

I'd like to say a few brief words about our Pastor, Andy Boyer.

Now, Andy hates it when attention is focused on him personally, and I know he is going to give me merry heck when this is done, but I could not let this occasion pass without recognising him and the role he has played in our parish over the last five years.

Andy has been committed since the beginning to supporting stronger lay leadership in the parish – not just in the Council and various committees, but in all aspects of parish life and ministry. Andy understands that we are all called to God's service, and that sometimes the best way for a pastor to serve is to 'get out of the way' and let others – the lay people – do what they are able to do.

And sometimes it involves a gentle or not so gentle shove to make people realise that we really 'aren't in Kansas anymore...' I remember an occasion when I was not going to be able to attend Parish Council and I suggested that he chair in my stead. Well, he was having none of that – he was adamant that he did not want there to be any misunderstanding that the priest might be 'taking back control' of Parish Council.

But equally, he was engaged, providing thoughtful, practical AND pastorally sensitive perspectives on questions and issues before Council, the Finance Committee, staff, volunteers and the community as a whole. I benefitted not only from his wisdom in dealing with various issues as a member of the 'Core Team,'

composed of the Pastor, the Chair and the Executive Director, but from his example and his sage and compassionate advice to me personally.

Of course, I have to admit that sometimes I wondered if his supportive nod was really a sign of understanding or if he had simply turned off his hearing aid completely...

I know I was not alone. I know many members of our community, and indeed, people from elsewhere, sought his advice and support. His is a calming but absolutely solid presence. His evident humanity and depth of faith are a shining example of the best in those called to religious life.

We have been blessed to have Andy amongst us. And while we still have several months to go before he actually leaves, I wanted to take this opportunity, with you, to thank him for his loving service to our community. Please join me in a warm round of applause...