

## **NEW PLANS FOR ST. JOHN'S**

Over the last several years we have been pleased to see our St. John's community grow. But with that growth have come some constraints. Anyone who has participated in the choir, had a child involved in one of our youth programs or attended a discussion group, anyone who has tried to find a meeting room, or schedule time with Ashley or Matt in their "office," or even tried to meet with Rob or Anne in their "office" understands the impact this growth has had on our current resources. Apart from the space crunch, the Parish Hall has had few upgrades since it was built in the 1950's.

The Vestry saw an opportunity to look at the vacant house across the street (100 Chapel Street) and the lower level of the Parish Hall as space that could be redefined to better meet our needs. Conversations started with "What if..." and people were invited to fill in the blank. What if we had real offices for the staff who need privacy and quiet for meetings and planning? What if we could provide sufficient space for the classes on Sunday and the book groups and study groups who come together throughout the week? What if funds were available or could be raised to accomplish these goals?

A generous bequest from a long-time parishioner, Margaret Tebbetts, provided the source for realizing some improvements. A Building Committee was appointed, led by Randy Carey and Bruce Dicker, and was asked to explore options to better use these buildings and ease the space crunch. Laura Ludes was added to the leadership team when she became Junior Warden.

The Building Committee began by meeting with as many interested parties as they could find: staff, teachers, and members of the various outreach groups. This input was critical in shaping future plans.

**PHASE ONE: REPAIRS AND OFFICE MOVE (TWO STEPS FORWARD AND ONE BACK)**  
Ideas and solutions gradually came together over the spring. The first phase of the plan involves some necessary repairs to the Rectory and then moving offices from the Parish Hall to the Rectory. Initially the committee planned to replace the windows with more energy efficient ones, but the Historic District Commission rejected that proposal. Consequently, we plan to repair the existing windows. Insulation will be added in the exterior walls and other minor repairs and repainting will also be done. The Building Committee would like to see this accomplished by the end of June, clearing the way for Phase Two.

### **PHASE TWO: UPGRADE PARISH HALL**

Work on the ground level of the Parish Hall would then begin, hopefully by mid-July. On the street side, three roomier classrooms will replace the several offices and one classroom currently in use. On the opposite side, the one classroom and the choir room will remain. Additional storage space will be added, exposed pipes will be covered where feasible and upgraded lighting provided. Bathrooms on this level will be upgraded and made handicapped accessible. The bathrooms on the upper level will also be upgraded.

The small office in the upper Hall, to the left of the kitchen, will be expanded as a multiple-use meeting space that is handicapped accessible. A handicapped accessible office will also be retained on the lower level. There will be an aggressive push to complete work on the lower level of the Parish Hall before classes begin in the fall.

#### CHECK OUT THE PLANS

The best way to visualize these changes is to check out the bulletin board in the upper level of the Hall. Architectural drawings are posted there and updated ones will soon be available showing the existing and revised floor plans. Come to Coffee Hour and ask any members of the Vestry to explain the changes.

#### TIMING

After 100 Chapel Street is repaired and repainted, and the clergy and staff have moved into their new offices,

#### GIFT FROM MARGARET TEBBETTS

The total cost of the repairs and upgrades will be in the \$150,000 range and will be covered almost entirely by Margaret Tebbetts' generosity toward St. John's. For those who never met her, Margaret was a member of St. John's for most of her eighty-eight years. She was born with severe glaucoma and was blind from a very early age. When she was only five, her parents arranged for her to attend the Perkins School for the Blind, where she learned to be quite self-sufficient, even supporting herself in part by caning chairs. She also did beautiful, delicate handwork: sewing, knitting and crocheting. She was an avid reader and Red Sox fan, loved dogs, especially the several seeing-eye dogs who gave her greater mobility. Later in life she was surrounded and helped by many of her St. John's friends. She died in on June 13, 2012.

#### ADDITIONAL PLANS

Not only the building, but the furnishings are in need of an upgrade. One plan is to start a Giving Tree so people can choose to donate toward that goal. We also think there are skilled people who would be willing volunteers for painting and other smaller jobs. More information will be coming about both opportunities.

#### DOWN THE ROAD

These improvements will meet many of the glaring needs St. John's is facing, needs that have developed because of the age of our buildings, and also, more positively, as a consequence of our growth and expanded programs. If our 'trajectory of success' continues, and we certainly hope that it does, this may be only the first stage of a more comprehensive plan to accommodate our future needs. We see this as a very positive challenge for the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.