



January 15, 2015

Dear Christ Church Family:

We are sending this mailing out to every household in anticipation of our **Annual Meeting on Sunday January 25, 2015** following the **one 9:30 a.m. service** that day: we expect to begin promptly at 11:00 a.m. and end by 12:30 p.m.

The purpose of this Annual Meeting will be to spend time reviewing the findings of the Harris House Working Group (made up of Steve Portalupi, Eric LaMontagne, Lang Plumer, Tom Lambert, John Gilbert, Mike Yergeau, Sr. and the Rector). Over the last few years we have deferred a final decision on the future of Harris House (the “Parish House”) until after the completion of the rector search and ongoing conversations with town officials regarding the current use of our buildings, specifically in regard to the overnight hosting of Seacoast Family Promise in our downstairs classrooms. In the meantime, we have not made any cosmetic upgrades to the facility – a building clearly showing its age.

The decision that awaits us is not merely a financial one. Though we have roughly \$600,000 in cash reserves earmarked for any future project, at heart the decision is one about the mission of the church. How do our buildings support our current and future mission? What would Jesus do, say or recommend? Is God’s work of healing, reconciliation, justice and compassion impacted by what we decide? What is Christ Church’s place in the Exeter community?

The purpose of gathering as a congregation on January 25 is for members of the Vestry to hear your thoughts, hopes and concerns. There will time for table conversations to discuss the report and time as a larger group to share and listen to one another. We hope to listen to what the “Spirit is saying to the church.” Perhaps we will see consensus develop in one direction or another. Essentially the choices before us are to do nothing at this point, renovate Harris House for effective use for the next 30-40 years – including all-important asbestos abatement -- or raze the current structure and move forward to design and build a newer multiple-use Parish Hall.

(continued)

In the weeks following the meeting, Vestry members will be available at the Coffee Hours after each service for you to continue to share your thoughts.

Enclosed in this mailing is current floor plan of Harris House, including a study of the use of the building.

There is a description of the various projects that could be included in a major renovation – including cost estimates.

What is harder to show is the possibility of a new Parish House. We have included a very basic footprint of a potential new-build that would have less square footage than the current space, but could be designed for better energy efficiency and multi-use. If a new building were built at ground level it would alleviate the need for elevators/lifts and provide full and ready accessibility.

If needed, we have made plans to call for a Special Meeting on Sunday, March 8 at 11:45 a.m. to move towards next steps.

Please make plans to join us.

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel at the Annual Meeting of Christ Church of Exeter for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.