



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Sunday, July 12, 2026

My dear Trinity family,

Before we conclude our worship this morning, I would like to speak to you as your priest. This morning, we talked about laying down our swords and extending the grace of God to those who are for us and to those who are against us... and I hope to embody that this morning.

Over these past many months, you have prayed for me, for my family, and for this parish. Some of you have stood beside us without hesitation. Others have struggled with questions, confusion, disappointment, or even hurt. I understand that. These have been extraordinarily difficult months for all of us.

When serious allegations were made, our Church did what it should have done. The Bishop immediately placed me on leave. The Diocese undertook its own process. Civil authorities conducted their investigation. I cooperated fully with each of them because I believed then, as I do now, that truth has nothing to fear from careful examination.

Those processes have now concluded. They determined that I violated no Virginia law because I did not do the things that were alleged, nor did I do anything that could be construed as inappropriate or harmful to young people in any way. As a result, I was restored by Bishop Stevenson to continue serving as your rector.

Throughout my ministry, I have sought to protect and defend children and vulnerable people, and I remain unwavering in that commitment. Over the years, I have reported serious misconduct when I became aware of it and have worked to help protect countless children from abuse.

I also understand that not every question can be answered publicly. The Church's disciplinary process exists not only to seek truth — which it did — but

also to protect the dignity and privacy of everyone involved. I intend to honor those commitments. Because of that, there are things I simply cannot say.

But there are some things I can say.

For more than thirty years, I have tried—imperfectly, but sincerely—to preach Jesus Christ, to love His Church, and to care for the people God has entrusted to me. That calling has never changed. It has not changed because of these past months, and it will not change today.

What has changed is that these months have taken a profound toll on my family and on me.

There are seasons in ministry when a priest pours himself out in service, and there are seasons when he discovers he has very little left to give. This has been one of those seasons.

After much prayer with my family, my bishop, and those who care deeply for this parish, I have decided that I will begin a sabbatical. I need time to rest, to pray, to heal, and to listen for God's direction about what comes next.

I do not know today exactly where that journey will lead. I leave that in God's hands.

What grieves me most is not what has been said about me. It is the pain this has brought to people I love—to my wife and children, to this congregation, and to a parish whose witness should always be centered on Christ rather than conflict.

I have never wanted Trinity to become known for controversy. I have always wanted it to be known for Jesus Christ—His grace, His mercy, His truth, and His love.

Over these months, I have reflected often on Paul's words:

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

That has been my prayer through these months — not that the difficulty would be erased, but that it would not have the final word. And it does not. Christ has the final word. He always has and always will.

So here is what I want to say to you, my beloved Trinity family, as I step away:

You do not need to choose a side. You do not need to have every question answered, or every doubt resolved, to remain faithful.

What this parish needs now is not division, but grace extended in every direction — to those who have struggled, to those who have stood firm, to my family, and yes, even to me.

Wherever this road leads, my prayer for you does not change. Keep your eyes on Jesus. Let this parish be known, now and always, for His mercy rather than for anyone's wounds — including mine.

And so, rather than asking anything more of you, let me leave you instead with what a priest is given to offer:

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

Go in the grace of Christ, who is not finished with any of us yet. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit... Amen.

Faithfully in Christ,

The Reverend Jonathan Adams
Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church