

Reflection on Harvest Thanksgiving at St. Mary's Anglican Church

October 11, 2026

Many of you will know that I work at my brother-in-law's farm at seeding and at harvest and a few days in addition. When it comes to harvest many of us have a vision in our minds. We see the cloudless and endless prairie sky with combines rolling majestically down the field, the scenes that make the news or special interest stories around harvest time. While we had some days like that the reality this year was far from that.

Each harvest brings its own twists and turns and this one was no different. You may remember September was rainy with some large amounts falling. The nice days were needed to dry things out. You may also remember the dew as each morning was very wet and needed to dry before starting the day. I would begin my day by going outside in my PJ's to wipe my hand on the grass to see how wet it was. The result was starting each day around noon and forced to stop soon after sunset as the wind died and the dew came again. By the middle of September we were about 20% done with not a lot of change in sight.

But change did come. We changed to Durum wheat which is quicker to harvest but so did the weather. Morning dews became less and the wind a lot more on some days. We started close to the same time but now we could go longer – much longer. For us, things started to roll around 5:00pm.

The prairie is a different place after dark. On the equipment, you hope for the sun to go down as sunset is the most difficult time to see what is going on. In late September, that late evening glow after sunset is mostly gone and the blackness descends quickly. Being a city dweller it is the blackness that I often marvel at. In the Bible we often see the analogy of light and darkness – good and evil – but that doesn't apply here.

At night the prairie has its own beauty. Close to you your lights reveal all that you can see but in the distance you can see the twinkling lights of farm yards and the lights of your neighbours in the field. When the combines are full you will see the flashing orange lights and then the fast moving lights of the cart drivers as they race to empty the combine and keep it moving. Later in the evening, some of us may go home while others fill trucks and/or attempt to finish fields. Our guys finished after 2am last night!

Driving home at night in the hours after midnight made me think about what I am thankful for. The immediate need was to miss all the deer and other wildlife. However, my thoughts focussed in on all who work through the night. We often think of healthcare workers, police, and fire crews but many others do too. In my work life I have worked the night shift at the potash mine and pulp mill. It is another world of work that goes on while most of us sleep and I am thankful for all their efforts.

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