



Anglican Church of Canada

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The VOX POP... Voice of the People

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Harvest/Thanksgiving 2025

Giving thanks for a bountiful harvest

I'm told that the festival of Harvest Home was a particular favourite of our late and much lamented Archdeacon, Ron Matthewman. In fact, I believe, and please correct me if I'm wrong, that it was through his auspices that this particular festival, very much part of autumn services in England, the land of his birth, first became popular here at Church of the Ascension.

Many of you will have been celebrating this festival down the years and will need no encouragement from me to go on doing so but it might be a good idea just to remind ourselves of how it all came about in the long ago before we embark on a new round of festivities.

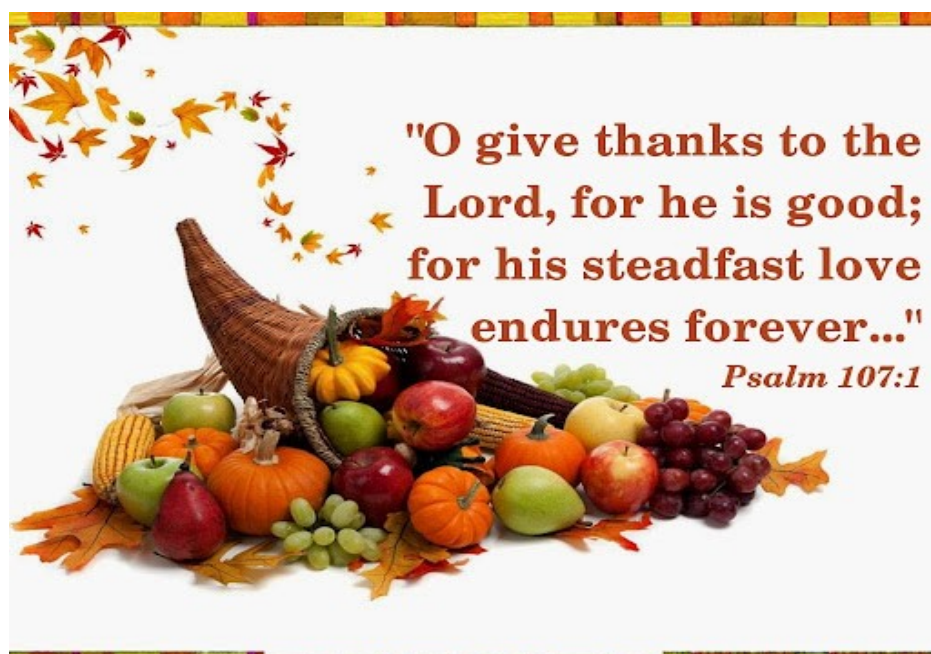
Apparently, it had its formative roots well established among the Celtic tribes of what is now Great Britain and was later adopted by the Anglo Saxons. According to the history books, they liked nothing better than to celebrate wildly as they finished all the hard work that had gone into harvesting and gathering the summer's bounty. No doubt they were well aware of the coming unproductive, testing months of late autumn and winter when the land offered very little by way of sustenance.



When Christianity arrived, the church wisely adopted the festival and began the practice of changing the concept from one of total celebration of effort to a time of saying thank you to Almighty God for his benevolence in providing the fruits of their labours.

And so, in the words of the long celebrated hymn, “Come ye thankful people, come. Raise the song of Harvest Home.”

D.H.





"Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name." 1 Chronicles 29: 13

Dear Ascensioners,

In this season of Thanksgiving, let us acknowledge that thankfulness is not merely a polite social custom, but rather a call to live biblically. According to Scripture, it is a foundational posture for the human heart and an essential element of the spiritual life. Scripture consistently calls us as believers to a life overflowing with gratitude, recognizing that every good thing is a gift from God, and a generous one at that!

When considering what it means to be thankful in a biblical way, the Old Testament Psalms are a good place to start. They urge us to approach God with a grateful spirit: *"Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name."* (Psalm 100:4) This imagery shows that thankfulness is the very entryway into communion with the Divine. We are to give thanks not just for what God does, but for who He is: *"O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for his steadfast love endures forever."* (Psalm 136:1).

In the New Testament, the call to gratitude intensifies and expands to cover all aspects of life, even the difficult ones. St. Paul writes: *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"* (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

If we're honest with ourselves, the truth is that it can be a challenge to find cause for gratitude "in all circumstances." However, St. Paul doubles down on this theme, linking thankfulness with peace and freedom from worry: *"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:6-7). When anxiety attempts to grip our hearts, an attitude of thanksgiving shifts our focus from what we lack or fear to the unwavering goodness and grace of God.

Ultimately, biblical thankfulness acknowledges the source of all blessing. As James 1:17 states, *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."*

Living with a thankful heart is living in alignment with this truth. It is a daily decision to recognize God's grace, not just in the miraculous, but in the mundane, and to express that recognition in our worship, our prayers, and our actions. This overflowing gratitude is truly the key to finding spiritual peace and honouring the One from whom all blessings flow!

May the Lord bless you this Thanksgiving.



A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read "Anne M. Smith" followed by a small cross symbol.



The Anglican Church of Canada

‘Goodnight, sweet prince and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest....’

Mark Antony is probably most famous for a speech which he miraculously delivered nearly 1,600 years after he died.

You’ve almost certainly heard of it: it begins : “Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears.” Now, I have to say that when we have entered our octogenarian time of life, we almost certainly have fewer friends than we’ve ever had, after all, we’ve had to watch many of them move along as “partakers of glory.” And I have to confess that the number of Romans that I have encountered over the years have been somewhat few and far between. So, I’m left with countrymen (and women, of course), and I still treasure many close associations in North America and in the Old Country far away on the other side of the affectionately-dubbed “pond.”

What is he droning on about, I hear you mumbling under your breath? Well, to cut a long story short, and you all know I’m long on stories, I find myself having to take up my pen to eulogise someone I never really knew, just like Mark Antony being given the credit for a speech he never made.

But Anthony had the “Sweet Swan of Avon” on his side. For William Shakespeare penned those immortal lines in his play about Julius Caesar first performed in 1599.

I have to rely, mostly during coffee mornings, on the memories



and thoughts of those who knew our dear departed Archdeacon Ron Matthewman (pictured at left) during the long term of service he put in here at Church of the Ascension.

When referring to his gentle nature and sympathetic approach, everyone speaks with one voice. “Always willing to sit and listen,” comes through loud and clear. “Dedicated to his parish,” is also high on the list.

He was Rector here at Ascension for nearly 25 years and during that time he was awarded the Queen’s Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977 for service to the community. Speaks for itself, doesn’t it? Sadly, I never heard him preach as he was long retired and well into his nineties when my wife Bonnie and I became members here in September 2023.

When he left us in July this year, something happened that most of the people who attended his funeral will never forget when hundreds packed the church to overflowing to hear Canon Lance put into words the story of a life well lived.

Elsewhere in this edition, Archdeacon Ron’s daughter Gillian, our dedicated church secretary, will have much more information to convey to you about her beloved father, who has left us all so much the richer in spirit for having known him. My only regret is that my knowing him turned out to be such a fleeting moment in time.

R.I.P, Archdeacon Ron, your selfless example lives on. **DH**

Holy Water Font at Ascension

Canon Lance Smith

You may have noticed as you enter into the church something new; a font of holy water. While many of us may be familiar with the use of holy water, some teaching about it might be helpful.

The use of blessed, or 'holy' water is a practice with deep roots in Christian history, symbolizing purification and the grace of God. Its significance draws heavily on water imagery as it appears throughout Scripture. From the story of Genesis right through to the book of Revelation, the Bible consistently presents water as a powerful symbol of life, cleansing, and divine activity.

In the Old Testament, water was essential for ceremonial purification under the Law of Moses. More generally, ritual washings (ablutions) with water were required to purify anything that was considered ritually unclean.

The New Testament elevates water's meaning, especially through the sacrament of Baptism. Jesus's own Baptism and his reference to giving "living water" (John 4:7-14, 7:37-38) associate water with the Holy Spirit, new birth, and eternal life. Sprinkling or touching blessed water can thus be a powerful reminder of our Baptism and covenant with Christ.

In the Anglican tradition, the use of holy water is sacramental. Its use is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." It prepares us to receive God's grace and reminds us of our Baptism. At Ascension, we have utilized holy water for

many years at the Easter Vigil when the celebrant has sprinkled the congregation (called Asperges or Aspersio) as we renew our Baptismal vows and are reminded of our Baptismal covenant.

As we both enter and leave the worship space at Ascension, people may dip their fingers in the water and make the Sign of the Cross, echoing the ancient custom of purification and renewing our connection to the Church through Baptism. Even if that is not your custom, simply seeing the font can serve as a powerful reminder of our Baptismal calling and discipleship.

Our thanks are extended to the family of Don & Mary Jane Winterton in whose memory the font was dedicated.



I personally was fortunate enough to have known and ministered alongside them both since I moved to the area in 2001. Both Don and Mary Jane sought to fulfill their Baptismal vows to the best of their abilities and were enduring examples of faith in action. May the font which now stands at the entrance of Church of the Ascension inspire us to such faithful discipleship!

Dedication of the Holy Water Font
July 27, 2025



At Long Last, Victory!

This summer, on June 13th, Ascension golfers rallied to the call of participation in the 10th annual Deanery of Essex Golf Tournament. This year we were fortunate to field 2 foursomes in the tourney. The original foursome who have participated every year since the beginning of the tournament shined up their clubs and took another crack at winning.

Fr. Lance, George Wilkinson, Kent McMillan and Rick Dinham entered the competition again believing that this might be the year! Alas, it was not...

However, be not dismayed! For our 2nd entry into the fray was victorious in their very 1st year of competition. The foursome of Terry Fink, Evan Smith, Jennifer Rooke-Simpson (pictured below) and Neil Rooke edged out the competition to bring the Deanery of Essex Championship Trophy to Ascension.

Congratulations to all involved and to the victors who will now have to defend their title in next year's tournament. Well Done!



It's a mystery, but then again, is it really?

As usual, there are no prizes for guessing the identity of our mystery baby. But without giving anything away, I think this is one picture that should generate a lot of guesses. So, have a good look and take in all those well-defined features. If you don't get it right, you'll be kicking yourself. As always, drop your guess in the Vox Pop box at the back of the church and don't forget to include your name. (Yes, someone did that last time). The answer will appear in the next Vox Pop.

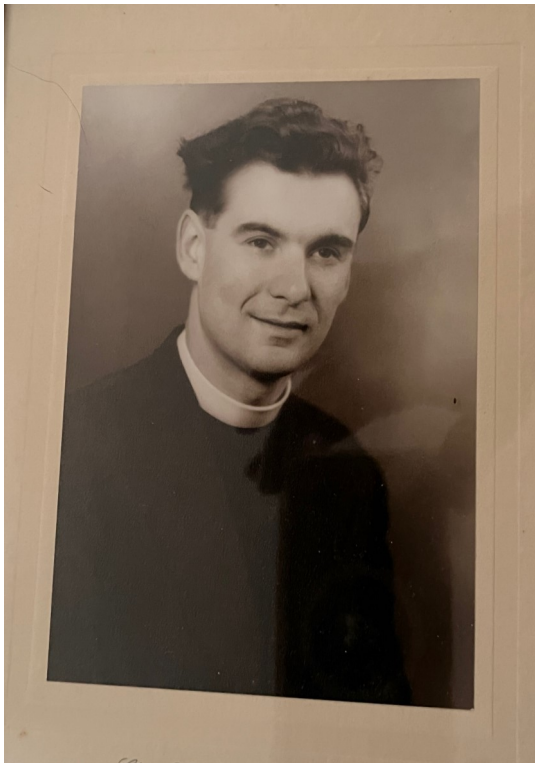


“Thank-you” from the Matthewman Family

The Venerable Dr. Ronald Matthewman, LLD, Lth, CD, GMTJ

aka Archdeacon Ron

June 8, 1930 - July 9, 2025



This photograph was taken shortly after Dad's Ordination to the Diaconate (December 1953) in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, England. In April, 1954, a few days after their wedding, our parents sailed to Canada. In Dec., 1954, he was Priested in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, Ontario, and began a life-long Ministry in the Diocese of Huron.

On behalf of the extended Matthewman Family, I wish to convey our deepest thanks for your memorial donations, messages of love, support and condolences on the death of our father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Archdeacon Ron. Dad considered the Ascension Family as an extension of our own, and we know that many of you have special memories of when he shared with you in moments of both joy and sorrow.

During the Celebration of Life/ Requiem Eucharist held here at Ascension on July 15th, we mentioned in our Family Reflections that with over 40 years of parish ministry, and involvement with many community organizations, there is no possible way of ever knowing how many lives he touched! But we do know that he cared for everyone and he prayed for and encouraged each of us along our journey to the promised land!

From a personal family perspective we shared with you some of his quirks, his signature dessert (the 'Archdeacon'), and his dry sense of humour. Most importantly, we shared how he taught us by example to live a humble and faith-filled life. I will always remember his eyes - they spoke volumes about his personality - from the mischievous twinkle to the 'scolding staredown'.

Dad lived a full life, met people from all walks of life, travelled the globe and never voiced any regrets. It is a great honour to have been able to share him with you.

Gillian Matthewman

This photograph was taken in October, 2024 - teaching his 5th great-grandchild, Serena, the art of the 'stare'!



WELCOME BACK LUNCHEON



It's been a long, hot summer and various absences have meant that we have not seen a Newsletter since the early days of June. But we were all welcomed back to Church of the Ascension on September 14, Holy Cross Day, and celebrated in style with an uplifting service and a “gourmet lunch” that provided food and drink to everyone's taste.

Vox Pop is back!





Church of the Ascension

1385 University Ave. West

Christmas Bazaar

Saturday, November 15th, 2025

9am - 2 pm

Morning Coffee Break - Hot Lunch - Tea Room

Country Store -jams, preserves Bake Table

Jewellery Knitting/Sewing

Christmas Porch Baskets

Variety Booth - new items and collectables

Attic treasures— used & new to you!

books, kitchen items, vintage clothing, bedding,

boots & shoes, luggage, toys, sports equipment,

jigsaw puzzles, Home décor and more

** Due to road construction on University Ave., there is no on-street parking. Parking is available at Alicia Mason Adult Learning Centre at the north-east corner of University and Cameron Streets**

The Annual Parish Bazaar

For over 50 years, our parish has hosted a Christmas Bazaar, the proceeds of which have financed many capital works projects. This is a whole-parish event, with an opportunity for everyone to have a part. We need people to bake, sew, knit, craft, make and serve lunch, work in the tea room, sort attic treasures, set up, clean up, etc. etc. If you need a job—we will find you one. Please speak with Gillian in the church office.

BIBLICAL HUMOUR

One night a lady came home from her weekly prayer meeting, found she was being robbed, and she shouted out, "Acts 2:38: 'Repent & be baptized & your sins will be forgiven.'" The robber quickly gave up & the lady rang the police. While handcuffing the criminal, a policeman said, "Gee mate, you gave up pretty easily. How come you gave up so quickly?" The robber said, "She said she had an axe and two 38's!"

From the Parish Office

Thank-you to Pam Over several days in the summer, the parish hall kitchen cupboard contents were sorted, cleaned and inventoried by the church staff, with a very huge contribution of blood (a minor cut), sweat and tears by Pam Johnson. "Thank-you" Pam for your dedication to this project.

Harvest Mailing

Due to the ongoing postal strike, we will not be mailing out the Rector's Harvest Message and Parish Thanksgiving Offering envelope. Canon Lance's Harvest Message is printed on page 3. Special Harvest Offering Envelopes are available on the table at the back of the church and in the pews. If you wish to make a Harvest/Thanksgiving Offering via e-transfer please send it to ascension@bellnet.ca and print the word "Harvest" or "Thanksgiving" in the memo / message line.

Sunday, October 19th

A "Thank-you for your Music Ministry" Reception will be held following the 10:30 am service in honour of Trudy DiCarlo, on her retirement as our Church Organist and Choir Director. Please plan to be with us as we celebrate her decades of service.

2026 Canadian Church Calendars

The calendars have arrived. The calendar sets out the liturgical colours and seasons, as well as holy days and various other observances for the year. They will be available for purchase from the Church office and between the services while supplies last. The Cost this year is \$8.00.