



St. John's Episcopal Church

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May 1, 2008

Dear St. John's Family,

Ever since the day God called Abraham to leave his home and go to a new land, the people of God have been on a journey with God towards the "promised land" or that place we sometimes call the "Kingdom of God." For God's people, that can sometimes mean a new city or a new job. At other times, it can mean a change in life's circumstances in the same place.

For the Schieffler family, our journey took an unexpected turn in 1994, when I felt God calling me to ordained ministry. Having lived in Helena-West Helena for forty years, it was scary at the time to think about leaving for a new place called Sewanee, TN. Looking back, however, I can see that it was the beginning of one of the best things that ever happened to us. Five years later in 1999, our lives took another unexpected turn when Bill Wright and Bishop Maze called us one Sunday afternoon with the question "How would you like to come to St. John's in Fort Smith?" That too was an exciting time for us and also a bit scary. But again looking back, the last nine years have been a tremendous blessing for my family and me. Now after nine years of sharing this journey with you, God is calling once again with an unexpected turn—this time to begin a new ministry at St. Mark's, Little Rock.

While I am excited about this new challenge, I am also very sad about leaving St. John's. These nine years with you, sharing not only ministry but life itself, have been some of the richest experiences of my life. You have been very gracious to me. I am profoundly grateful to have shared many privileged moments with you. I am also very thankful for your support, your encouragement, and above all, for your love. In each of these you have helped me to become a priest.

Finally, let me say that I am excited about the future of St. John's. I can hardly believe all of the good things that God has done through you in recent years. It seems that God has chosen to bless St. John's in ways that are almost unimaginable. And for your part, you've shown a genuine passion for passing on those blessings to others who are less fortunate. I pray that God will continue to bless each of you.

My last Sunday at St. John's will be June 1st. Between then and now, I look forward to speaking with as many of you as possible. As always, you are in my prayers.

Peace,

Danny