



November 5, 2023

Dear Members and Friends of Christ Church,

The good and lengthy work of preparing our Parish Profile and then reviewing applicants for the position of rector has come to a wonderful end: the Parish Vestry has approved the candidate presented by the Search Committee, and the Bishop Diocesan has approved the candidate.

It is with great joy that I announce the calling of **the Rev. Dr. Maria McDowell** as Rector of Christ Episcopal Church Tacoma. The Rev. McDowell comes to us from St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church in Portland, Oregon. I have included her professional and personal biography. Mother McDowell will begin to minister among us on Thursday, January 4, 2024, and will be present among us in church on Sunday, January 7.

The Celebration of a New Ministry, the official installation of Mother McDowell by Bishop Provisional Melissa Skelton, will take place in the Spring.

The Rev. Dr. Maria McDowell has lived in Los Angeles, Iowa City, and Boston, but is always drawn back to the blue green trees, mountains, and ocean of the Pacific Northwest and her hometown of Portland, Oregon.

Maria was raised in the Russian Orthodox Church. In college, she joined a social justice oriented InterVarsity group in Los Angeles, and attended Fuller Theological Seminary where she recognized a calling to public ministry and realized she was not an evangelical Christian in either theology or temperament. After seminary, she pursued a PhD in Theological Ethics at Boston College while returning to her Orthodox roots where she served as a choir member, chanter, youth minister, educator, and occasional preacher; essentially any form of church ministry open to women within Eastern Orthodoxy. She met her wife, Elizabeth, in the Orthodox Church: they were subsequently asked to leave the church. Maria then followed Elizabeth to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral (Portland) where they were immediately invited to exercise their gifts as welcome participants in a vibrant community.

In the Episcopal Church, Maria found a home where worship was a joyful and life-giving experience of hope, welcome, and delight in the uniqueness of all God's creatures. In 2018, almost twenty years after leaving seminary, Maria was ordained to the priesthood, and then served as Rector of St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church. Elizabeth joined Maria in her ministry at St. Philip, helping start

Godly Play and leading music, all the while completing an LPN degree and then working with the elderly at Providence Elderplace.

Maria loves gardening and woodworking and her prayer life involves conversing with God with busy hands or while writing. She has always been a bit of tech geek, and often relaxes with a video game or two. She and Elizabeth like to camp, kayak, bike, and eat good food. Maria is a fan of the Portland soccer team, the Thorns.

Christi McCarren

Christi McCarren
Senior Warden
Christ Church Parish



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