

March 18, 2009

Dear Member of St. Mary's,

As you may know by now, Peter Chase, our rector for the last seventeen years, will be retiring from St. Mary's (and from ordained ministry) on or about June 1 of this year. Peter has let many of us know for some time that this day was indeed coming, and although it is happening sooner than I expected, it comes as no surprise. My own father retired from ordained ministry at the age of 72 when he knew it was time, and I told Peter that he would also know when the time was right for him.

Peter has been the rock of our parish for many years, and is the reason many of us joined St. Mary's. He, Abbie, Gaelan and Ben will be missed, and all will be remembered fondly.

A change of rector in any parish almost always brings apprehension, but it is also an opportunity, as the search for a new rector forces us to think critically about the future of St. Mary's. Over the next year, we will need to answer some fundamental questions: What is it that makes St. Mary's unique and vibrant? What is God calling our parish to do? What do we need to do to remain a vital parish in our third century? For only after we have grappled with these and other questions can we hope to find the right candidate. And in coming to terms with these questions, we will become an even stronger parish.

Part of the reason for this letter is to inform you about some of the details of the transition process and what will be happening in the coming weeks and months. In the Episcopal Church, the process of bringing a new rector into a church can take a year or longer. Fortunately the process for doing this - and the support the Diocese can provide us - is very well developed.

By the time you have received this letter, the Wardens will have met with the Reverend Cynthia Hubbard in the Diocese's Office of Transition Ministry. Reverend Hubbard will be meeting with the Vestry in a special meeting on March 24. Also, Bishop Bud Cederholm will be visiting St. Mary's on Sunday, March 29 and will be available to discuss the transition with us.

In April, the Wardens and Vestry will begin the important work of identifying and recruiting an Interim Rector, as well as in commissioning a Search Committee and Transition Committee.

- Working closely with the Diocese, Reverend Hubbard, and Bishop Cederholm, we will identify and bring into St. Mary's an ***Interim Rector*** to be responsible for the spiritual needs of the parish, including the conduct of worship and the continuation of pastoral ministries and programs. In the Diocese of Massachusetts, Interim Rectors are specially trained to work in and with a parish in transition to prepare for the arrival of a new rector. The Vestry and Wardens will continue to be responsible for the administrative, operational, and financial management of St. Mary's.

- I have asked Vivian Brocard to head the *Search Committee* to identify and recruit a new rector. Vivian is not only a past Senior Warden of St. Mary's, but also an executive recruiter, currently at Isaacson-Miller, one of the country's largest search firm specializing in executive placement for non-profit organizations, and is exceptionally well qualified to lead this effort.
- A *Transition Committee* will also be formed to handle many of the practical issues around Peter's departure - including organizing his "farewell party" - as well as in welcoming and orienting the new rector into our Parish family.

Many of the details and timelines of this transition will become clearer over the next month. It is our intent to keep the parish informed of these plans and progress through announcements in church as well as through the *Good News* and website. We will also make announcements for volunteers interested in serving on the Search or Transition Committees.

Do feel free to contact either myself or our Junior Warden, Mary Green, if you have any questions or concerns, have information to share, or just want to talk. Also, Gwen Buehrens has offered to be available to anyone who wished to talk as well. Our contact information is listed at the bottom of this letter.

It is perfectly normal to be sad and concerned at the imminent departure of a trusted and respected leader like Peter. However it should also be a time of happiness and celebration. We should celebrate the ministry of Peter over the past decades, and everything he has done for us individually and as a parish. We should celebrate his well deserved opportunity in retirement to do as he wishes, and to spend more time with Abbie. And we should celebrate the vitality and vibrancy of St. Mary's, and all the members of our parish family, and celebrate the time God has given all of us together here.

Yours in Christ,



Paul Pyzowski

P.S. Our contact information, should you wish to speak, is:

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