

Councilmember Jack Evans

Council of the District of Columbia

Dear Councilmember Evans:

I write in strong support of the request of St Thomas' Parish for a zoning variance that will permit the Parish to move forward on the construction of a new church at 18th & Church Streets, NW. Moving to the construction phase of this project will be the culmination of years of effort by this congregation. This work has included extensive effort to devise a development plan that meets the needs of this vibrant and vital religious congregation as well as needs of the community of which it has been a part for over a century. Especially over the past two years representatives of St Thomas' and its development team have had countless meetings with members of the community to understand their concerns, and the Parish has made numerous and significant changes to its plans to accommodate concerns expressed by community members.

St. Thomas' Parish takes pride in serving its neighborhood in a variety of ways, which in recent years has included not only the historic witness of this Parish in support of the interests, concerns and needs of members of the gay, lesbian, transgender and bisexual community, but also making Parish facilities available for community groups.

St. Thomas' is among the most effective and vibrant parishes within the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and its success has resulted largely as the result of the willingness of Parish leaders to respond to changing circumstances over time. I strongly commend the work of this congregation and urge your support of this crucial next step in assuring that this Parish will have the facilities it needs to continue to carry out its mission and ministry in Dupont Circle.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Paul E Cooney

Canon to the Ordinary and Chief Operating Officer

Episcopal Diocese of Washington