

January 2018

A Letter from Parishioner Wendy Merrill  
Discerner, Vocational Deacon Process  
Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

Dear St. Peter's,

I have been a member of St. Peter's for about 3 years. About a year ago, I met with our Rector, Father Ollie Rencher, and shared that I was interested in becoming a vocational deacon. He was very supportive and put together a Parish Discernment Committee for me. Five very special people took time out of their busy lives to meet with me several times over the course of a couple of months. They came to a consensus that I should continue to the next phase of the ordination discernment process, administered by the diocesan Commission on Ministry for the Diaconate and the Bishop. After meeting with our Bishop Suffragan, Anne Hodges-Copple, I received her "okay" to continue my process, which will involve an internship about which I wanted to share with my parish family.

My internship assignment will be at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Charlotte. The internship will begin this month and end in October. I am excited about it and trust that the new experiences I face will enrich my faith journey and provide a great deal of information for me, the diocesan Commission on Ministry for the Diaconate, and the Bishop to decide if this is the path I should be taking. In the same way that Robin Sands from St. John's served in various roles as St. Peter's Parish Intern from January to October of 2017, I about to do the same at St. Martin's.

Just as we recently observed the Advent season - a time of reflection, hope, anticipation, I feel like I am living a personal "advent". Something is going to happen. I don't know what. I do know that I am being compelled to continue in this discernment process. I will miss worshipping at St. Peter's for 10 months, but know it will be a temporary absence, kind of like going off to school. Please include me in your prayers every now and then, as you will remain in mine.

Peace,  
Wendy