



25 August 2021

Dear Parishioners,

I am writing to inform you of a recent decision by the Vestry that impacts us all. In order to prioritize Bethesda's immediate needs, the new Parish House/Mercy House project has been discontinued. While I realise this may come as a surprise, I can assure you that the Vestry has acted after due deliberation and in good faith.

On the one hand, the project faced exceedingly protracted delays in securing financing and a sharp rise in the cost of building materials. On the other hand, the need to make repairs to the church and to rehabilitate the undercroft into more useable space has become paramount.

We have struggled for years as a parish to meet our operating expenses on the pledge and plate offerings of parishioners. It is evident that we cannot consider undertaking the construction of a new parish house until our financial position improves.

For example, work on the roof is now underway, as may be seen when you drive by the church. Additionally, the following projects require our attention: restoration of the nave and sanctuary; improvement to the undercroft for music, education and fellowship opportunities; new heating, cooling and drainage systems; securing the tower and bells; and preservation of our beautiful stained-glass windows.

The Board of Mercy House has been notified of the Vestry's decision and has already begun the necessary steps to implement it. We offer our profound appreciation to the members of the Mercy House Board, especially to Gordon Boyd, who has devoted countless hours to this project.

For those of you who have questions or wish to learn more, I invite you to attend a congregational meeting on Sunday, 12 September. On that day, there will be only one service, to begin at 9.15am; our meeting should start by 10.00am.

As always, I am available if anyone has specific concerns. In any case, I look forward to seeing you in due course.

With very best wishes,

Fr Charles Wallace
Priest-in-Charge
Bethesda Church, Saratoga Springs