



ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

E P I S C O P A L

Dear people of St. Paul's,

Our patron, St. Paul, made a practice of starting his letters by giving thanks for the people he was addressing. It's an excellent model for any letter-writer, and it is easy for me to start a letter to you by giving thanks for who you are, as members of this extraordinary, gifted, and energetic community. The challenges of the last 2 ½ years have given many of us a new appreciation of the importance of this family of faith, both for ourselves and for the community around us. The steady presence of St. Paul's, both as a prominent physical structure in our city and as a spiritual home and refuge, has been a blessing as we have walked the winding path of the pandemic, seeking to pivot and adapt with each new development. Thank you for your commitment, your service, and your love.

In some ways, our journey since our celebration at the end of 2019 has been both spiritual and literal, as we descended from our old offices to the Great Hall basement, from the old chancel to the nave floor, and then back up again as we settled into the light-filled spaces of 525 Olive and focused the lights on the new, expanded chancel.

2022 has been a year of opening our arms to the community and welcoming all into our embrace: we have developed partnerships with Voices of our City Choir, expanding our involvement with our unsheltered neighbors, and with Villa Musica, a community music school whose mission to offer children and adults the gift of great music harmonizes with our own tradition of intergenerational music ministry. We host regular dance classes, board meetings, and social gatherings for HOA's, non-profits, and alumni groups. And we have extended a warm welcome to our new neighbors in the 525 Olive tower, giving them housewarming gifts of coupons from local merchants as well as information about our ministries. St. Paul's is wide open, truly living into our desire to be the Cathedral for the City.

When you look back at where we were two years ago, isolated in our homes, our lives constrained by lockdown regulations and understandable fears, the contrast is stunning. Today we are ready to serve, ready to grow, as God calls us forward.

There are challenges ahead: I cannot pretend otherwise. The rising cost of living, the lingering effects of the pandemic, the political and societal divisions, the continuing cultural drift away from organized religion – all these are part of our reality today, and we must be continually assessing, adapting, and refocusing the way we do ministry, while remaining utterly faithful to the God who loves us beyond measure and who calls us to serve everyone without exception.

Challenges aside, I am excited by the possibilities that the coming year presents: we will establish St. Paul's as a desirable event location in the city; we will rebuild our legendary children's choir program; we will continue to grow the children and family ministry that has started to flourish; and we will expand our outreach and efforts to share the good news of Jesus with our neighbors. As we love Christ, serve others, and welcome all, we will grow in faith and love.

Love Christ • Serve Others • Welcome All

For 153 years St. Paul's has served the people of San Diego. We serve because Jesus first served us. We seek to grow because Jesus called us to go out into the world and share the good news. We love our neighbors because God loves us. It's that simple. We are ready to serve, ready to grow. And we can all do our part.

I invite you to begin praying now about your commitment to this community, how your faith has shaped your response to all that we have experienced in 2022, and what generosity means to you, as we open our annual pledge campaign for 2023.

Enclosed you will find a brochure that includes information about the ministries that are supported by pledging, some tools that you might use to determine the amount of your pledge, and a reflection on the state of our church as we begin this effort.

Our pledge campaign this fall will kick off after the 10:30 am worship service on Sunday, October 9 and will continue throughout the month and into November. We will have one event mid-campaign, an early-evening gathering on Friday, November 4 in our beautiful new Guild Room. Please RSVP for this event online at <https://stpaulcathedral.org/my-pledge/>. We will hear short witness talks from parishioners during worship each Sunday of the campaign, and the campaign will conclude with blessing the pledges on Ingathering Sunday, November 20. Each element of the campaign will have its own character and provide a different perspective.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, please be in touch with me so that we can determine how best to support you. If you are not, I pray that you will join me in discerning what financial pledge for 2023 might be an appropriate response to God's presence in your life and the life of our community. When you are ready, either pledge online at <https://stpaulcathedral.org/my-pledge/> or return the enclosed pledge card via USPS. With your pledge in hand before November 20, 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 vibrant 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,



The Very Rev. Penny Bridges, Dean