

May 13, 2016

My dear Parish Family,

On Wednesday of last week when my lunch with Dennis turned into what I call "The R-word Lunch", I admittedly was entirely unprepared. Although we have always known that Dennis' retirement was imminent, I believe we all were silently operating under the hope that he would stay until he arrived at the mandatory retirement age of 72. Alas, our hope has not become the reality, so we now move to Plan B.

Regardless of the suddenness of this, and our current grieving while we wrangle with hanging onto our hats while steady as she goes, I feel confident in the ability of our strong parish family and Vestry to forge ahead and keep our eye on the ball. While I am certain there are those who are responding with a deep gasp and wish to pause on any forward movement (in particular the Elevator Project) until a new rector is in place, my personal opinion is that we must stay the course and be defined by our actions with deep faith. Dennis' departure is "new data" with which we must work, but it is not the end of the world.

While I understand that this development does complicate matters by casting a cloud of doubt on the future on many levels, I am not able to dwell on the sudden manner of things as it is too draining and doesn't accomplish the objective. So we will hold our heads high, keep our hearts filled with gratitude for what has gone before and what is to come, and get on with the business of taking good care of our beloved St. Barnabas with grace and wisdom and responsible action.

We have many blessings to count, and I believe that this is where we should focus our attention. We have been blessed by Dennis' steady and consistent leadership and love for our congregation. He is leaving us in very good condition on innumerable counts, and while we wish he would not go, it is time. I am thrilled for Dennis and for Grace that they will soon enter into a slower pace and an enjoyable retirement; we are very fortunate that they will remain on the island and in our lives and hearts.

Things are well in hand with a strong and very agreeable and thoughtful and soulful Vestry. I believe it is very important to be inclusive and keep you, the congregation, as informed as possible throughout the upcoming new chapter in the story of our beloved St. Barnabas.

Thank you for all that each of you bring to St. Barnabas and our parish family and I appreciate each and every thought and opinion shared. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Vestry at any time.

Warmest regards to each of you,

Virginia Walker  
Senior Warden