

## Letter from your Priest-in-Charge

My time with you is rapidly coming to an end, and I want to let you know of several things I'd like to accomplish before then. A very important piece of this was Canon Augusta Anderson's visit to the parish in September. She was such an encouraging, supportive presence that day. She celebrated the Eucharist and preached, and following time with those who were in church that Sunday, she met with the Vestry. Canon Augusta was concerned primarily to find out what level of energy the Vestry thought the church had right now either to maintain the kind of pastoral care I was asked to do during this past year, or boldly and energetically to set the mission of the Church of the Epiphany in a new direction, with the goal being of deliberately trying new ways of attracting new members to the church, and further fulfilling the church's evangelical mission. After considerable discussion, and a frank facing of the fact that so few people were doing so much just to keep the church maintaining things as they've been, the conclusion was reached that for the year to come, another year of pastoral care such as I was asked to provide will best support the church's ministries and outreach. So Canon Augusta, in collaboration with the bishop, will find a priest who can help provide the pastoral care and skills of maintaining what is currently happening at the Church of the Epiphany for the coming year, with the hope that given another year to gain strength and courage, a few new things can be attempted next year. This, at least, is how I perceive the way forward, on the basis of the conversations Canon Augusta had with the parish and the vestry when she visited on September 9.

One thing Canon Augusta noticed when she visited was the way the congregation was scattered all over the pews. That can't support a sense of community, and being together, she thought. So during her conversation with the Vestry, it was proposed to have the congregation move closer together for the service; and to that end, only the first 6 pews on either side of the aisle will be used for seating. The others will be roped off. We'll see how this works in October, and get some feedback early in November.

As you know, during the time of the sermon I've been conducting a class for those interested in being confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church when the bishop comes early in the new year. I expect this "class" will continue through the Sundays in October, along with the brief teaching I've been doing following the Collect of the Day.

I also want to up-date the certificates of those performing various liturgical functions in the service--layreaders, chalicists--and those who are Lay Eucharistic Ministers--so they can perform their duties with the knowledge and full support of the bishop and the diocese. I plan to give these up-dated certificates when those performing these ministries are re-dedicated to their work at a short service during the Eucharist on a Sunday in November.

Finally, I want to gather the members of the Church of the Epiphany's chapter of The Daughters of the King on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, to re-dedicate them to their holy work of prayer and service for those primarily in the parish.

Let me say once again--and I've said it before, and I can't say it enough--what a blessing and a pleasure it's been to be a part of your church life during this past year. Oh, how I love you and wish you every blessing for the year, and years, to come. And Laurel feels the same way as I do.

The Peace of God be with you all.

*Perrin*