



August 23, 2021

To the members of St. John's Episcopal Church of Lancaster:

I wanted to thank everyone for your input, insight and guidance as the Vestry determined the future of our properties located at 209 and 211 Concord Street behind Becker House. It was extremely helpful during our meetings to consider the different options as to the best use of the two properties.

At our June Vestry meeting, we voted to keep the property at 209 Concord Street. The property is in good shape, we have a great tenant leasing the property (she's been there for 4 years), and we believe keeping the property provides us with several options to use it for different ministry opportunities in the future. This allows us additional time to discern and discuss the best use of the property at 209 Concord Street.

The harder decision was what to do with 211 Concord Street. As discussed previously with the parish, we found out in February that this property had not been properly maintained over the years and was, quite frankly, not habitable. There were issues with the basement, kitchen, second floor bathroom, third floor bedroom and roof, and there was black mold throughout the house. We determined the tenant needed to vacate the property so we could clean it and determine the extent of damage.

We worked with the tenant to help her find another place to live. Once vacated, we were able to clean out the unit and perform a full inspection. It confirmed our worst fears. The kitchen and second floor bathroom were "shot" and needed to be replaced. There were questions about the plumbing and electrical systems in the house, the floors and walls were damaged, there was black mold throughout the house, and the roof needed to be repaired. We received quotes and estimates that it would take anywhere from \$70,000 to \$100,000 to renovate/repair 211 to get it back into "functional" shape that would pass City inspection.

The Vestry spent significant time considering whether to keep or sell 211 Concord Street. We considered the long-term benefits of keeping it, and what different ministries could be best served going forward (we discussed using it as housing for refugee families or as an apartment for an assistant priest). We also considered the cost to renovate the unit (and how best to raise those funds after a six-year capital campaign), and whether it was in the best interests of St. John's to remain in the residential real estate business as a landlord. The Vestry felt strongly we should not be in the business of being a landlord if it was not associated with a ministry of our parish.

After much discussion and discernment, over several Vestry meetings, we have decided to sell 211 Concord Street. Several factors tilted in favor of this decision. We were mindful of the financial stresses we have battled in recent years to balance the operating budget, as well as the uncertainty created by the ongoing pandemic. In recent years, unexpected property expenses on our campus have created financial challenges for us since those costs have not been budgeted. The vote was unanimous (7-0 with two absent). The Vestry will determine the best uses of the proceeds from the sale to further the mission and ministry of St. John's. This decision is subject to the approval of the Diocese.

I want everyone to know that your Vestry did not come to this decision easily. As a group we were back and forth as to what to do, but in the end, we believed the best outcome for St. John's was to sell this property. The continued availability of 209 Concord to support parish missions made the decision to sell 211 Concord sensible.

Please feel free to email or call me with any questions. I will be happy to discuss further. My email is webb.cook@yahoo.com and my cell number is 717-917-1790.

Webb Cook
Senior Warden

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