

June 19, 2011 (Trinity Sunday)

Dear Friends,

There comes a time in our lives when we have to make decisions which will have an impact on your own life and those who share your life. One of those times has come for me.

As I announced on May 8, the opportunity has come for me to exercise my priestly ministry in another parish in our diocese and I have accepted that opportunity.



The people of the Church of The Holy Trinity, Thornhill, have called me to be their Incumbent. My appointment takes effect on August 15, 2011. After 15 years, my Incumbency at St. Stephen's ends on Sunday, July 10.

I am extremely grateful to every member of this parish who has shared in this ministry during the time I have been serving among you. I feel blessed to have spent half of my ordained ministry learning and serving with you.

Many persons, on hearing of my pending move, have expressed the view that I have done a lot in my ministry in this part of God's vineyard. That may be true, but none of that would have been possible without your cooperation and support.

During this time I have been intimately involved in your Christian journey. The records suggest that I was blessed with the privilege of

- Baptising **206** new members
- Presenting **60** members for confirmation
- Blessing the Marriage of **49** couples
- Commending the souls of **62** individuals to God's eternal keeping

These liturgical acts, with pastoral care, Christian Education experiences, community outreach and parish administration, are a central part of any priest's life. Many of you have played your part in my ministry since July 1996.

In terms of parish administration and management, I am indebted to Gina Carter, our long standing secretary, who has seen another priest come and go. The many combinations of Wardens and Deputy Wardens, Advisory Board Members and the several Chairpersons have all assisted me in tackling many, and at times, difficult issues. Please accept my thanks for your advice and support. Successive fundraising committees and hospitality teams have also played their part as we sought to build up the Body of Christ at St. Stephen's. The sextons and custodian, counters and envelope secretaries have all assisted the wardens and me in our work. I thank you for your faithful ministry.

Sunday worship is when the parish family generally gathers together. Those who serve during these times are a crucial support for the clergy. Our organists, choirs, servers, ushers, altar guild members, readers, chalice bearers and “techno-ministers” (power-point) have all been of assistance to my ministry. Your support made it very clear that you understood the importance of your ministry among the gathered community.

However, there is a piece of my ministry that was and will always be near to my heart. The ministry of the children and youth to me and mine with them has been my blessing. I made it my priority to put the spotlight on our children and young people.

Though there were a few naysayers, I believe we, as a parish, made the right decisions. The evidence is there for all to see. I thank them for allowing me to be a part of their lives. The support of the youth leaders, Sunday School teachers and the



many volunteers was a significant part of this portion of my work. The most recent Sunday School celebration was, perhaps, the crown of their work thus far.

The work of the Downsview Youth Covenant has been a significant ministry in our community. We have sought to meet the many and varied needs of the youth and their families. The Diocese and other funders have expressed confidence in what we have sought to do and have come alongside us. I thank God for this blessing.

My ministry among you was enhanced by the incredible support of my family. Our sons, Marc and Luke, will always be children of St. Stephen's. We will always treasure the wonderful experiences shared and friendships established during of our time among you.

The parish to which I was called was established in 1829 and I go to continue that ministry with the same enthusiasm I brought to you in 1996. As I take my leave of you, I urge you to continue to support the work which was started here in 1953.

It is my prayer that God will continue to sustain you during this time of transition. I further pray that *God will look on our church and the Parish Selection Committee with grace, and guide their minds as they choose a Priest for this parish, that you may receive a faithful servant who will care for you and support you in your ministries.*

Your friend.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Stephen +".

Canon Stephen +