

# A Message from Terry

*Day after retirement reception, 12 September, 2022*

The first thank you comes for your presence. Gratitude begins by deciding to go to church.

The second comes for the flowers, the tiramisu, the array of things to eat and drink, the good wishes, the warmth of the community chattering away in the garden.

The third comes for the sound of ley lo rising up, meeting the balloons cascading over the balcony. I said to Maureen at the start of the service, "Something will come over the balcony," because everyone who has been in worship planning knows how joyous I find it when there is a balcony surprise. I was not surprised, but that did not matter. It was joyous. The children made sure we understood, trucking around with the balloons and the red paper flowers.

The fourth is for the book. I did not really take time to examine the book at the end of the service. I hope some of you took a closer look while it was laying on the altar and we were feeding ourselves. When I saw the book, I thought, "Yikes, Edwin, (I recognize Edwin's style) I am going to have to go to muscle gym just to haul this book around. It's so big. I'm 73 after all. Receive a remembrance book; get a hernia." Right. Later in the afternoon I savored the book, flowers on the table, little desserts at hand. First, I showed the pictures to Cyril. He does not understand much English, so the words were going to be a slog. The pictures presented their own stories. I could introduce him to Max and Lusmarina and a much younger Steve, Koko and me. But with the subsequent reading, from this enormous book emerged boundless memories, from Regine first teaching me the Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C-major by Bach and then playing it herself as part of the blessing of my partnership with Max, to my being the best man for Jeff and Susan, to the singing of a New Hymn by James Taylor, to the appreciative words from those going way back, to the moving account by Emese remembering George smiling at us singing a Hungarian Christmas carol in the nursing home. Edwin has made the book so the words of many of you shine like jewels. I'm sure that Maritza helped him along the way. I know there are a couple of more contributions out there. I look forward to them as well. I need to be careful, or it will give me an enormous head and you won't be able to put up with me.

Mostly, I feel deeply loved by our community. Of course, that is just a beginning. We are not finished until everyone who enters our doors feels welcomed, and then included, and then valued, and eventually on a process toward being profoundly loved. It is not that we are so good at loving, but that we are continually graced by the love of Christ, who keeps on calling us to learn love, so we follow his pattern and go looking for those who need.

That is another great gratitude, inviting someone else to come and see, to come and sing.