

*Announcing the call of the Rev. Kristin Wickersham as Priest-in-Charge*

The Vestry and the Discernment Committee are excited to announce the Rev Kristin Wickersham has agreed to accept the position of Priest-in-Charge at Epiphany starting June 1, 2022. This extraordinary development is a result of intense prayer and deliberation on the part of all involved; the Vestry, the Discernment Committee, the Rev. Wickersham, and the Diocese. This means Epiphany will not be going through a lengthy search process and dealing with all of the associated uncertainty. This outcome is anticipated to be as favorable as the selection of any candidate coming out of the standard search process.

Most importantly, Kristin is seen as a good fit for Epiphany. After a career in the public sector and extensive community involvement, a deep discernment process led her to enter seminary in 2016, graduating in 2018. As a seminarian and deacon, she spent time at St. Andrews, Holy Comforter, and St Stephens (all in Richmond) and crossed paths with Mary Thorpe, our former Rector, and David Knight our former Interim Rector. She is passionate about ministry as a parish priest and has led many innovative initiatives in her current role as Associate Rector at St. Thomas on the north side. While she had not indicated a desire to take on an Interim Rector position, the Diocesan Transition Minister, knowing both Kristin and Epiphany, suggested we connect. In March, everything seemed to fall into place to call Kristin as our Interim Rector. When meeting to sign the contract, we looked at the standard clause stating: "The Interim Rector cannot be a candidate for the parish's new Rector". An idea emerged to ask the Diocese to waive this clause. The response was positive. In fact, the Diocese advised us to take some time and consider whether Priest-in-Charge might be appropriate. Following this guidance, the Vestry had a lengthy meeting with Kristin and she later met with the Discernment Committee. The feeling was unanimous across both groups that calling Kristin as Priest-in-Charge would be a good choice for Epiphany.

The difference between a Rector and a Priest-in-Charge relates to the ongoing involvement of the Diocese. With a Priest-in-Charge, the Diocese maintains a level of oversight by requiring the parish to submit an annual "Mutual Ministry Review" for three years. Additionally, the Discernment Committee prepares a Parish Portfolio which serves as a tool to define the character and direction of the parish. These things aid in validating the original decision to call the Priest-in-Charge. After two years, if the parish and the Priest-in-Charge agree to move forward, a request can be made for the Diocese to approve a transition to Rector status.

This opportunity feels like a blessing for our parish. Avoiding a prolonged search helps us work through the lingering impacts of the pandemic and Andrew's departure by bringing in strong, long-term leadership. Coming out of Covid seems to call for "reinvention" that will come from exploring, under Kristin's spiritual guidance, our faith journey as a parish. It will be a time of excitement getting to know one another and growing together. How fitting that Kristin's first Sunday will be Pentecost Sunday, June 5, celebrating the ascent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus's disciples. We hope to see everyone there.

**Vestry**

Gray Corbett – Sr Warden

Randy Holden – Jr Warden

John Norris

Stacy Mitchell

Jeri Townley

Cory Isemann

Becky Card

John Sarvay

Scott Blackwell

**Discernment Committee**

Crystal Sarvay

Cheri Blackwell

Brooke Hsieh

Gail Wood

Tad Blackburn

Kim Ruder

Diana Stone