Holy Communion's Next 150
The Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion has reached its 150th anniversary. Such a milestone is an opportunity to celebrate and to reflect. The first group of parishioners met in a brick schoolhouse near downtown St. Louis in 1869. The parish became a beacon of service to our original midtown St. Louis neighborhood. When the original church was finished in the 1870s, the first rector insisted it become a “free church.” People of all incomes were to be welcomed, not just those who could afford to rent a pew. In the 1930s Holy Communion relocated from midtown St. Louis to University City. Our current church building, completed just in time for Christmas 1950, has allowed our congregation to live out its mission in University City. We are known as a “Community Center for University City.”

The 150th anniversary is also an opportunity to look forward. Recently Holy Communion has experienced significant growth in membership, attendance, and programs as we have focused on living out the values the congregation discerned together: Welcome, Diversity, and Community. While the growth has been remarkable, it has highlighted challenges in the aging building that are beginning to limit our congregation’s ability to look forward.

Beginning in Spring of 2018, our vestry led a discernment process. We gathered one to one, in small groups, and in large meetings. This past fall we released a feasibility study to the parish asking “How can we make smart investments that help us live into our mission for the next 150 years?” The results of the feasibility study were strong and identified priorities.

We now ask you to contribute to the Capital Campaign for Holy Communion’s Next 150.
We asked our architect for a “20 year master plan,” and the initial response was ambitious. In Fall we tested $1.8 million worth of potential renovations and updates. Based on our feasibility study, some of those plans have been put on hold, and some have been scaled back. While the goal we set is lower than the goal we tested, we also view this as a win. It is far better to set a realistic goal than to reach beyond our means. We have set a primary goal for the campaign of $823,000. Our stretch goal of $1 million would allow us to take this work even further.

We believe this work will allow us to live more fully into our core values by removing many of the limitations experienced by the current building.

The Goal: Realistic, Achievable, & Real Investment in Our Future
Core Values

Welcome

Holy Communion knows itself to be a welcoming congregation. Our visitors often remark on the warm greeting they receive here. In conversations and responses to the feasibility study, this value was asserted again and again. In this campaign we seek to make our space more accessible, easier to navigate, and open to all. The plans for the capital campaign include significant improvements to our physical welcome. On Delmar, we anticipate updating our signs to better reflect the vibrancy of life inside. Out of necessity, we have already begun updating our heating system, and we will do similar work with the air conditioning, ensuring the space will be comfortable for all who enter. The plans work to make spaces more navigable, and our current goal funds a design (which will require collaboration with University City) to improve our current disabled parking situation, no longer requiring cars to park on a sidewalk.

Diversity

Holy Communion has grown in diversity, becoming one of the most racially integrated congregations in Missouri. We are also diverse in age, ability, language, culture, gender and sexual orientation. The capital campaign honors that diversity by making significant investments in accessibility for those with physical limitations. The restrooms on our main floor will be enlarged and brought up to the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will reflect the diversity of the congregation by commissioning the first stained glass windows in the parish featuring people of color. The campaign also values diversity by making our worship space more flexible. Flexibility is key to supporting diversity.

Community

Community has two meanings as a value for Holy Communion. We speak about the community that meets to worship here, and our service to the community outside our walls. The campaign makes investments in both. As noted in the other values, a significant portion of the campaign will improve accessibility and flexibility of our worship space. We also have plans to restore and insure the future of our historic organ. These renovations will serve our worshiping congregation, but they will also allow our church to be more useful for concerts, performances, and community groups. You might one day be invited to a yoga class in the church nave. We might follow the lead of other churches with flexible worship space and provide emergency shelter or to host a regular food pantry in our sacred space. An extensive renovation of the kitchen is also planned, which will allow us to continue to host breakfasts and dinners for the church. The plans would bring the kitchen up to code, meaning the kitchen could serve the wider community. The capital campaign expands our options for feeding the hungry and could allow us to rent kitchen space at a reasonable rate to a group of young immigrant women seeking to start a catering business.
Rector
Mike Angell

Vestry
Shirley Mensah, Sr. Warden
Susan Norris, Jr. Warden
Brian Barnhart, Treasurer
Alisa Williams, Secretary
Tahnee Jackson-Whitlock, Scott Ferguson, Rudy Nickens, Megan Ondr-Cooper, Pat Redington

Director of Operations
Cheyanne Lovellette

Campaign Committee
Scott Ferguson, Jean Parker, Valarie Wilson, co-chairs
Donna Baudendistel, Fran Caradonna, Christian Davis, Amanda Diemer, Gary Johnson, and Patti Thorp
Worship Space: Sacred & Flexible
Worship Space: Sacred & Flexible

The planned renovations seek to honor our history and to facilitate our ongoing growth. Perhaps there is not a better place to start than by talking about seating. The historic pews at Holy Communion were some of the first “free pews” west of the Mississippi River. When Holy Communion was founded, it was common for Episcopal churches to raise funds by charging rent for pews. Our first rector insisted that the new church would be a “free church” open to all regardless of ability to pay. We will honor that heritage by restoring many of our historic pews, allowing them to serve as primary seating in our church. As we restore them, we will also unbolt them from the ground and make the pews able to be moved. We will replace about half the seating in the church with beautiful liturgical chairs, like the chairs we currently have in the back row of the church.

The carpeting will be replaced with a beautiful and durable “slate-like” tile floor. Air conditioning vents will be reworked so that cool air can be delivered along the length of the whole church, not just at the front. Lighting will be updated to be more ecologically friendly and more flexible with a functioning dimmer system. A new set of lights will “uplight” the barrel vault. Acoustic engineers will work with us to make sure the spoken word and music are clearly heard throughout the whole church. We will also be able to make important cosmetic repairs to the plaster, and we plan to repaint the bright yellow arches in a color that shows off our architecture while better responding to the overall palette of the space.

The balance of sacred and flexible will allow us to continue to live into our mission as a worshipping community. The vestry is currently exploring plans for a third worship service at Holy Communion which would be well served by these renovations. This service would make intentional space for those with “sensory” needs like people on the autism spectrum. Our planned renovations would allow for an afternoon service with dimmer lights, quieter music, and a more relaxed setting. Flexible seating would mean that these worshipers could have the physical and figurative space they need to feel included.
Our Space: Welcoming & Accessible
Welcome is a central value to Holy Communion, and the investments of this campaign will allow our building to better reflect that work. New signs on Delmar will point to the vitality of life in the congregation. This campaign will vastly improve our restroom facilities on the main floor, making them truly accessible to those with disabilities. Enhanced acoustics, lighting, and audio systems will make our space more responsive to the needs of those with disabilities, and to aging members of our congregation.

Welcome, in part, is a feeling. It is intangible. To be clear, much of the investment in this campaign are similarly intangible. You won’t see investments in ecological sustainability unless you serve on the vestry’s finance committee and see reduced energy bills. You won’t notice the difficulty to hear a preacher in the back of the congregation. You might only see a simple sign welcoming those with hearing aids to tune into our closed loop system. While many of the investments we are making are subtle, they collectively make a big difference.

One of the most expensive components of the planned renovation has already begun. You don’t know there is a problem with the heating and cooling system until you feel it. This year the vestry had to invest in a new boiler ahead of schedule. In the gap between the old boiler’s failure and the installation of our new more efficient system, the building was uncomfortably cold. Similar investments will be made in our cooling system, including bringing vent work unobtrusively along the length of the nave, so that air-conditioning is available throughout the whole church, not just pooled near the vents up front.
Stained Glass: Reflecting Our Diversity
When the current church building was constructed, Holy Communion was not a racially diverse congregation. Our current stained glass windows reflect that lack of diversity. As part of the planned renovations, for both ecological and structural reasons we are planning to work on the windows in our current chapel. We plan to add insulated glass to the exterior, to minimize the loss of heat in winter and cool air in summer. The insulated glass will also dampen the noise we hear from Delmar which can become a distraction during mid-week worship.

This very practical update allows an opportunity to better reflect our diversity as a parish. While one of the four bays of windows in the chapel is historically significant, and will be restored and maintained, three of the window bays are filled with windows that were simply ordered from a church catalogue. We anticipate replacing at least one (and, if we reach our stretch goal, perhaps all three) of these sets and commissioning a local black artist to design new windows featuring people of color as saints and biblical figures.

Your senior warden Shirley Mensah has written:

“Our stained glass windows at Holy Communion (our eyes facing out to the community) tell the community what is going on inside our walls.”
Restoring the Organ: Living into a Diverse Music Repertoire
Did you know Holy Communion has a pipe organ? While the pipes are not currently visible from the pews, the organ is one of our most historic assets. At least twice before in our history, the congregation has made a significant investment in rebuilding the organ. Our current building is the second home of Holy Communion’s 1924 Möller pipe organ, Opus 4022. This organ incorporates pipes from an even more historic 1893 Farrand and Votey organ originally built for the church. We have pipework almost as old as the parish itself. This campaign will make a lasting investment in the health of our historic instrument, and will ensure that it continues to play for generations to come.

Holy Communion is particularly proud of the diverse and rich music you will find at our parish. On any given Sunday you might sing a classic English hymn, an African-American spiritual, or hear a piece by a modern composer. While we are glad that the repertoire at Holy Communion is not limited only to organ music, hymn singing, historic, and modern music supported by the organ is a significant component of our worship.

Our plans for the organ are frankly modest. We anticipate investing about $250,000 in the restoration. While that may seem like a great deal, in recent years we have received bids for up to $500,000 to restore the instrument. Other churches regularly spend millions to restore or replace their pipe organ. Working with a local firm, we plan to restore the best of our pipework and supplement the existing organ with digital components which will enhance our current sound. The result will sound like an impressive pipe organ, though some of the new stops will be digital. The plans also include bringing beautiful pipework out into the area behind the altar, so that it is obvious we have a pipe organ.
The Kitchen: Feeding Our Community
Many members of our congregation know what a blessing, and a challenge, our current kitchen presents. While we are still allowed to use the kitchen to make breakfast for parishioners each week, and to host meals throughout the year for parish events, our kitchen is not “to code.”

Planned updates to the kitchen have been scaled back, but they still include the necessary work for our kitchen to receive certification from the county. The upgrades will make the kitchen safer. The most expensive component is a new hood, required by the code, which would suppress a fire on the stove.

The investment will also make the kitchen easier to use with better designed sinks and reliable appliances. These updates will remove many of our current limits both in how we prepare food and what we are able to do in the kitchen. It will allow our kitchen to better serve the congregation and the community beyond our walls.
Primary Goal: $823,000

**Proposed Solution & Costs**

Below are proposed projects to address the needs of our congregation:

**Heating and Cooling Systems**

Our new boiler will be complimented by new HVAC handing systems and ductwork, and augmented by energy efficiency work throughout the building.  
*Proposed cost: $100,000*

**Organ Rehabilitation**

Our historic organ is in need of serious rehabilitation if it will continue to help support the diversity of our music program. We anticipate building a new computerized console, preserving the best pipework, and supplementing the existing organ with digital sound.  
*Proposed cost: $300,000*

**Updated Sanctuary**

We imagine an updated sanctuary which feels both traditional and flexible. Comfortable chairs mixed in with restored historic pews could be arranged in a variety of ways, depending on the season and style of worship. Improved lighting and sound, and increased natural lighting would make the space more accessible and comfortable.  
*Proposed cost: $200,000*
New Stained Glass

Working with a local artist, new stained glass windows would feature people of color, both biblical characters and saints, reflecting the diversity of the community.
Proposed cost: $18,000 (up to $30,000 stretch goal)

Reconfigured ADA Restrooms

Reconfiguring restrooms upstairs to be ADA Accessible.
Proposed cost: $25,000

Outdoor Signage

Our signage would be updated to reflect our new logo, and ensure that all those who drive, walk, or cycle by receive a message of welcome.
Proposed cost: $10,000

Kitchen Rehab

Updating dated equipment and bringing our kitchen up to code would ensure our Sunday breakfasts can continue to expand, and we might be able to rent space to a young catering business or food truck, bringing income for our ministries.
Proposed cost: $77,000

General Repairs

$50,000

Soft Costs

$63,000

Total of the Primary Campaign: $823,000
The Stretch Goal: $1 million

What More Can We Do Together?

Our primary goal of $823,000 will go a long way. The investment will help us to more fully live into our values of welcome, diversity, and community. The stretch goal would take us even further.

$1 million dollars is more than a significant psychological marker. It would mean further updates to our landscape, an exterior plaza, gardens, and seating for neighbors who walk by our church.

The goal would also allow us to commission more stained glass for the chapel, increasing the representation of people of color in our liturgical art.

We would be able to commission a local artist to match our new flexible seating with a beautiful new altar and other liturgical furniture which would allow for more flexibility in how we worship.

$1 million would transition our kitchen from “good” to “great” with better ovens, stoves, refrigeration and storage upgrades, making it a better place to prepare meals for our community and the community beyond our walls.
Further Sanctuary Upgrades

With more budget available, we will be able to further enhance our sound system, lighting, and provide an organ case visible to the congregation.

Proposed cost: $45,000

Exterior Plaza

Additional funding will allow us to create an attractive plaza to gather, and an outdoor labyrinth. We hope to improve our curb appeal, and create a place to welcome those who walk by, and a space to park your bicycle.

Proposed cost: $100,000

Kitchen Upgrades

Additional upgrades to our kitchen including new appliances, counter space, and storage renovation.

Proposed cost: $20,000

Drop off Lane

We lack a parking lot or available land to build one, but we hope to include a safe pullout on Delmar for dropping off folks with mobility challenges.

Proposed cost: $10,000

Additional Stained Glass

Additional funding would allow us to move from replacing just one bay of windows in the chapel, and to replace all three of the “generic” window with newly designed glass better reflecting our diversity as a congregation.

Proposed cost: $22,000

Planning for Future Capital Needs

Monies raised beyond the cost of projects funded in the primary goal and proposed in the extended goal will be added to the Caskey Endowment. This vestry designated fund is used for ongoing work on our building and infrastructure. Based on the final amount raised and the feasibility of additional projects, the vestry will make determinations accordingly.
Architectural Rendering of Worship Space
Realistic, Achievable, & Real
Investment in our Future
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