

Dear Councilman Evans,

As a member of St. Thomas Parish, I am writing to share my thoughts about the importance of a new church building for the Parish and to ask your support for moving forward with the building plan.

St Thomas embodies a deep and passionate commitment to nurturing the spiritual life of its members, welcoming spiritual travelers and questioners, extending a hand to and living in harmony with our neighbors, serving those in need and crisis, advocating for social justice, and providing a safe place for people to gather for mutual support, such as AA, OA, and other 12-step programs.

Today, St. Thomas remains confined to the 1920s service building that became “home” after a devastating fire destroyed the original church decades ago. That building is now old and deteriorated, and does not have the capacity, flexibility, or type of space necessary for sustaining our ministries of service, worship, and community. A new church building will provide the physical facility we need to maintain, strengthen, and increase our ministry programs; gather, teach, learn, celebrate, and mourn as a community; and serve the common good, as well as our parish life.

With a new church, we will once again have adequate worship space for our members and the kind of space needed for educational offerings and community gatherings. We will be able to provide office space for all our clergy and administrative staff—not just some of them. We will have the capacity to host full weddings and hold funerals with coffins that must be moved—things we cannot do now. We will be able to accommodate people with ADA requirements. Space constraints now cut us off from and disenfranchise a group deserving welcome. We will be able to wholly realize our music ministry, acquire the organ we need, and provide suitable space for the choir during worship—as well as hold public concerts, lectures, and art shows that can more fully include and invite our neighbors. We will have the space to grow our outreach and advocacy programs for human rights and reconciliation—efforts that are especially critical now, as they represent the mission cornerstones of the new leader of the Episcopal Church.

Thank you for considering how your support of the St. Thomas building plan is a critical factor in making all this possible for the benefit of the wider community today and in the future.

Karen Garlick
Member of St. Thomas Parish