

January 8, 2023

As you know I am completing my final year as pastor here at Saint Anthony's. I have emotions of all kinds running through my veins at any given time. I know and believe that the Lord will see me through and find me just the right place to move into when my days here are completed. I do ask you please to continue to pray for me and for our parish of Saint Anthony's especially these next six months. Pray that the Lord will handpick my successor and will find me just the right place to retire to when my ministry here is completed.

I am not the only one who will be completing my ministry to the People of God at Saint Anthony's. Our longtime parish secretary, Ellen Afflerbach, stepped down from our role as parish secretary as the calendar year ended. Ellen was working parttime at Saint Anthony's when I arrived in 1991. When Jackie Jones, the spouse of our Archdeacon Dave Jones stepped down from her role as parish secretary, Ellen stepped in and has held that position for many years.

She is an amazing woman. You have to be to handle all the responsibilities and assignments that Ellen handles. She is on the door and answering the phone. She is at the cutting edge of interacting with all our parishioners and everyone who comes to the door or calls on the phone with any and every kind of issue or request or complaint.

She also was responsible for putting together the Parish Bulletin and sending it to be printed each Tuesday. Doing this part of her responsibility was very detail oriented. Doing high detail work in an environment where you are constantly interrupted is a daunting task. Ellen did it all day every day for years and was amazingly even keeled throughout.

She was talking with me on Friday last about her years here and she said simply that this was not like any job she had ever had. She loved coming to work here. It was not like going to work. She has been a member of our parish here for many years. She brings communion to different parishioners, helps to schedule, organize, and communicate about all our funerals (81 last year) and our weddings. She schedules and collects certificates for all the baptisms that we have each year.

One of her most important functions is to keep the parish calendar where all parish events and activities are scheduled and conflicts are so very rare and in a parish this size not to have a lot of calendar conflicts is a testament to the detailed way the scheduling has been performed.

Most of all, Ellen is a friend. She has had her tragic moments when she lost her husband Tom who also worked here doing the financials for a number of years after he retired from the Navy Yard. Ellen was able to interact with all members of the staff with ease and comfortability. Just that is a lot because there are many people interacting on a daily basis.

We had a luncheon for her last week and gave her some gifts and cards and little surprises. Thank God we will continue to see her in church because Saint Anthony's has been a large portion of her life for many years. I personally will miss her and in my card I said that I was proud of her for the way she did what she did all these years. Say some prayers in thanksgiving for a job well done.

Because Ellen was leaving, we advertised and interviewed for a person to replace her at the front office desk. Our new parish secretary is also a parishioner. His name is Chamaine Duerr (pronounced: Shah-main Derr). His husband is Chris who is also present almost daily here at Saint Anthony's. They have three children: James, Sarah and Lucie. Chamaine began this past Tuesday. Please welcome her and be patient while she learns so many of the particulars and details that she would have no way of knowing just yet.

Thank you Ellen—for everything. Welcome Chamaine.

Peace,
Msgr. McHenry