



Monday Musing: October 28th, 2024.
Gratitude...

This past weekend, St. Andrew's United, my home church and family, celebrated its 190th anniversary. This was a huge three-day event and a huge undertaking after months of preparation and over 200 invitations. It was a huge milestone in the life of this church that needed to be celebrated. And we had so many congratulations come from individuals, other churches, the Honorable Paul Calandra, Mayor Frank Scarpitti, and even strangers in the downtown. And the Town Crier, John Webster, called out our anniversary and invitation to the Open House.

Preparing with the new letterhead, invitations, signs, posters, PowerPoint, bookmarks, history booklets for the self-guided tours, and the special order of service, we had these things in the works step by step along the way. Then came the time to get the house ready. With cleaning, dusting, tidying, purging, vacuuming (with the new vacuum!), and even some painting, our church home was readied from top to bottom by a group of us in our grubbiest of clothes, just like what we all do in our own homes for a big celebration.

This was quite a time. It was a time of memories, stories, laughter, and tears, and oh so much work. And it was a time of growing closer together too. From the Second Annual Pumpkin Patch Lighting Friday night, through the whole day and Open House Saturday, and then Sunday's Celebration Service and Mix 'n Mingle Luncheon, this was how we celebrated 190 years of being the church where we are.

All I can say now, from the bottom of my heart, is thank you to all of you for sharing this celebration with me and with each other in every way that we did this together. Thank you for all the work we did together, and for welcoming me into your church family, and for the kindness and love you have and give that I have seen and felt too.

I truly believe that the word 'thank you' can't be said enough in our world. These words are precious. They mean so much to the person, or persons, receiving them. It is the way we can change the world, in our little corner at least, by creating a culture of gratitude, just saying thank you to each other, sincerely, generously, faithfully, and making sure they are our first words and nothing more.

When Karen and I walk on Fridays, we often talk about our weeks. We focus on emptying ourselves of the negative aspects of the week and sharing with each other the positives that happened so that our day together is positive. And when we take our leave of each other, we say thanks to each other too. We believe we all need to combat the negativity in our lives, in our world, and we can do so together starting with the words, Thank you. Besides, isn't it nicer to be somewhere, among people in groups, or committees, or

associations or churches, where the words are offered genuinely and often!? Doesn't that make you want to be a part of such a place!?

So, thank you to all of you who did so much for the last four months to make this past weekend an anniversary to remember. And yes, we had our 'oops' moments, but then we're all imperfect human beings working to be the best church we can be, to, for and with each other as we serve within and beyond our doors in Christ's name. Surely, we can say, it was God's love and grace among us that allowed us to just laugh and hug through all this work and weekend, and then to say, "Thank you everyone. And thank you for being here." Now, go rest.

Peace always,
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Prayer

Gracious God,
With gratitude for our lives together,
Loving and serving in Christ's name,
We pray that we might always work to be honest,
To be kind, and to be love itself in our words and our works.
Help us to say thank you
In every corner of our lives, with everyone.
May we live and offer words of thanks,
Generously, freely, honestly, graciously,
Trusting our words make a difference.
They need to be offered. They need to be heard.
With and within the Christ, we pray.
Amen.

Scripture this Week

Ruth 1:1-18	Ruth chooses to go with Naomi.
Psalms 146	I'll praise my Maker while I've breath.
Hebrews 9:11-14	Christ, the High Priest of good things.
Mark 12:28-34	Which commandment is the first of all?

TR Question (theological reflection)

What is the relationship between love and gratitude, that is, how do you connect caring for and saying thank you, within your beliefs and your faith?