



June 12, 2014

Dear Friends in Christ,

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our listening groups and our All Parish meeting last weekend. The purpose of the meetings was to continue our effort to gather input for our Third Century Vision for Christ Church Cathedral. I am grateful to the community members and the many members of our congregation who gave their time and shared their thoughts as part of this process.

In particular, it was inspiring at Sunday's parish meeting to see so many people in the room, and I was delighted to hear from some of our new members, as well as many of our long standing members. I was pleased that you were able to share your thoughts and perceptions, but it was also clear that there was some confusions and frustration about the process that day. The facilitators did not quite grasp how to contextualize the information presented.

I hope to rectify that confusion with this letter.

This letter accompanies a document that provides an overview of the Third Century Vision as it currently stands. Some of you may recall reading a narrative of this outline in my dean's column published in the March issue of *The Cathedral Tower*. I first spoke to all of you about this vision in my address to the congregation at our annual meeting in February. In addition, many of you have heard me talk about aspects of the Third Century Vision at the twenty or so neighborhood "zip meetings" that have been held. Now, along with sharing this vision in writing, I also want to be clear on how this vision evolved. As you will see when you review the overview, it is rooted in your own good work of recent years.

Christ Church Cathedral has an impressive history. Certainly there have been times of great struggles and trials, but most of its almost 200 years of existence have been marked by times when our congregation contributed to the building of God's kingdom in our midst. Once again, we are poised to do great works, as we build a community in which all are invited to offer their gifts. We do this by honoring the contributions and wisdom of longtime members of the congregation while at the same time inviting new people to offer their talents to our future as a cathedral.

Before I began my cathedral tenure last November, I was already studying the Parish Profile with congregational hopes and aspirations and the strategic plan that so many members contributed to during the interim period. I began organizing the various components into three, scripturally based categories. I then built into that structure the ideas you shared with me in our zip meetings, cathedral forums and other meetings, as well as our informal conversations. The document as it currently stands represents the good work and input from so many of you, including the contributions of our current and recent past church leadership.

My purpose in pulling these components, initiatives and ideas together in one document was to give us a focal point around which we could deepen the conversations that you as members have been having for the past several years and of which I am now a part.

As you will see, some of the initiatives – such as hiring an in-house communications director and re-designing the cathedral website – have been acted upon or are in process. Other

efforts are still in the idea stage, ideas that will continue to be shaped and changed through our ongoing conversations. Still other ideas, involving the purchase of a new organ for the nave, the refurbishing of Centennial Chapel and a major housing initiative, are further along because of the press of current needs. However, all are still efforts that need input from the congregation. I know some of you are looking for full details, but we cannot accommodate those requests because we are still very much in the mode of gathering feedback. I can, however, summarize the specifics we do know that have been reported to date, primarily in the *Tower*.

A large bequest put the cathedral in a position to move forward with the much needed new organ for the nave. The decision to act on this purchase was made in consultation with the vestry, as well as the music committee and the building and grounds committee. Any needed modifications of the nave to accommodate the organ are now under study by professional acousticians, architects and other experts. These plans will be shared with the congregation and the larger community as they are developed and will include opportunities for feedback on design.

The advent of Christ Church's bicentennial in 2017 presents an appropriate opportunity to address the structural needs of the chapel. Again, in consultation with the vestry and the building and grounds committee, engineering issues are under investigation. Once the engineering evaluations are complete, the cathedral will be ready to look at design considerations with an eye to preserving the beauty and ambiance of the chapel, while addressing the structural issues along with other considerations for a full utilization of this treasure.

A steering committee made up of outreach and vestry leaders has been investigating the needs to better serve the poor and vulnerable in our community. Since addressing housing needs has been an especially strong ministry of the cathedral, the steering committee is looking at a program known as the Family Scholar House. The Family Scholar House is a proven ministry that provides stable housing for families while parents either complete their education or receive job training so that they may secure viable employment and go on to live as independent family units. In May, the vestry passed a resolution to create a nonprofit entity to recruit community partners to share in this vision and to develop a business plan and budget.

To further our conversations, I invite you to join me and Canon George Hill for three additional meetings scheduled for this summer on Sundays at noon – June 26, July 27 and August 24. Each one of these "Cathedral Conversations" will focus on one of the three categories of the Third Century Vision – The Zacchaeus Initiatives, The Bartimaeus Initiatives and Unleashing The Faithful Servants. They will be another opportunity for you to ask questions and share your thoughts. What other programs and projects are we to pursue? How can we better serve our diverse neighbors, especially seekers, urban young adults and those who have felt disenfranchised in other faith communities? What is the Holy Spirit calling us to do?

As always, however, please speak to me, a member of our clergy staff or one of your vestry leaders, if you have additional questions or comments. We are here for you.

I ask for your prayers as together, as one body of Christ, we move forward into the unfolding of our Third Century Vision.

Faithfully,

