



September 9, 2015

Dear sisters and brothers of Trinity Church:

Greetings to you in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord. We are about to begin a brand new journey together on September 20th, and I write to you with eager anticipation and great hope about all that God has in store for us in the days ahead!

Here are just a few particulars about your new rector. I am 55 years old, single, and the oldest of two children. "Carenda" is not a family name; it was my mother's concoction! I was born and raised in the village of Gardners, in the midst of Cumberland County's apple orchards. I love singing and playing music; learning new things; spending time outdoors; all manner of cats (especially Phoebe and Sam, my two Siamese cats); dogs; ice cream; and sharing a cup of tea or coffee and conversation with a friend. I love the laughter, spontaneity, play, and wonder of children. I admire the drive for competence and desire to forge their own unique identities of teens and young adults. I appreciate the calling, challenge, and responsibility borne by parents and grandparents, and aunts, uncles, siblings, and children in the lives of every family. I am grateful for the wisdom of elders, who have rich life experience to share from facing both adversity and blessing over a lifetime. And I absolutely LOVE a good story! Harry Potter, Dr. Seuss, James Michener, the Holy Scriptures.

We are about to begin writing a new chapter in the life of Trinity Church, yet we are certainly not starting from scratch! We are already part of the much older and larger story, THE STORY of God's love affair with this mysterious and messy world God made and pronounced "good". I expect us to encounter much mystery, messiness, and memorable ministry together in the days ahead. All shall be well when we can manage to remember three basic things:

1. God absolutely loves us unconditionally, and can be counted on to be compassionate and faithful, even when we are not. Our God is about healing love, mercy, and new life.
2. The journey we are on together as a parish is all about continually learning what it means to live in community as Jesus' disciples. Our life together is for the purpose of being equipped to share in Jesus' mission of bringing healing, liberation, reconciliation, and justice to the world.

3. It is crucial that each of us be attentive to and responsible for our own individual relationship with God, as well as the communal relationship we will nurture as part of the body of Christ in this particular place, at this particular time. The ministry of the body of Christ in this place will be directly affected by your and my faithful prayer and participation in our sacramental life together.

I so look forward to meeting and getting to know each of you - to listening, laughing, and learning about your hopes, dreams, and passions, as well as your cares and concerns for our world. You know this I'm sure, but it is worth repeating: Blessings will be richer as we share them gratefully and joyfully with each other. Burdens will be a bit more easily borne when we help and support one another when any one of us is facing and must carry a heavy load.

Senior warden Cheryl Stearn has given me a copy of the parish directory, and I have begun to pray for each person listed there. I ask now to be held in your prayers as well, and that you will continue praying for the life and ministry of Trinity parish. It is my deepest desire that the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - will become abundantly evident in our life together over the weeks, months, and years ahead. Let's make this new chapter we are called to write a "must read", and a "must share", to the glory of God!

Ever and always a sister servant of our risen Christ -

Carenda

The Reverend Carenda Baker +