

St. Philip Proposal to Share Space on St. Matthias Site

As we consider the idea of St. Philip and St. Matthias parishes uniting in some fashion, we give thanks to God for the decades of loving ministry and service through which we have engaged our communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to have relationship with the people of St. Matthias as we consider the path forward for both of our congregations.

In the past months, our parishes have entered into a discernment process, the outcome of which is not certain, but is in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, who we trust will guide our paths. Accordingly, we acknowledge that there is no commitment to a future together, in some fashion, until congregations have discerned that the co-location of our peoples at St. Matthias best serves the mission of God to be light in the world.

That we are even considering a future together arises from Bishop Anna's observations. On the one hand, St. Matthias is a small, aging congregation with a part-time priest. This small group of committed people must manage a significant physical plant that includes a free-standing hall and a ground-level sanctuary with potential for excellent accessibility. On the other hand, St. Philip parishioners, who are more numerous and overall younger, worship with a full-time priest in a smaller physical plant that is not accessible, and would require major renovations to even attempt to make it so.

Considering this background, St. Philip proposes, to re-locate its ministry to the St. Matthias site, where we would continue our worship services and assume responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the St. Matthias church and church hall. The congregation of St. Matthias would continue to worship in their own style with their current priest, free of the responsibilities of church and hall operations. As St. Philip currently holds two worship services, this would likely mean three services on Sundays, in addition to less-attended mid-week services held by both parishes.

Should the St. Philip congregation re-locate to share space with the congregation of St. Matthias, it is anticipated that both parishes would flourish spiritually with combined resources and missions. Additionally, it is anticipated that there would be considerable financial benefit, as Bishop Anna has proposed that funds from the sale of the St. Philip site would be used to improve the St. Matthias physical plant, e.g. to render it more accessible.

In faith and love, St. Philip offers this proposal as one means to ascertain if the St. Matthias people wish to enter into formal conversations leading to a decision about a possible future for our two parishes. Should this proposal be acceptable to St. Matthias, we would survey our parish's interest in proceeding. In consideration of two different community cultures, we will reflect upon where God might be leading the people of each parish in our future ministries.

With trust in the wisdom and guidance of God,

Judith Armstrong and Larry Anthony
St. Philip Wardens