

November 14, 2009

An Open Letter to the Parish

Dear friends,

For a year now we have been praying a Collect that was specially written for St. John's that asks God to send to us a priest so gifted in His wisdom, love and strength that our whole parish family will be increasingly enlightened, made fit for His holy purposes and stirred to act promptly in answer to His every call. I am extremely please to tell you that God has indeed answered our prayers.

On November 2, the Search Committee presented to the Vestry their candidate of choice. The Vestry, after appropriate consideration and discussion, took the next step of bringing the candidate to Charlotte so we could get to know him. Last Sunday and Monday we spent many hours in various setting doing just that. We asked questions, we answered questions (yes, he had a few of his own for us!), he led us in Evening Prayers and gave a short Homily, we explored areas of mutual ministry, we compared his experience to the needs of St. John's and we shared your hopes and dreams for what St. John's wants to look like as a body of Christ.

The outcome was a unanimous vote to call the Reverend Paul S. Winton to be our next Rector. Following protocol, I called Bishop Curry to ask permission to issue the call. He was very gracious and said "*joyfully* give you permission to call this fine priest as your next Rector."

Father Paul, as he is called by those that know him, will be coming to us on January 24, 2010 from St. David's Episcopal Church in Roswell, GA. He has served St. David's as Rector for eight years and they will miss him greatly. So that you can get to know him a little before his arrival, an informal profile of Father Paul is included with this letter. It's a folksy, fun piece written by him that I think you will enjoy. To learn more about the work Fr. Paul has led at St. David's, go to their website at www.stdavidchurch.org and look around. I think you'll like what you see!

Please join me in thanking the members of the Search Committee for the outstanding work, dedication to purpose and extraordinary commitment of time they each gave in making this call a reality. Their collective discernment of God's will for St. John's will serve us well for many years to come.

Thanks be to God!

Faithfully,

Cathy Harrison
Senior Warden