

◆ THE MISSION ◆

ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS

JANUARY, 2004

"The Purpose of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Episcopal Church is to help people be transformed, gifted, called, equipped and sent into ministry by Christ in the context of a caring community of celebration."

Dear Friends,

There's something exhilarating about a new year – thinking of new beginnings, new opportunities, new options! The custom of making resolutions is one way of making that energy more concrete. Even if we don't follow through, we've taken the time to think of goals, to evaluate where we would like to change, to take a deep breath and go forward again.

This year we're going through this process together. We're looking realistically at our options, and we're also looking with faith and trust at the faithfulness of God. I think of the words to the old hymn –

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;

....

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

Because of all we've gone through this year, we face the new year with more intentional faith, more thoughtful decisions, more deliberate commitment to one another. However, our finances are down, so we had to make some hard choices, one of which was to delay the search process for a time. Your Vestry has listened to some options discussed with Bishop O'Neill and, after evaluating them, has asked me to stay on for two years as Priest-in-Charge, pending the Bishop's final approval. He will meet with the Vestry and Search Committee to finalize and clarify this process as soon as possible.

This role is different from that of Interim, which has several clear-cut tasks to accomplish between called priests. As the Bishop has explained it to me, he assesses a parish's situation, and if it meets certain criteria, he then appoints a priest-in-charge – a rector – for a certain period of time (usually one to three years). He then meets with the priest and Vestry to help them set goals for this period and follows up with periodic evaluations to see how well they are doing with meeting their goals. All of this is with the consensus of the Vestry. If you have input or concerns about this process, please communicate them to me or to any Vestry member. We want to represent everyone faithfully (one of our new year's resolutions: better communication with everybody!).

I'm excited for the opportunity to work together in a new way, to begin a new season together. Over the last few months, people have said things like, "I'd like to do this project" or "I want to begin something new." Now we'll have time and space to do those things God is moving us to do. We'll have time and space to make those new year's resolutions together, trusting God to lead us and equip us to carry them out.

Please plan on coming to the annual meeting, where we can discuss together our hopes and dreams. Remember Paul's advice: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, Rejoice.... The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:4-7)

May God's grace and peace be with you now and always! Happy New Year!
Mother Marilyn+