



Monday Musing: October
5th, 2026.
Giving...

Often when Karen and I
would walk through the
forests, our conversations
would bounce around
from topic to topic and
back again, as if our voices

were going out and bouncing off the trees. And the trees have always been so patient with us. Quiet. Listening. Sometimes leaning into us as if to hear better or join the conversation. The trees, the whole forest, has always given us attention as we have given attentiveness to the trees, to the whole forest too. And every time in the forest, at some point we would say how thankful we were for the trees, for our ability to walk them together. Being together in the forest has been a way of saying thanks to each other for our friendship, giving to each other in time, step after step, hill upon hill, week after week. We have walked, hiked and climbed so many forests. *Receive. Thank. Give.*

A few weeks ago, I watched a mom at a store give her child something. I did not know what it was, but it brought such delight on her child's face. The child squealed with a "thank you Mommy" and then jumped into her mother's arms giving her a huge hug. *Receive. Thank. Give.* It reminded me of my kids at that age. I would walk up to bring them home from school. Lee would come bounding out to me with a huge smile. Josh would come squealing "Mommy!" and jump into my arms. Their excitement to see me, and their appreciation for my coming to walk with them home, was made known in their voices, their words of thanks, and their big hugs. *Receive. Thank. Give.*

So much of our lives is about receiving, thanking, and giving. It is a way of living: acknowledging the received gift, thanking the giver, giving in return. The forests, for me, are the gift, along with the time shared, received with Karen. We are thankful for the gifts. We give back by cherishing, donating, even picking up what others have regretfully left behind. You see, cherishing the gift of the forest means leaving only our footprints when we leave.

This weekend ahead is Thanksgiving. During our Time for All Ages on Sundays, I have often spoken of the history of the Canadian Thanksgiving because our history is different from the Americans' history of Thanksgiving. Ours is about giving thanks for the harvest, for sure, but also, in 1578, Martin Frobisher gave thanks to God for his ships making it safely across the ocean. They celebrated with what food they had and with Holy Communion in what is now Newfoundland. This was decades before the American first Thanksgiving. In 1606, Samuel de Champlain, in New France (now Canada), along with French settlers and local Mi'kmaq, shared celebrations that

included great feasts. Giving thanks for safe passage, for the harvests, for food to share was celebrated regularly though not with a consistent designated day until 1957. The second Monday of October was designated by the Canadian Parliament for our Canadian Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving became “a day of general thanksgiving to almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed.” It became a day to be with family and friends with a meal together. *Receive. Thank. Give.*

We live such an abundant life here in Canada. We live with so much prosperity, safety, plenty in food and water, compared to many other places in the world. It is true, it is not fairly distributed or accessed even here. And that is why we need to work hard to remember: We’ve received. Now let’s live with thankfulness and give to those who don’t have what we have – here and beyond here.

Receive. Thank. Give. Thanksgiving is about giving thanks for all we’ve received in our lives to sustain us, feed us, and enliven us, from life itself, to the land, the waters, air to breathe, food to eat and love to give. Love is in the thanks and the giving too.

Prayer

Holy God, for the harvests of the earth that feed us,
For the rivers and lakes of fresh water that enliven us,
For the loving presence of family, friends and forests,
May we always cherish what we’ve received, offer thanks,
And give in return that all might share in the loving abundance. Amen.

Scripture this Week

Deuteronomy 8:7-18	God will bring you to a bountiful land.
Psalms 65	God provides; the valley sings.
2 Corinthians 9:6-15	God loves a cheerful giver.
Luke 17:11-19	Ten healed, only one gives thanks.

TR Question (theological reflection)

The bible speaks to God’s call for social justice. In I John 4, God is said to be love. How do you understand God as love, God’s gifts of love, and your giving in return as love?

May we each be held in the loving arms of family and friends this weekend coming, in the many ways and places we will receive, thank and give,

Rev. Dr. Deb Foster, Minister at St. Andrew’s United in Markham
905-294-0351 minister@standrewsmarkham.com