

# GRACE

## GRACE MEMORIAL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We are moving forward with our shared project of discernment around our campus. To that end, we need to book some time with you on pretty short notice to update you and to check in with you around the possibility of redevelopment here at Grace. You are invited to one of three coffee hour conversations: this Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> at 11.45am and next Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> at 9am and 11.45am. (If none of these times are workable for you, please let the office know, and we'll work on scheduling a mid-week conversation.)

While it is less than ideal to be meeting on such short notice, we ask for your understanding: a good number of Grace's members will be boarding a plane for our parish pilgrimage to the Holy Land next Thursday and we need and want for those members to be part of this conversation. And, as you will see from the following materials, there is some new urgency to our conversation that won't permit us to delay until their return.

Some context:

Since our four parish meetings in January and the subsequent written updates that we shared with you, the Vestry and the Grace Campus Development Committee (for the purposes of brevity, let's call it the GCDC hereinafter) have done a number of things.

First, Vestry passed a motion:

*The Vestry directs the Planning Committee to begin preliminary discussion with the City of Portland and/or its Housing Bureau to explore the possibility of partnering in redeveloping Grace's campus, even while it continues to explore alternatives for meeting our infrastructure needs. The Planning Committee shall report to Vestry regularly, and be guided in this preliminary work by ongoing input from the Vestry and Grace membership.*

Second, Vestry appointed Nancy Entrikin to chair the GCDC. Nancy brings a great deal of history, passion, and wisdom to this work. As importantly, she brings a love for the Grace community and for its campus. Vestry is delighted that Nancy has agreed to serve in this role.

Third, Nancy arranged for Walsh Construction to do what Walsh called a "fat pencil" estimate (i.e., a broad or ballpark estimate) of the costs of a total repair and renovation of the current campus rather than replacing any buildings. We'll share that estimate with you at our meetings

Finally – and here is where the urgency arises – Ross Cornelius of Walsh Construction and Fr. Martin recently had a preliminary meeting with the Portland Housing Bureau. The PHB had a fascinating two-pronged message for us. To begin, they said that they were not positive that they would want or be able take on a project at Grace.<sup>1</sup> But then they added that, if they were to enter into a partnership at Grace, they would want to begin serious negotiations as soon as possible. In other words, PHB won't yet commit to negotiating with Grace but, should they decide to say "yes" to such a negotiation, they would need Grace to be ready to "go" really fast.

As you can see, nothing is set in stone, nor are we on a definite or immovable course. However, in order to be ready for the possibility of beginning a negotiation with PHB, we need to discern four things with you:

1. Would a partnership with the Portland Housing Bureau be consistent with Grace's Statement of Purpose,<sup>ii</sup> with Grace's motto to be "a parish for all people in the heart of the city," and with the Gospel?<sup>iii</sup>
2. If PHB were to build affordable housing on site, who would be appropriate residents? In other words, who would be good neighbors for Grace?
3. Can we, as a parish, imagine a scenario in which some of our parking is relocated offsite? This question matters because constructing new parking is an extraordinarily expensive undertaking, and replacing 100% of our current spaces would significantly limit the funds that we would have available to build excellent ministry spaces.
4. What do we think about the replacement of the parish hall? While replacing the existing building has many elements in the "pro" column – a new parish hall, for instance, would be larger than the current hall, it would be ADA accessible throughout, it would be energy-efficient and low-maintenance, it would provide a beautiful and stable home for our beloved chapel – it does have the significant "con" of saying farewell to a building in which we have many special memories.

We hope that you can join us over the coming week for the next steps in our parish's ongoing, shared discernment. As always, Vestry, the members of the Campus Development Committee, and Fr. Martin remain available to discuss these or any question with you directly.

In peace,

The Vestry and the Campus Master Plan Committee

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<sup>i</sup> PHB did make it clear that Grace's location is pretty close to ideal from their perspective. In particular, it has a very high *opportunity score* (i.e., there are a substantial number of amenities nearby, such as grocery stores and public transit).

<sup>ii</sup> Our parish's Statement of Purpose: "Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, following in the way of Jesus, seeks to effect transformational change in individuals, in our Portland neighborhoods, and in other communities near and far. To do this we will engage our spiritual, human and financial resources in creative partnerships with people and organizations to further God's work in our world."

<sup>iii</sup> Consider Jesus' famous words in Matthew: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25:35-36 NRSV)