitality and kindness. "Oh you shouldn't have," is, in fact, a very dismissive thing to say! It's much better to receive gratefully—and gracefully—by simply saying, "Thank you."

Even though we are only passing through—here for a short while—God gives to us with abundant generosity, not because we merit it but because he loves us, and he wants us to enjoy the bounty of that love so freely bestowed on us. We often struggle with what we can do to be worthy of such an amazing gift, and of course there isn't anything we can do, except live lives of graceful gratitude, lives in which we give freely of ourselves to those we love, lives which reflect—no matter how imperfectly—the sacrificial love of Christ. So, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.

Happy Thanksgiving,
Leighton

PARISH UPDATES

Keeping in Touch On-line

*Now that we are back to Church in-person our Sunday morning services are **live streamed** on Facebook and YouTube at 10:30 am. Simply go to St. Mark's Niagara-on-the-Lake Facebook page.*

Please use these URLs to watch:

<https://www.facebook.com/St-Marks-Anglican-Church-Niagara-on-the-Lake-235477056649804/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-vVgNf0GbuxrfljW4sOXzQ>

Our Enews and Order of Service can also be accessed through new website:

Enews: <https://stmarksnotl.org/news/news>.

Order of Service: <https://stmarksnotl.org/worship-ministry/order-of-service-bulletin>

WARDEN'S LETTER

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO EVERYONE! We hope that if you can be with family and friends this weekend that it will be with safe conditions as we continue to see the spread of COVID and the variants. We cannot afford to let down our guard. This weekend's Thanksgiving holiday offers a special opportunity to reflect on our many blessings and

to be grateful for what we have. May this be a beautiful reminder of the wonderful things in life.

Roxanne has been on vacation this week but thanks to those who have called in about their attendance on Sunday, Gary has recorded this information for the Sunday team. We continue to chase down our audio issues and we have engaged a very capable sound/audio expert. We all desperately want this fixed asap.

Finance committee met this week to review the current status and have made recommendations to Corporation on various matters. A sad note in that Mark Annett who has acted as Treasurer for the past three years has resigned as he and his wife are leaving Niagara. Mark has been a great help in this role as well as Cherry Festival co-chair and participated in many of our groups. We wish them good health, good times, and a large thank you.

Although we have had some encouraging news from the Diocese as to easing of a few restrictions, we still are restricted from any fundraising activity involving our facilities.

On October 17th at 4:30 p.m. there will be the Induction service for our Rector. We will be limited to the 50 people and as expected family and friends of his will reduce the available seats. Please register earlier than usual.

We received sad news of the death of a former parishioner, Gisela Kozak, who along with her late husband Steve were very active members of St. Mark's. Please keep them in your prayers.

We want to improve St. Mark's Facebook presence and would benefit greatly from help and advice with this project. If you are interested, please reach out to a warden.

A reminder for those using debit/credit cards to check your expiry dates.

We are planning a Stewardship program this fall and if you would be interested in helping with this very important part of our parish life, please contact one of us.

As always a reminder to advise the office of anyone who needs assistance in any way, including a phone call, food picked up and delivered or some companionship through phone, Facetime or over the fence.



Stay safe – keep well

Called to Life – Compelled to Love

Your Wardens

WORSHIP:



Sunday Prayers with Bishop Susan

The services begin at 10:00am on [diocesan Facebook page](#) and then will be posted on [YouTube channel](#).

READINGS FOR HARVEST THANKSGIVING

Sunday, October 10, 2021 – Harvest Thanksgiving

Joel 2:21-27 Joel has described a plague of locusts which has invaded Palestine, with devastating effect. The Day of the Lord can be like this, but if the people of Judah repent and turn to the Lord, he will spare Judah from such a fate.

Matthew 6:25-33 Our reading is from the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus has just said that it is impossible to serve two masters: one cannot love both. Accumulation of wealth and providing for times of difficulty can cause people such anxiety that they fail to put God first in their lives.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray to God, the Lord of the harvest, that he will bring to fruition all that he desires for his creation. Lord of creation, we see that the fields are ripe for harvesting: we pray for your Church, that it may be ready to gather fruit for eternal life. Lord of the harvest, **in your mercy hear us.** You have created the universe by your eternal Word, and have blessed humankind in giving us dominion over the earth: we pray for the world, that we may honour and share its resources, and live in reverence for the creation and in harmony with one another. Lord of the harvest, **in your mercy hear us.**

Your Son has promised that the Spirit will lead us into all truth: we pray for the community in which you have set us, before one another and for ourselves, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace. Lord of the harvest, **in your mercy hear us.**

You have given your people a rich land, yet by sin we have made a world of suffering and sorrow: we pray for those who bear the weight of affliction, especially Gillian MacKay, Terry, Don Dicarlo, Jan Brown, Lisa, Dorothy Walker, Sharon, Dick, Doug Garrett, Bev Garrett, Jodey Porter, Sean, and Joshua. And for those shut in their homes, Fred Habermehl, Fred Dixon, Joy Ormsby, Selina Appleby, and Joan Draper. That they may come to share the life of wholeness and plenty. Lord of the harvest, **in your mercy hear us.**

Your Son Jesus Christ is the first-fruits of the resurrection and will reap the harvest of the dead at the end of time: we pray that he will gather us all together with Gisela Kozak and all those who have gone before in the banquet of the age to come. Lord of the harvest, **in your mercy hear us.**

Almighty God, Father of all mercies

All we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;

but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. **Amen.**