



Announcement of New Priest in Charge

The vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church is proud to present our new Priest in Charge, The Rev. J. Peter Swarr (pronounced “swore”)

Peter is a native of Biddeford and 1998 graduate of Kennebunk High School. He went to Wheaton College (Illinois) where he received a B. A. in History, Theology and Bible in 2002.

He earned his Master of Divinity in Preaching, Formation and Worship from Virginia Theological Seminary in 2006.

He has been rector at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, since August of 2009. Peter grew St. Mark’s from an average Sunday attendance of 89 to 120. He developed a new generation of leadership, enlivening community engagement, adult education, youth formation and communication mechanisms.

He and his wife Angela have two children, Lucy (8) and Eli (6). Angela grew up near Deering High School and is the daughter of Steve Young and Susan-Tully Young.

He announced his departure to St. Mark’s vestry last week and to the congregation on Sunday, September 27th. We wanted to get word to you as soon as possible. He has sent this letter of salutation to all of us. He will most likely be in our pulpit on November 29.

Here is Peter’s letter:

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I write these words with great joy. I am filled with an overflowing sense of gratitude that you have called me as your next priest. And in the midst of my gratitude, I am also filled with expectancy about beginning to work along with you in serving God and each other in the City of Portland. From the moment I began to listen to the call of God about Trinity, I have sensed energy, enthusiasm and hope fill me. I pray that you too, even as you have bid farewell to Larry, sense new possibilities beginning to dawn. God walks with us all in this time of change.

I have heard of your strength, your desire for growth, your care for one another, your commitment to children and youth, your joyful worship, and your desire to engage with the broader community. Being someone who was formed by Diocesan Youth Ministries, I know of your long history of engagement with families, youth, and children. I am convinced that if we continue to love one another, and to seek and serve Christ in our neighbor, God will do abundant and wonderful things. God will bring life.

Jesus made this clear when he said to his followers, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b). Jesus came so that ALL of us, no matter who we are, no matter what our background, no matter what our beliefs, may have abundant and overflowing life.

I am counting the days until we can find COVID appropriate ways to begin the process of knowing one another and doing the work Christ calls us to, living in the abundant love of God.

In the meantime, know that you are in my prayers and in my heart as I wrap up my time in Massachusetts and prepare to come home (Kennebunk High School Class of 1998). My wife, Angela, and our two children, Lucy and Eli, invite your prayers as we say goodbye, search for a home and transition to Portland.

May the Love of God fill you this day and always,

Fr. Peter Swarr

Selecting a new Priest in Charge was a difficult process. I want to thank Chris Fraser, Bill Gordon, Jane Hartwell, Tom Keating, Bill Spear and Marilyn Thomas from the vestry, and Ida Connolly, Jan Lewis and Jess Marino from the congregation, who formed our Discernment Committee. It was a pleasure working with them.

Hold onto your hats as Peter Swarr leads us into the future!

Bill Green
Senior Warden
September 28, 2020