



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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A Letter to the Congregation from Father John Smylie upon the announcement of his nomination for Bishop of Wyoming:

December 7, 2009

To My Family at St. Mark's,

Today, the slate of candidates for the ninth Bishop of Wyoming was released, and as you may or may not be aware; my name is on the list. There are a few things I want to say to you about this. First, please know that there is nothing in me that is dissatisfied with St. Mark's. You are a wonderful people; prayerful and full of the Spirit, and it is an honor to serve with you. I like it here. I've never regretted the move to Casper, even with the challenge of Jill following over a year later.

Immediately after the bishop announced his impending retirement in October 2008, I was approached by several people asking me to prayerfully discern if I might be called into this process. I have kept this discernment process intentionally quiet and discovered the need within me to test this call. I knew that if I had not been open to this process I would always have wondered about it, and I would have been disappointed with myself for not risking participation in it.

What do I want you to hear? I want you to hear again that I'm happy with you. I am simply trying to be responsive to God -- I believe God has been calling me to be open to this process while trusting that His will, will be done. I want you to hear that even in the midst of this process, my focus has been at St. Mark's. God has given me the grace of being detached and generally not anxious about this future possibility. Scripture says be not anxious about tomorrow; let the day's own troubles be sufficient unto the day. I want you to hear that the reason you may not have heard about this from me before for this day is because I didn't want to raise anxieties in the congregation for something that might not have happened.

What do I want you to hear? I want you to hear that St. Mark's belongs to God -- that you belong to God -- that I belong to God -- that we belong to God, and that God is good and can be trusted. I hope we can walk this journey together in faith and confidence without worry or anxiety, believing and knowing that God is good and gracious and merciful, and that all shall be well!

*Yours in Christ,
The Rev. John S. Smylie*