

# Church of Corpus Christi

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January 21, 2018

Dear Parishioners,

If you were around last November, you know that I reached one of those milestone birthdays, 70. It was celebrated in both parishes, and I shared my thanks in the parish bulletins. This birthday has also been the occasion of much reflection. In fact, it was the focus of my time on Retreat. Those five days gave me the chance to pray, think, converse with my long time retreat director, and listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, to take stock of where I am now and to discern where I should be. By the end of the retreat I knew that at the end of this year of parish life it is time for me to step down from the ministry of pastor and full time ministry, and to be of assistance to pastors and parishes as needed from the position of retired priest.

I met with Archbishop Hebda at the end of November, and after a long chat he affirmed my request to retire. Just this week I received the official letter from the Archbishop concerning retirement, and on Monday, January 29, Saint Rose and Corpus Christi will be on the list of openings for pastors that will be sent to all the priests. So to be clear, I will be celebrating the 45th anniversary of my ordination on June 2 (yes, I was a mere 25 years old when I was ordained!), and will retire at the end of that month.

I do not know the exact process or timeline for naming a new pastor, but I know that over the coming months it will include the parish leaderships and staffs putting together parish profiles, the establishment of a transition team, and meetings of that team with members of the assignment board. Two facts that will guide the process are that Father Jim will stay on as the Senior Associate, and that the cluster of our two parishes under one pastor will remain in place.

This has not been an easy decision for me. I love what I do, and wherever I am I love the people I am with and am able to serve. And I have never moved frequently - as an associate 4 years at Saint Olaf and seven years at Holy Spirit, and as pastor 21 years at Saint John's in Little Canada, and now 13 years at Saint Rose and a simultaneous 6 years at Corpus Christi. Even so, I know it is time to step down from full time service. I look forward to the months ahead, not only as we celebrate the most important faith seasons of the year, but also sharing the memories of my time here and elsewhere serving God's people as a priest. Please pray for me and for our two parishes as we enter this time of transition.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Fitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.