



*Saint Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh*  
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Dear Parishioners of St. Thomas':

I write with news that the Rev. Marek P. Zabriskie has been called to serve as Rector to the good people of Christ Church in Greenwich, Connecticut. Marek's last Sunday with us will be October 28, more than 23 years since his election as our Rector at St. Thomas'.

Marek's pridesworthy legacy at St. Thomas' includes an enduring emphasis on bible study, a culture embracing full participation in lay ministry, a thriving preschool, a remarkably talented and committed staff, a vibrant music ministry, new buildings such as Haas Hall (2001) and the Emily Norris Carey Learning Center (2016), and a six-fold endowment growth. Marek's passion for strong pastoral care has brought peace to our sick and bereaved, and his expertise in religious studies has helped deepen our spirituality. As the officiant of Sunday services and countless baptisms, weddings, and funerals through the years, Marek has a permanent home in the hearts of thousands of parishioners. Thankfully, Marek's responsible and prudent leadership as the steward of the gifts entrusted to our use and care ensures that our parish is in fine shape, and poised to do meaningful ministry for many generations to come.

Reflecting on his twenty five years of ordination during a sermon he offered in 2014, entitled "A Long Obedience in the Same Direction," Marek testified that he still had fire burning within him to "grow the church, and transform lives, to have holy conversations and be a spiritual leader, to care for the poor and the needy, widows and the aged, those in the midst of divorce or suffering from dementia, and to invite, welcome, baptize, confirm, marry and finally commend to God." His sermon continued in acclaim that all of us, clergy and laity alike, spend much of our lives serving others in small and seemingly insignificant ways:

*"There are times when we wonder whether what we do makes any difference. Yet, oddly, when people speak of something that I have done in my ministry, it is almost always something small that I can barely recall at all, yet it somehow meant a great deal to someone along the way."*

Marek, we are thankful for each of those gift moments in the past 23 years that you likely can barely recall, and which have meant the world to us.

### ***What's Next for St. Thomas'***

During Marek's last two months at St. Thomas', he will attend to pastoral duties and help our parish begin to prepare for what is next. He will lead our Camino pilgrimage and enjoy vacation between Sep 15 - Oct 15. After bidding goodbye to our Rector, St. Thomas' will begin a period of transition and search for a new leader. The interim period will be an important phase in our congregation's life, giving us opportunity to reflect on the gifts and challenges of the parish, to search deeply for the guiding voice of the Holy Spirit, to honor existing strengths, and to open the community up to fresh voices. We are thankful to our Bishop and his staff at the Offices of the Diocese for their proactive, expert support in our process to call an interim rector and next permanent rector.

During the next twelve or so months while we prepare for the calling of our next rector, our Vestry will be highly focused on ensuring that the needs of the parish are well met. Liz, our Associate Rector, and staff remain committed to serving you in your journey. If at any time there is a concern or an unmet need, our Vestry wants to hear from you. Please contact any Vestry member at anytime.

### ***Mark Your Calendars***

The Vestry welcomes your participation on **Sunday, October 28th** as we celebrate the ministry we have shared together under Marek's leadership and mark the beginning of a new chapter in the life of St Thomas', a story that is 320 years in the making. Ours is a rich history of embracing change and cultural advancement as we strive to serve and love each other, while holding constant in our tradition of faithful worship. During the celebration and in the preceding weeks, there will be opportunity to contribute to a gift fund for Marek. It is another way that we will be able to give our thanks for his ministry.

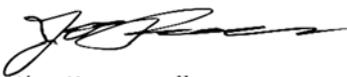
### ***We Journey Together***

Whether you are new here or a longtime member, this is an exciting time to be part of St Thomas' Church, Whitemarsh, and our Vestry warmly invites you to join us as an active participant in the process. Here are just some of the ways you can be involved:

- Share encouragement and support for our amazingly talented staff and associate (bringing cold refreshments and some cheer to Church Hill is often the welcome cure on a hot late summer weekday). It is a priority for all of us to show our care for those who work hard everyday when we are in need of their support and encouragement.
- Your help and strong participation is needed to keep ministries thriving, attendance high, and pledging strong so that we will look great to potential rector candidates. Our Homecoming event on **Sunday, September 9, 2018** provides an ideal venue to learn about opportunities to participate more fully in the life of St. Thomas'.
- Participate in our parish's spiritual inventory survey called RenewalWorks that will be offered **September 16 - October 7, 2018**. This is a way that we can get in touch with who we are as we enter our interim period.
- Mark your calendar today for our **Celebration Sunday, October 28, 2018**. We are going to send Marek off in proper fashion. You will not want to miss this event!
- Join our Vestry for a town-hall-style meeting on **Sunday, November 4, 2018** during our all-parish breakfast. We will detail our search process and provide a forum for questions and answers.
- Stay informed of our process by periodically reviewing the information on our webpage at [www.stthomaswhitemarsh.org/rector-search](http://www.stthomaswhitemarsh.org/rector-search). This is where our Wardens and Vestry, in consultation with the Bishop, will provide information and timelines for our transition and search processes.
- Join our wardens, Vestry, staff and lay leaders in this prayer for the congregation, by Desmond Tutu and adapted from St Francis:

*Stir us, Lord, to dare more boldly, to venture on wider seas, where storms will show your mastery; where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars. We ask you to push back the horizons of our hopes, and to push us into the future in strength, courage, hope and love. AMEN.*

In prayer for God's continued blessings upon Marek and his family, and with appreciation for all ministries of St Thomas', your Senior Warden,



Jim Pasquarella

Cc: *The Rt. Rev. Daniel G. P. Gutiérrez, XVI Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania*  
*The Rev. Marek P. Zabriskie, Rector*  
*The Rev. Elizabeth Costello, Associate Rector*