

Dean's Remarks for the 2022 Annual Meeting

My first task, and it's a joyful one, is to offer thanks for some key leaders in our community. I did this in my written report but it's important enough for me to do it again. If this were a live meeting I would call for an enthusiastic round of applause for each group, but unfortunately, once again, that isn't possible. Next year, God willing! I want to thank the four Chapter members who are completing their three-year terms: Bob Knight, Margret Hernandez, Jairus Kleinert, and Donna Perdue. You have all been committed, faithful, and hardworking leaders of our congregation during a very challenging time. Thank you. Secondly, I want to thank our staff. We are blessed at St. Paul's to have a group of smart, motivated, and team-oriented people on our payroll. We could not do what we do without them, and I give thanks for them every day: they make it a joy to come to work. Kathleen Burgess, Richard Hogue, Brooks Mason, Martin Green, Bob Oslie, Judy MacDonald, Molly Green, Gabriel Arregui, Maya Little-Saña, Chuck Guillotte, and Erin Sacco-Pineda, thank you for all you do for our cathedral family.

Did any of us imagine a year ago that we would STILL be in pandemic mode today? And yet here we are. And here we STILL are, not only surviving but thriving and moving forward in ministry.

I hope you will spend a few minutes at some point reading the annual report booklet. My report focuses on the year gone by, so I'm not going to say much about the past. Let's look instead to the future and all the bright possibilities that lie ahead of us.

As we begin this year, we are on solid financial footing, thanks to all of you and thanks also to the financial markets which were kind to our invested funds last year. We are also on solid spiritual footing, with liturgies that have adapted to the realities of the pandemic but maintained their beauty and integrity, and a number of small groups which root us in prayer and spiritual growth, including the Daily Office groups, Centered Prayer group, Education for Ministry, and Stephen Ministers. We have a capable and diverse Chapter and a strong staff team, and the major construction project next door is in its final stages. I give thanks for all these strengths, in the face of all the disappointments and adjustments of the past two years. One of the greatest disappointments for me has been the decision to suspend our weekly Eucharist in Spanish, but I remain hopeful that in the year ahead God will lead us to a new vision for our ministry with our Latino neighbors.

All the gurus tell us that churches can no longer depend on member pledges alone, if they are going to stay viable. We have seen a steady drop over the last decade in the number of households pledging, although those who do pledge, pledge more, for which I am deeply grateful. The fact remains that we have to find creative ways to support St. Paul's ministry into the future, and I believe that the most important thing we can do is equip ourselves and our campus for broader ministry to the community around us. I'm going to run through some of the ways St. Paul's is preparing for effective and sustainable ministry in the post-pandemic era.

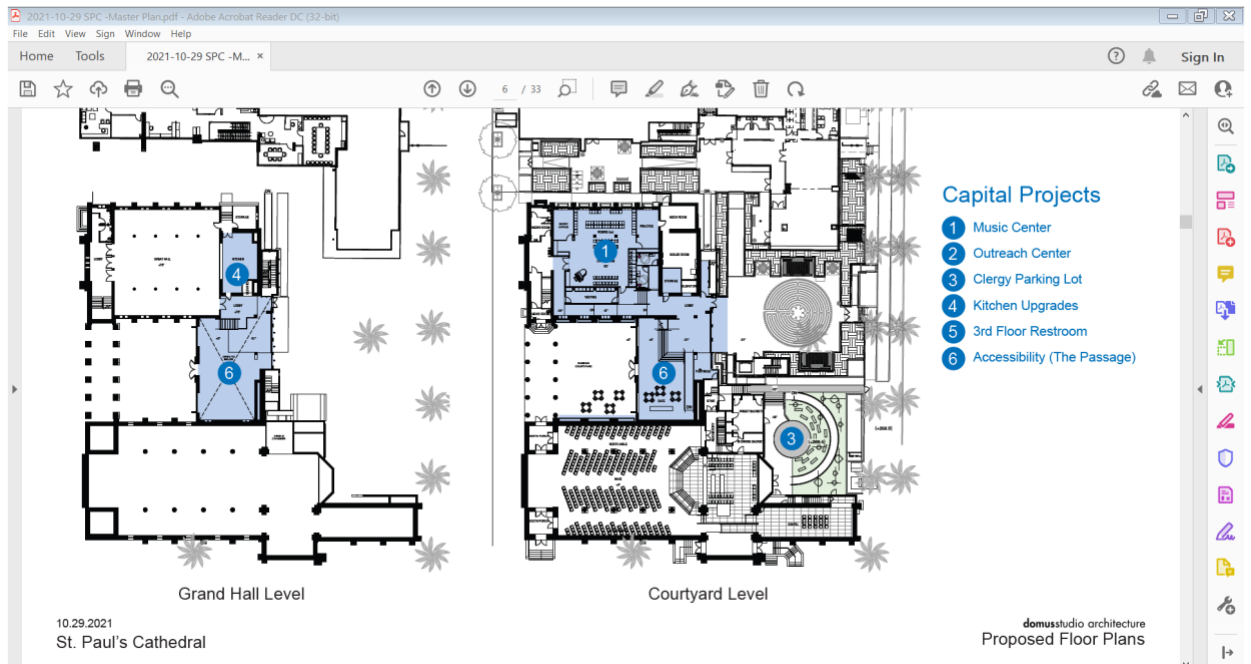
We are remodeling the Chancel for accessibility and flexibility, making the entire nave more useful to the community. As you know this project has been in the planning for well over a year. Since we began work on the design, costs have sharply increased and we have all become

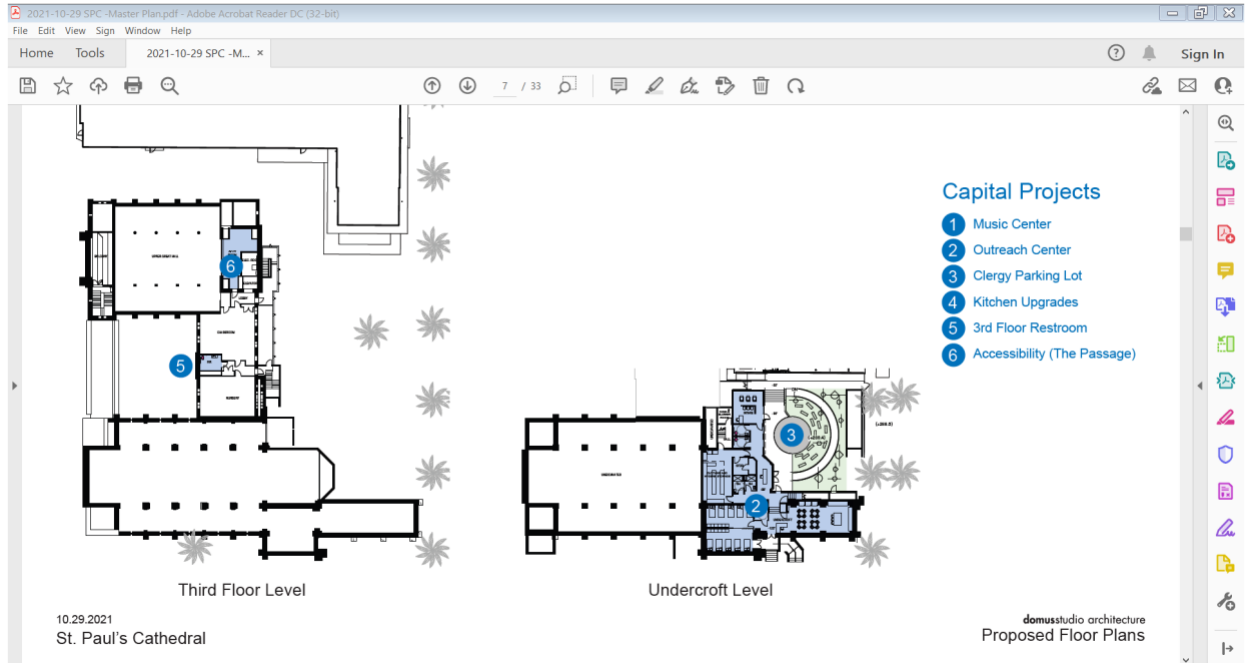
familiar with the “supply chain” issue. When we reviewed the project scope a couple of months ago it was clear that doing the minimum of what was needed would exceed the very generous financial gift by a significant amount. I am happy to report that another generous parishioner came forward with the money to cover the gap, and we are now in a position to start construction. The first thing you will notice will be the organ console being moved to the nave floor. Did you know that our organ console is moveable? While some items, such as smart lighting, are caught up in the supply chain mess, I am hopeful that we can complete the major part of the project before Easter. We are already fielding inquiries from musical organizations about using the improved space

Our Revenue Research Task Force is completing the marketing package to attract renters for our various gathering spaces, including the new space. We will be able to provide good quotes on a consistent basis and hopefully attract many community members to our campus.

We are working with architects on a master plan that will open up the campus in new ways for outreach, music, and community gatherings, incorporating the current plans for the music and outreach centers into an overall plan that makes the whole campus more accessible and safer, eliminating many dark corners and smoothing out the different levels. I am really excited about this!

Here’s a quick orientation to help you envision where we hope to make improvements.





The two major pieces of this project are the Music Center and the Outreach Center, with some minor improvements to support our children and family ministry. We know that music, outreach, and families are the ministry areas closest to the hearts of St. Paul's members, so that's where the energy is going.

The Music Center will be located underneath the Great Hall, where our temporary offices are now. The original use of that space was as the parish hall and all the interior walls can be removed fairly easily. bring into one space all the functionality of our music ministry: rehearsal space, music storage, vestments, and offices. These are currently on four different levels throughout the campus and are not all accessible or particularly safe.

The Outreach Center will be located underneath the chapel, with permanent shower and laundry facilities; rooms where people can gather, eat, and sleep; lots of storage for the items we give away at Showers of Blessings; and a space where a case manager can meet with clients. We hope this will be used for Showers, for the Interfaith Shelter Network, for mission trips from other parts of the country, to name a few possibilities.

We do not as yet have any kind of cost estimate for either of the centers or for the masterplan. So far those involved in the conversations with the architects have been executive staff, ministry leaders of music and outreach, and the wardens.

So how are we going to pay for these wonderful improvements? There are two major pieces for this, a capital campaign and a search for grants.

Last year we did the first, listening phase, of a capital campaign that will hopefully yield the funding for the capital improvements included in the master plan. We plan to restart this

campaign very soon and move forward with the feasibility study, under the leadership of Rocky Ewell and the Rev. Richard Hogue. I'll just remind you that there is a big difference between our annual pledge campaign and a capital campaign.

The pledge campaign pays for our ongoing operating expenses such as staff salaries, utilities, and our commitment to the Diocese. Typically we pay our pledges out of our own ongoing income, so, for example, I make a payment each month on my pledge as my paychecks come in.

The capital campaign focuses more on a single large gift, which might come out of my savings or my retirement plan, and might be paid in several installments. It includes elements of estate planning, and your financial advisor can guide you for the best possible tax advantages. The objective is to give our ability for ministry a one-time major bump, lifting us to a new level of service for the community. Typically people give to capital campaigns because they are excited by the vision of what could be, and by the prospect of making a visible and lasting difference in the community they love.

I have reactivated the Grants Committee, a small group of parishioners who are expert grant writers. This committee is focusing on finding sources of grants not only in the Episcopal Church but in the broader world of philanthropy. There's a lot of interest in the religious philanthropic arena in helping churches to equip themselves for a future in which fewer people attend or pledge to religious organizations.

Outreach is the lifeblood of any faith community: in order to stay healthy, we have to look outward to the needs of God's world. We are gradually moving back towards a full offering of Showers of Blessings. The masterplan calls for permanent showers to be installed; while this won't happen for a while, we should be able to resume renting the diocese's shower trailer once the major construction is over and we regain use of the old clergy parking lot. During the lockdown we had conversations with several community partners about the most effective way for us to serve our unsheltered neighbors: Showers address only a symptom of homelessness, and don't offer a solution; but as we attract volunteers who are passionate about this issue, I see the possibility of building a group that will encourage our community leaders to find systemic solutions and transform our community.

As the pandemic recedes we will start to rebuild our choir program, recruiting and training a new generation of children to love our musical tradition. I see this as a key youth ministry: singing in choirs is known to promote intelligence and learning abilities, as well as being good for the soul and bringing people from diverse communities together.

And all the time, we are continuing to love Christ, serve others, and welcome all, shining as a beacon of God's love and light in a world that desperately needs both.