**

***Harvest Thanksgiving 2025***

*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4.19)*

While we should always work hard and do our best, the idea of earning or deserving something can be a slippery slope. Have I earned because I have worked hard? What about the person who has a physical disability? Am I deserving because I studied and did well on the exam? What about the person who could not afford to take the course?

And what about good health and favourable weather: can we honestly say that we deserve either? We are just the creature; He is the Maker of Heaven and earth. We are small; He is Almighty. We are mere mortals; He is the Everlasting God. We are miserable sinners; He is thrice Holy – the One Who is perfect Love.

Whether it is rain or food or forgiveness, the fact is, we are completely dependent on the goodness and mercy of God. And, thankfully, He is gracious – constant, single-minded -- in His desire to help us and save us. ***“God is Love,”*** wrote St. John. (1 St. John 4.16) How do we know? Because He sent His only begotten Son to be the propitiation (the remedy) for our sins.

So, the lack of rain; the wildfires; the high price of food -- none are reasons for us to stop praising God. As the Psalmist says, ***“O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is gracious; because His mercy endures forever.”*** *(118.1)* and ***“Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”*** *(103.2)* But with gratitude comes repentance: leaving my self-reliance and opening my heart to God’s will.

Near the end of the ‘Form of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of the Harvest’ (p. 619, BCP), there is a prayer when the harvest has been defective due to drought, pestilence, flooding or fires. It acknowledges God’s Wisdom in withholding His bounty while still giving us more than we deserve; and it includes this request: “increase in us more and more a lively faith and love, and a humble submission to thy blessed will”.

As we gather this Harvest Thanksgiving, may the jug of ice water on the table remind us of our complete dependence on the Lord Who mercifully does not give us what we deserve, but ***“exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or imagine”*** *(Ephesians 3.20).* Hallelujah! In all things, let us give thanks!

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

Yours in Christ Jesus,

**Chris VanBuskirk** **+ Rob Salloum +**