



December 2, 2021

Notice of Rector's Resignation and Retirement

Dear people of Ascension,

Earlier this evening I informed the Vestry of my plans to resign my ministry as your Rector and to retire. Subject to further conversation with the Wardens and others, my final Sunday with you will be the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, February 27, 2022

In mid-January, I will have been with you for six remarkable and meaningful years. I've been greatly blessed here as priest and pastor, in particular by way of Ascension's liturgies and music and by those of you who have been humbling examples to me of perseverance, patience and goodwill. We've made strides, I believe, in more genuine fellowship and mutual care. I am optimistic about what lies ahead for you.

Over the past few years, my doctor has been increasingly concerned about some stress-related medical conditions, including but not limited to hypertension. Contributing factors have arguably been the ever-present and ever-changing needs, deadlines and expectations of parish ministry and the pandemic's added challenges. My decision and timing have arisen in no small part from my apparent need for rest and recovery in body, mind and spirit.

My wife Brooke and I are not altogether clear about other aspects of what lies ahead for us. However, earlier this year we purchased a home in San Miguel de Allende, in Central Mexico, where we lived during a six-month sabbatical in 2005. We look forward to spending time both there and here in Chicago, and to fewer pressured 'working' weekends and holidays, and to learning in faith what forms our ministries will take in the next chapters of our lives.

For the remainder of my time with you, however, there is work to be done! Among other commitments, I will be partnering with the Wardens and Vestry, our Ascension staff and members of our diocesan staff to contribute, as asked, in preparing for what lies ahead for Ascension. Please join me in prayers for positive transitions, for those entrusted with leadership and decisions, and for what you can offer for the good of Ascension and all who worship and serve here.

In faith, hope and love,

The Rev. Patrick Raymond, Rector



Wardens' Message

Dear members and friends of Ascension,

As you now know, Fr. Raymond has shared with the Vestry his plans to resign his ministry as Ascension's 17th Rector and to retire early next year. We have been in conversation with him about this and would like to begin to answer some of the questions that you may already have about our way forward.

At its best, the departure of a rector and the call and hiring of a new rector reflect a positive partnership between a parish and bishop's staff. We have already had contact with Mother Andrea Mysen, Director of Ministries for the Diocese of Chicago, and Father Kevin Caruso, a trained parish transition consultant and Rector of Trinity Church, Wheaton. Both have proven knowledgeable and supportive, and Mother Mysen has worked periodically with our Vestry since early in Fr. Raymond's ministry. They are ready to provide assistance and guidance to us now.

We've been encouraged to pay attention to our good-byes. A genuine and loving farewell to Fr. Raymond and his family will help us to close one chapter and prepare for the next. Addressing any related pastoral, practical and strategic matters can help us to prepare for our next chapter. We hope you will join us in an intentional and positive farewell.

A rector search rarely unfolds speedily. It may take a year or more and it typically begins with a parish's collective self-examination about its mission, ministries, needs, challenges and hopes. We have had some preliminary conversations with Mother Mysen and Fr. Caruso about possible rector search models and timelines; however no decisions have yet been made on the path forward.

We will likely be relying on the ministry and leadership of an interim rector. The process of identifying an interim rector can often (but not always) be resolved fairly quickly. By diocesan policy, interim rectors are not candidates for the permanent rector position.

Mother Meghan Murphy-Gill, our Curate, has rapidly formed positive relationships among us and has made positive contributions to many of our ministries. She will not be asked to serve as Interim Rector, however, nor will she be a candidate for Rector. Her present contract ends in August 2022, and we will be grateful for the continuity she can provide in the coming months.

Our interest in identifying strong Vestry candidates to be elected at our January 30, 2022, Annual Meeting has greater significance now due to the role of the Wardens and Vestry in the search and call of a new Rector. Please prayerfully consider serving and share your related questions and/or interest with a Warden or Vestry member and Nominating Committee Chairperson Jim Lo Bello.

We will do our best to communicate with you when and as appropriate. Feel free to share your questions along the way.

Faithfully,


Cheryl Peterson, Senior Warden


Kenneth Kelling, Junior Warden