

The Rev. Deborah R. Brown Named Rector at St. Philip the Deacon

Submitted by Barbara Peschiera

Continuing in its 100-year tradition as a hub for social activism, St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church is pleased to announce that the Rev. Deborah R. Brown, ObjN, has been called as the parish's new Rector.

The appointment of Rev. Brown follows the retirement of long-time St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church Rector, the Reverend Alcena E. Boozer in 2010.

Rev. Brown, who is relocating to Portland from Rochester, N.Y., will conduct her first Eucharist at St. Philip the Deacon on Sunday, September 9, at 9:00 AM. The church is located at 120 NE Knott Street. All are welcome to attend the service.

"We are extremely excited that the Rev. Deborah R. Brown has been called to serve as the new half-time Rector for the parish," said Michael Montgomery, St. Philip the Deacon's Senior Warden. Speaking on behalf of the Parish Vestry, Transition Committee, Search Committee and parishioners, Montgomery went on to say, "The selection of The Rev. Brown will usher in a new opportunity to build our parish, set on the firm foundation of a century in Portland as a wonderful place of worship."

Most recently, The Rev. Brown served as Assistant Priest and Director of Community Ministry at Trinity Episcopal Church in Geneva, N.Y., and had been a canonical resident in the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y. since she was ordained to the priesthood in December 2009. The Rev. Brown also served at the diocesan level as Presiding Youth Missioner, and Associate Priest-in-Charge for St. Mark's and St. John's Episcopal Church in Rochester, N.Y.

Before ordained ministry, Rev. Brown taught orchestra and general music for eight years in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System and Durham Public Schools in North Carolina. She is also a professional and freelance violist. She also worked as an addictions counselor in inpatient and outpatient treatment centers for two years.

She has a Bachelor of Music degree from Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY; a Master of Music Education degree from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C.; and a Master of Divinity degree from Duke University Divinity School in Durham, N.C. Currently, she is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Development degree from Seabury Western Seminary in Chicago.

The Search Committee and Vestry were especially



The Rev. Deborah R. Brown

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interested in The Rev. Brown because of her enthusiasm for missions and ministry, which was demonstrated when she developed a single mothers ministry at Trinity Church and created a diocesan youth ministry. She enjoys teaching, and building partnerships and relationships in communities that advocate for social

justice. She is a strong and inspirational preacher, and has worked in multi-cultural, diverse, and non-traditional communities. She is collaborative, energetic, authentic, intuitive, enthusiastic, and possesses a strong sense of humor. She is a prayerful priest who strives to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Brown was enjoying a meal with members of the Vestry when she learned she has been called to become the new Rector for St. Philip the Deacon. Her reaction was one of exuberance, joy, and extraordinary enthusiasm.

"This is such a blessing for me and I welcome this opportunity to become part of the St. Philip's family," said Rev. Brown. "I look forward to moving to Portland and quickly become a member of this wonderful community".

Following the church service on September 9, a brunch in honor of Rev. Brown will be held in the St. Philip the Deacon's Father Stone Parish Hall.

In the Episcopal Church, the process to identify a new rector is extensive and includes holding numerous parish meetings, developing a Parish Profile, as well as conducting a comprehensive search; in this case, a national search. This process has been underway since Mother Boozer's retirement two years ago.

During the interim, St. Philip the Deacon has been served very well by several Supply Priests, as well as an Interim Priest. Indeed, The Rev. Richard Green spent a full year as Interim Priest, and was extremely well regarded by the congregation.

Citing St. Philip the Deacon's history in this community, Montgomery noted that "we were born as an African American Episcopal congregation in 1911, and have grown into one of the most inclusive and diverse spiritual communities in Oregon" Montgomery added that "having just celebrated our Centennial Year in 2011, the Rev. Brown will now serve as our spiritual leader as we begin our second century in this community, and we couldn't be happier".

The Rt. Rev. Michael Hanley, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Oregon met with the Rev. Brown in July, and approved her call to St. Philip the Deacon. He, too, is very happy with the selection of Rev. Brown.

The Rev. Brown has also been named as the half-time Episcopal Chaplain at Portland State University (PSU). Moreover, the search committee members for the PSU Chaplaincy are as excited at the parishioners at St. Philip the Deacon upon the arrival of Rev. Brown.

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