

**To: St. Philip Parishioners**  
**From: Wardens Judith and Larry**

You will recall that in our July 27th town hall meeting, we collected many questions from very interested and engaged parishioners. We, as Wardens, spent time organizing those questions into themes, which included questions related to process, culture, facility, finances and vision.

We have been working to address these questions, gathering information from all sources. The following is the first installment of our findings. You will notice some questions have been grouped together; this is because the questions address similar issues.

Please feel free to communicate with us if you have any comments or questions arising from our information.

Yours in service,  
Judith A. and Larry A.

**PROCESS CATEGORY:**

- **Will the decision-making process be transparent?**
  - We have decided that our discernment process will be lay led, **with oversight from** the church Wardens. As Wardens, we are committed to three guiding principles:
    - Involving parishioners in the discernment journey, wherever it may lead; St. Philip is not a building, it is all of us.
    - Communicating progress in **an** open and transparent manner, **as timely as possible**. As we find out information, we will share it with parishioners and try to address all questions that may arise.
    - Being **open to the Spirit to guide us to** the outcome of the discernment process **that is right for St. Philip, wherever that might be**; St. Philip is not the Wardens, it is all of us.
- **What is the reason for the process/What is driving the process?**
- **What is the underlying motive?**
- **What are the advantages for the Diocese?**
  - St. Philip renovations would be needed to make the church fully accessible and create more multi use space use
  - St. Matthias has a larger facility with some accessibility features that St. Philip does not have and has a separate and much larger hall with multiple rooms that potentially could be used for community activities (current space is rented by various community groups). It has a kitchen which has greater functionality than St. Philip's kitchen
  - Given St. Philip's history, it is perhaps understandable that there may be some suspicion of the Synod leadership's motivation. However, a conversation between Fr. Allen and Brendon Neilson (Executive Director of our Diocese and leader of the Dioceses property management) is revealing. Brendon takes a big picture view that the *raison d'être* of our Diocese, and by extension its member parishes ("We are the diocese!"), is to proclaim the Gospel with our

culture and our communities. To do this, we must be good stewards of past and present Diocesan assets, including 16 Greater Victoria properties, many of which are not being utilized to their full potentials in reaching our communities. If it makes sense for particular parishes to partner in the Gospel and in Stewardship, then it makes sense to seek the Spirit's guidance through dialogue (as we have now begun), and allow the Spirit to challenge our fears and perhaps encourage us to leave the status quo. Brendon doesn't see a possible relationship between two parishes in terms of 'advantage' to one party; as partners in the Gospel, we all share in victories and in defeats.

- **What is the bishop/diocese's role in making this move/merger happen? (ie can they force us?)**
- **Is a move a done deal or do we and/or St. M get to say no? (if we say yes, can St. M say no?)**
  - Bishop Anna understands any change in St. Philip and/or St. Matthias status to be a decision for St. Philip and St. Matthias to make. The parishes would not be forced to come together.
  - Either parish can say no, though St. Matthias has limited options because they are a smaller and aging congregation.
- **Why did the St. Matthias [sale/development deal] fall through?**
  - Fr. Allen posed this question to Brendon. The St. Matthias sale fell through because the developer wanted too much; in the end, he didn't want to develop the property in tandem with the Diocese and parish. Apparently, there is another developer who would love to "get creative" and develop the property with the parish. However, this notion might simply be aspirational; investment numbers might not pan out. Another option for St. Matthias might be to sell the church hall and the low-cost housing development on the St. Matthias property (see below) and build a smaller hall near the church structure. Of course, if another parish were to move in and take up residence at St. Matthias, all development talk would either stop, or else be negotiable in a different way, with the new parish working with the diocese to develop the property in ways that make sense for them and for the diocese (remember, we are the diocese!).
- **Do we have a guarantee St. Philip will exist, if we decide against a merger?**
  - Bishop Anna answered that question whilst attending our September Parish Council meeting, indicating clearly that if we elect not to move to a new location, St. Philip will continue at its current location.
  - We are free to renovate our physical plant as we are able
  - Renovations over \$20,000 would need to be approved by the diocese, and would come from St. Philip financial resources.

#### **FINANCE CATEGORY**

- Would funds be available from St. Matthias?
- Where are the funds to renovate coming from?
- What funds or support would the diocese offer St. P if we were to choose to move?
  - As mentioned above, in a scenario in which St. Philip remains at the current, Eastdowne, location, any renovations must come from St. Philip financial resources.

- In a scenario in which St. Philip relocates to St. Matthias, then the Diocese will sell the Eastdowne property. Renovations St. Philip undertake at St. Matthias will be supported by the Diocese, using a significant portion of the funds generated from the sale at Eastdowne (specific percentage not yet specified).

**FACILITY CATEGORY:**

- **I'm not aware of a 'Senior Housing' [at St. Matthias] - where is that?**
  - From the St. Matthias Website: Adjacent to St. Matthias is Rogers Court, 24 units of low-income seniors housing. Members of the board are all St. Matthias parishioners.
  - Rogers Court is owned by the diocese; Bishop Anna's recommendation is that St. Philip does not take over Rogers Court management.