



THE MISSION OF CHRIST CHURCH is to bring all persons to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through Word, Sacraments, and instruction, as taught through the Episcopal tradition, that all may know the joy and grace of faith, and to share that grace through outreach.

# *The Chronicler*

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## Gratitude and Grief

The other day during Sunday announcements I mentioned that after I am no longer the rector of Christ Church I will not be able to function as your priest. I also said that I can still be your friend. Believe me that it is difficult for me to say goodbye to you as your priest, but I am comforted that friendships can continue.

As I reflect on the past 17 years in preparation for taking my leave, I experience a profound sense of gratitude. I am thankful for the privilege of being involved in your lives. I am thankful for the honor of performing pastoral offices, such as marriages, prayers for the sick, and burials. I am thankful for my sacramental ministry among you, celebrating baptisms and Holy Communion, preparing and presenting candidates for confirmation. Mostly I am thankful that God led me to a place where I was happy, and my wife was happy, and where my children have grown up happy. That is truly a blessing, and not one every rector can claim.

There are far too many people I would like to thank by name than I possibly could, and I would be sure to forget someone. So let me thank everyone who has ever served in any of the parish's many different ministries, either as a leader or a 'worker bee.' These are the jobs that make this parish function. These are ministries that define Christ Church. None of it would work without the generosity of those who pitch in and offer their time and talent. God knows I have depended on you to be the ministers of the parish.

In chapter 4 of Ephesians St. Paul writes, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup>one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup>one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. <sup>7</sup>But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift... <sup>11</sup>The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." God does indeed give us all different gifts and call us each to a unique ministry. In the Body of Christ, each member plays a part and all the parts work together to do ministry. It's not that any one part is more important than any other. All parts are important and needed. I have been blessed as I played my part among you. Thank you all for playing your parts! The Body is much bigger than Christ Church, and we will still all be part of the same Body of which Jesus Christ is the head, even if we won't see each other regularly anymore.

Please know that I leave you with a heart full of gratitude and yet heavy from grief. I will miss you all terribly, though I take you with me in a way as well. Thank you for the memories, the ministry, the love, and the care you have given me and my family. May God bless you and keep you always.