



ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

ANGLICAN CHURCH

Easter 2018

Dear Friends,

Every year during Holy Week, I imagine how the disciples must have thought that things weren't going the way they expected them to! Following Jesus did indeed mean changing the world but not in the manner or time frame they planned. Hopes and dreams were shattered with Jesus' death but with the dawn of his resurrection, everything changed – life conquered death, hope was reborn, and new possibilities abounded. Year in and year out, we celebrate the same rituals during Holy Week because it is too easy for us to only do the celebrating of Palm and Easter Sunday and skip the hard work of walking through the grief and pain of Good Friday. Easter will come but perhaps not as we expect it to. We know this, because we experience it so many ways in our daily lives.

And so it is, that with a heavy heart, I have to announce that the leasing of the Parish Hall to The Ministry of Coffee will not proceed. As you will recall, at the 2017 Annual Vestry, Corporation was authorized to negotiate the leasing of the Parish Hall to The Ministry of Coffee at commercial market rates. However in the end, the cost benefit analysis was not in our favour.

The project developed quite slowly, partly because of the need to deal first with our collapsing wall, and partly because The Ministry of Coffee took almost a year to have plans prepared for renovating the interior to suit their needs. In consultation with our real estate advisors, we and The Ministry of Coffee settled on a lease rate that was at the higher end of commercial lease rates in the downtown core. In addition, we were prepared to fund the construction of washrooms, close off the back entrance of the hall, and open a new access door off the accessible ramp. After The Ministry of Coffee had completed and priced their fit-up plans, however, the owners informed us that they expected the church to fund all the mechanical and electrical upgrades that would be required. This proposal was unacceptable to us, because our fit-up costs would have totaled more than three years of our expected leasing revenue. Our real estate advisors agreed that we had already made a very generous offer. Increasing our costs would have meant a substantial addition to our loan from the Diocese. When we made clear our position, The Ministry of Coffee told us that they also were unable to fund these upgrades, and we ended our negotiations – amicably, but with great disappointment on all sides.

Over the past year, I and the other members of Corporation have been eagerly anticipating the start of this new venture, which promised to provide us with a steady revenue stream and increase our connection to the community. I know from your unanimous approval of the project last year, and your many comments to us since then, that the parish as a whole shared our excitement. At the same time, we have always been clear that this project needed to be a good deal for the church even after our expenses. Although this opportunity has not worked out, we are convinced the leasing of our Parish Hall to a coffee shop or similar business is an idea whose time will come – although not likely until sometime after the reconstruction of Elgin Street in 2019 is complete. Thank you for your support throughout this process. If you have any questions, please do speak to me or one of the other members of Corporation – Brian Cameron (Rector's Warden), Detlef Dransch (Peoples' Warden), and Kathleen Arsenault (Deputy Warden).

May we move forward with Easter hearts, knowing that new life, new hope, and new possibilities will arise, even though it may not go the way we expect it to!

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Canon Beth Bretzlaff
Incumbent