

14 July 2016
Thursday, the 8th Week after Pentecost

To the people of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Norman, Oklahoma

Dear Ones,

Greetings from Augusta, Georgia! I write to you with great delight and anticipation, as I prepare to make the move to Norman and St. Michael's Church.

In her sermon of June 26th, Deacon Laura Blazek observed that "Saying 'hello' is often just as hard as saying 'goodbye'." Everyone involved brings their hopes and dreams and expectations, wanting to make good first impressions. Inevitably, those first impressions become realizations that everyone involved is human, and imperfect, and messy. And everyone involved is also made in the image and likeness of God, and beloved, and wondrous. So we offer compassion and forgiveness to others (and ourselves) for the imperfections and messiness, and we offer curiosity and deep respect to others (and ourselves) for the wonderful beloved mystery that we each embody.

One of my first projects when I arrive is to spend time with you and hear your stories. Who are you, and who we are together? What makes us "us"? How has God's life been experienced in the life of this congregation? Such stories tell of living, vital encounters with the Divine Life, just as surely as the passages from the Bible we hear on Sunday mornings. I look forward to hearing of these encounters and learning from you all, both formally and casually, as I enter into the St. Michael's household.

By now you have read the biographical statement I submitted through the diocese. It conveys a very small part of who I am. I look forward to sharing far more of myself with you, as we come to know and care for one another as parts of the body of Christ.

Until we meet face to face, I remain,
Your pastor and servant,
Jason+



Jason and Shannon, Summer 2015