

Honoring Our Past...



Welcoming Our Future

Case Statement for Proposal

St. John's Episcopal Church

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ephesians 2:19-22

St. John's Free Church was founded in 1853 to implement a vision of a church without a pew rental system (which Bishop Bowman, our founder, judged to be contrary to a basic doctrine of Christian worship). We have consistently provided a center for worship and ministries that welcomes people of all social and economic levels to God's table. Our beautiful historic buildings also support our Jubilee Ministries, which lie at the heart of who we are as a congregation that integrates advocacy, empowerment, evangelism and outreach into church life. We have become increasingly aware of the physical obstacles that prevent people with mobility challenges from participating fully in our ministries, and we believe that now is the time to remove those barriers.

In our 2011 property survey, parishioners overwhelmingly identified courtyard refurbishment and handicapped accessibility from parking areas as the highest priority items, and at least half of respondents also deemed columbarium expansion and elevator installation as "very important."

Our proposal meets all of these expressed needs, with the unanticipated benefit of further enhancing the "Welcome!" with which we want to greet our members and our guests.

These are the primary features of our proposal:

- ◆ Accessible buildings and parking
- ◆ Gathering space near the church's entrance
- ◆ Columbarium expansion
- ◆ Courtyard restoration, including a labyrinth and new gardens

Key Features of *Welcoming Our Future*

Accessibility

For guests with mobility challenges, St. John's provides access to our church from a small parking lot, through the Parish Hall, down a ramp (which gets slick when wet and treacherous when snowy), and across the breezeway — not the most hearty welcome! We've discussed an elevator several times in the past few decades, but plans have always stalled. A five-level elevator and a ramp that parallels Chestnut St. would provide easier access to our worship space, as well as every-day access to our auditorium, basement classrooms, courtyard, and All-Purpose Building.

Gathering Space

From the designs presented by Marotta/Main Architects, and with feedback from the congregation and the Historical Architectural Review Board, we have chosen a two-story, all-glass design to enclose the area between Parish Hall and the church. This warm, inviting, and well-lighted gathering space would allow us to welcome guests, display information, and greet one another before and after services. The elevator would open into this space, providing access to other levels from there.

Columbarium Expansion

All remaining niches in our columbarium have been reserved. Our proposal would more than double our capacity. We would install new niches both inside and outside the new building, providing space for ourselves and for future generations.

Courtyard and Labyrinth

Our courtyard has often been used for picnics, Easter egg hunts, weddings, and other outdoor gatherings, but its current condition is hazardous. The installation of seat walls and gardens would rejuvenate the space, and the removal of soil outside the lower-level Sunday School rooms would reduce moisture-related problems in those rooms. Finally, a permanent labyrinth (funded by a memorial gift) would provide a space for contemplation and spiritual healing.

...and a Bonus: Additional Space

One unexpected bonus of the glass enclosure would be the large space below it at the courtyard level. While columbarium niches will occupy part of the new space, there will be additional space available, perhaps for our expanding Food Pantry ministry, a new bathroom, or other as-yet-unimagined uses.

Next Steps

Using a thorough interview and review process, Marotta/Main Architects was selected to develop preliminary designs, and Horizon Stewardship was selected for its capital campaign and stewardship leadership.

Here are the next steps in our process of addressing our identified needs:

February—March 2015:	Gather congregational input on financial feasibility
August — October 2015:	Capital Campaign Event
Beginning November 2015	Marotta/Main Architects produces detailed plans, with projected cost estimates and detailed drawings.

Based on our preliminary design, the estimated cost at this time is in the \$1.2—\$1.5 million range. More precise costs will be available after construction bids have been secured.

Feasibility Committee Members

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We ask for your prayers and support to guide our church through this important process.