

From the Rector's Desk

Today for the first time in my life I wrote an "I quit!" letter!

Well, it was hardly an "I quit" – it was actually the formal letter a parish priest writes to the Bishop when the decision to retire has been made.

Many of you know that I reach retirement age next year, and I have spoken quietly for sometime now about my intention to keep that date.

The letter I wrote this morning simply makes it official: as of July 28th 2012, I will be fully retired. With holiday leave it will be July 1st that my desk will be cleared, and my last official ministry as rector of St. Luke's

will be done. In fact, the bishop announced at clergy conference a couple of weeks ago that this would be my last clergy conference since I would be retiring next year – and I am always obedient to my bishop!



To quote St. Paul, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" that a retirement be announced well ahead of time. Throughout the previous 37 years of my ministry, every time I have left a parish, the process leading to the decision to move has been cloaked in secrecy, and then announced with only three months notice. It was slightly different when I left Gold River, since that was an Anglican-United Church charge, and the United Church call system required that a vacancy be declared some six months earlier. I wasn't sure I enjoyed being declared a vacancy – though no doubt some would have agreed! 😊 But in every other parish, it was a huge trauma, and catapulted both my household and the parish into a flurry of hasty activity, such as wrapping up projects, saying farewells, arranging school transfers, looking for housing, and generally planning for a changed future that seemed suddenly thrust upon us.

There will be many things for me to learn about retirement, and about the possibilities for significant ministry after retirement. I will get to those with the Lord's help. But for now, there are many things for me to learn about this opportunity we share together, to move toward a wisely planned transition time for St. Luke's. I have long promised myself that (within the real physical limitations of age and energy) I would not put the flaps down, cut the engines back, lower the landing gear, and spend 12 months in a gradual descent to the landing strip of retirement. That would not be fair to the parish, nor would it reflect the sacred calling of priesthood, which is always for the building up of the mission of the Church in the world. A minister might retire, but God's mission for the healing of the world never stops, and will continue even without us. We have work to do, gifts to offer, and a gospel to preach with as much energy and commitment as ever.

However, it is my hope that we will spend some important time together over the next year, contemplating the ways in which this parish might continue joining in God's mission in our community, our city, and our world. What is God calling St. Luke's to be known for in the next decade? What work is God doing around us that we can enter into? What structures of leadership, lay and ordained, will best serve St. Luke's for the next decade? What forms of worship, traditional and new, will be best suited for the decade to come? These are some of the things we can talk about, as we move towards the celebration of a new chapter in St. Luke's life.

I am delighted, as I know you all are, that we have been able to welcome The Rev. William Ferrey, Deacon, into the parish. Will brings a view of the Church and Christian Mission which will be a great asset to us. I trust all our parishioners to welcome and support Will as a member of the family and the ministry team. We look forward to the time that he will be made priest and be able to preside at the altar with us.

I thank each of you for your prayers and support as we continue in this wonderful parish to serve Jesus Christ in his mission to the world.

- Peter