

wonderful and warm impressions of Emmanuel – all of which continue to be true!.

Dear members of the Search Committee of Emmanuel, Newport, (November 18, 2009)

I am delighted to write to you for consideration for the position of rector of Emmanuel Church in Newport. The description of Emmanuel as one with a big heart, open arms and warm, loving hands captivated me, and as I read further in your compelling Parish Profile I was struck by how resilient and honest you are. Thank you for such integrity and transparency. Because I see myself in your profile, I offer the following ways in which I am particularly attracted to your congregation at this time in its history.

I am drawn to Emmanuel by your deep and abiding commitment to outreach, not only to specific programs like Soup's On, Lucy's Hearth, your annual mission trips and your weekly Spanish classes, but also to your long term relationship to groups such as AA, and the CROP Walk. Your passion for wonderful music and your desire to be responsible stewards of your resources make you very attractive to me. I resonate with your desire to grow in a mutual way with your new Rector and to look to your spiritual leader for warmth and direction, wisdom and imagination, all the while building consensus and being transformed into where God is calling you in your ministry in Newport and the world. Emmanuel Church seems to be a highly organized church of the people on the move – how very inspiring!!

This June I celebrated my 25th anniversary as a priest in the Episcopal Church. As I reflect on my ministry as a pastor of the flock, I believe that it is important to lead by example and to delegate responsibility to lay people. Cultivating, developing and nurturing the leadership of the laity are vital for the ongoing wellness of a vibrant community like Emmanuel Church. I liken mutual ministry to that of a team where all members are of equal value and worth. When one is missing, the team is incomplete. The whole is better than the sum of its parts. The rector is often a

coach to parishioners, supporting ministries and encouraging new ones to spring forth. I believe that I possess, in the words of your parish profile, a stout heart, an open mind and robust sense of humor.

I am deeply fed and nourished by the privilege of providing pastoral care to others. Never a day goes by when I do not reflect on the enormous gift of being present and able to shepherd people at all times and in all aspects of their journeys in faith. I am also greatly sustained by my ministry with children and youth whose energy and openness feed by spirit. My journey in faith took off as a youngster in my church choir and was deeply sustained through my singing in both school and church choirs as a student in college. It was in Providence at Brown University where I discerned my call to priesthood. My college chaplain presented me for ordination as the first woman ordained to the priesthood at Trinity/Wall Street.

In reviewing your captivating Parish Profile, I believe that I possess the experience and skills you are seeking in your next rector. My strengths include: energy and vision, liturgical design and musical ability, Stewardship development, children and youth programming, design of parish and community outreach ministries, pastoral care, and strategic planning. I am known to be a warm and compassionate person who plays to people's strengths. I am highly organized and enthusiastic about learning and growing collaboratively as a faith community. I relish music and preaching. I thrive on developing new parish and community outreach ministries.

Therefore, I say thank you to the Search Committee. Thank you to the Senior Warden, the indomitable Lil Hargrove, and Junior Warden, the techie Ellen Vadney. I now really understand the expression to have "left and right arms" for support. And I would add a third arm of support, our amazing Treasurer, Anne Sherman. The parish is so strong because of the leadership of these women, supported by rest of the very active and engaged Vestry: Deb DeAscentis, Joyce-Anne Michaels, Maris Humphreys, Larry

Hann, Janet Hunt, Susan Potter, Heath Twichell and Donna Whitelatch, Assistant Treasurer. I count in my blessings the fabulous staff of Emmanuel: Stephanie Shoemaker, interim rector, 2008-2010, who prepared the way for me and shepherded me before I arrived at Emmanuel, Parish Administrator Kathleen Skelley, whose organization and “can do” approach daily amaze me, Jim Perry, Sexton who is always eager to assist anyone in need, Josie Sleeper, Housekeeper, who keeps the inside sparkling and Allen Hill, Director of Music, who surely receives the evangelism award for his drawing people of all ages to sing and be a part of the community of Emmanuel. And to the congregation, I say thank for your wide welcome and warm embrace of me since May 9. Thank you to all for the privilege and joy of being called as your 18th rector. When I count my blessings each night, all of you are always right there at the top.

I would like to name this 2011 year as our **year of evangelism**, of calling people to the flock of Emmanuel, Newport. Just how far does God’s love go, and how far are we willing to make it go? Let’s keep praying together, keep growing together, keep reading the Bible together and looking at the example of Jesus, as recently as today’s Gospel. Along with our worship and caring for one another, bringing people to church – both long-term members and new members - is the most important thing we can do to build the church, to increase the financial pledge base, to plan for the future, to be good stewards of all we have been given (including this magnificent church building) and to fulfill the goals the parish set for itself for as part of the self study process. Having an evangelism emphasis will help us to better attract, assimilate and keep members, in particular children, youth and young adults. With an evangelism thrust and focus in place and systems under girding these endeavors, we will not only increase our financial pledge base, but also do what we are called to do, and what you identified as your goals for the ministry we share. In the parish profile you stated your goals to grow using the following methods:
With God’s guidance, we intend to:

- **Deepen and enrich our worship by incorporating new ideas and experiences into the traditional liturgy.**
- **Develop a more integrated, multi-tiered Christian Formation program that continues to serve the spiritual and educational needs of all ages.**
 - **For pre-school and grade school children: □**
Continue to provide an educational foundation in Christianity that gives them a spiritual framework to build upon and helps them learn and grow in their love of God.
 - For young adults:**
 - **Continue to educate teens on the basics of our traditions while guiding them to develop their own sense of spirituality and motivating them to participate in all facets of our parish life.**
 - For adults: □** **Develop a series of educational opportunities to motivate and inspire adults to deepen their faith through healthy spiritual habits, to expand their knowledge and experience of God, and to encourage them to use their unique gifts to serve others.**
- **Maintain our major outreach commitments to Soup's On, Lucy's Hearth and our annual mission trips. In addition, we will continue to seek other opportunities to commit our time, talent and/or treasure to those in need.**
- **Encourage everyone in our Parish community to pass on their individual gifts and talents in ways that enrich our own lives and the lives of those around us**
- **Nourish our spiritual life in the broadest sense. We believe that to be a fully formed Christian means to love God, love our neighbors and love ourselves. Everything we do, from worship to Christian Formation, volunteer work and outreach will be done with an open and loving heart to bring us all closer to Christ.**

In my first 8 months as your rector I have been focused on maintenance and systems – as well as getting to know you and how

Emmanuel works! With these introductory months past, I am more energized than ever to work with the Wardens, Vestry and congregation in addressing your goals as set forth in your Parish Profile. In particular, I am eager to move forward in planning programs, implementing, teaching and evaluating programs in Christian formation for all ages as well as deepening and enriching our worship, as stated in the Parish Profile. In the Stewardship program this fall, led by Bill Douglas and Valerie Martin, the focus was on passing on gifts and talents. I am deeply grateful to their exemplary witness and leadership in inspiring us to give generously of our time, talent and treasure, another explicitly stated goal in the Parish Profile.

The Vestry addressed these 4 goals at its June 19, 2010 retreat, when it also conducted a mutual ministry review of the rector and Vestry to ask the perennial question, “How are we doing?” They also set forth measurable goals for the next 5 years with the ultimate goal to decrease any dependence on the endowment by 2015 (see the notes and minutes from that report).

As outlined in the Parish Profile, the two greatest challenges of Emmanuel remain actively growing our population and significantly increasing our financial base, beginning with raising the number and amount of pledges as well as other sources of revenue. As stated in the Parish Profile, the greatest challenge facing Emmanuel is:

Achieving Growth & Better Financial Security: For our Parish, these goals are closely interrelated. Everyone is well aware of how critically important they are for our long- term survival. Thus, while continuing to practice wise and prudent stewardship of our physical and financial resources, we need to make Emmanuel attractive to more people— especially young families—by:

- Listening intently to our neighbors and community partners to discern where God is calling people beyond our walls.
- Faithfully and energetically working to achieve all the other goals outlined in this profile.”

I concur with the other challenges as well as stated in the

Parish Profile:

Energizing a New Generation of Lay Leaders: Both the new Rector and the current leadership will need to identify, motivate, mentor and empower new leaders for our future. We also need to explore the possibilities for implementation of dynamic leadership training programs.

Strengthening Christian Formation: Although we provide a range of Christian Formation programs, we need to follow through on our vision statement, which says we intend to develop a more integrated, multi-tiered Christian Formation program that serves the spiritual and educational needs of all ages.

Keeping Up Our Magnificent Building: Although its overall condition is good, providing that inspection and maintenance remain a priority, we are barely keeping ahead of the ravages of time and weather—and maintenance too long deferred steeply compounds the eventual costs. The Friends of Emmanuel have provided significant aid in addressing problems with the historic structure; but their charter precludes them from fund-raising for other capital needs. So more help is required, not an easy thing to do without careful planning and dedication

Since the floods of March we have seen the extraordinary cost of maintaining a 100 year old building. Thanks to the Herculean leadership and exceptional organization of Heath Twichell, we have addressed the emergency roof repair, even as that repair has led to other critical repairs. Heath has also looked at other capital improvements needed in the next 3 – 5 years. He and other Vestry members are looking at separate sources of funding, chiefly in the form of grants, to underwrite some of these major building costs. It would be easy to focus only on the enormous costs of building maintenance, which would be for us to lose sight of our calling to care for all of God’s creation, not just our buildings.

Please join me in re-committing yourselves to this parish, to its vibrant future as Emmanuel, “God with us” in this our new year of Evangelism. I strongly encourage your continued support of our programs, particularly in urging parents to bring their children and

youth to worship and developing classes in spiritual formation. We are honored to host a diocesan wide confirmation at Emmanuel May 21, 2011 and we will begin classes soon in youth and adult confirmation for this Eastertide service. I also ask for your participation in these programs, and your active promotion of them. *The E-pistle*, the service sheet, the website and above all, you, are the best ambassador in sharing the good news of Emmanuel to friends and neighbors.

We cannot do this ministry alone. We can and must share this life work. I am deeply honored to be part of this chapter in your life. Like you, I will continue to give this calling my deepest commitment for the work of serving Christ in the world. You are in my daily prayers, and I pray that I am in yours as well. My door is always open and the phone is always ready to receive your call. I want you to know how I care for each and every one of you. Let us continue to face our challenges with renewed vigor and commitment, remembering that we have all that we need for this journey. We have this faith community, one another and our trust in Jesus Christ to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. May it be so.