

## **A Farewell from the Rev. Laura Palmer**

**9/25/25**

Gratitude has always meant to me a “love that knows it’s been blessed” which is why the profound gratitude I feel towards all of you at St. Martin’s also humbles me.

My farewell Sunday was exhilarating because of the choir – always because of the choir—but also because Rutter’s, “The Lord Bless You and Keep You” and Widor’s Toccata opened the heavens and my heart. (The Widor became an anthem of gratitude for me when I discovered that the words “Now thank we all our God,” slip right into the build-up to its conclusion).

But surpassing even the music were the kind and most generous words parishioners offered up in thanksgiving for my ministry in the Litany of Farewell. I was stunned.

Stunned because it surely wasn’t me, it was we. “You know it’s a vocation if it keeps making more of you,” are words from Gail Godwin’s *Evensong*.

You have made more me, and we have made more of each other and together, as a parish, because of your trust in each other and in me. But it is our love for St. Martin’s and our determination to do all that we can through this community to carry the light and love of Christ into our beleaguered world that matter most.

To paraphrase a Late Night talk show host this week, “I am not important. What is important is that we get to live in a country that allows us to worship freely.” May we never take that freedom for granted. Rectors, interims, priest associates and deacons all come and go, small streams that flow into the river between St. Martin’s past and future.

At the reception following the service, I received a beautiful binder with all my sermons, a framed photograph of St. Martin’s with a rainbow arching over it, and then, a collection of 56 notes, letters, and even a poem from parishioners. (Rumor has it that Martha Crowell might have had something to do with this so thank you, Martha.)

The love and generosity of spirit expressed has humbled me even more. Some moments that were small for me, were not so small for you, an affirmation that everything matters and that we never know the impact a simple act of kindness might have on someone else.

I’ve never believed that “God doesn’t give you more than you can handle.” But I do believe that there is nothing “a community can’t bear” when we bear it together.

We've done that superbly. The staff I've worked with, Lorie, Noor, James and Tyrone are sensational. I cherish them for their humor and have relied on them for always going above and beyond. My clergy colleagues, Mary, Luke, and Carol (prior to her retirement), have been steadfast and stellar.

Connie Haggard, the hard drive of St. Martin's institutional memory and the light that has led generations forward, is a treasure. Kate Maus leads our many volunteers with smarts and kindness.

Take what we have created and hurl it into your future together. Never has your fierce faith, generous hearts and abundant love of Christ been more necessary and needed in our community and our world.

And do know that the pilot light of love in my heart is braver and brighter because of you.