



ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
E P I S C O P A L

January 6, 2026

Dear St. Paul's family and friends,

January 6 marks the Feast of the Epiphany, commemorating the revealing of Christ to the peoples of the world. In some parts of the Christian church, January 6 is celebrated as Christmas Day. So it is an auspicious day for our faith, regardless of the variety of Christianity that we practice.

I have chosen Epiphany as the occasion for me to share some important news with you. In February I will complete twelve years joyfully serving as your Dean. It has been the most fun, the most fulfilling, the most holy and extraordinary time of my life, and I dearly love this congregation. Together we have moved St. Paul's forward, equipping our campus and our ministries in multiple ways to be relevant and useful for many years to come.

A few highlights:

- We installed colored lights around the cathedral, making it visible even from the air and allowing us to convey messages of mourning, hope, and solidarity.
- We inaugurated Light Up the Cathedral for Pride, sharing a message of unconditional love with thousands of our LGBTQ siblings.
- We developed a broadcasting ministry, streaming our services and musical events across the country and the world.
- We updated the church space, enlarging the chancel and making it accessible and flexible, and replacing the pews with chairs that can be moved at will to accommodate all kinds of events.
- We completed the long-term project of selling part of our city block and partnering with a developer, resulting in splendid new offices and community meeting spaces.
- We are about to complete the beautiful music center which will attract top-drawer musicians to apply for the position of Canon for Music.

Some of our less visible achievements have been equally impactful, as we constructed a strong financial system with best accounting practices, and instituted appropriate standards for human resources, audits, and Safe Church Safe Community training and compliance.

I am very proud of all that we have done together.

Love Christ • Serve Others • Welcome All

In April I will turn 68, having spent 29 years of my life in ordained ministry. It is time for me to change the rhythm of my life. As many of you know, I now have two precious grandchildren; and I long to have the leisure to return to my first love of music, once again playing in a symphony orchestra and singing in a choir on a regular basis. Full-time ministry has been a wonderful adventure, and a challenging one. I am tired, and I sense a drop in my energy levels. You all deserve a Dean who is at the top of his or her game, who can give you the vibrant leadership you need to move forward as a spiritual cornerstone of San Diego.

After much thought and prayerful discernment I have decided to retire from active ministry, and from the position of Dean, on May 31 of this year. I hope that we can together celebrate the past twelve years and enjoy a “good goodbye”.

You may wonder why I have chosen this timing, particularly in view of Martin’s recent departure. I know that it’s a lot to process. I had fixed on my retirement date well before Martin announced that he was leaving. May 31 is Trinity Sunday: it marks the end of the Easter cycle of the year and the beginning of the long “green season”, which is a good time for interim clergy to arrive and settle in. It’s also a logical time for a change of leadership, as St. Paul’s completes a long period of campus improvements.

I had originally planned to share this news with you at the end of January, but I realized that, for those standing for election to Chapter, it would be unkind for them to be elected and only then discover that the landscape was about to shift radically. I wanted to give our Chapter candidates the opportunity to know what lies ahead.

I have absolute confidence that St. Paul’s will continue to flourish after my departure: we have built a strong and cohesive team of staff and volunteers who are well equipped to carry the Cathedral forward through the interim period.

I am glad that we have interim musicians in place and that the music search committee has started its work under the leadership of Donna Perdue. I hope that before my last Sunday with you, we will have called the next Canon for Music.

There will be more to share later, both in terms of the transition process and in plans for celebrating our shared ministry. For now, I ask for your prayers, and I give the deepest of thanks to our loving God for the incredible privilege of serving as your Dean.

Your sister in Christ,



The Very Rev. Penny Bridges