

RELIGION

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# Ven. Neal to leave in August

## Has been rector at Christ Church for past 10 years

By Jack Evans

The Intelligencer

The Quinte area will lose one of its senior spiritual leaders this summer with the retirement of the Ven. Archdeacon John Neal from Christ Church (Anglican) Belleville.

Rev. Neal has been rector of the large, historic church for 10 years, but previous to that, served a number of years at St. Mary Magdalene, Picton.

Neal can mark his coming and going to Christ Church with two significant events.

Days after taking up residence in the old parish rectory across the street from the church, a fire broke out in the house. The incident was the subject of much good-natured ribbing by parishioners for some weeks.

Then on the eve of his retirement, (which he had formally announced months ago to allow the church time to make preparations) he broke his ankle while on a routine walk with his chocolate retriever, Mason. So Neal spends his final weeks in the parish stumping around the church in a heavy cast.

"I have no special retirement plans," he said, "except to move to Kingston and be available to help out (the church) from time to

time."

He can also reflect on some major changes in Christ Church and in his own situation during his 10 years in Belleville. One was his promotion to archdeacon in February of 1993.

In the past two years, Neal points with pride to a warm and growing relationship between his congregation and that of St. Thomas Anglican, the actual "mother church" of Christ Church.



Ven. John Neal

Such involvement has included shared services in each other's churches and other activities.

"This is a positive thing," said Neal, who adds that Christ Church itself though, "remains a vibrant parish."

In a broader picture, Neal outlined moves by the national Anglican Synod recently toward an agreement for full shared communion between the Anglican and Lutheran church groups.

"I was at the synod in 1989 at St. John's, Newfoundland, when it was first discussed," he said. The most recent synod authorizes the Anglican church to accept Lutherans as communicants "in principle" pending a more formal move at the next synod in 2001.

Neal supports these moves as well, but admits that the national

moves have not had much impact between local Lutheran and Anglican congregations yet.

But as a result, St. Thomas, which is running a daily vacation Bible school this summer for the Anglican community, is using the Lutheran curriculum for the school and has issued an invitation to Holy Trinity Lutheran for its children to participate.

Neal retires officially Oct. 31, but with holiday time, will be leaving Christ Church at the end of August.

His departure is the second major change in the parish within a few weeks. A youthful Rev. Andrew Chisholm had been serving as curate for the past three years and made many friends in the parish and community. The Rev. Chisholm left several weeks ago for vacation followed by a posting of his own church at Bath.