

April 7, 2021

Dear People of Saint Luke's,

It is with mixed-feelings that I am sending you this message today. Feelings of sadness, excitement and thankfulness.

Yesterday, Tuesday April 6, I submitted my resignation to the Vestry because I have discerned and accepted a new call from the Lord to serve the parish of Emmanuel, in Delaplane, Va. My last Sunday with you will be on May 2nd and my last day at the office the following Friday. Then I will be on leave. We will move to Virginia just after Clement's graduation on May 25. My first Sunday with the people of Emmanuel is June 6.

So, even if I am excited about this new calling from the Lord, I'm sad to leave you and St Luke's. I'm so thankful that the Lord called me to be your rector to journey with you. Together we did our best to love and serve the Lord by loving and serving those around us. Together we worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Together we laughed, smiled, cried, argued, shared, found new ways to serve the Lord and those around us. Together we learned how to be a spiritual and welcoming Christian community where all are welcome. During these almost seven years, I have come to know you, and I have accompanied some of you through times of joy and thanksgiving, and through times of trials, losses, and mourning. Sometimes we disagreed, but always in the love that we are called to share for Christ's sake.

Looking back at my time with you, I'm amazed by what the Lord did in our midst, always calling new brothers and sisters to join our family, helping us to find new ideas for our various ministries. Some ideas did not last long, like the Taize services we held for almost a year, others were successful like the Steven Ministry and the Food Pantry among many others.

I'm so grateful for the work accomplished by all the commissions and ministries, and I want to thank from the bottom of my heart all who have been serving in leadership positions during my tenure: Wardens, Commission Chairs, people in charge of our various ministries, deacons and retired clergy. I'm so aware that nothing could have been done without you.

But the leaders of Commissions and Ministries could not do anything without the volunteers who are serving these commissions and ministries. I want to thank you who have been doing the work in all our various groups. It's because of you that St Luke's is this wonderful Christian community.

I was not alone serving St Luke's. In addition to all of you, the Saints of St Luke's who are the soul of our congregation, I have also been supported by a wonderful and very dedicated staff and by my beloved wife. She not only did a fantastic job with the Youth and Children ministry, but also supported me in good and bad times at home.

Change is not easy, and I would like to invite you to look at the future with hope. I told you more than once that St Luke's is not the rector but the people. St Luke's is a strong, loving

and lovable congregation. Your Vestry and your Wardens are dedicated, your Commission chairs are enthusiastic about their ministries, so all together you will strive and bring Christ's light to this part of the world. Fear not, the Lord will guide you as long as you are willing to listen to the guidance of the Spirit.

The transition process will give you the chance to assess what is working and what is not. This will be a time for you with your Vestry to discern what the Lord wants you to be and to do, and this is exciting! Fear not, the Risen Lord will be with you as He has always been. St. Luke's is a vibrant, healthy congregation with strong lay leaders and the diocese will help your Vestry during the time of Transition, so I feel as though I am leaving you in the best of hands. As the Quad-cities area is growing, the future of this parish is bright as is God's dream for you.

Once again, I'm so thankful and feel so blessed for the chance that was given to me to serve you with the best of my abilities. I love you all, and the only thing I ask of you is to welcome and love your next rector and their family as you have loved me and my family. You have been a blessing to us. I will keep you in my heart for as long as I live.

God bless you my dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Pierre-Henry+