

Dear People of Christ Church,

In this holy season of Advent - a season about awareness, expectation, and preparation - I'm noticing how what's happening in my own life mirrors the sense of the season. I am aware of how I am living in both the "what is" and the "what is to come," as we wind down our time at St. Paul's and in Savannah while very much looking forward to being with you in Valdosta. As we are getting ready for our own physical move from here to there I see the reflection of that part of Advent, and our anticipation of joining you at Christ Church makes real that sense of waiting for what God is about to reveal in the celebration of Christmas. While I am grateful for these theological insights, the reality is that it's really hard for me to be patient and stay present here. My family and I are anxious to start this next chapter with you. I do feel like a kid waiting for Christmas and thinking it's never going to get here.



As we make our plans, pack the house, and finish up all the details that go along with a move, I want to take a moment and introduce you to our family. You'll see some of us a lot more than you will others, but they'll be around from time to time, and we all want you to know who we are. We snapped this photo while everyone was home for Thanksgiving - it was my first time propping my phone up on a tripod and using the timer from my watch to take the picture. I have to say I'm pretty pleased that it worked.

Top right of the photo is my mom, Bonnie. My dad died a few years back, and not long after that, mom moved in with us. Shortly before the move, she retired from her lifelong career as a church organist. She and Dad met when they were students at Valdosta State and even before she graduated, she was the organist at First Presbyterian downtown. Since then she's played in Baptist, Lutheran, and Episcopal congregations, along with one other Presbyterian church up in West Virginia. Mom loves walking, yoga, Xi gong, and gardening, and she was a vegan before that was even a word.

Next to mom in the photo is our oldest son Jack. Jack is a graduate of Georgia Tech (yes, we are a house divided) who lives in Decatur with his wife Gracie (seated between Christine and me in the pic) and their dog Lottie. Gracie is from Hawkinsville, Ga, and because life is a funny thing, Gracie's older sister Sarah Kate is the first person I ever baptized after I was ordained 31 years ago.

On the middle step are our son Sam and our daughter Kate. They both are currently living in Athens. Sam is a UGA grad working in Athens, and Kate is a sophomore at UGA. Christine and I are on the bottom step. You already know a bit about me; Christine has been a public school Speech Language Pathologist for her entire career. She'll be working at a nearby school district once we get moved.

At this point we're up to our ears in boxes and packing tape. There's a lot still to do, but we're making good progress, and we will be with you soon. Until then, we do what we always do in Advent: we wait, we watch, and we prepare, always trusting that the Light of the World shines upon us and upon our path.

December 12, 2025