OPEN DOORS
Preparing for Our Third Century of Ministry in Downtown Syracuse
ST. PAUL'S SYRACUSE
Dear people of St. Paul’s,

We are making our way courageously through this strange and unsettling time of the coronavirus pandemic. We have struggled to find ways to worship, serve, celebrate and experience the fellowship at the heart of St. Paul’s. Through all of the challenges of the past months I have held three ideas in the back of my mind:

- God is journeying beside us in this uncertain, anxious time.
- This pandemic will come to an end.
- It will be a joyful day when we are finally able to open wide the big red doors on Fayette Street and greet friends and strangers with open arms and no masks on our faces.

In the coming months our hearts will be happy as we begin to worship and work, share bread and wine, coffee and soup in the place that is like a second home for us. These buildings are the safe place where we find, and are found by God. These rooms and hallways and ancient halls are the place where we seek and serve Christ in friends, and in the strangers God brings to our doorstep.

We are preparing for a third century in this place of intense ministry, in the center of the city. Rich and poor, country folk and young urban hipsters, people of all backgrounds and nationalities walk under the shadow of that enormous granite spire every day of the week. Our congregation and ministries might look different than they did one hundred years ago, yet we are motivated by the same love, we are guided and formed by the same Holy Scriptures, and we journey beside the same God.

In our third century we are called to welcome and serve all of God’s people in this place. Our buildings are the place where much of the ministry happens, so we are dedicating this issue of
The Epistle to the details of the Open Doors project. We are moving forward with the task of renovating, preserving and improving our buildings during a time when we rarely set foot inside them. The Open Doors project has four purposes:

- **Preservation** of beautiful, historic buildings, given to us by previous generations.
- Increased engagement with our members, visitors and community through increased *universal access*.
- Increased, improved space for *mission*. Just as it was for previous generations, ministries that serve those in greatest need will be an essential part of St. Paul’s for the next 100 years.
- **Renovation** of our facilities to make them beautiful, safe and energy efficient.

Open Doors is the largest capital improvement project at St. Paul’s since 1958. Thanks to the efforts of a skilled, faithful group of members, St. Paul’s has secured over $800,000 in grant funds for Open Doors. In order to complete this vital work, we will need the financial support of each of our members and many friends of St. Paul’s. There is more information about our next steps into the Capital Campaign on pages 14-15.

As you read through this little brochure you will notice there is no mention of many of our favorite spaces, such as our worship space, the Brewster Room and the kitchen. That’s because these spaces work well and are dearly beloved just the way they are.

I urge you to ‘read, mark and inwardly digest’ the brochure in your hands. Hold onto it, at least until we have a more formal capital campaign brochure. The work St. Paul’s begins this month will strengthen us for ministry for generations to come!

Fr. Philip
Windows are the eyes of the building. Through them we see God’s creation: people walking by, sunshine, blue skies, snow and rain. Windows are like eyes in being the most expressive element of the face of the building. Windows are like eyes in being the most vulnerable part of the building. Our work of preserving and renovating our parish house begins with repairing our windows.

Many of the windows in our parish house were installed in 1909. Many are single pane, like these pictured, with wood sashes and sills. Most are sealed shut by layers of paint. Some newer windows have plastic coverings. Others have storm/screen units that don’t work and don’t match the style of our building. Water damage has ravaged the wood and the caulking that held the glass, stone and wood together.

Our historic windows will be repaired and, if necessary, replacement wood sashes will be built to match the originals. Joints between wood and masonry will be caulked. New, compatible storm units will be installed. Other exterior wood trim will be prepped and painted. When the work is complete, our windows will be fully functioning, efficient and beautiful!
PRESERVATION:  
If You Love A Building, Give It A New Roof

Looking down on our parish house you begin to understand that the Hansen Dining Room, the Brewster Room, the kitchen and the Hadley Chapel are parts of at least four separate buildings that have been connected with hallways, doorways and ramps. All of the roofs in this patchwork of buildings are in poor condition. These roofs will be replaced with new materials, new rigid insulation and better technologies:

- Notice the standing water on the flat roof in the photo above. The original drains are often plugged. Every few years we pay to have leaks repaired; most of these roofs are at least 25 years old.

- New snow and ice guards will be installed on the south side of the cathedral building (note the green copper material in the photo below) to keep snow from falling on the sidewalks.

- The oldest roof of all is the steep red, shingle roof on the Hadley Chapel. We often find shingles lying on the sidewalk near the office door!
We need a way for members and visitors, especially those with mobility issues, to enter the church building easily. Open Doors includes an entirely new entrance to the building, from the parking lot directly into the Sargent Foyer.

You can see the location for the new entrance in the photo at the top of page 5; the location is outlined with a thin, black line on the brick wall of the church. The new entrance will be cut through this brick wall. The entrance will have a roof to protect people from rain and snow, and it will be fully wheelchair accessible. (No steps!) Cars will be able to pull up to the covered entrance to drop off passengers, and then park in the lot. Handicapped parking spaces will be located next to the new entrance.
Most days of the week, the Montgomery Street doors are the ‘front door’ of the church. Visitors know they are entering a beautiful, welcoming place when they approach the big red doors. Yet when the doors are opened, members and visitors are confronted with an intimidating set of steps. To correct this problem:

- The current outer doors will be replaced with fully accessible new doors (red, of course).
- The sidewalk will be rebuilt to meet the entrance.
- The floor of the lobby will be lowered to the level of the sidewalk.
- The first floor offices, Brewster Room and Hansen Room will be accessible by elevator or by a short set of steps.
In the 21st century we demonstrate our hospitality by making our spaces accessible to everyone, so installation of an elevator is one of the most important elements of the Open Doors project.

Several sets of renovations and additions to the parish hall have resulted in multiple floor levels in the building. The solution will be an elevator with stops at each level, served by doors in the front and the back of the elevator. We don’t have a lot of choices about where we can locate this elevator in order to serve all of the different levels. The best location is the spot you see in this photo, in the space in the center of our current office lobby, right next to the stairwell. The stairwell will be enclosed to meet current fire regulations.
The Sargent Foyer bathrooms have served members and visitors for many years; they were built over 60 years ago. Our new bathrooms will:

- Be fully handicapped accessible.
- Have more toilets.
- Be roomy, clean and pleasant.

The new bathrooms will be appreciated by our members, but they are essential for crowds of visitors who come to St. Paul’s to attend an increasing number and variety of concerts in our cathedral building.
We love the Hansen Dining Room. We want to use it more. We want it to be more functional. We want it to be beautiful again!

When we are finished with our work most of the room will look much as it does today, but Open Doors includes several major improvements around the edges of the Hansen Dining Room:

- The windows will be repaired and made energy efficient.
- The storage area will be expanded and hidden behind a modern wall.
- A ‘media wall’ will be built into the East side of the room (the part of the room with the ugly closet doors in this photo).
- The media wall will have a built-in projector and amplification system to make it easy to make presentations to small and large groups.
- A permanent video conference set-up will facilitate in-person meetings with some members participating via Zoom.
The Hadley Chapel is a large room with a beautiful stained glass window, yet it is rarely used at this time. We will continue to use the chapel for small services, but it seems unfaithful to leave it completely empty most days of the week.

One of the primary challenges in using the chapel as it is today is that the smooth, high arched walls and ceiling make it easy to hear a preacher deliver the sermon, but the acoustics make normal human conversations jumbled and difficult to hear. Acoustical buffering, modern lighting, and a few high-quality furnishings will convert the chapel into a comfortable, functional space for large and small groups, for children and adults.
Our drop-in center for those with housing instability, The Caring Place is the newest ministry of St. Paul’s Church. The Caring Place mission is to create a safe community of hospitality where healthy, caring relationships develop, and individuals are supported. Prior to the closure of our buildings we welcomed guests to share conversation, small activities and a simple meal. 20-25 people joined us most Thursdays. The strong response of our guests shows the need for a relationship-based program in Syracuse. As we learn more about the downturn in the economy, store closures and job losses, we expect the need for the program will grow significantly in the coming year.

The Caring Place needs a dedicated space where the program can grow. In the Open Doors plan, the space formerly occupied by the Samaritan Center (shown in the photo) will include:

- a large, attractive common space.
- smaller spaces for quiet conversations and person-person support services.
- an improved entrance.
- upgraded bathrooms, reconfigured for safety.
- space to allow for expanded facilities: a kitchen, laundry or showers.
We hope to be able to refurbish two little used parts of the building through the project: the Hadley Chapel entrance and the alley on the south side of the Hansen Dining Room.

The chapel entrance on Montgomery Street has been the closest thing we have to an accessible entrance, but the doors are 135 years old and difficult to open and close. Our plan is to build a new, truly accessible ramp and rebuild the doorway with modern security and visitor screening technology.

During the past hundred years many structures have been built in the alley between St. Paul’s and the old Masonic Lodge building. Many of these structures need to be removed or replaced, the most visible being the fire escape. We are working closely with the new owners of the Masonic Lodge building to transform the alley into an uncluttered, even beautiful, space.
St. Paul’s is in a strong position as we begin our fundraising efforts due to receiving commitments of over $800,000 in grant funds for the project. We have reason to be confident that our members and community partners will provide strong support to complete the project.

The first step is to get a clear picture of the amount of financial support we are likely to receive from individuals and community partners. This will be accomplished through a feasibility study conducted by the fundraising professionals at Partners for Sacred Places. Partners has more than 30 years’ experience with congregations raising funds for capital projects. We have experience with them as consultants in the decision to undertake this project. Partners established the National Fund for Sacred Places to help historic churches like ours. Last fall the Fund awarded us $250,000 for our project, and four of our leaders attended their fundraising and community building training in Chicago last November.

Two staff members of Partners, Gianfranco Grande and Bridget Fidler, will be conducting St. Paul’s feasibility study. To make an accurate assessment of our financial situation and support for the project, Gianfranco and Bridget will be interviewing about 20 members of St. Paul’s, representing a cross-section of our members, and about 20 of our community partners.

Amy Youker (our assistant bookkeeper) is serving as our administrator for the project; she will be arranging the interviews. If Amy calls or leaves you a message, we trust that you will respond positively and participate in an interview. Interviews may be conducted in a physically distanced, in-person setting or via Zoom.

With help from these interview participants we should have the results of our feasibility study by the end of September.
The precise timing of succeeding steps depends on many factors, including the spread or suppression of the COVID-19 epidemic. Our proposed timeline includes the following steps:

- **Fall of 2020**: Capital Campaign begins.
- **Winter of 2021**: Architectural plans are completed. Requests for construction bids are sent out.
- **Spring of 2021**: Contracts are signed.
- **Summer of 2021**: Construction begins.
Deadline for Upcoming Epistle

The next regular Epistle will be August 15th.
The deadline for that issue is Wednesday, August 5th.