



**Rector, Wardens and Vestry of
Christ Church
220 Owenville Rd
West River MD 20778**

November 15, 2024

Dear Friends of Christ Church,

I have been grateful for so many of you who have not only been aware, but so sympathetic and supportive of my various attempts to be in two places at once — at home with Kim and our extended families in Syracuse, and at home with you here in West River. Your love and care has been yet another way that Christ Church has continued to be the warmest, most enjoyable congregation in my 4 decades of pastoral experience. I really am at a loss to find the words to convey how much you have meant to me and how much you have deepened my own spiritual experience and life. I cannot thank you enough. To borrow from the last stanza in *Amazing Grace*, “when we’ve been there 10,000 years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no fewer days to sing your praise than when we’d first begun.”

So I am sad to tell you that the time has come for me to admit that Kim and I need to return to the north. You know that I’ve been pondering this for quite some time with my spiritual directors, advisors, friends, and our Bishops, past and present. Of course, I’ve talked this through with our Wardens and the Diocese, not only for what this means for Kim and me, but also and especially for what it means for Christ Church.

My plan is to lead you through Christmas and to the end of December. I want to be available for each of you during this time. I urge you to join me for our Advent studies on Wednesday evenings from next week, Nov 20, through Dec 18, where one more time I’ll do my best to inspire your faith and spiritual life. Together, we will prayerfully imagine what God has been doing and will continue doing through Christ Church, as God’s Kingdom comes increasingly among us. Kim and I will also invite you to the Rectory for a pot-luck/open house on Nov 22, and are considering how best to have one more get together in December, if possible.

In the meantime, our Diocesan Transitions Officer, Kristin, will begin meeting with our Wardens and Vestry to plan next next steps for Christ Church. Kristin and our Bishop Carrie both assure me that they have your best interests and needs well in sight, and will work with you in the days to come.

See you Sunday.

Fondly and faithfully,

The Rev. Dr. Richard Laribee



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Dear Christ Church Community:

While we are saddened at the pending departure of our friends Rick and Kim, and many will deeply feel the absence of our teacher and spiritual leader of nearly five years, we are happy for Rick and Kim as they begin their next exciting chapter of life, up north. We are richer for the light we have shared with them.

We will simultaneously begin a new chapter in the life of our beloved Christ Church community. This next chapter will include:

- Vestry work with the Diocesan Transition Officer, Kristin Krantz, to find our next Pastor. Our first meeting with Kristin is Monday, 18 November. This meeting will help us understand the process ahead of us, and set it in motion.
- Real work. The search process is very important and will benefit our church community as we examine our identity and needs as a parish. Given the amazing amount of change we all have experienced together in the last six years (since our last search for a Pastor), it will be interesting to understand how we have changed, and stayed the same.
- Close interaction with Diocesan leadership, who have assured us of their support in our transition.

We have a lot going for us as we look to the future, and our growth over the last five years puts us in a good position in terms of our search for our new spiritual leader. Our loving community and careful stewardship of our resources give us many options in terms of selecting a Pastor. We are known in the Diocese as a welcoming and well-managed church, and that will benefit us as we proceed.

As we are just beginning this chapter, many details are yet to come into view, and we will communicate more as they do.

Yours Faithfully,

The Wardens and Vestry of Christ Church