



June 5, 2022 - Whitsunday: The Day of Pentecost

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In the feast of Pentecost and the transition out of one season into the next, I am reminded of the journey of Moses with the people of Israel. He pastored them on the way out of Egypt and through the wilderness as they made their way to the Promised Land, to the very banks of the Jordan River.

God has delivered us through a wilderness, over two years of life and ministry shaped by Covid, prayerfully behind us. I am firmly of the opinion that St. Andrew's weathered this season better than many, perhaps most. We added new members to the flock of Christ. Our life of prayer and worship adapted to the circumstances and continued through ups and downs. Fellowship is returning anew to feed the communal life shared with one another. Our stewardship and finances have remained strong, allowing us to undertake projects to refresh our space and to plan for more to come. With a ministry fair on the horizon at the end of the summer, St. Andrew's is preparing to launch into a new season.

Emerging from the pandemic desert, it has been my privilege to pastor St. Andrew's as we arrive to stand on the banks of this Jordan moment. It is time to begin afresh with a new vision and mission, and we ponder with hopeful expectation what the Lord has in store amidst the fertile fields on the other side. Though it will come with its own challenges, we know that it is good for the Lord who leads us is good.

There is more to Moses's story though. He did not cross the Jordan with Israel. His time of leadership was concluded at the far edge of the wilderness, and when the time was right, the mantle was passed to another to shepherd the flock into the Promised Land. And looking to the days ahead of St. Andrew's, I have prayerfully concluded that the moment has come for me to lay down the mantle of Rector, a mantle which another will take up according to the gracious providence of God in his timing.

And so, it is with mixed emotions that I share with you that I have accepted the call to serve as the Director of Admissions for Nashotah House Theological Seminary. My last Sunday will be July 10, and my resignation will be effective July 15. We will conclude our ministry together with a service of Evensong and a time of fellowship on that day.

The Lord brought us together for a truly unexpected season, and any accomplishment has been by his grace. There is much for which to give thanks, and I do. I give thanks for God bringing us together in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, and I give thanks for what He still has in store for you here.

I have been blessed to labor with you in service to the church and the kingdom, and I am praying fervently for the discernment ahead as you seek God's will in the life of St. Andrew's. I have high hopes for you and confidence in the leadership of the Wardens and Vestry. I am also encouraged by Deacon Mark's presence among us. All these, along with the faithful leadership of our new Bishop and the support of Canon Evans, leave me with an abiding sense that the providence of God which brought us together for a time such as this will continue to provide for the wellbeing of St. Andrew's and of all of you now and in the days to come.

May God bless you richly now and always!

With abiding affection for you and trust in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Hankinson, Jr.", with a small cross at the end of the line.

The Very Rev. Benjamin D. Hankinson, Jr.  
Rector