

**All Saints-by-the-Sea
Sanctuary Preservation and Readiness Project
Comments by the Rev. Aimée Eyer-Delevett**

Introduction

On behalf of the entire parish I want to thank you for being here. I am Aimée Eyer-Delevett, the rector of All Saints. I am also one of your neighbors – Alyson, Willa and I love being a part of the neighborhood, and we've so enjoyed getting to know many of you. I hope to get a chance to get to know each of you as we walk to the beach, walk our dogs, and wander around this wonderful neighborhood.

Structural and Seismic Needs

I'd like to take a bit of time to share with you information about this beautiful and historic Sanctuary that we are sitting in. From that we welcome your questions and look forward to continued dialogue and sharing - tonight and into the future.

The story of our current efforts began about 7 years ago, when parish leaders assessed the entire campus to ensure that maintenance needs were being fully addressed. You might know that there are actually 10 structures on our campus; and as you can imagine, this requires tremendous amount of time, effort and, of course, dollars.

The assessment results in a lot of preventative maintenance and good work. However, it also brought to light some very, very serious issues that now require the parish to focus on ensuring that this building will -- literally -- stay standing for another 115 years and beyond.

The reports from our engineering firms have informed us of two serious issues that must be addressed immediately. The first is that the iconic Bell Tower, the cornerstone of which was laid in the year 1900, does not in fact have a foundation nor any type of structural reinforcement. So age, settling and various earthquakes over the decades have left cracks that, engineers tell us, mean it is an unsafe structure that must be deconstructed and rebuilt. This work must be done immediately and I can share more with you about the timing in a few minutes.

The second serious finding from the engineering analysis of this building was two-fold, and just as serious: that there is literally no foundation supporting the entire west half of this structure. So from the middle of this area we are in, the walls are sitting on rock piles and a few wood supports. The floor itself is sitting on posts that used to rest on boulders -- that's what they did in 1900. But the boulders have sunk and moved in 115 years and so we have areas of the inside of the church with literally no supports. You can check out some photos taken under the floor and they are actually pretty scary to all of us.

Finally, we found out that there is a lack of what is called "lateral support" that would ensure the building could withstand a major earthquake.

The All Saints Sanctuary, our sacred home, is crying out for us to tend to her.

Broader Conversation about Sanctuary Needs

Interestingly, these seismic and structural concerns became part of a broader conversation throughout the church about the missional needs and goals of the parish. For instance:

1. For the past few decades our pipe organ has literally been growing mold and corroding with the sea air and climate. It is failing and must be replaced.
2. Also for nearly a decade, the lay leaders and clergy set a goal to lower the communion rail. This place, where we kneel to present our lives and ourselves to God and to be made one with one another and God's creation, isn't accessible to everyone. We want to lower it to the floor level so that all can gather together in our weekly Sunday Eucharist, or our service of Great Thanksgiving.
3. And since I've arrived we have looked further at how this building supports the mission and ministries of our parish community.
 - a. We have vital and vibrant spiritual practices, including healing touch, meditation, and centering prayer.
 - b. We have a burgeoning ministry to young families with children.
4. So we began to think about how to use the space within the building just to the south of the sanctuary to create a space to house these spiritual practices and deepen ministry to our children.
5. Finally, it has been long held desire of parishioners to have a place where they can lay to rest the ashes of the people they love.

Memorial Chapel

With the replacement of our organ, there is a very large area just to the north of the altar area -- inside the Sanctuary -- that will no longer be needed to house organ pipes. This is the location where it's our desire and plan to create a memorial chapel where we can lay to rest the ashes of people who worship here and their families.

For people who worship here, this sacred space is home to us; we live out the whole of our lives. We're washed in the waters of baptism and are taught the stories of our faith. We're fed at the altar each week to give us hope for living and strength for serving in the world. We claim an adult faith at our Confirmation; we are married here; we give thanks for the birth or adoption of our children; we seek forgiveness here, bring our fears and grief here. People who have lived out their lives here may also want to find their final rest here.

A Memorial Chapel provides our people the opportunity to rest in peace within these sacred walls. It allows the church to offer pastoral care to the family of the deceased in a unique way. And it serves as a physical and visible reminder of what is already spiritually true— that we gather each week in mystical communion with all of creation in the present, yet to come, and with those who have gone before us.

Now, I understand that prior to my tenure there were conversations with neighbors regarding an outdoor memorial garden. That effort was abandoned in the face of neighborhood concerns. Our intention is to locate fully indoors, within the walls of the church, a memorial chapel.

Outreach to Our Community

I'm grateful for this opportunity to gather and begin a conversation as neighbors. The church is called by Christ to serve our neighbors, and I am very, very enheartened by the work that All Saints does locally and around the world to help people. In our own neighborhood, we answer this call in an incredible array of ways:

1. There are more AA meetings held on this campus than anyplace in community, which means people are helped to recover and sustain their lives here. From the cars parked in our lots at all hours you probably already know these classes occur.
2. The All Saints Parish School, which has served generations of families with young children, for over 50 years, serves people in the earliest stages of life.
3. And the Friendship Center serves people in the last years of life, as adults with cognitive disabilities are given care and their families given respite.
4. And something that we have quietly set up over the past few years: we have stored, in the little garage that many of you drive by each day, enough emergency supplies for our neighborhood, for you, if a disaster were to occur. We can help shelter and feed 200 people for 3 days with the supplies stored here.

All Saints really does seek to serve the community for the whole of their lives, too.

The Purpose of Tonight

Let me begin to wrap up by saying that our intent for this gathering was to begin a relationship with you, our neighbors, to simply start a conversation about how we are and can be in relationship with each other.

We want to know how our buildings and campus can help serve your needs. Perhaps our spiritual and meditative practices are of interest to you. You are welcome! Are there other interests we can pursue together, something like yoga or other needs you have?

We want you to feel welcome at All Saints, so please pass along your ideas and suggestions. Our doors are always open to you, and our outreach is always extended to you.

Next Steps

The very next step in the readiness and preservation effort is the immediate rebuilding of JUST the Bell Tower. We hope to file a request for a permit to the County in early October. It was important to us to have this gathering before we took an official step with the County.

We are not sure about timing but it is possible that we will obtain permission and begin deconstruction in January of 2016. But we will keep you posted and you are welcome to walk with us on this path -- to review our application and stay involved with us.

We invite you, and promise to be open and transparent with you.

The rest of the work that I've described will require a full permitting and hearing process and will take the next 18 months or so. We do not believe we would get close to actual construction until

later in 2017. Following tonight, we will meet with the Miramar folks and see if there are ways we can work together to minimize the impact on all of you.

Q&A

We'd like to hear from you if you have questions about what's been discussed tonight or any other issue. We know you may need to leave so please do feel free.

There are cards available should you wish to submit a question or comment in writing or if you'd like to request a meeting with a representative of the project or the church. We promise to send you information via email with significant updates and we'll also write up a summary of tonight's session and email that out.

We have several parish leaders as well as our architect, Bob Easton, who can help me respond to your questions.

Thank you!