

To my brothers and sisters in Christ at St. Paul's Church,

With joy I greet you in the name of our Lord! Words cannot describe the pride and excitement I feel when I tell others that I have been called to be the new Rector of St. Paul's Church. God has indeed called us both to be pastor and people, and I am confident that he has amazing things in store for us.

Eugene Peterson in *The Contemplative Pastor* says that a priest, as he or she begins a new pastorate, should be mindful of one very important thing: The new rector needs to remember that God is already present in that church and has been at work there for a long time, long before he or she has ever been called. The priest's task, therefore, is not to rush in and change things, as if it is his or her job to unpack God out of a suitcase and introduce Him to a congregation for the first time. Instead the new priest's job is to immerse him or herself deeply into the life of the parish in order to discern where and how God is working and what He is trying to do in that parish – then to look for ways that he or she can cooperate with what God is seeking to accomplish. So...discerning God's presence and movement among you, and then joining in and cooperating with that movement...that is going to be my first endeavor. To some extent, I have already discerned how God is moving among you, particularly in your love for and commitment to worship and outreach. My heart cries, "Yes!" when I hear God's invitation to join that! I also have heard your longings for a more systematic approach to Christian Education and Formation as well as to congregational development – again, I say, "Yes!" to that call.

And I do want to know you better. In order to do that, I will be calling on you in the next few weeks and months to meet with me, both individually and in groups. When I call, I hope you will say, "Yes!" Meanwhile, I hold you in my daily prayers, and hope you are doing the same for me. My husband (Tom) and I, our two daughters, Sarah (13) and Rebecca (9), along with our dog (Poly) and cat (Jaboo) are making the move to South Bend, and moving one's lives and possessions is often trying to say the least. With joy and excitement, I anticipate seeing you in September.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Mother Susan  
(Or, if you prefer – Pastor Susan)