

St. Christopher's Church 75th Anniversary Capital Campaign: *Blessing Our Spiritual Home for the Future*



This year we mark the 75th anniversary of our church. It's time to pause and spend a moment thinking about how we got here.

Our congregation stands on the shoulders of energetic and wise leaders and parishioners, who established the character of St. Christopher's as a haven for contemplative inquiry. They built the Sanctuary in 1950, and the Parish Hall, offices, and classrooms in the early 1960s. They equipped the buildings for the long term, with good infrastructure.

Over the years they took care to choose wonderful Rectors, to cultivate community among our parishioners and Day School families, to punch above our weight in Outreach, and to maintain the physical infrastructure. We must be thankful for their good work. Here's a remarkable fact: over our 75 years we've had only five Rectors, all excellent in different ways. Not many churches have that kind of history.

Until now, our generation of parishioners hasn't been called upon to make the kinds of capital investment that our predecessors made. For the reasons outlined below, a capital infusion is necessary now, to ensure that St. Christopher's remains strong for the future and can continue to welcome new individuals and families and demonstrably care for our community. Now, it's time for this generation to step up, as our predecessors did.

Why is this so important? Aren't we and our children and grandchildren increasingly bombarded with materialism, the need to win, and selfishness valued as a virtue? We have the great privilege to come to St. Christopher's for connection: to God, to each other, to children, and to our society. Our predecessors gave us this jewel; now it's our turn, to make sure it is flourishing into the future.

This is also an opportunity to honor Hillary Raining, our beloved Rector who is departing for some very important responsibilities in Washington, DC. She has worked hard and has served us superbly. She should end her tenure here knowing that our church will thrive.

NEEDS

Physical plant. St. Christopher's worship, gathering, learning, and working spaces are where we find comfort and inspiration, fellowship, intellectual growth, and spiritual fulfillment. Our physical plant is lovely but desperately needs work.

- ❖ We have two HVAC systems, one 62 and the other 75 years old. We have conclusively determined, through much recent experience and through a comprehensive, outside engineering study, that they need a thorough revamping, urgently. We have studied potential paths toward reliable long-term heating and air-conditioning, with due emphasis on economy given current economic conditions. Some elements of our current system are reliable for the long term, such as our excellent copper piping, but other elements need replacement and modernization. We anticipate a substantial project in the summer of 2026.
- ❖ When we revamp the HVAC, we will need to significantly upgrade our electrical system, which is a one-phase, much jury-rigged, essentially residential system left over from 1950.
- ❖ We've modernized some of the windows, but it's time for the next round of window replacement, for comfort and energy efficiency.
- ❖ We have also prioritized ~
 - improvements to make the Parish Hall more useful, year-round, for all ages
 - a back-up generator and emergency lighting
 - upgraded playground equipment (for the Day School and, really, the whole Gladwyne community)

Endowment. For the long-term future of St. Christopher's, we also need to increase our Endowment funds.

The Endowment, which currently has about \$3.4 million of assets, is not only a rainy-day fund for unanticipated needs. Every year, the Endowment Fund provides crucial resources for the Church's operating expenses and Outreach, and that support is increasingly important every year. Because of market gains, the Endowment has grown over the years. And in the long term, it is likely that our present younger parishioners will have sufficient wealth to provide the necessary financial resources. But we need a bigger Endowment as a bridge to that era.

Outreach. From the beginning of thinking about this campaign, we have prioritized including an Outreach component. If we didn't, it wouldn't be St. Christopher's Church. We determined that this should take the form of a \$100,000 contribution to a specific, identified partner.

After research, we have decided upon the Welcome Table of St. James School as the right partner. Well imbedded in the Allegheny West neighborhood, the Welcome Table is efficient and ambitious, expanding from food (still the most important service) to adult education, practical help with home repairs, and other areas. This support of the Welcome Table is particularly important given recent cutbacks in governmental support.

GOALS

Our 75th anniversary capital campaign goal is \$3.5 million. Of that, we anticipate \$2.4 million will be needed for improvements to our physical plant. Most of that will go for HVAC improvements and the other steps necessary for that. A total of \$100,000 will go to the St. James School Welcome Table. In addition, our goal is \$1 million for increasing the Endowment.

We are delighted to have received early, generous, commitments to this campaign totaling almost \$1.6 million, and so progress toward our goal is underway. Recognizing that most of the planned improvements will benefit the Day School as well as the Church, we are hoping that this campaign will inspire support from our whole community. We will welcome donations in honor of the Rev. Dr. Hillary Raining.

It's important to emphasize that our goal is not really HVAC or Endowment. Our goal is to make sure St. Christopher's Church is prepared to warmly welcome new members, Day School students and their families, and community members who visit frequently or just occasionally, for the foreseeable future. We are committed to living into our mission "*to lift people up as Christ calls*" today, ten years from now, and at our 100th anniversary in 2050. Our predecessors delivered this wonderful church to us. Now we have the opportunity and responsibility to prepare...really, to bless....St. Christopher's for the future.



TO LIFT PEOPLE UP AS CHRIST CALLS