ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH
P.O. BOX 293
BEDFORD, NEW YORK 10506

February 29, 2016

Dear Parishioners,

A New Foundation for Our Next Generation

Over the past two years, I have mentioned in my Annual Report letter that your vestry has been examining the condition of the foundation of our 206-year old Church building. We engaged an engineering firm last year to conduct a full assessment of the building's structure, and its mechanicals (HVAC, electric, plumbing, etc.) and… They have now provided us with a comprehensive report on the building. Below is a brief summary of the engineers' findings and our action plan.

The overall condition of our Church building is deemed "fair" by the engineers with principal concerns about its structural underpinnings (the foundation, joists and sills), the exterior masonry, the roof structure and the belfry – all of that needs to be attended to sooner rather than later. You may have noticed the sag in the pews in the middle section toward the back of the Church as well as cracks in the exterior brick and cracks around some of the windows. The sagging and cracks are a result of framing and foundation issues. Also, our HVAC and electrical systems are not adequate to handle our present needs. For those who are not aware, below the Church floor is a largely inaccessible dirt floor on which stone pilings support the floor joists, some of which are showing signs of failure.

Our plan is to remediate these deficiencies, beginning in the spring of 2017. We want to address all of the engineers' recommendations, including the addition of a comprehensive HVAC system, with air conditioning, and energy improvement upgrades that, together, will provide a more stable environment for the organ and a more comfortable environment, especially during the summer months when, in addition to our regular services, we often have a number of weddings. During this time, the Church building will be closed as we will be removing the pews and the flooring to do the remediation work. During construction, services will be held either in the Fellowship Room, the Children's Chapel or the Chapel-in-the-Woods, depending on weather and attendance trends.

For several years, the vestry has explored the scope of work and determined that it is important that we act on this now, given Terry's pending retirement in July 2017 and the following interim period for a New Rector Search. In addition, while the Rectory is vacant, we will be undertaking some extensive renovations, including the kitchen, in preparation for the incoming Rector.

I want to point out that this is not a deferred maintenance project, but, rather, a significant restoration project that goes well beyond the scope of our Property Commission's maintenance purview. We feel strongly that this project be done comprehensively rather than piecemeal and in order to do it right, we must count on the support of our parishioners.

It is important that we not invade our endowment for this project as it is our core financial asset and we, as a healthy parish community, should be able to achieve this important stewardship of our beautiful building through current parishioner support. The decision on funding for this major project was addressed at our vestry retreat in 2014 when we unanimously approved initiating a Capital Campaign for $2.5MM. The breakdown of the "uses of funds" is: $2.2MM for the Church and $300k for the Rectory. The silent phase of this campaign began in December 2015 and to date we have commitments totaling $1.5MM. Your vestry is 100% committed to this project financially and we hope to be able to engage our entire parish family to be equally committed to achieve this goal.

The objective of the Campaign is to secure your Campaign pledge between now and July 1st so that we can be assured of the needed funding. Pledges will be payable over three years, beginning this year and may be made by check, credit card or securities. Pledge cards will be available at the Parish House.

April Foley is our Campaign Chair. She will be available to anyone with questions, as will be any member of the vestry. Steel Swift, vestry member and head of our Stewardship Commission, has put together a slide presentation that better describes the work we have ahead of us. And vestry member, Patrick Brennan, has been the lead point person for this project, to whom we owe our sincerest thanks for his architectural expertise and input. Patrick will be happy to explain in greater detail the scope of the work that needs to be done.

As our prior parish's vestries, with the willing support of its parishioners over the past 206 years, have maintained this beautiful building, so should we together be the devoted stewards now to ensure that the next generation will have a sound Church building.

I hope that all of you will generously support this **Campaign for a New Foundation for Our Next Generation**.

Thank you,

Dan

Dan de Menocal, Warden