



March 22, 2009

Dear Friends,

After almost 11 years as your Rector and as my 66th birthday approaches, it is time for me to plan my retirement from full-time ministry. Before coming to Chicago, I served congregations in Seattle, Princeton, N.J., New York City, and Washington D.C. Each of those experiences held great joys; but the past decade at St. Paul & the Redeemer has been the most rewarding time of my 40 years of ordained ministry. I am deeply grateful for you and for the ministry we have shared.

As I said on Sunday, I still love my work and I continue to approach it with energy. But I want to do less of it. On a part-time basis, I expect to work with congregations that want to grow. I will also continue to mentor clergy, especially those who are newly ordained. This is a natural development, building on the D.Min. program I've been involved in during the past three years and on the work I currently do for the Diocese.

On another front, Tom travels a great deal in his work, and he often goes to wonderful places. During the past month he has spent time in New Orleans and New York. He also travels to Florida and California in the winter. So, I very much look forward to the opportunity to accompany Tom on some of his trips. You may find me beneath a beach umbrella while Tom is inside working!

The Vestry and I have agreed that I will continue at SPR into the first quarter of 2010. I'm glad that all of us will have ample time to prepare for the change that will take place early next year. Until then, I intend to remain fully involved in the leadership of the parish, and I fully expect the months ahead to be a time of continued growth for SPR.

Tom joins me in expressing thanks to you for welcoming us into your hearts and for all the relationships that have come to be very important to us. We have grown to love both you and Chicago, and we intend to continue to make our home nearby.

For more details on the transition process that has already begun, please read the enclosed letter from the Wardens. The leadership of the congregation is excited about the future of SPR and fully committed to keeping all of you informed, every step of the way, as we move forward.

Love to you all,

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

S. James Steen
Rector