

Announcement from Fr. David

This past Tuesday, I met with the wardens and shared with them news that I am sharing with the parish this morning. After a period of considerable prayer and reflection, I have accepted a new appointment within the Diocese of Toronto and will be concluding my ministry at St. Thomas' at the end of May.

One of the realities of priestly ordained ministry is that priests don't stay in any one place forever. They come for a time to a parish, share their gifts while (at the same time) the parish endures their weaknesses, and then they move. By the end of May I will be within three months of concluding nine years here at St. Thomas', and what a nine years it will have been.

My deep sense and conviction is that, with our new building complete, this is a strategic moment in the life of the parish to renew its sense of vision and calling. Already this fall we have been experiencing a growing energy and momentum, and have welcomed many new people into our fellowship while also living into a renewed energy for outreach. I believe that this is an opportunity for the parish to work together to discern its future and to call a new leader who will, I am convinced, work with you to do amazing things at St. Thomas' – more, indeed, than you could ask or imagine.

While already I am grappling with the realization that I won't be part of that future beyond the end of May, I also have a strong sense of call to a new opportunity in parish ministry. On June 1st I will become the incumbent of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, which is located in Toronto near Bathurst and College Streets. St. Mary's has a unique and interesting history, liturgical and musical tradition, and I am looking forward to the challenges of exercising my priestly ministry there.

Mary Lou, Sarah, Rachel and I will be moving to Toronto after the current school year end, which means there will be a few weeks for me to commute. I'm grateful to the wardens for allowing us to continue to live in the Rectory until the end of June.

Many of you will, naturally, begin to wonder what happens next. The first thing I want to say is that I will remain fully committed and engaged in the life of St. Thomas' until the end of May, and I ask you to do the same. One of the most remarkable and wonderful things about this parish is how committed *you* are to ministry – to our worship, our fellowship, our pastoral care, the oversight and administration of the parish, and our outreach. Let us not stop, but rather continue.

The wardens will be meeting with Bishop Linda Nicholls early in the new calendar year to begin to work with her on this transition. In due course, Bishop Linda will appoint an interim priest-in-charge who will guide the parish through an interim period beginning in June. At the same time, the wardens will work with the bishop to convene a Parish Selection Committee, which includes the wardens, to develop a profile of St. Thomas'. In due course, this committee will interview candidates put forward by the bishop and will make a recommendation to her. You can expect opportunities to be involved in the development of a renewed vision for St. Thomas'.

We will have an opportunity, I know, to say good-bye, but that time is not yet. Now, I ask for your prayers – for this parish in a time of transition, and for all who worship and minister here, that they may be strengthened and deepened in their commitment of faith and ministry. May I also ask for your prayers for our family as we prepare to close this chapter of our lives and to begin a new chapter.

Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Amen.

*The Reverend David Harrison
13 December 2009*