

## **Thanks...and Yes!**

*"For all that has been, Thanks! For all that will be, Yes!"  
- Dag Hammerskjold*

Among the blessings of my life for which I give thanks are my newer friendships. That includes you, good people of St. Matthew's! It also includes clergy friends who, first, were longtime, dear friends of my wife Eyleen. One of my newer clergy friends is Nancy Sehested, the first woman called to serve as a senior pastor in any Memphis Baptist church.

We asked Nancy to preach at our wedding nearly ten years ago. Recently, she retired from parish ministry. Her final season of call was as interim pastor at High Country United Church of Christ in Vilas, North Carolina. The first paragraph of her farewell article in their newsletter began with the famous quote above - and then, these words:

*It has been an entire year since I started this memorable and cherished time with you in this season of the in-between. Your invitation came to me at a time when I felt I needed to leave my 13 years of work as a state prison chaplain. You offered me a time of transition during your own time of transition. My cup overflows with gratitude for your extravagant welcome to me. Your holy welcome invited me in and allowed me to offer what I could. I have caught your spirit of grace, strength and goodwill. You have given me new life and hope. I cannot thank you enough.*

Except the part about being a prison chaplain, Nancy's words to her congregation are also my words to you. It is now clear that it is time for me to go home - at last. And yet I know one of my spiritual homes will always be at 330 North Hubbards Lane. May God continue richly to bless your life and ministry together with your new rector and friend, Kelly Kirby, and her family. Please keep my family in your prayers; you are in mine.

Peace,  
Tom

P. S. For those interested in "The Lover's Waltz," the piece of music I played during my Trinity Sunday sermon, please contact the parish office.