

Step In and Step Up: A Thanksgiving Reflection
A Thanksgiving message from Archbishop Anne Germond

This Thanksgiving, I am giving special thanks for Bishop Victoria Matthews.

At the end of May, Bishop Victoria answered a call to come to St. Luke's Cathedral in Sault Ste. Marie, where a community was finding its way through profound grief following the unexpected death of its beloved Dean, the Very Rev. Dr. Jay Koyle.

Bishop Victoria did more than step in. She stepped up.



With extraordinary pastoral care, wisdom, and a willingness to speak the truth with love, she has helped the Cathedral community find steady ground again. She has also been a wonderful source of encouragement to our Synod office staff, visiting regularly and sharing generously of herself.

As she concludes her ministry with us this Thanksgiving weekend, I am reminded of just how many people throughout the Diocese of Algoma step in and step up, often quietly, faithfully, and without expecting recognition.

We see it in the extraordinary volunteers and donors who have supported Alongside Hope's Wild Ride, going the extra mile, quite literally, for people in need around the world. We see it in the people who organized September's Lay Readers' Conference, in our friends at Thorneloe University who continue to make opportunities for theological education possible, and in the many people across our deaneries who are planning celebrations, caring for their neighbours, and finding new ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Week after week, the stories we share in Algoma are filled with people stepping in and stepping up.

The apostle Paul reminds us in this weekend's Thanksgiving readings that our service to others not only supplies what is needed, but also overflows in thanksgiving to God (2 Corinthians 9:12).

What a beautiful way to think about the Church, and about our lives together.

At a time when the troubles of the world can so easily command our attention, I hope this Thanksgiving weekend we will take time to look more closely at the goodness unfolding all around us.

Perhaps it is a friend who has walked beside you through grief, a neighbour helping someone remain in their home, or a family member whose quiet generosity holds others together.

Perhaps it is the wardens and treasurers who carry so much responsibility in our parishes, the musicians and choirs who enrich our worship, or the countless volunteers whose faithful service makes our church communities places of welcome and belonging.

This Sunday, as you gather for worship, and as you sit around your Thanksgiving tables, I invite you to look around. Really look. See the people who step in and step up, and whose lives make God's love visible in the world.

Give thanks for them. And, if you can, tell them.

For surely the Holy Spirit is at work through these faithful acts of kindness, courage, generosity, and love.

To Bishop Victoria, and to all those across Algoma who step in and step up, thank you. May our hearts overflow with thanksgiving, this weekend and always.

+Anne