

April 1, 2009

Dear Member of St. Mary's,

I am writing to keep you informed about Peter's coming retirement and provide more details about what will be happening between now and the start of summer with respect to our rector transition.

But first, let me thank you for the heart-felt expressions of thanks and gratitude that many have expressed to Peter Chase for all he has done for St. Mary's and for us individually. Peter's coming retirement is bringing out emotions in all of us; yet we need to remember that this is also going to be tough on Peter and his family, as well as on our dedicated professional staff. Please continue to support them with your words and prayers.

The topics discussed in this letter include:

- An update on the Vestry's meetings with the Bishop and Diocesan Office of Transition Ministry
- Preliminary plans for Peter's retirement celebration and other transition activities
- The process the Vestry will follow to appoint the Search Committee to find a new rector
- Some important dates coming up in May and June

Let me note a few important items upfront. First, ***Peter's final Sunday at Saint Mary's will be Pentecost Sunday, May 31.*** More details will be provided closer to the date.

Second, the Wardens and Vestry will need support from the entire parish membership to insure a successful transition, including ***volunteers to help with a number of transition projects, as well as for the Search Committee for a new rector.*** More details are provided in this letter.

Third, the Vestry plans on having the Search Committee appointed by the time of Peter's departure. If you have an interest in being considered for the Search Committee, please read this letter carefully and follow the instructions listed later in this letter. ***If you wish to be considered, or nominate someone else to be considered, for a position on the Search Committee, you need to express your interest by Sunday, April 26.***

REVIEW OF MEETINGS WITH THE BISHOP AND DIOCESAN TRANSITION TEAM

In the past two weeks the Wardens, Vestry and head of the Search Committee have had four meetings with the Bishop and Diocesan Office of Transition Ministry. These were in addition to the Adult Forums for the entire parish held on the Sundays of March 22 and March 29. Let me share some of the highlights here.

Overall View of the Search Process - The process for a new rector search has been considerably streamlined since St. Mary's last rector search seventeen years ago. First, a healthy parish like St. Mary's is not expected to go through an extended period of preparation before starting the search process. Second, the Diocese has identified and trained Interim Priests who specialize in working in parishes in transition. As a result, the average time of transition in the Diocese is 14 months, and barring unforeseen circumstances ours should not be much longer than this.

Identification of an Interim Priest - The Reverend Cynthia Hubbard, the Diocesan Officer on Transition Management, is currently looking for someone to serve as our Interim Priest. When she has identified an appropriate candidate, the Wardens will conduct a detailed interview. If the Wardens believe the candidate is a good fit, the candidate will then meet with the Vestry. If the Vestry approves, we will proceed with that candidate as our Interim Priest.

If the Wardens/Vestry believe that candidate is not appropriate to serve at St. Mary's, we can say no and ask for a different candidate. The ultimate decision on whether to accept a particular candidate for Interim Priest resides with St. Mary's, not the Diocese.

It is, of course, important that we find the right person for St. Mary's to serve in this important role. Although we cannot know for sure how long this will take, a reasonable expectation is that we will have someone in place by about September 1.

Departure of the Current Rector - A number of Vestry members expressed deep feelings about Peter and his departure. A common theme is that although we knew his departure was coming, the suddenness and short time frame came as a surprise. Reverend Hubbard noted that a two to three month departure period is normal for a retiring rector and that longer departure periods really don't help the parish or the departing rector.

She also emphasized that, as a matter of strict Diocesan policy, the retiring rector cannot come back to his parish to perform any official duties, including presiding over baptisms, confirmations, and marriages.

Bishop's Visitation - The Vestry did meet with Bishop Cederholm for about 90 minutes on the Sunday of his visitation. Surprisingly little time was devoted to the transition; we spent most of the time talking about both what brings us joy in our parish, as well as the challenges facing us. The Bishop explained to us about some of the support that the Diocese can provide to us in areas including coordinating youth events with other parishes, joint outreach projects and Diocesan support for improving energy efficiency in our buildings.

PETER'S RETIREMENT CELEBRATION AND OTHER TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

Planning is underway for a special event(s) to celebrate Peter's retirement. This may include separate events for both the adults and youth of the parish, as well as some kind of gift or memorial for Peter. These events will be planned on or around the date of Peter's retirement, May 31. Lucille Rossignol will be coordinating these activities on behalf of the Vestry; if you have any question or suggestions, please do feel free to contact her at either (781) 267-3306 or LavRoss@aol.com. More details about Peter's retirement celebration will be provided in a letter to the entire parish at a later date.

In addition, we will be asking for volunteers to help with many of the other important transition tasks around Peter's departure as well as in planning for and welcoming the new rector. A partial list of these include:

- Making sure Peter's move to Vermont is smooth
- Working with the Property Committee on a review of the rectory to see what work needs to be done prior to the arrival of a new rector
- Providing support to the Interim Rector as needed in working with the people of St. Mary's
- Welcoming the new rector (and family) to St. Mary's and helping them integrate into both parish and community life

We are asking for volunteers who would be willing coordinate as well as help with the different transition activities. If you would like to help, please let one of the Wardens know.

FORMATION OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

Per church law, the responsibility for forming the Search Committee lies with the Vestry and ultimately with the Wardens. The Vestry's intent is to have the Search Committee in place at the time of Peter's departure, so that it can begin its work over the summer and be prepared to begin identifying suitable candidates in the early autumn. The timing of this is in no way meant as a slight to Peter, or to diminish the celebration of his last months with us at St. Mary's. This decision was made for practical reasons: if we waited until after Peter's departure to begin appointing a Search Committee, with the intervention of summer break, we would end up not having a committee in place until sometime in October.

As mentioned before, Vivian Brocard will be chairing the Search Committee. 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 firms specializing in executive placement for non-profit organizations, and is exceptionally well qualified to lead this effort. (Although Vivian is a professional search executive for a major non-profit executive search firm, she is performing this role strictly as a member of St. Mary's.)

A number of parish members have already expressed an interest in serving on the Search Committee, and we certainly want people who are motivated to be on the committee. To insure that we select the best committee possible, and do so openly and transparently, the Vestry is

going to use the process and timeline described in the next six paragraphs of this letter to appoint the members. We have reviewed this process with the Diocese to make sure it is in accordance with church law and Diocesan recommended best practices.

The Vestry expects that the Search Committee will have between eight to twelve members that represent a cross-section of the membership of St. Mary's, including members young and old, recent joiners and old-timers, male and female, families and singles. Two members will likely come from the Vestry; although the Wardens cannot serve as voting members, they will be ex-officio members and can attend meetings as needed. The Diocesan guidelines for "Desired Characteristics of Search Committee Members" include "Team player; Person of prayer; Member in good standing (attends church regularly, giver of record, gives of time and talent); Willing to work for the good of the church and not partisanship; No hidden agendas; Can maintain confidentiality."

We are asking for both volunteers and nominations for people to serve on the search committee. A box for names will be placed in the entrance to the church sometime after the service on Sunday April 5. ***If you wish to volunteer, or nominate someone else, please put the name of the person on a piece of paper, along with your reasons why you/the nominee would be a good member of the search committee, and place the paper in the box. We will collect names through the end of the day of Sunday, April 26.***

If you are considering volunteering or nominating for the Search Committee, please keep in mind that there will be a serious time commitment - as many as one or more meetings per week once a final pool of candidates is identified - as well as obligations of strict confidentiality. Search Committee volunteers will also be expected to attend kick-off meetings for the search scheduled for Sunday, June 7 and the weekend of June 12 and 13.

Everybody whose name is entered into the box will be given strong and serious consideration by the Vestry. However, ***given the importance of having a balanced, representative cross-section of the congregation, volunteers and nominees may or may not be appointed to the Search Committee.*** The Vestry may also decide to ask someone to serve who did not volunteer or was not otherwise nominated.

All names entered in consideration will be reviewed and discussed by the entire Vestry at the Vestry meeting on Tuesday, April 28. Based on this discussion, a nominating committee consisting of the two Wardens and Search Committee Chair (and advised by Peter) will prayerfully prepare a proposed slate of candidates. This slate of candidates will be brought before the full Vestry for discussion and final approval at the Vestry meeting on Tuesday, May 19. The candidates, and those who volunteered but are not on the slate, will be informed shortly after, and an announcement to the parish made during the week of May 24.

The Search Process will formally begin with a parish-wide meeting following a special service on Sunday, June 7, that all are invited to attend. Please see the additional details toward the end of this letter.

IMPORTANT DATES IN MAY AND JUNE

Please note that the three consecutive Sundays of May 31, June 7 and June 14 will all be special events in the life of our parish.

Peter's last Sunday as rector of St. Mary's will be Sunday, May 31. This Sunday is also Pentecost Sunday - the birthday of the church - and Peter thought that the celebration of the birth of the church would also be a fitting day to celebrate his ministry. More details on the events of Sunday, May 31 will be provided in a future letter.

On ***Sunday, June 7***, the Reverend Cynthia Hubbard of the Diocesan Office of Transition Ministry will be our guest celebrant. During the 10AM service, Cynthia will formally ***commission the Search Committee*** with the task of recruiting a new rector to St. Mary's. Following the 10AM service will be a ***parish-wide meeting in the parish hall, led by Cynthia and assisted by Search Committee Chair Vivian Brocard, formally beginning the search process.*** More details on this will be provided closer to the event.

Lastly, ***Sunday, June 14 is our Annual Church Picnic.*** Note that we are breaking with custom and holding it the week *before* Fathers' Day. And thank you to Stephan Braun for once again organizing this.

FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS

We are all aware that rector transitions can be times of uncertainty and anxiety, yet I believe that we are a strong parish and can come through this transition even stronger. The Vestry and Wardens believe it is vital that we keep the parish informed as best we can about what is going on, keeping you current about the timelines and processes in making certain decisions, and allowing for as much input into the process from the parish as we can. Please do keep in mind that although we will listen to all feedback, there are times when decisions will need to be made without consulting the entire parish, and that everyone will not agree with some of the decisions that are made. Just please remember that your parish leadership is doing its utmost to make the best decisions for the future of the parish as a whole.

The Wardens and Vestry intend on using the various communication methods at our disposal to keep you informed of the details of this transition, all the way through the appointment of a new rector. Major announcements will be made during the 10AM Sunday service, as well as in letters like this one mailed to all members of the parish (though hopefully not all as long as this one.)

We will also use the parish newsletter *Good News*, the church email list and the church website to communicate and reiterate important information. If you have received this letter, you should also be receiving the *Good News*. If for some reason you are not, or know someone who should be on the parish mailing list but isn't, please contact our Administrative Assistant Denise Flanagan at either 617-527-4769 or denise@st-marys-episcopal.org.

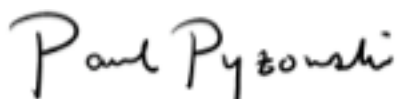
We also plan on using email and the parish website for updates. If you are not on the parish email list, you can register at http://st-marys-episcopal.org/Mailing_List.html. Also, the church website has a very active blog that is updated at least once per week, see <http://st-marys-episcopal.org/News/News.html>.

SOME LAST THOUGHTS

As I was finishing this letter, I realized that it is almost entirely about the transition and that I have said almost nothing about Peter. This is not to slight him in any way. As Bishop Bud said this past Sunday, we should make these next few months a celebration of Peter. It is the nature of these transitions that we need to look to the future as we live in the present while remembering the past, and that it all gets jumbled together in the process of life. That this letter is one of detailed planning that looks to the future is meant in no way to diminish our celebration of Peter's ministry and the enjoyment of his last two months as rector. (Plus, if I tried to write something flowery about him, he would just laugh at me.)

However, as we enter into Holy Week and Easter, I will encourage you to attend as many of the services that you can that week, and especially the special services of Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday. This is not just because this will be Peter's last Holy Week with us. While growing up, my father told me that the Holy Week services would be the ones that I would remember most later in life, and he was right. The demands of 21st century affluent New England are not always compatible with quiet weekday evening services meditating on our faith, but if you can attend, please do so.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Pyzowski". The letters are dark and fluid, with a personal touch.

Paul Pyzowski