

November 20, 2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

In all my years as a priest you may be surprised to know that I have never used this greeting, made famous by the infamous apostle Paul, in my email, church newsletters, or to open sermons. Yet, as I write this I think to myself that Emily may quickly recall my using that greeting in an old newsletter column.

Paul wrote letters of encouragement to churches he either founded or in which he intimately knew its members and labored among them.

While I respectfully defer to Randall's leadership when some of you worked with him to found St. Andrew's, I do know some of you well enough to borrow Paul's heart to send my greetings and love to you all. Fellow laborers in the kingdom that God has entrusted to us.

My heart is proud of your determination in starting a congregation 50 years ago, and even more so for not resting in showing the face of Christ to each other, in Burke/Springfield, and beyond.

In his famous letter of all letters, Paul writes "I give thanks to God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him - in speech and knowledge of every kind - so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift..."

Enrich. Many of you know of my love for words. And so, I leave this word for you this morning, and for the next 50 years: enrich.

It means to make something or someone better. To give back. To give something of yourself for the greater good. Expecting nothing in return.

Enrich: FACETS, CROP Walk, Relay for Life. Peace Islamic Center. Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. The Preschool. Hypothermia Prevention Week. Wednesday morning Chapel and Bible study. Scouts. Helping in small ways to make something or someone better.

You have been unselfish. You opened your doors and lives to me and Alexis. And you have made our lives much richer for having known you and labored among you to enrich the lives of so many others. From those down the pew from you to, in some instances, those around the world.

You are a great incubator (as Barbara Brown Taylor might say) of enrichment.

You are a bunch of sweethearts. You really are. Even saints.

With love and gratitude to have served among you, I remain

Faithfully yours,

Tim+