

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR TRANSFIGURATION? 2006 AND BEYOND...THE VISION!

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The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration · Dallas, Texas · www.transfiguration.net

Preparations are underway for our Jubilee Capital Campaign that will officially be launched on April 23. Each and every one of us will have the opportunity to step out in faith to help bring to fruition the vision of those who helped build this great parish family over its first fifty years and carry us forward in our own hopes and dreams for its future. As we move through the next weeks and months, preparing to make our commitments, I would ask of all of you but one thing – that you pray, and pray daily, for the ongoing life and ministry of this your parish family. Use the *Prayer for our Parish* as it is printed in the Spotlight insert each week or, better yet, say the prayer of your own heart. But, my brothers and sisters, please pray that the hearts of every member of this great family of faith will be opened for the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us in the days ahead. Let us not go forward with the few, but united by the good graces and generosity of us all. That's what a family is. That's what a family does.

The theme of our Jubilee Capital Campaign is, "Honoring our Vision – Creating our Future." The vision since the building in which we worship today was built in 1970, was that all the parish ministries would be housed together in one connected facility at the top of the hill and that in it there would be a glorious pipe organ that would lead the People of God in offering praise and thanksgiving in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Coupled with this vision of a completed facility and worship space, my own vision for Transfiguration since I came here in 1982, was that we would become known and respected for our outreach to those in need. Part of that vision has included being an advocate for the Outreach line-item in the annual parish budget. Part of it has been to see individual parishioners and families catch on fire with passion for "doing" outreach, not just paying for others to do it. Part of my vision has been for people to get involved in helping change the systems that keep the down trodden down...to work, as well as pray, for justice and peace in the world, in the community and in our homes. (If you'd like to teach your children or grandchildren truly significant values, get involved with them in some regular outreach ministry...go to where the people in need are and discover the Christ that lives in them...you can and will make a difference!)

And part of my vision for outreach has been that we would build a corpus of cash, the income from which would be used to do good works that are outside those funded by the annual budget. I would not want to give the impression that the Endowment for Outreach is to take the place of the outreach enabled by the annual budget. It is to provide the means for more. For example, the Vestry has made a commitment to fully fund the 2006 Jubilee Habitat House from the portion of the Capital Campaign dedicated to Outreach. We can now concentrate our energies on building the house,

which will begin in September on our property and then moved to its permanent location when completed.

In addition, we have signed a contract on a 46-rank pipe organ to be built and installed in the church early in the summer of 2008. In order that the organ be used to its optimum, certain modifications must be made in the choir gallery and the HVAC and nave lighting equipment currently housed there must be moved. A portion of the new building, notably that section immediately to the south of the Gathering Space which is planned to include a parlor and small choir rehearsal room, must be built to facilitate moving mechanical equipment and to provide new access to the gallery. The current stairwells to the gallery are no longer compliant with building codes.

So here is the vision: To honor what our founders, and those who have worked and worshiped in this place for the past 50 years had as their vision for worship and music, for ministry and education and for outreach, and to "create" on that foundation, our future...to come together now to do all we can to turn our vision into reality.

A strong request of the respondents to the survey was the desire to know more about the new south building. Please take a look at the schematic renderings of the facility and join me in a "not-quite-a-virtual-tour" through the proposed building.

The new south building is two stories and will be of the quality construction of the buildings to which it attaches: the church and the Parish Life Center. The architects are Good, Fulton and Farrell, the same architects we used for the Parish Life Center and several of the other buildings on our property. Because of grade restrictions, the first floor will be slightly lower than the level of the labyrinth with access to it via both ramp and stairs. The second level will be accessible via several stairwells including one "grand" staircase and by an elevator.

The building will attach to our existing building at three points. The window wall and doors on the south side of the Gathering Space and labyrinth will be removed and primary access to the new facility will be through that portal. Access will also be through the south transept which will open on to a new west entrance plaza. The third access point will be from the south side of the choir gallery, allowing musicians to move directly from rehearsal hall to gallery, the easy transfer of handbells and handbell tables, pianos and other instruments without conflicting with the flow of worshippers in and out of the nave. The main floor level will also connect, via covered walkway, with Building B, which will be remodeled to become a new Children's Ministries Building for Kindergarten through Sixth Grade Sunday School and other children and family ministries.

Come with me in your mind, if you will, up the grand staircase to the second level. You'll find it just outside the

current south doors to the Gathering Space, about where the large fig tree toppled over this past summer. At the top of the stairs you can turn right...but be careful...you'll find yourself in the choir gallery and once there, you may have to sing for your supper! Turning left will take you along a short corridor to the main east-west corridor and access to the two primary sections of the second story of the building. Around the corner on your left, if you peek in the door you might find one of our three fine children's choirs warming up for the service, or maybe the members of the handbell choir making ding-a-ling with their bells. Across the hallway, down another short corridor you'll find other musicians vesting for worship in the room on your left and a larger rehearsal hall on your right. It is equipped with risers so the singers can see the director and has a higher ceiling to enliven the room's acoustics so that how they hear themselves in rehearsal comes approximates how they hear themselves in the church. On around the corner to the left you'll pass the Director of Music's office, choir library, and music assistant's office...and on your way, you'll be passing five new adult-sized classrooms where you're likely to find one of our many masterful adult Sunday School teachers preparing for their classes.

Moving on down this corridor you'll come to another staircase that would return you to the ground level. But if you make another left turn you'll come back to where you started, passing on your way the elevator and "essential" rooms for this floor. This main corridor would also allow you to walk all the way to the west end of the building and down a staircase, into the west entrance foyer and to the chapel or the entrance to the south transept.

Let's do that. Let's walk down the long hallway toward the west end of the second level, down the stairs to the main level. Here we are in a very pleasant and inviting foyer that opens out on to an entrance plaza that welcomes those who arrive from the south and west parking lots. On one side of this foyer we can see into the church through the south transept. On the other side of the foyer we discover the entrance to the new chapel.

The chapel is octagonal, seats between 30 and 50 people and has provided a new home for the two wonderful stained glass windows that have, for years, cried out for natural light to reflect their real beauty. These two windows, now at the back of the north and south transepts will be moved to provide two of the outside walls of the chapel. On one other wall you'll see that the present organ has been relocated in keeping with the wishes of the original donor that it, one day, be placed in the parish chapel. In the chapel today, we're going to have Children's Chapel and so the furniture has been moved away so the children can sit on the floor and do other Children's Chapel activities. But next week the chairs and altar will be moved back into place for the Wednesday evening Eucharist, or maybe a small chapel wedding on Saturday.

Returning to the entrance foyer, just up the short flight of stairs to the south transept, we see the entrance to a new,

larger Altar Guild Sacristy, where Altar Guild members are busy preparing for our liturgies. Were we to walk down the back hallway, we'd find the current sacristy has been remodeled and equipped for appropriate storage of our magnificent vestment collection.

But don't go there right now. Let's just turn around and find the entrance to a small auditorium. This space has been designed primarily for use by our FIG Theater Company and includes storage space for their props. It will also function as a multi-media room, lecture hall and general purpose space. In fact, every space in this new building has been designed with multiple uses in mind, even though primarily dedicated to specific purposes. This small auditorium will enable us to still schedule receptions in Roper Hall while productions or meetings are taking place over here.

Moving on down the main corridor you'll pass, on your left, another lovely interior garden space much like the Meditation Garden we now enjoy. On your right, you'll come to a lovely open and welcoming reception area where the parish receptionist will greet you and invite you for a cup of coffee before you go to your appointment with a member of the clergy or lay staff. This is the staff area and includes offices for all the staff, storage for parish records as well as small conference rooms for private meetings with families in bereavement or for making wedding plans, and one larger one for staff meetings, vestry meetings and the like.

As you look out from the reception area, you'll be looking directly back into the Gathering Space from which you began this journey. But wait, there is one more room. On the left as you walk up the ramp to the Gathering Space, is the new and larger parlor...our parish living room, if you will...that opens out to the beautiful interior garden you passed on your way down to the office suite.

Well, that's about it...but, you ask, "What about the current parlor and Music Director's office?" Our plans are to put them to appropriate use, possibly to house the MacMaster Library and the Kay Andrews Bookstore, thus making our wonderful library collection and the religious books and articles sold by the bookstore more accessible to those who use the facilities each week.

So that's a tour through the new building. As you study the plans in the Gathering Space, please keep in mind that, although they are fairly well set, certainly in the basic configuration, the Building Design Committee will continue to work with the staff and the architects to perfect the plans so they will serve, to the best possible advantage, our needs and purposes as we continue to grow in ministry to each other and to the community and world into which we are called and sent.

This is the challenge and excitement of our Jubilee Year...equipping the saints in word, song and deed for ministry for our future...a future that is bright and bold...a future built on the sure foundation which is none other than Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.