

A Letter from the Rev'd Dena Whalen on the Retirement of the Rev'd Deacon Kay Swindell

Beloved of St. Paul's,

Four years ago, on Christmas Eve, 2015, Kay Swindell became the Deacon at St. Paul's. Since then she has been present in the deacon's role at Sunday worship. She has also been present among us during the week participating in staff meetings, with special attention to our newcomers' ministry, leading bible studies, and pastoral care.

Having served as a vocational deacon in the Diocese of East Carolina for 27 years, Kay has decided it is time to retire from active ordained ministry. Her last official Sunday at St. Paul's will be May 5th when she will be the preacher.

Before arriving at St. Paul's, Kay served at St. Anne's in Jacksonville for 18 years where she was the Ministry Coordinator. (They called her the cruise director of St. Anne's!) She then served at St. Philip's, Holly Ridge, for 5 years. She was involved in youth ministry at the parish and with the diocese, having served on Happening teams and the Youth Commission. She worked with doctors, pharmacists, nurses and social workers, through Onslow Outreach Ministries, to establish the Caring Community Clinic, a free medical clinic in Jacksonville for uninsured residents of the county. She received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award from N. C. Governor, Pat McCrory for this work. What began as a two-night-a-week medical clinic is now open 5 days a week and includes a dental clinic.

Kay and Hannah, a therapy dog, tended to patients at Onslow Memorial Hospital for 5 years. Kay has stories to tell about the holy encounters she and Hannah shared. Kay has also served as the Spiritual Director for Cursillo.

While we will miss Kay in her role as deacon, you will be glad to know that she and her husband Bob will continue to worship at St. Paul's and enjoy the friendships that have grown.

To honor Kay and to give glory to God for her vocation as a deacon, it is fitting to make donations to a ministry that Kay and Bob support: Thistle Farms- www.thistlefarms.org, which provides a safe and supportive place to live, meaningful work, and a lifelong sisterhood of support to women who have survived trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. If you would like to contribute toward a gift to Thistle Farms in Kay's honor, please make checks out to St. Paul's and a donation will be made in Kay's name.

In Christ's love,

Dena+