



CHRIST CHURCH

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The Rev. Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector

May 30, 2018

Almighty and everlasting God, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift: Send down upon our clergy and upon the congregations committed to their charge the healthful Spirit of thy grace: and, that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honor of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen.¹

Dear Friends in Christ,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Rev. Canon Susan Harriss, Rector Emeritus of Christ's Church in Rye, will be joining our staff in the autumn as part-time Priest Associate. We are blessed to have Susan joining Christ Church. Her credentials speak for themselves. She has been a pillar of the Diocese of New York for nearly 40 years, and she is one of the most well-regarded and respected priests in the Episcopal Church.

Susan served as Rector of Christ's Church in Rye from 2000 until her retirement in 2016. She was Deacon Katie's sponsoring rector at Rye. Before coming to Rye Susan served at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine as Canon Residentiary (1996-2000) and Chaplain to the Cathedral School (1991-1996), as Theologian in Residence at Saint Michael's Church in New York City (1989-1990), as Associate Rector at Saint James Madison Avenue (1984-1989), and as Chaplain and Personal Assistant to the Bishop of New York (1980-1983). She was granted the honorary titles of Canon and Rector Emeritus for her exemplary work at the Cathedral and at Christ's Church, respectively. In 2016, Susan was awarded the Bishop's Cross by the Right Reverend Andrew Dietsche, "in recognition and gratitude for her witness to the effective leadership of church institutions wedded to the love and knowledge of Jesus, for her service to parish, diocese and the larger Church".

Susan will be with us on Sundays and major Holy Days, preaching and celebrating about once a month. She will also be in the parish office one or two days each week for counselling, pastoral care, and guidance. Her presence will allow me to be more hands-on in certain areas of parish life, especially in our children and youth ministries.

¹ Collect for Clergy and People, 1979 BCP; adapted.

Christ Church has historically had more than one priest on staff which is congruent with being a “program sized” church.² Our average attendance is about 175 which means that we are one of the larger congregations (top 10%) in the diocese and Episcopal Church, and comparable Episcopal congregations normally have more clergy on staff than we do. I think it is worth noting that our neighboring Episcopal congregations in Larchmont, Mamaroneck, Port Chester, and Rye all have full or half-time assistant priests. We have been without a second priest for the better part of a decade, and the reason has nothing to do with need but rather financial limitations.

It is possible for us to call Canon Harriss to Christ Church because we received a one-time \$30,000 Next Step Grant from the Diocese of New York for 2018-2019 to assist the transition to supporting an assistant clergy person. As I noted at this year’s annual meeting, we applied for and received this grant in 2017 with the intention of transitioning from a seminarian intern to a part-time priest.³ To be clear, having a Priest Associate will not cost Christ Church any money until September of next year (2019). The funds from this grant will completely cover the added expense of a part-time priest for a single year. Beginning in September, 2019, we will need to fund the Priest Associate position ourselves, and I will make an explicit pitch for that funding during this year’s Stewardship Campaign.

I am confident that Susan’s presence on staff will serve as an engine of spiritual, programmatic, numeric, and financial growth at Christ Church. She is compassionate, reverent, and kind. She brings extraordinary experience and skills. She is an excellent preacher, listener, and pastor. Deacon Katie and I are overjoyed that Susan will be joining the clergy team at Christ Church. I am grateful that the diocese has made this possible for the next year, and I pray that we are able to build on the generosity that has been shown to us by the wider church. Susan will officially join us September 9, though she will also be here for Sunday supply on July 22 and July 29.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Hoxsie Mead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

The Reverend Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector

² The Episcopal Church demarcates congregation type and recommended pastoral oversight based on average Sunday attendance (ASA): **(1) Family Church** (0-50 ASA) – A small church usually overseen by a priest who is not full-time or in some type of shared ministry. **(2) Pastoral Church** (50-150 ASA) – A small to medium sized church overseen by a Rector or Vicar who is full-time. **(3) Program Church** (150-350) – A large church overseen by a Rector who is full-time and assisted by at least one other priest and often also deacon(s). **(4) Corporation Church** (350-500+) – A very large or mega-church overseen by a Rector and numerous other full-time priests and deacons each overseeing areas of ministry.

³ A full-time priest costs about \$80,000 per year when housing, stipend, benefits, and other expenses are considered. The financial leap required to bring on a full-time priest or even half-time priest was too large to seriously consider, though it was floated as a possibility during the Stewardship Campaign in 2017.