

As I often do when preparing remarks, I started searching through some of my tried and true books of daily devotions and readings. I knew I would find just the right one that would accurately reflect what is happening at St. Mary's. It comes from Henri Nouwen's "Bread for the Journey" and is entitled "Waiting with Patience." Mr. Nouwen writes, "How do we wait for God? We wait with patience. But patience does not mean passivity. Waiting patiently is not like waiting for the bus to come, the rain to stop, or the sun to rise. It is an active waiting in which we live the present moment to the full in order to find there the signs of the one we are waiting for."

The word patience comes from the Latin verb *patior*, which means "to suffer." Waiting patiently is suffering through the present moment, tasting it to the full, and letting the seeds that are sown in the ground on which we stand grow into strong plants. Waiting patiently always means paying attention to what is happening right before our eyes and seeing the first rays of God's glorious coming."

I believe that St. Mary's is a beautiful depiction of this description of waiting. Yes, we are waiting for our new rector, but we are doing it in such an active, forward thinking manner that I can't help but believe that God is pleased. I am amazed at how we have not missed a beat since Weezie's announcement that she was leaving. The staff is amazing. Every single one of them have stepped up to the plate, cheerfully assuming additional responsibilities. This place is a well-oiled machine! I had the opportunity to sit in a recent staff meeting. I'd put our staff up against any major corporation on how well organized and efficient they are. Mission trips are being finalized. Pastoral care teams are thriving. Our music continues to get better and better. But even more impressive is how they are tackling new initiatives. Ashley's support on our first Annual Gala and Mike and Didi's support of our Legacy Giving Committee are just a few examples. As I said to the staff after their meeting, my heart is happy to see not only how well they run our business but also at the care and compassion that they have for each other. We are blessed.

Which leads me to the work of the search committee. Believe me, we recognize how fortunate we are that we can take our time and really listen for God's calling to us knowing that the day to day activities at St. Mary's are well in hand. Equally impressive to the staff is the Search committee. It is composed of a wonderful combination of ages, skills, backgrounds and ideas but are bound together by their love of St. Mary's and their commitment to find the next and best rector. Please be assured that they are hard at work. The process of creating our church profile allowed us all to reflect on the impact St. Mary's has on our lives and what a wonderful place we are in as an organization. If you have not read our profile or job description I encourage you to do so. The link can be found on our website or if you are technology challenged the staff can help you. We have posted the opening nationally through the Diocesan website, the Episcopal News network, and through the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes, otherwise known as CEEP. Resumes are starting to roll in. More than that, we are reaching out to get names and references and believe me, we are not afraid to make those calls. If you have anyone you would like for us to contact, now is the time to let us know. Nancy Reed and I will be representing the search committee along with Bruin Richardson and Andrew Moore at the CEEP conference in February actively listening and reaching out to those we think might be a fit.

I'd like to close with part of the prayer that Joan Wilkins, our committee chaplain leads us in at each meeting. "Guide our minds and hearts so that we will work for the god of our church family an all your people. Teach us to be generous in our outlook, courageous in face of difficulty and wise in our decisions. May your wisdom, love and grace strengthen us in this endeavor."

We wait with patience, but not passivity. I look around and yes ,my heart is happy.