



The Right Reverend Jennifer A. Reddall  
BISHOP OF ARIZONA

December 4, 2020

To the People of St. John the Baptist in Glendale:

Advent greetings in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I have heard concern from several of you about the retirement of your Rector, the Rev. Bruce Jackson, at the end of 2020. He has served you faithfully and well for nine years, and I have the highest respect for him and his priestly ministry.

Canon III.9.8 of the Episcopal Church requires the resignation of every priest upon their 72<sup>nd</sup> Birthday. A similar canon has been in place since 1949, and while I believe it could be usefully updated, it is part of the practice of the Episcopal Church, and one of the canons that we as clergy take an oath to uphold when we are ordained.

In practice, what the canon does is ensure that there are wise, gifted, and vital clergy post-retirement to continue building up the body of Christ's church. Retired clergy enrich the life of the church in many ways, and I am blessed to see many of our retired clergy in Arizona serving in critical and active ways. I expect Father Jackson will do this in his retirement as well.

The canon also ensures that congregations continue to develop lay leadership to guide them, and that clergy have opportunities to step into new congregations, building upon the gifts and skills of the past. I expect this will happen at St. John the Baptist in the coming year.

When I met with Father Jackson and your Warden in December of 2019, and learned that he was turning 72 that month, it was the first time I learned that the Diocese of Arizona had sometimes reappointed Rectors beyond their 72<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Not wanting to cause an abrupt change in leadership at St. John's, I agreed to reappoint Father Jackson for one additional year, through the end of 2020, to allow for a smoother and healthier transition. I am grateful that you have had this year together, though I certainly wish that 2020 had been a more "normal" year for everyone.

I know transitions are hard and create anxiety, particularly during a time such as this. But this is also the season during which we hear the angel proclaim "Fear not!" and proclaim God's good will to all through the person of Jesus Christ. Our Lord will bless you, guide you, and strengthen you in the days to come.

Yours in Christ,

The Right Rev. Jennifer A. Reddall  
Sixth Bishop of Arizona