

There is a longing, just before the harvest. You want to have it NOW!

Like the excitement before school begins, or a new job, or a birthday's eve as a child.

You want it in your hand, safely gathered in. Not two in the bush, but in your hand, ere any winter storms begin.

But the trouble with harvesting is that you often don't get to see it. When you go shopping now the shelves don't seem any better stocked than in March. We ourselves don't grow much. And although if world harvests failed it would be a catastrophe for all of us, we often have difficulty seeing, truly seeing, and understanding how marvelous a harvest is.

I am looking at the new building, which will house Grace Church. I look at 700 Kennedy Rd, and change my usual route to go by it. I long to see the paving finished and the front doors installed. I want to see the lights on. I want to see the furniture in. I want it to ring with the sound of our voices uplifted in hymns of praise to God our creator.

I want our building harvest in.

But pause now. Look at the Harvest around you. It is easy to miss what God has been doing here. It's easy to miss the harvest right in front of us.

Two years ago we entered this building together for the first time. Four crosses processed in, four different candles burned upon the altar of God. Four of this, of that and of the other.

Like separated colours, rainbowed, we entered. Who knew if it would bear fruit?

And now a brighter white light is ours. We are one. Combined and amalgamated.

Grace where Crispin, Epiphany, George and Giles were disparate before. Stronger, more playful, prayerful, creative and hope-filled than any could have imagined.

This is the first wave of the harvest of God's Gardening amongst us.

I want to offer you an image of this, to help you see it.

[David produces five balls of yarn: One for each of the churches and one for people who have joined since amalgamation. People are invited to hold a line of their colour of yarn and throw the ball on to another member of their old congregation. Then we behold what we have become]

Harvest is an image with many layers.

For Jesus' people it was more often about fishing. Letting down a net and sometimes catching nothing. But when the Lord is present the net is full to breaking. Look at the net these balls of separate yarn has made.

Another image is of farmers.

The wheat is cut and threshed to make bread for us to eat, and the grapes are picked to make wine for us to drink. The church feeds our souls and nourishes us in Christ.

But the body of Christ, into which we are being built, is also God's harvest to feed the world, or a bit of it in South Scarborough.

Like the net we are made into by God, we are also called to be bread to nourish the souls of our communities. We are to be wine to make them glad. Or Rum, sometimes.

It is sometimes hard to believe in a great harvest in the Anglican Church of Canada. We see shrinking, closing, aging every where. But Joel, the prophet speaks God's word to a diminished and dying community.

*Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. O children, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of you, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.*

So look at the decoration in the church, at the web of new life God has made of us, at the building getting closer to receiving us in and at the invitation to outreach and mission before us, which Vinay signals to us.

Look, see the harvest God has made, and be glad!

Look, God's harvest of outreach is now starting to grow, believe!

Look at yourself, your life, family, community of friends, and give thanks!

And let us be one bread, one body, one cup of blessing which we bless.