



c/o 726 Chatsworth Place
Kingston, ON K7P 2E2

613-453-9140
livingwaterskingston@gmail.com

Sunday, October 1, 2017

**“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever.”**

(Psalm 107:1)



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Fall is traditionally a time to give thanks; and, as the above excerpt from Psalm 107 proclaims, to reflect on God’s goodness towards us. Being thankful is a state of being—an attitude of the heart—that grows out of our relationship with Jesus, and is a central characteristic of what it means to follow Him. As one person writes; “A true Christian is someone who never for a moments forgets what God has done for them in Christ and whose whole comportment and whose activity have their root in the sentiment of gratitude.” Gratitude is born in the hearts of those who take the time to count their blessings because they know that everything they are and everything they have comes from God—it’s all grace! However, the other side of being thankful is equally important: Being willing to share our blessings with others. In fact, Paul tells us in Acts 20:35 that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Have you ever wondered why this is true?

Generosity isn’t a trait we’re born with. When we come into the world, our focus is on receiving. We think only about having our immediate needs met, as any parent of a newborn will tell you. But in time, children begin to enjoy giving. That’s why they pick dandelions for their mother and offer them as if they’re a priceless treasure. In the same way, we can learn to enjoy giving to the Lord. At first, our contributions may be small because they’re based on what we think we can afford. But as we experience God’s faithfulness in supplying our needs, our trust grows and we’ll be more willing to give generously.

In 2 Corinthians 8:1-6, the Apostle Paul describes a group of believers in Macedonia who had learned this truth firsthand. When they heard about the financial needs of the Jerusalem church, they wanted to help. Paul used their example to encourage the Corinthian church to do the same. By applying four biblical principles found in these verses, we too can benefit from their example!

Generosity isn’t based on abundance. Sometimes we think we’d give more if we had more. But in reality, if we aren’t generous with a small income, it’s doubtful we’ll be charitable with a larger one. From all outward appearances, these Macedonian Christians had nothing extra to give. Although they were living in poverty and going through great affliction, they had an abundance of joy (2 Corinthians 8:2). And Paul tells us that they voluntarily gave not only what they could afford but even beyond their ability (2 Corinthians 8:3)!

Generosity flows from a heart of compassion. Perhaps the reason the Macedonians were so open-handed is because they knew what it was like to be in need and had experienced God’s faithfulness to them. Once they heard about the church in Jerusalem, their hearts overflowed with compassion, and they begged Paul for the honour of participating in the support of those brothers and sisters (2 Corinthians 8:4). How often do we look at giving as a *privilege*? Maybe we’re happy to buy birthday or Christmas gifts for loved ones, but do we delight in contributing to the Lord’s work? Does the passing of the offering plate or the announcement of a need in the church bring a sense of duty rather than a spirit of joy? Remember, what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:7; “God loves a cheerful giver,” not one who gives out of coercion or a sense of guilt!

Generosity isn't limited to material things. Sometimes at Christmas or other occasions we limit gift giving to items that can be tied up with a bow. This could lead some of us to spend more than we should. However, debt doesn't prove devotion. Some of the best gifts cost us nothing. For example, offering our time to serve others or to listen and encourage them is a wonderful way for us to demonstrate love. Similarly, we may think giving to the Lord is limited to financial contributions, but Scripture enlarges that perspective. Paul says the Macedonians "first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God." (2 Corinthians 8:5) Giving ourselves to the Lord means surrendering our rights, preferences, and desires in order to do His will—whatever that may be. Sometimes He might convict us to give financially, but He may also lead us to show hospitality, serve in a particular area of the church, offer encouraging words, or present the gospel to those who don't know Jesus.

Generosity is empowered by faith. Every challenge in life is an opportunity to deepen our confidence in God. However, sometimes we're reluctant to trust Him when it comes to finances, even though He's given us some amazing promises. As we read in Luke 6:38 says; "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." How must the Lord feel when we say; "I believe the Bible, but I don't trust what God says about money and giving?" Has the Father ever under any condition failed to keep a single promise from His Word? No! Then why won't we trust Him and give joyously, liberally, and eagerly?

Generosity is an attribute of God, and we are never more like Him than when we give! I encourage you in this season of thanksgiving to consider all that God has given you: breath in your lungs, the love of family and friends, the fellowship of a community of believers, the prayers He's answered, and His faithfulness in keeping His promises and providing for your needs. Then let your gratitude overflow into generosity toward others—and not just with your money or material goods, but your time and attention, too.

To help you do this, I am inviting you to once again reflect on the commitment that you would like to make to God in and through *Living Waters* in the coming year. Included with this letter is a Commitment Card—I encourage you to prayerfully reflect on those areas of ministry that you are interested in supporting in the coming year, through the offering of your time and talents. All ministry information will be given to Kathleen Young, our Vestry Clerk, who will ensure that you are contacted by the appropriate person for any new ministries that you are interested in undertaking. The financial information that you provide will be kept in strict confidence, and will help guide Parish Council as they prepare the 2018 Operating Budget.

I invite you to offer your commitment to God on **Commitment Sunday—Sunday, October 22nd**. If you are unable to be present on the 22nd, please bring in it as soon as possible.

Fall is traditionally a time to give thanks. I give thanks for all of you, and for your thoughtful generosity and active support of the life and ministry of *Living Waters* over the past year. We have all been richly blessed and I am confident that God has great things in store for us in the coming year! I look forward to ministering with you with a renewed sense of compassion, commitment, and purpose.

May the love and peace of Jesus rule in our hearts.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Christopher R. Doering
Lead Pastor & Rector
crd3@live.ca

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"

(John 7:37-38)