

This is what is supposed to happen. It's all more than good! I have to say, I like it when "what is supposed to happen happens" and a task undertaken faithfully is completed. Transition is a part of the Church's life and growth because that is how we move to new life ahead. Sometimes something comes to an end and the new arises. And sometimes, like this transition, something new arises and that signals an ending. T. S. Eliot in his "Four Quartets" writes *every ending is a beginning and every beginning points to an end*. We know that all endings and beginnings point to resurrection hope and life we know in Christ Jesus. And this is a hope that embraces us all, you and me.

St. Paul reminds us in his first letter to the Corinthians that the leadership of the church changes. Leaders are here for a season and then they go and others come. Some plant, others water, but God gives the growth. And the foundation built upon is Christ Jesus. And indeed, there is a strong foundation in Christ here at The Falls Church Episcopal. And so after 18 months of building, planting and watering with you, it is time for me to begin to say farewell. It's hard to believe that I have only about two more weeks before my tenure ends with you and our wonderful staff and assisting clergy.

My emotions are complex. First of all, there is immense gratitude for you and the privilege of serving with you. This privilege of serving as your Interim Rector will always be a source of great joy for me and for Tippy. I have grown to love you individually and collectively as a parish with your vibrant and faithful mission. The pandemics (viral, racial, economic, social) we've faced have been momentous. We have worked hard together to respond faithfully as God calls us. And because we have shared so much in such a short time, sharing our very lives and hopes and struggles, I am also sad. I will miss you. And even though it is great to finish a task, there is always the "what's next" feeling. I love the church and the ministry I share and so I'm in a liminal time, which is not always easy.

But I wake up every morning and face the rising sun reciting 1st Peter 1:3: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By God's great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead.* This ending we are experiencing will find its fulfillment in resurrection life, new life. And because our Triune God is in the mix, it will be nothing short of love, vibrancy and growth. I'm going to bank on that, and I trust you will, too. I still have a bit of work to accomplish here, but we also have some celebrating to do with an ending that opens up new beginnings and new life for us all.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.