



**CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL OTTAWA**  
**Harvest Thanksgiving 2018**

Dear Friends,

I was three when my family moved from Edmonton to Fort Nelson, a town in Treaty 8 territory in the Northeast corner of British Columbia, at mile 300 of the historic Alaska Highway, surrounded by Boreal Forest near the confluence of the Muskwa, Prophet and Fort Nelson Rivers.

Our home was a standard-issue military house, in an area carved out of the bush to accommodate personnel who were stationed there as part of the defense of the North during the Cold War. You did not have to go far to be in the bush: across the street and over the fire break lay the vast expanse of the forest and its inhabitants.

Early one morning my brother went out on his bike and encountered a mature lynx padding along the gravel road. The hunters in the community simply walked out their back doors to pursue game in season. Big birds like the great horned owl, bald eagles and golden eagles graced the skies, and the rivers and creeks had plenty of fish. Black bears were commonplace.

My very earliest memories formed in that rich environment. To this day, certain scents in the forest, the lay of land, the look of the sky, or the way light falls on leaves or snow will bring me back there.

I have been lucky enough to spend time in many natural places in Canada and abroad over the years, in forests, mountains, prairies, deserts, rivers, lakes, and oceans. When my soul needs to be restored, I head into nature.

As good as it is to be in wild places, nature breaks through everywhere, and when you look to the sky from any location, or across water, or even in the most urban of landscapes, you will always see signs of creation. Last year I was startled to encounter the beautiful composition you see above, emerging from humble shrubbery and trees near my home. It reminded me to look for the beauty and solace of nature everywhere. It also reminded me that God cannot be contained or found in only some places, and that God loves to break into our lives in unexpected ways.

May you encounter rich and unexpected signs of Christ's irrepressible grace, God's abundant love, and the steady fellowship of the Holy Spirit wherever you find yourself in this season of Harvest Thanksgiving.

With kind blessings,|



The Very Reverend Shane Parker  
Dean of Ottawa