

The Rev. Aimée Eyer-Delevett

Sanctuary Preservation and Readiness Town Hall Meeting

June 7, 2015

Theological Framework of the Project Elements

Church building exists to serve the mission of the church. So, I'd like to speak for a few minutes about how the elements of this project impact the mission of our church.

It seems to me that the need for seismic retrofitting speaks for itself. Without addressing these needs, we very well might not have a church building in which to house our mission. So I'm not going to speak to this project element. If you have questions about this element, please ask them during the Q&A.

We come to church to bring ourselves closer to God and to one another in community of faith. We bring the **whole of our lives** here that we may dwell more fully in God's will for us and for our world. The elements of this project address the whole of our lives lived out in the church.

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It begins with Sunday morning. We come here, week after week, month after month, year after year, to practice our faith, to hear the word of God in song

and speech, to be fed by word and sacrament. We come here so that we might grow in our knowledge of God and God's love.

Organ and Communion Rail:

My first Sunday at All Saints, I stood in the back of the church. I was excited and nervous, opening my heart to my new congregation, feasting my eyes on this beautiful Sanctuary. Everyone was in place. The organ sounded to begin the service. And, huh? What was that? Confusion arose in your new rector, not sure what was happening. Someone saw the confusion on my face and leaned over, "that's why we need a new organ." The organ was behaving badly and had to be turned off, and back on again, right as we were beginning the celebration.

The purpose of music in worship is to enable us to join our voices together in prayer, to allow our prayer to transcend the confines of merely cognitive thinking, that we might worship God more fully with body, mind, and spirit. Our sacred music is an “outward and visible sign” of the worth which we give to God in public worship. We need an instrument that doesn’t hinder our worship, but that is worthy to offer God the praise God deserves.

Just as our instrument shouldn’t hinder us, neither should the architecture of our chancel, the altar area. There is among you a desire to make the communion rail more accessible so that everyone can bring themselves to the altar to receive communion. This impulse is good and right. The architecture of 20th century churches no longer builds in a gap between altar and the people, but rather follows Jesus example in closing the gap between the divine and the human. Following this impulse we are working on a design for the chancel that will close the gap between chancel and nave, priest and people. This will prepare our church for the 21st century and beyond, to form the baptized to be the Body of Christ, the hands, feet, and hearts of Christ, blessed, and sent out to minister to the hurts and hopes of this world.

Seaside Chapel:

This is a high and holy call: to BE the Body of Christ. And I for one need EVERYONE we can get to help us carry out this ministry. I know you do, too. You articulated in your Parish Profile the desire to reach even the youngest Christians, and their families. I have a vision for the Seaside Chapel that can help us do just that.

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What if...

What if there were a sliding wall, and, where the Vesting Room is we created a truly sacred space as an extension

of the Nave. On the other side of the sliding wall we could put a child sized altar and have moveable seats, even space to sit on the floor. In this truly sacred space we could host a service oriented especially to young children and their families. Kind of like Family Feast but held weekly.... Currently, our implicit message to our kids is, “this Sanctuary isn’t for you” because we send them out of this space during worship. This creates for them a barrier to participation, and ultimately weakens the Body of Christ.... But, WHAT IF we could create special, sacred space that was child-centered?

And what if . . . this space could be used during other services as a place where families could go if their child needed space to move around in, or to be nursed, but where mom or dad could still have visual and audio participation in the service thanks to the sliding wall....

And what if this space we laid a labyrinth in the floor and we could be used during the week to **host the ever-deepening spiritual practices** that we offer: contemplative prayer, Christ-centered prayer, healing touch, circles of trust, and other such ministries that deeply tend the spiritual life. In truly sacred space....

There are many creative ideas and energy circling around the new Seaside Chapel idea. How they will take shape is still to be discerned... but potential to be a sacred space that deeply forms our spiritual lives.

Memorial Chapel:

And because this sacred space is home to the whole of our lives and our stories, we also have plans for a memorial chapel. As I said in my opening statements, we live out our life stories here. Our Book of Common Prayer, in the section on Pastoral Offices, displays how we mark the important moments of our life here. We proclaim 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; **AND WE ARE BURIED HERE.**

For those of us who have lived our lives here, we may also want to find our 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 is a physical and visible reminder of what is already spiritually true—that we gather each week in the mystical communion of the faithful who have come before us.

Endowment/reserve funds:

And finally because this sacred gift is not only for us or for those who have gone before us, but for those yet to come, this project also includes the creation of an endowment and reserve funds. These funds will ensure our ability to be good stewards of this building and the ministry it houses for generations of Christians to come.

Ultimately, this project is not about the building, but about ensuring that we have the sacred spaces necessary to house ministries that form the faithful and allow us to grow in relationship with our God and one another as we serve the world in Christ's name, now, and for years to come....