Welcome Interim Rector
Reverend Melissa O'Keefe Reed

The Vestry is delighted to announce that the Reverend Melissa Reed has agreed to serve Grace Memorial as Interim Rector, beginning December 1. Melissa brings a unique set of skills, talents, and experience that we believe will assist and inspire Grace in the coming months. References refer to her deeply held belief in collaboration and the development of relationships, her "heart of a pastor," and the care she takes in connecting scripture to the challenges of everyday life in her sermons. Melissa has guided over 15 parishes in transition through her work at the Oregon Synod and has collaborated in seeking and receiving grant support for creative initiatives.

Your Senior Wardens worked closely with the Rev. Chris Craun, Canon to the Ordinary at the Diocese, in making a serendipitous connection with Rev. Melissa and in successfully concluding negotiations with her and the Diocese.
Melissa has worked for the Oregon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) since 2019 in various leadership capacities. She served Redeemer Lutheran Church and Leaven Project (later Salt & Light Lutheran Church) as Pastor from 2008 – 2019 and as Executive Director and Co-Organizer of the Leaven Community from 2013 – 2019. Melissa was ordained to the ministry in 2008 after completing her Master of Divinity at Pacific Lutheran Seminary that year.

It may be helpful to know that in 2001 the Lutheran and Episcopal churches entered into full communion through the joint adoption of the document "Called to Common Mission." Full communion entails working together for joint mission and witness in the world, especially through the exchange of ordained ministers. As an ordained Lutheran Pastor, Melissa can celebrate the Eucharist and perform all other sacraments according to the liturgy in our Book of Common Prayer.

The interim position is full-time, and Melissa will be performing all the duties of a permanent Rector. Melissa has told us that she is delighted to return to pastoral life after her years of administrative work and is enthusiastic about serving at Grace. Melissa lives in Portland with her husband Matt Smith, and her children Jack (18) and Brigid (12).

As Senior Wardens representing the Vestry, we are thrilled to bring Rev. Melissa to Grace and to work with her in the coming year as we enter our process of discernment for a permanent Rector.

Melissa will attend services and coffee hour on November 15. Please join us to welcome her in advance of her official start as Interim Rector at Grace.

— Nora McLaughlin and Stephen Weeks