

The Rev. Josh Stephens
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December 13, 2019

Dear Parishioners of St. John in the Wilderness,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

I often think of Advent as a time of expectancy and excitement even as we try to slow down the quick days of December and appreciate each moment of preparation with each other. While this Advent season will come and go, I have a sense that the excitement that I feel now is only going to build over the next few months until we get settled in Flat Rock and begin to get to know you better. It reminds of me the feeling that Rosanna and I have often felt when preparing for an adventure-filled trip of some kind. Yet, honestly, no trip that we have ever been on can compare to the adventure that awaits us as a parish family sharing in God's in-breaking Kingdom. It's the journey of a lifetime—and beyond!

The challenge, when on the eve of such expectation, is to stay present in “the now” and to appreciate each moment with each other. For us, that means finishing our work in Williamsburg and saying goodbye to friends at Bruton Parish who have become our family. For you that could mean appreciating the ways in which you have uniquely supported one another and St. John in the Wilderness during this interim period. I hope you will join me in thanking John Barker and the discernment committee and Carol Rector and the vestry for their hard work over the last two years. I also am so very grateful, as I know you are, for the energizing and dedicated work of Fr. Bill McCleery. Please thank him well!

It is clear to me that St. John in the Wilderness is a very special place with very special people. I am honored and humbled that you have called me to be your next rector. You will be in my prayers each day in the weeks ahead until I join you on February 23, 2020, the Last Sunday after the Epiphany of our Lord. Please keep Rosanna, Arlo, and me in your prayers as well, and may God bless you and keep you, now and always.

In Gratitude,

The Rev. Josh Stephens