

Volunteers Appreciation Sunday at St. Paul's

(unpublished)

With seven days in the week you're in there most days putting in your hours. You're obviously happy with your work because you smile a lot and say hello to everyone.

They seem pleased with the job you do and tell you that most of the time, but they are busy too, so if you're overlooked once in a while it means nothing. It's a hectic life but you know you can take time off occasionally to attend that graduation, take a short holiday, even be ill, but then you'll have to catch up next month.

Sounds like you're an ambitious young lawyer on the fast track to a future partnership, billing hours for a big city law firm.

Wrong. You're a 70-year-old church volunteer with a bad back and private sorrows daily doing God's work.

You're cutting grass out front, weeding a flower bed at the side, peeling potatoes in the kitchen, painting window trim in the Sunday school, baking cookies at home, visiting the ill in hospital, playing the piano for a "Happy 85th birthday", pricing the flea market donations, reading the Lesson.

Can they get along without you? Well, there'll come a day you won't be there, and they'll grieve for you and pray for you and never, ever, forget you and then your family and friends will take over. But until then, they need you. Every day.

And you certainly don't need to be told St. Paul's, Lindsay is commemorating its 175th Anniversary this year. You're already half-worn out preparing for it since mid-2010. That first celebration in January when our Primate participated in the service? We saw you there. You were in the background, helping.

Now the second one comes up Sunday, May 15th. That's when they'll finally pay tribute to you. They're calling it "Volunteer Appreciation Sunday". Bishop Douglas Blackwell will be the special guest. They'll make sure you feel very good about yourself that day. And you'll sit and listen, but you won't become overly proud because just about everyone around you that Sunday will be a volunteer and you'll know there were thousands more back down those 175 years and you're all being honoured that day. In the church hall afterward with coffee and cake and surrounded by fellow volunteers, you'll glance around and say a quiet prayer for those not there whom you see only in your heart.

And when it's all over, you'll stick around and put the tables and chairs away and take the tablecloths home to wash and iron.

Because it's all about faith and good works.