



# ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

## ANGLICAN CHURCH

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Pentecost 2017

Dear Friends,

When adversity strikes, some communities crumble and fold, unable to deal with the stress, or to adapt and change. Other communities rise to the challenge, determined to embrace with creativity and spirit whatever may come. We are deeply blessed to be part of a parish that falls in this latter category!

Just a few weeks before Easter, in the midst of preparing for rental negotiations of the parish hall, the short wall – adjacent to the ramp leading from the church to the hall – began to fail, with exterior bricks crumbling and falling between the buildings. Our focus was immediately shifted to deal with this issue, as we learned that, due to years of leaking water running down behind the panelling where it was not visible, this wall had become critically compromised. As this was a structural wall, immediate action was taken during Holy Week to install a temporary shoring tower and support cables to prevent the church from collapsing. In characteristic St John's good humour, rather than complaining about the unsightly structure, parishioners creatively erected on the tower the Easter cross.

In the spirit of resurrection, we must now demolish the existing masonry wall, remove and store the wood panelling, and salvage any brick that is still in good condition to be reused for the exterior veneer. Then, a new reinforced concrete wall, including a new doorway, will be built and the wood panelling and exterior brick reinstalled. Also, the roof will be repaired to prevent future water damage. The estimated cost of this project is \$90,000, including the remediation and architectural fees.

The failure of this wall had a lot to do with the fact that three roofs from different parts of our buildings all sloped into this particular corner of the church, resulting over time in damage caused by ice and snow accumulation and the build-up and ingress of water. In addition to this problem, the exterior wooden wheelchair ramp between the church and the hall, in this same area of our buildings, is not in compliance with the relevant codes, and so must be replaced in the near term. The combination of these issues makes it judicious to replace the existing exterior ramp with an indoor corridor that would join our two buildings, and be covered with a roof structure uniquely engineered to optimally manage drainage and minimize risk to further, future water damage. It will be wonderful to have another safe, structurally sound, attractive and inviting entrance to our church!

At its April meeting, Parish Council authorized Corporation to spend up to \$90,000 in order to proceed with the repair of the wall, and planning and preparing drawings for the exterior ramp (corridor) reconstruction. At present, tenders are going out for the work on the wall; and in the coming days, we expect to receive an order-of-magnitude estimate for the construction of the new enclosed corridor.

**This Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Special Vestry beginning at noon.** We do not have an option about replacing the wall, or about replacing the exterior ramp with an inside corridor, but we do need to discuss how we will finance these vital projects. This will be the subject of the Special Vestry. Please bring some finger food to share so we may be sustained and focused during our deliberations.

In the meantime, parish life continues. We have completed due diligence for rental of the parish hall and are awaiting quotes on getting it lease-ready so that we can began the formal negotiations. We have engaged a commercial lawyer and real estate negotiator, and we look forward to having some positive news about this venture in the near future.

Also, in accordance with the 2017 Work Plan for our parish strategy, "Creating an Abundant Future", a Sacred Space Renewal Working Group has been struck to evaluate some exciting possibilities for renewing our sacred space, and prepare a plan to present for consideration by the parish, as a whole, including purposed timelines and financing options that will be required. The working group is comprised of: Brian Cameron (Chair), Detlef Dransch (Vice Chair), Wendy Williamson-Scrim, Dallas Frazer, Jo Cassie, Glen Robinson, Monica Patten, Stephen Giles, TJ Purves, and me. Please bear in mind that this working

group has no authority to make any final decisions on behalf of our parish. They are building on more than 30 years of previous efforts to explore options and ideas for making our space more versatile, accessible and functional, while also seeking to preserve and promote its sacredness and beauty. This group plans to make a progress report at our 2018 Vestry. If you have ideas, please pass them on to any member of the Sacred Space Renewal Working Group!

These are challenging and exciting times in the life of our parish, as we ensure that St John's not only inhabits the corner of Elgin and Somerset well into the future, but also provides vital ministry and sacred space for all. Your ongoing prayers and support are deeply appreciated. Please also consider making a contribution, in addition to your regular donation, for these immediate projects. You may use the enclosed return envelope or donate online at Canada Helps Charity website for St John's donors: [www.tinyurl.com/donate-stjohns-wall](http://www.tinyurl.com/donate-stjohns-wall).

May we continue to rise to the challenge, determined to embrace with creativity and spirit whatever may come!

With gratitude and in Christ,

The Reverend Beth Bretzlaff  
Incumbent

The Easter Cross

