

Search Committee Members Marni McGee and Tom Mack
Comments at Sunday Services, Sept. 7, 2014
Regarding the Selection of
The Rev. Aimee Eyer-Delevett as Rector of All Saints

Good morning. I'm Marni McGee. Tom Mack and I were privileged to be the Discernment Committee's visitors to the Church of the Holy Nativity, where Aimee Eyer-Delevett currently serves as Rector. What we experienced there is a foretaste of what we can expect when Aimee, Alyson and Willa join our parish family.

Our visit began at the hotel where we each found a basket generously filled with goodies, a personal note, and a detailed schedule for the weekend, beginning with dinner at Aimee and Alyson's home. Conversation sparked immediately and flowed easily. We didn't get to talk with Alyson very much that night because she graciously stepped out of the limelight to handle the dinner and to care for 4-year-old Willa so that Aimee could freely interact with us. What we saw on Friday night was a wholesome, happy family unit – a healthy team.

Saturday's schedule provided hours of intense conversation, just the three of us – Tom, Aimee and me. We talked about theology, families, preaching, guiding principles, formative experiences, and our philosophies of leadership and service within the church. Tom and I found ourselves engaged, excited, and at times, deeply moved. Later in the day, we visited with Aimee's wardens and also, separately, with a group of friends who know her well. Both meetings revealed Aimee as someone who is admired, respected and loved.

On Saturday night, an adults-only dinner out allowed us to meet Alyson as a charming, strong, effective woman who is greatly valued both in the parish and in the diocese, where she holds a very responsible position.

The depth of faith, creativity and commitment that characterized our Saturday encounters was mirrored in the lively worship we experienced on Sunday. Aimee knows her Bible; she knows her parishioners; and she knows Whom she serves. She's an excellent preacher who asks people to think, to care, and to act in God's name. She's a strong leader but also an excellent listener. She knows the importance of children, youth and families in a parish – the parish is full of young families and children. Clearly, Aimee is well prepared to help us build this vital aspect at All Saints. She is well prepared – and eager – to lead us as we grow and flourish, while also serving those in need.

Tom and I are both convinced that the Holy Spirit was and is at work in this decision, this choice. We're certain that, in a very short period of time – if you will welcome her with open minds and hearts – that All Saints will do amazing things – for God. My friends, we are about to begin a wonderful adventure together.

Aimee Delevett

I am Tom Mack. In Marni's reflections about Aimee, we heard two themes that I want to raise up for us as we prepare to receive this family:

First, we believe Aimee will prove to be a great gift, from God, for All Saints. She is so talented and so well prepared for the work that needs doing here that she will be a stunning addition to our parish family and a wonderful new leader for our church. Her great strength is a persona that is so warm, so sensitive, and so open that she is just a joy to be with; once you are with her, you won't want to be without her.

You should also know that as we winnowed down the 20-odd candidates to the six we would visit, and again when we narrowed those down to three, in both cases Aimee was the only candidate to receive 11/11 votes, with enthusiasm. She was and is our WOW candidate.

And she knows how to make herself useful. Seven years ago when she came to Church of the Holy Nativity, average Sunday attendance was 70 and sinking, and there were concerns that the parish might die. Now the average Sunday attendance is 150+ and rising, and when you visit you get a welcome like nothing I have ever seen.

Second takeaway, we see Aimee's family as another wonderful gift. While her family has a different composition than most, it is in its essence the same as any strong, functional, nourishing family in that it provides the love and caring to its members that they need to be all that they can be. Aimee's partner, Alyson, is a deeply committed, compassionate Christian whose talents will be a great asset to All Saints. Daughter Willa is a bright, happy, playful little girl – just what you would expect with two parents that love her dearly.

Two things for the weeks ahead:

This is not the moment to tell you all about Aimee, but please do use us and the Vestry members that have been with her to learn more about her and her family. We are happy to talk about anything on your minds, as she will be after she arrives.

The one thing that Aimee and her family asks of us is that they be accepted, cared for and loved, as they will accept, care for and love us. Those of us up here are committed to do everything in our power to see that their welcome to All Saints is radically warm and loving in every way, and we hope you all will join us in that commitment.