

June 11, 2019

Next Sunday, June 16, I encourage all members of St. Paul's to attend the congregational meeting immediately following the service (note that there will be one service, on summer schedule at 10 AM). At the meeting, we will be voting on an important step in the process of calling our next pastor: renovations to the DC parsonage.

Thanks to a very generous donor in 1970, St. Paul's acquired the house located behind the church at 3625 Ellicott Street NW and has used the property to house several pastors and vicars over the past 49 years, among other uses. The house, built in 1933, is a charming side-hall brick colonial with 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, an unfinished attic and basement, garage and screened porch.

Owning a parsonage in which our next pastor can reside is a blessing, particularly given the cost of housing in the immediate neighborhood around the church and in the greater DC area in general. In our conversations with synod staff, they indicated that having a parsonage, and particularly a parsonage in the same neighborhood as the church, would be a very positive factor for pastoral candidates considering a call to St. Paul's. Rents near the church range from \$3,000 per month for a 2- bedroom apartment to \$5,500 for a home of comparable size to the parsonage. Homes for purchase in the area start at around \$850,000 on up. Many of these options would be out of reach for a pastoral candidate, even if the church were to offer a housing allowance in accordance with the DC synod's recommended housing allowance for our neighborhood of recommended housing allowance for our neighborhood of \$30,000 per year (as a portion of the overall compensation package). In other words, if we did not have the parsonage, in order to call our next pastor, we would likely need to provide a housing allowance that far exceeded the synod's recommendations for compensation (and our budget), or our pastor would have to live in an area where there was a lower cost of living and commute to the church.

As with any home, the parsonage requires regular maintenance and upkeep. Unfortunately, that has not been a regular feature over the past 49 years and there is a significant amount of deferred maintenance that the church must now attend to. Mike Charlton and David Cox have been working hard over the past several months to identify the issues that need to be addressed and seek bids from contractors to properly address them. They first engaged an inspector to provide an objective overview of the condition of the property and identify any issues that would need to be resolved. Mike and David then interviewed and received bids from three highly recommended contractors who do a lot of work in the neighborhood around the church and are very familiar with the houses and challenges. They then broke down the bids to do an apples-to-apples comparison and provided a recommendation to church council. The council met in the parsonage in April and took an in-depth tour of the property in order to evaluate the recommendations and the scope of work.

The recommended bid, which is also the lowest bid, priced the cost of the deferred maintenance issues at approximately \$150,000. This includes correcting the grading of the property to prevent moisture issues in the basement and garage, fixing the masonry, repairs to the porch and gutters, installing wholehouse central air conditioning, repairing termite damage, installing new windows, insulating the attic to reduce energy loss, and replacing the outdated (and in some cases nonfunctioning) kitchen appliances.

Beyond these must-do's, the council is recommending that the church expend additional funds to update the parsonage to make it more comfortable for our next pastor. These items include renovating the master bathroom and updating the second bathroom, as well as renovating the kitchen and half bath. The costs of these items ranges from \$100,000 - \$150,000 depending on what issues are discovered with the house when renovating and how extensive the renovations are.

In January of this year, the church sold the Maryland parsonage where Rev. Omholt and his wife, Barbara, lived for 34 years. The net proceeds from the sale were \$1,029,375. The church council has proposed that up to a maximum of \$300,000 of the funds from the sale of the Maryland parsonage be used to pay the costs of the renovations to the DC parsonage.

For those who attended the meeting in December where the congregation voted to sell the Maryland parsonage, you may recall that the plan presented at the time was to use a portion of the proceeds to update the DC parsonage. Now that the Maryland parsonage has been sold and we have budget information about the DC parsonage, the council is seeking the congregation's support to continue with the plans to renovate the DC parsonage. Per the church's bylaws, congregational approval is required for any expenditures over \$50,000 and we will need a quorum of 50 members to attend the meeting on Sunday to move forward.

So very long story short I hope that you will be able to attend So, very long story short, I hope that you will be able to attend the meeting next Sunday, June 16 immediately after the 10 AM service to discuss and vote on this proposal to renovate the DC parsonage. I know it is Father's Day and there are rightful celebrations to be had for that, so we will try to keep the meeting brief, and hopefully this overview has provided useful information in advance to keep the meeting itself as short as possible. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at kate.belinski@gmail.com or 202-285-5599 or Pastor Spangler at jspanqler@stpaulslutherandc.com or 202- 966-5489.

Blessings,
Kate Belinski Church Council President