

10th May 2021

Thank you

**“We give thanks to God always for you all,
making mention of you in our prayers;
remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love,
and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Bible, I Thessalonians 1:2

When St Paul begins his first letter to the Church in Thessalonica (in modern-day Greece) with the words above, the warmth of his “thanks to God” comes from the heart. The people’s “work of faith”, “labour of love” and “patience of hope” had obviously touched him deeply. For here was an exemplar of what the Church can and should be. The letter St Paul wrote, thought to be one of his earliest, is largely personal in nature, its purpose being to encourage and reassure the people of this fledgling Church to go on working quietly in respond to their faith in Christ.

This week sees the beginning of a new parish structure for the Church of Scotland in part of East Lothian, when three churches come together to form a larger unit, the Parish of Traprain, covering the town of East Linton and several surrounding villages. I’ve been involved with two of the churches which are part of this new union, in the villages of Athelstaneford and Whitekirk. I’ve worked with them for three years, through the ups and downs of parish life and the twists and turns of finding a new structure for the work and witness of the people of God.

I’m no St Paul, but the words quoted above say all I would want to say to the people of Athelstaneford and Whitekirk. Many of them will be reading this, so, in that sense, like St Paul, it is my personal letter of thanks. Today I give thanks to God for the ceaseless work of faith and countless labours of love I have seen, heard of and experienced personally. There has been patience, hope, belief, service, commitment, and, above all, there has been love. How can I not “give thanks to God for you all”?

Go on doing what you do, and do it well – working quietly in the service of Christ and His people. And be assured, I will always be “making mention of you in my prayers”. Thank you, and may God bless you all.

A prayer for today

*Give thanks to God this day, for all that is good in life and love,
and all that is Godly in the Church and in our communities. Amen*

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon Also available at <https://swallowsnestnet.wordpress.com>