



Dear people of St. Stephen's,

I am honored and thrilled to accept your Vestry's call to serve as your next Rector, and cannot wait to join you in ministry.

Like you, I found my home in the Anglo-Catholic expression of our Anglican identity. I deeply appreciate St. Stephen's dedication to the importance of music and liturgy in our common

sacramental life, and your witness to the catholic expression of the Christian faith. I also truly believe that offering people a chance to encounter God in transcendent beauty is one of the chief assets St. Stephen's has to offer those in our immediate community and beyond.

For the past two years, I have served as Assistant Rector at St. John's in the shoreline town of Essex, Connecticut. Before ordained ministry, I served for six years as Associate Director of Music and Organist of Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC. I am also the product of two campus ministries: Canterbury Fellowship at Indiana University, as well as the Episcopal Church at Yale; and so I recognize how invaluable a parish like St. Stephen's is for students, faculty, and staff at Brown and RISD.

In my conversations with the Search Committee and your Vestry, I have come to know how dearly you treasure St. Stephen's, and how much you desire to know Jesus in all things, and in all things to make him known. It will be my privilege to join you as a fellow disciple, striving to always follow him more nearly, and to proclaim him by word and example.

Due to the reality of the ongoing pandemic, it may be awhile before I am able to meet all of you. However, social distancing does not stop the work of the church, and I look forward to meeting you virtually, in small groups, and other venues in the coming months.

I am so excited to begin serving with and among you, and to start the work that lies ahead of us. Until then, as I prepare to say farewell to the good people of St. John's, Essex, I hope that you will keep me in your prayers, as I keep you in mine. I look forward to joining you on August 15th. May God bless you all.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin +". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Benjamin Straley