

January 6, 2022

The Feast of the Epiphany

Dear People of Atonement,

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1) For more than twelve years, it has been the season of my service as Rector of the Episcopal Church of the Atonement. I am so grateful to God and to each of you for the opportunity to worship and serve alongside you. Soon, my season will change to the time of retirement from full-time employment. I will retire as your Rector on May 31, 2022.

It is a great privilege to be your Rector. You welcomed Bill and me into your parish family and the wider Westfield community with generous arms. Together we have witnessed the baptism of dozens of folks and stood up with many who confirmed their faith. We have laid beloved family and friends to rest. We have elected a new bishop for our Diocese. We have created a hand bell choir. We have taken on and expanded the Westfield Farmers' Market. We have strengthened our ties to Westfield State through the Interfaith Center and with our Choral Scholars. We have fed people through the Food Pantry and the Westfield Soup Kitchen. We have served hundreds of strawberry shortcakes and raised thousands of dollars for local organizations. We have learned how to livestream worship and remain connected in the midst of a global pandemic. Throughout it all we have worshipped together faithfully and frequently on Sunday mornings and holy days, on Sunday afternoons with children and families, on Thursday evenings with our choir, on Wednesday afternoons with prayers for healing. I am so grateful for every minute that I spend in ministry with you.

On May 31, I hope that you will join me at church for the service of Evensong and Pastoral Leave-taking. We will be joined by Bishop Fisher and some of my colleagues from around our Diocese. On that evening we will celebrate our time together, first in worship and afterward at a reception. I look forward to sharing details of this event when the time is closer.

In the meantime, there is a lot of ministry for us to share! Please join us in worship and service here at Atonement. Thank you for your love and care for my family and me and all of God's people.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Nancy Webb Stroud

Rector