

**Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”**

Hello, fellow St. Philips congregants. I’m Holly Meiners, your vestry chaplain for Pastoral Care. It’s springtime, the seagulls are cawing, the inland birds are chirping and the flowers are blooming again in Southport. Our new Parish Hall is nearing completion and our church is growing. These are all positive changes, giving us “hope and a future”.

Along with these changes comes the need to adapt our services and expectations. Pastoral Care is no exception. Our church has grown from a Pastoral to a Program Church and pastoral care must be shared by our clergy and well trained lay volunteers, including Stephens Ministers. My own experience on vestries is a perfect example of the difference between a Pastoral and Program Church. I was vestry person for pastoral care in a pastoral church in Connecticut. My responsibilities included being chairperson of the pastoral care committee. At St. Philips, I have oversight and responsibility for communication between the vestry and our pastoral care related lay volunteer committees. My role has changed, due to the size of the church, and the dedication of our lay volunteers.

As Father Eric said in his March 20<sup>th</sup> sermon, being a volunteer draws the giver to a greater relationship with our church and God. We on the vestry are very grateful for all the volunteers that make our mission possible and rewarding. The lord gave us all gifts of abilities that we didn’t work for, or deserve. I believe he expects us to make full use of them in his service.