

~ The Epistle ~

Vol. 15

AUTUMN 2012

No. 6

NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST
THE ANGLICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CANADA • TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN COMMUNION
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THE VERY REVEREND SHANE B. JANZEN, DD, DEAN AND RECTOR

SEPTEMBER brings us back to work, school, the end of vacation time, and the return of autumn's routine. For one of our families, the end of August brought with it new life, the birth of their baby daughter Rose to Brent and Sonia Nicholson. So while nature prepares for a change of season, the proud parents prepare for their own life changes, with a new baby and their move to Burlington, Ontario. We pray them God's blessing and providence; and hope to see them all among us for the holidays.

I must admit that, at least for me, summer seemed to go by way too quickly. At first it seemed summer was never going to arrive, and now it is all but over. Vacation time also went by too quickly, though I enjoyed my time up-Island relaxing. September starts up our parish calendar of events for the autumn months. On September 13th our weekly Study Group will resume, continuing our study of the history of the Christian Church – newcomers always welcome. The first Sunday in October brings us Harvest Thanksgiving, the time we set aside in our annual calendar to give thanks to God for the bounty of land and sea; followed by our civic Thanksgiving Day on Monday, October 8. In mid-October we will put on our first Parish Autumn Bazaar of jams, jellies, baked goods, and perhaps some crafts and used books, as a means not only of fund raising but more importantly of raising our profile in the community and welcoming people to see our little white church on the hill. We end the month of October with the traditional feast of All Hallows' Eve.

As announced on Sunday, August 25th, the Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Craig Botterill, issued out the Call for Election of our next Metropolitan and Diocesan Bishop. On Holy Cross Day (September 14), the clergy will conclude the nomination process; this will be followed by the issuing of ballots, and the election by the house of clergy of our next bishop. In late October or early November the congregations across the Diocese will be called upon either to ratify or reject the man elected by the clergy. Finally, the TAC College of Bishops will be asked to approve the choice of the clergy

and laity for Metropolitan and Bishop Ordinary of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada. As we undertake this important process let us pray that God the Holy Spirit will guide us in our choice and so lead us to elect a good, devout, and strong chief pastor.

We were so pleased the other Sunday to see Andy Wilson bring a number of his friends to Church. He certainly took his name's sake to heart, for St. Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus...and the rest is in the Gospel. So I would invite each of you to bring a friend or relative to church on any given Sunday. I know from conversations with many of you there are people you know who have stopped going to church or who may very well appreciate your invitation for them to join you here at St. John's. We will grow by personal outreach, prayer, and God's providence. While communications strategies, pamphlets, concerts and bazaars were useful means of outreach, nothing but nothing can replace the personal touch, the personal invitation to come and worship. So make it your task this autumn to invite people to join us in the worship and praise of Almighty God. Mighty oaks grow from tiny acorns ~ and parishes grow from personal touch.

God calls us to celebrate life. Jesus said to His disciples: "I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." God bids us give thanks in everything. God doesn't want this because He is greedy for praise, or so that He would feel better about Himself -- He wants it because it will bless us and because it will bless and transform the world He has made.

In early October we pause in our daily lives and busy calendar to offer our thanksgiving for the bounty of land and sea; for all the many blessings God has bestowed upon us in our lives and in our family and parish. Even amidst trial, tribulation, sorrow and suffering, God's Hand is ever present, to bless, to heal, to comfort and console. So with the coming of autumn and the turning of the seasons, let us always and everywhere give thanks to Almighty God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dean Shane B. Janzen

Reflections of Autumn

David Jeremiah
Turning Point

MY childhood autumns hold precious memories—the fall revival at church, unpacking warmer clothing, hot cocoa, harvest moons, fires in the hearth, a well-stocked pantry, and best of all—FOOTBALL! I loved it.

The autumn of life is a strange mixture of nostalgia, blessings, and potential. It yields the harvest of seeds we've sown throughout life and braces us for colder days to come.

When life's autumn arrives, we look back and better understand the way God led us; but we still have work to do—the best and fullest. It's a good transition time.

"Autumn" only occurs once in the Bible. In Jude 1:12, false teachers are compared to "autumn trees without fruit," implying that autumn should be a fruitful season, the most abundant of the year. How can we take advantage of the "autumn of life"?

The Unchanging Nature of God

The seasons come and go, so focus on the God who remains unchanged and unchanging. "LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Psalm 90:1-2).

There's a lot of unwelcome change in our world. Moral and societal changes bother us most when we turn on our television or glance at the magazines. We're painfully aware our kids are growing up in a world far different from the one we knew as children.

And personal changes—children leaving home, the passing of dear friends, and the slow, steady decline in our vitality and health. Sometimes we feel outdated at work.

But amid all the changes, one thing, one person, never changes—our eternal God. Remember this verse from "Abide with Me"?

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.*
Henry F. Lyte

J. I. Packer points out that God does not change. His life is always the same. His character is always dependable. His truth, ways, and purposes do not change. His Son does not change. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

His children will enjoy His fellowship a million years from now. The world may fade, the stars may fall, the seasons may change, and winter may come. But the God who has been our help

in ages past is our hope for years to come. In Him we have permanence, stability, joy unshakable, and life unending.

The Divine Foresight of God

We've all suffered setbacks along the way. But God promised, "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten. . . . You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God" (Joel 2:25-26). His divine forethought knew it all in advance, and He can be trusted with what has happened to us in years past.

Our omniscient Savior knows the end from the beginning, and He will bless whatever is yielded to Him. Focus on His foreknowledge, providence, and sovereignty.

The Wonderful Blessings of God

The autumn of life is a great time to focus on God's wonderful blessings—family, friends, strength, shelter, provision, guidance, care, fruitful ministry, opportunities to serve, more time to pray and study His Word, and eternal life still to come.

During life's autumn, we have a richer perspective and can count more blessings than ever before.

A Renewed Commitment to God

Autumn is a good time to focus on your commitment to God. Some of the saddest words in the Bible are in Jeremiah 8:20, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." If you've never made a commitment to Jesus Christ, do it now, while there is still time.

If you are a follower of Christ, remember to remain close to Him during the shifting seasons of life.

During autumn, we all know that winter lies ahead, but if winter comes, can spring be far behind?



ALL too quickly it would seem comes the changing of the seasons. Spring to summer, and summer to autumn. With the changing of the seasons comes planting, ripening, and harvest. For us here in Canada, autumn brings with it the traditional festival of Harvest Thanksgiving, perhaps one of the oldest festivals in the world. It is as old as the fields and valleys. It began when primitive man felt within himself a stirring of thankfulness to some one or some thing for the mystery of life and the bounty of the land and sea.

The ancient Israelites of the Old Testament had their service of thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth. The Jews today continue this festival in their homes and synagogues. Even the secular world pauses briefly on the first Monday in October to give thanks, even if it is sometimes more a festival of overstuffed turkeys and overstuffed people.

So too, we at St. John's welcome Harvest Thanksgiving each autumn. Our church is decorated in an array of produce, including the traditional cornucopia. We sing the familiar harvest thanksgiving hymns. But over and above all of these familiar rituals of Thanksgiving is the underlying truth universally held but not always realized that God is a bountiful Provider; and that in this bountiful provision we learn of God's love and goodness toward us – in the fields of our land, in the teaming seas, and in the gift of His Body and Blood under the form of Bread and Wine.

We pause to give thanks to God for His bounty and provision: For the sun, the rain, the beauty of land and sea; for food and shelter; freedom and peace; for our families and friends. And, most importantly of all, for God's gift of faith and the promise of everlasting life.

Note well that all these are free. It is always so with God's gifts. There is nothing mean, nothing grudging about His giving for our well-being and for our salvation. If more than half the children in the world go to bed hungry every night it is not because God has withheld His hand. It is because we, who have been created in His image, have failed to be good stewards of His bounty. So our prayer at table this Thanksgiving, and each day, should include the call to be 'ever mindful of the needs of others'; and our prayer should be made real by our every day actions.

Thanksgiving is not only a time to give thanks for the generosity of God's provision for our physical well-being and for the freedoms and blessings we enjoy in this great land of ours, but it is also a time to give thanks for God's care and concern for our spiritual well-being. Every soul is precious in God's sight, whether the person be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, mentally or physically challenged; whether a sinner, weak

and easily tempted; be it the unborn, the aged, the sick and the dying -- all are precious in God's sight. His love for us is unconditional; He desires only are well-being and our salvation.

Like His generous bounty at harvest, the salvation of God from sin and death is free. We cannot buy it. We cannot earn it. We can never deserve it. It is completely and unconditionally free in God's loving gift to us in His Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. All we are required to do in return is to accept God's generous, loving gift of salvation with penitent hearts and humility of soul – giving God in turn our praise and thanksgiving.

A farmer sowing seed in a field in the cold of a Spring day may seem to be doing something rather foolish -- and when the young shoots first appear they seem so frail as to have no real chance of survival. It is not until harvest, when food for man and beast is before the eyes of all, that the whole mysterious process is made clear. It is then that God's design, God's promise of seedtime and harvest, are fulfilled and made evident ~ the harvest of wheat and grain, vegetables and fruit, witness to the plan of God for His creation from all eternity.

And what of God's design in your own life? Perhaps you can see no design, no plan or purpose for your life, or for the life of a loved one. Perhaps there are more questions than answers. But, as so many faithful Christian men and women have come to know through the years, when we look back over our life and reflect on the past with the eyes of faith, we can indeed see the design of God; and know that behind all the things we could not understand and found so difficult to accept at the time, there was the loving hand of God: ever-present, leading, guiding, comforting, forgiving.

God indeed has a design and a plan for each life. No life is useless. Each life has a meaning and a purpose. By God's loving plan, our lives are moving toward a destiny, a goal and a place chosen of God. Our life here is but a preparation for a fuller life, for the perfect vision of God; Who has prepared for us such wonderful things beyond anything we could ever imagine or conceive.

One day soon will come the harvest of our souls. The day when God will call us home for the Great Thanksgiving, when we shall know ourselves even as God knows us. When we shall be able to see what sort of yield there has been in the harvest of our lives. When we shall behold our God face to face, and give account for our stewardship. When the wheat and the tarres shall be separated, and the harvest of salvation is brought Home.

Dean Shane B. Janzen

PARISH CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2	TRINITY XIII SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
SEPTEMBER 8	NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ~ MASS 9:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 9	TRINITY XIV SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
SEPTEMBER 13	ST. CYPRIAN ~ MASS 9:30 AM <u>STUDY GROUP RESUMES 10:30 AM</u>
SEPTEMBER 14	HOLY CROSS DAY ~ MASS 9:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 16	TRINITY XV SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
SEPTEMBER 19	PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ~ 7:00 PM
SEPTEMBER 21	FEAST OF SAINT MATTHEW ~ MASS 9:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 23	TRINITY XVI SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
SEPTEMBER 29	ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS ~ MASS 9:30 AM
SEPTEMBER 30	TRINITY XVII SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
OCTOBER 4	ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI ~ MASS 9:30 AM
OCTOBER 7	HARVEST THANKSGIVING (TRINITY XVIII) SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
OCTOBER 14	TRINITY XIX SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
OCTOBER 17	PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ~ 7:00 PM
OCTOBER 18	FEAST OF SAINT LUKE ~ MASS 9:30 AM
OCTOBER 21	TRINITY XX SUNG MASS 10:00 AM
OCTOBER 28	FEAST OF ST. SIMON AND ST. JUDE SUNG MASS 10:00 AM

*In addition to the Sundays and Holy Days set out above
The Holy Eucharist is celebrated each Thursday at 9:30 am
followed by the weekly Study Group at 10:30 am in the Church Hall.*