



WE GIVE THANKS TO YOU, GOD

PSALM 75:1

Dear members and friends of Kensington,

I sit to write this letter on a beautiful Autumn morning. The sun is shining bright and strong, the sky is blue, and the air is cool – summer is officially behind us, and the beautiful realities of the Fall season are here. As we approach the celebration of Thanksgiving, we particularly express our gratitude for the gifts of the land as they make their way from field or orchard or vineyard to our tables.

A few of my favorites for this time of the year are: pickled beets, squash soup, pumpkin pie, Golden Delicious apples, mashed potatoes, roasted fennel, curried cauliflower soup, and maybe a glass of Cabernet Franc from the Niagara Peninsula. (Notably absent from my list: rutabaga and brussels sprouts!!)

As I was thinking ahead to Thanksgiving dinner this year, and was browsing on the web, I came across a site that asked this question: “What foods are a MUST for Thanksgiving dinner?” It is an interesting question, particularly in the light of our increasingly multicultural context. While there may be a traditional Canadian thanksgiving dinner menu, that menu must also be thought of as being quite flexible. The Thanksgiving menu can and will continue to be adjusted as new flavours and dishes and cultures are incorporated within our North American context.

But as I thought about that question – which foods are a must – it seemed to place too much focus on the question of ***what is on our tables***. As we think about the reality and importance of gratitude, perhaps the more important question is ***who is around our table***. Who has a place at the table? Traditionally, I suppose, the Thanksgiving meal has been a meal shared with family members and friends; that is, those with whom we are already close.

Living in gratitude toward the God who gives every good gift means recalling the ***expansive*** covenantal love of God. This expansive love is described in the Old Testament through the prophet Isaiah, who sees the nations streaming to Israel to honour God and share in a meal with his people. And Jesus himself is recorded as saying, in Luke 13:

over...

“Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.”

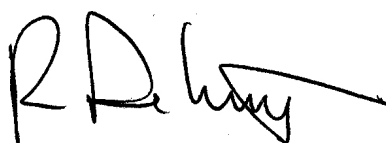
This expansive love of God can be expressed not only in the makeup of our church family, where everyone is welcome, but can also be expressed in our homes. We are able to invite others who are outside our usual circle of friends and family members to share in Thanksgiving with us. When it comes to our Thanksgiving meal, it doesn't matter so much what is on the table – it matters who is around the table.

This Thanksgiving at Kensington we have another unique opportunity to “open the table to others” if you will. Each year at this time, we are invited to make a special financial contribution to support the work of Presbyterian World Service and Development – the relief and development agency of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. And as a congregation we have decided to focus our givings on Tidzalerana Club, a program for those with special needs and their caregivers in Blantyre, Malawi.

Through our extra Thanksgiving offering (please use the enclosed envelope), we are able to provide mobility aids or physiotherapy for those with physical disabilities, transportation to medical appointments, or meals at the weekly club meetings. Above all, this program enables those who might otherwise be relegated to the sidelines and back rooms of society to find their place within the community.

As an expression of gratitude to the God of expansive, covenant love, may we give **generously** this Thanksgiving toward the expression of love that is Tidzalerana Club.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. DeLong". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.