

A look back at the year...

Looking over last year's Priest-in-charge report, I'm struck by the optimism with which I approached our time together. Not only that but also with the accomplishment of most of those hopes!

Interim ministries are 'iffy' things. They are like blind dates that can go either way: gloriously well or abysmally terrible. Either way, memorable. While we may have had a couple of glitches, I can safely say that from my point of view, my time here has been glorious and I fully expect that by the end of my tenure, we will remain so.

As we move into the final phase of my time with you, I believe that St. Andrew's is truly ready to find a new priest to be a part of your community. As I write, the Canonical Committee is preparing the parish profile to submit to the Synod Office. We are hoping that the process will move quickly to lead to the choice and acceptance of a call here. These are exciting times and you should all be proud of how the church has negotiated the choppy waters of interim ministry.

We have continued valued ministries to seniors' homes. We have knit prayer shawls, and supported the food bank, Christmas bureau and PWRDF. We stabilized finances, paid debt and maintained infrastructure. We have opened the church for social events and concerts. We cleaned up and planted flowers; we sang and praised; we laughed and cried together. We reflected on what we prize in this place and started to envision where we could go together here. All these things show a growing sense of community and hope.

We have been able to complete Screening in Faith police record checks. It is very important that anyone who is privy to private information or works with vulnerable persons have a current record check. The process is simple and free for volunteers. If you take on a job that requires a check, the office will be able to guide you in the process.

So it's been a good year. The coming year will be a year of more change and I am confident that St. Andrew's is ready to take on more transitions as you continue to grow.

I truly believe that those communities that want to grow must first find happiness in themselves. To attract others, you have to like yourselves and therefore have something to offer. This is where ministry and purpose come in. And that's a process that continues. As challenging as it may be, asking what we have to offer within and beyond has to be raised over and over.

Of course there are challenges.

- When a parish chooses to have half-time clergy, everyone has to step up and take on an active role. The people carrying out that active role have done a fantastic job but they can't do it forever. There will need to be continued commitment to St. Andrew's from many people.

- Looking back to past glory days is a trap of any organization. We have to believe that we are exactly in the place that God wants us to be right now, ready to learn and grow into God's purpose. It's more work to consider where we are called to be but infinitely more productive.
- Historically, we have measured church health by Sunday attendance. But vibrant healthy churches in this era often find that Sunday attendance may grow a bit, but that attendance at other events is what really gives a church life. Messy church, community meals, seniors support really add dimension and meaning to parishes.
- Everyone gets very tired of 'visioning' exercises and mission planning. I would suggest that you simply continue to take on a variety of smaller projects, as you have been doing. Then if one project gathers enthusiasm and energy, see where it could be expanded. But the focus of ministry and mission has to be in action. Reflection is a necessary part of the process but cannot be the center of mission.
- This parish has such a big heart. We will have to work on attaching to the new priest. Your canonical committee will do their very best to choose the new priest. My role here, if it is to be successful, is to be able to say goodbye with a good heart. I've known this from the beginning but of course, I'm attached and have come to love this parish. My prayer is that you open your big heart to the next incumbent priest and to make that relationship flourish. This will be easier than we can imagine now.

Thank you all for the past year of ministry.

Rev'd Helen Tervo
Interim Priest-in-Charge