

LETTER FROM JR & SR. WARDENS TO EMMANUEL PARISH
MAY 10, 2016

Several weeks ago, shortly after Dan made his decision to retire known to the congregation at large, Ida, the Senior Warden, and I stood before participants during all four Sunday services. We shared that we had a meeting scheduled with the Bishop and the Canon to the Ordinary to discuss the transition process currently used in the Diocese of Missouri.

We want to let you know that the meeting has taken place and both Ida and I were encouraged with what we heard. Staff in the Diocesan office are fully aware of the complexity and vitality of our parish. They are committed to working with our Vestry to secure the best possible results from searches for both Interim and permanent Clergy.

For those in our congregation who are not familiar with Episcopal tradition and process and for those who have never experienced a Rector search, we appreciate that there is much that is unknown and unfamiliar. We also recognize that for those who have already been through one or more searches, there's probably a desire not to go through another one. We understand but we also need to honor where we are.

The process of discerning who we are as a congregation, where we are being led by the Holy Spirit, and who will be called to accompany us on our journey is a process that will take many months and has many stages. To skip any part of the process out of our own anxieties would be a disservice to the long-term health of the congregation we all love.

There will be time for all of us to learn about the transition process; time for education about how a community reflects on its past and plans for the future; time for each person to listen to fellow parishioners and to express their own views - and there are folks specifically trained to help us do that.

But, for now, our task is to say goodbye to Dan and his family, to celebrate the gifts he has offered freely and the love and respect he has shown to us all, and to acknowledge the contributions he has made not only to our parish but to the community at large. It is a time to celebrate with him and to wish him well as he begins his own new season of retirement and re-definition.

Several events from which parishioners can choose are being planned to celebrate Dan's retirement, and as it always does at Emmanuel, they will all involve food, entertainment, and, I suspect, as much laughter as tears. And yes, you can choose to attend ALL events!

Expect to see many more announcements about the celebration plans - **and how you can help** - coming in future email blasts and newsletter articles.

Your wardens will be in touch after those celebrations about the next stages of the transition process.

Donna Erickson and Ida Early