

January 18, 2012

Dear St. Andrew's Parishioners:

Greetings, and best wishes to each of you in this Epiphany season!

I am writing with an important and exciting update about our life as a parish. As you know, in November of last year we conducted a feasibility study to gather feedback from the congregation about the possibility of a capital campaign here at St. Andrew's. Exactly one hundred individuals and families responded to the survey, representing an impressive response rate of more than 40%. Thank you to all who participated so willingly!

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive and made the Vestry's subsequent decision clear. Ninety-seven percent of respondents supported the idea of a capital campaign, and 82% said they would plan to contribute. Thirty-four percent of folks were even willing to volunteer their time to the effort. Taken together, these are outstanding signs of commitment, especially in a time of economic recovery. They point to the dedication and passion of the people of this beloved church, and to the conviction that this centennial year offers us a critical opportunity to boldly sail together into a second century of mission and ministry.

Earlier this month, the Vestry met to review the results of the feasibility report. Andi Tilmann of the Episcopal Church Foundation, who managed this feasibility process, joined us to convey her recommendation that \$650,000 would mark a responsible and realistic target for the campaign. **After careful thought and discussion, the Vestry members unanimously decided to act on the congregation's input by approving the campaign with a goal of \$650,000.**

The projects that comprise the campaign will reflect those prioritized in the survey responses. The highest priorities were a new heating and air conditioning system and new exterior windows, combining to provide improved efficiency and security, vastly reduced utility costs, greater comfort and an assurance that we are doing our part to better care for this corner of God's creation. Other projects receiving broad support were improvements to the bathroom facilities (including handicapped accessibility), upgrades to White Hall and the Auditorium, and modest kitchen renovations. These projects may not be flashy – they involve ceiling tiles and light fixtures and widened doors – but the survey responses reveal their importance. They are symbols of our commitment to providing hospitality for church members of all ages and abilities, and to the many people who use our building each week for fellowship and outreach to the community.

Additionally, we will join with West Ghent School to raise funds for an expansion of our playground and enhancements to the Graydon Avenue entrance of the parish building. Again, this will serve as an expression of our hospitality and our commitment to providing safe and welcoming spaces for children and families. Finally, our organ, which features outdated technology in need of constant maintenance, will receive electronic upgrades to extend the instrument's capacity and preserve our place as a parish that values sacred music. All of this falls within that \$650,000 goal, and together these projects will allow us to seize this centennial moment and build a wonderful legacy for generations to come.

Let me now address the next steps of this process. **At 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, February 5, in conjunction with the Parish Life breakfast in White Hall, we will share the results of the feasibility study and give an overview of what to expect in the coming months.** Two familiar faces will guide that discussion: Ann Dodson and Will King have graciously agreed to serve as co-chairs of this campaign. They will lead us with wisdom and enthusiasm, but they will also need a lot of help. Please consider how you can lend some time and energy as we move forward. Already, the Buildings and Grounds Committee is working on finalizing cost estimates and project plans, the Finance Committee is looking at funding options, and the Communications Committee is considering plans for brochures and other materials. Later in the spring, we will be ready to begin seeking three- to five-year pledge commitments, as together we embark on this exciting journey. Our hope is that we will see construction underway this summer and largely completed by the fall.

This is a bold step for our congregation; we have not done a parish-wide campaign since "Renovate '88" some twenty-four years ago. Yet based on the survey responses our collective will is evident. There is a clear sense that it is our turn, in this centennial moment, to ensure that the mission and ministry of this community will continue to thrive well into the next century. No doubt there will be questions and concerns that arise in the months ahead, and the Vestry and I will do our best to keep you well informed. We want this to be an open and engaging process that really brings us together and enlivens the faith of everyone in this special church. Thank you for your support and participation!

Faithfully,

John D. Rohrs