



ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL EPISCOPAL

October 6, 2020

Dear people of St. Paul's,

The Church was built to stand strong in a time such as this: a time when the world is in turmoil, when disease ravages the land, when political tensions divide us from each other, when questions of race, justice, and equity swirl.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5

While it would be easy to be discouraged by these conditions, St. Paul's Cathedral has risen to the challenge with initiatives such as the phone ministry of Circles of Love, the engagement with racism in our *Waking up White* book study and *Sacred Ground* dialogue circles, and of course our online worship opportunities. Our attendance has remained steady and, in some cases, increased as we have learned to gather in new ways.

This community has remained steadfast together: responding to hoarding with *generosity*, answering fear in the world with belief in a God who values *all*, and providing an antidote to isolation through *connection and belonging*.

It has been a hard year. But we are *rising together*. Your courage, faith, and dedication have kept us going with almost no change in our income this year—a real testament to your faith in the God who shines a light in the darkness; who provides when there seems to be scarcity, giving freely so that we may give in return.

Even now, we see the new building rising from the ground. As we look to next year and the years to come, it will take all of us to continue rising, with God's help.

Next year we need to rise together in our financial generosity, because we will have three challenging missional goals:

- *Support* renewal of ministries from the pandemic as we transition to a hybrid of in-person and on-line activities, seeking to care for all segments of the congregation including the medically vulnerable, those whose faith life is greatly diminished without sacramental worship, and those who have joined online, some from a great distance.
- *Move forward* into the next stage of dismantling racism, completing our *Sacred Ground* study and continuing as staff and members develop St. Paul's reputation as a place of welcome, transformation, and justice.
- *Prepare* for the opening of the new building, and for associated increased operating costs to equip the new space for ministry and our larger community.

Love Christ • Serve Others • Welcome All



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Next year will hold continued challenges-- but we are a strong community emboldened by a God who loves generously. We must continue the work God has for us, resisting the forces of fear in this world with God's gifts of love and courage. Together we are the body of Christ. Together we can overcome the fear in the world around us to rise in hope. **I invite you to begin praying now about your commitment to this community, how your faith has shaped your response to fear in 2020, and what generosity means to you, as we open our annual pledge campaign for 2021.**

This year, the entire pledge campaign will be virtual. Ingathering Sunday will be November 22, and there will be two virtual gatherings for the campaign (information below). If you have been financially affected by the pandemic, please be in touch with me so that we can determine how to best support you. If you have not, I pray that you will join me in discerning what financial pledge for 2021 might respond to God's presence in your life and the life of our community, and when you are ready either pledge online at (stpaulcathedral.org/my-pledge) or return the enclosed pledge card via USPS. With your pledge before November 22, the Chapter can plan more confidently for next year's budget.

I am, as always, grateful for the privilege of serving as the Dean of this extraordinary community, and I look forward to the new ways in which we will Love Christ, Serve Others, and Welcome All in the year ahead.

Your sister in Christ,

Penny

We will gather for two events this campaign season to have fun and reflect on how God has moved in our community this past year. Please consider attending one of these two virtual events and see what's in your mystery box!

Choose November 1 at 6:00 p.m. or November 8 at noon.

RSVP at stpaulcathedral.org/my-pledge.

Virtual Ingathering celebration November 22, noon: details forthcoming.

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