

We water seeds already planted, knowing they hold future promise.

There are many reasons Jesus used so many agricultural metaphors, and one is because they encapsulate something about the organic nature of our individual and communal faith lives. I know that during my time at The Falls Church, I was watering seeds that had already been planted in this congregation by those who had come before. They were seeds planted by those gathered in Robin and Bill Fetsch's living room and later in the Presbyterian Choir Loft. They were seeds planted by the likes of Michael Pipkin, Kathy Tibbets, Michael Hinson, Rosemari Sullivan, Jean Milliken, Nina Bacas, and John Ohmer – the clergy who have tended The Falls Church Episcopal in their own ways and times. I trust that seeds I may have planted in this community will be nurtured along in the future. Please know just how many seeds The Falls Church has planted in my heart that I will continue to tend.

And in the end, never forget, the seeds may have been watered and planted, but it is [God who gives the growth.](#)

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the staff at The Falls Church. It is a strange and wonderful thing to work at what is essentially a church plant inside an enormous and historic property. This staff is faithful, loyal, incredibly adaptable, and wildly creative. No one can do everything, but each of them does something – their thing - and does it very well. They are a reflection of the larger Body of Christ, in which each person is [individually gifted for ministry.](#) And I particularly want to thank Father Andy for his gracious support as I've navigated this process and for his leadership during a remarkably challenging year.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

I've been with The Falls Church for a few of its steps along the way, and now it's my turn to step aside to make space. It's my turn to point to the deep truth that times of transition are yet another opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. Practically, this means a few things. I will be close by at Holy Cross, Dunn Loring, but it is a good and healthy tradition in the church that departing clergy not exercise pastoral leadership in their former congregations...it gets too confusing for all involved. So, I will not function as your priest anymore – no sacraments, no pastoral visits or hospital care. In the future, if there are ways in which I might be helpful to The Falls Church, it will be up to your clergy to reach out to me. This is hard-learned wisdom in the Church, and I have deep respect for it.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

Words cannot express how grateful I am to the Master Builder for calling me as the Associate Rector of The Falls Church. The privilege of walking alongside this community for this particular five years in your life and in mine is something I will always treasure. In these last few weeks, I have gotten the most lovely and generous notes from many of you, and Sunday's celebration of our ministry together was perfect in a way I never could have imagined given these COVID-conditions. I want to thank the team that help put that celebration together – Fr. Andy Anderson, Erin Muhlbradt, Jill Kettler, Paul Rosbolt, Nancy Councilor, Danielle Rampton, Errin Matechak, Tiffany Smith, Chris Licciardi, Geoff Kannan, Julie Tucker, Jeanine Bonds, Dave Raglin and Barb Mantegani. Thank you to everyone who contributed a note to the scrapbook. Thank you to everyone who gave so generously to my farewell purse – some of that money is going to pay for a little retreat time for me in a cabin out in the Shenandoah in the next few weeks. Thank you to everyone who drove by on Sunday afternoon to say they wish me and Alex well. I left on Sunday feeling very loved by The Falls Church community. I hope you felt my love back.

The Falls Church will always remain in my prayers and in my heart.

With gratitude and love,
Kelly+