



Christ Lutheran Church

Washington, DC

5101 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20011
Phone (202) 829-6727
Fax (202) 882-3077
clcoffice@verizon.net
christlutheran-dc.org

A Reconciling in Christ Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America

May 4, 2022

District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441- 4th Street NW Suite 200-S
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ZC Case No. 21-18

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to express support for the proposed Dance Loft/Heleos project, both individually, as a neighbor (1523 Upshur Street NW), and on behalf of the congregation, Christ Lutheran Church (Gallatin & 16th Streets NW), where I have served as pastor since 2001.

Since 1990, when Christ Lutheran used a bequest to co-found Transitional Housing Corporation (now Housing Up), we have had an active commitment to affordable and permanent supportive housing in the District of Columbia. Additionally, we have sought to become a congregation that is multi-racial and economically diverse. We have grown significantly in our racial diversity but have not made the same strides in terms of economic diversity.

What drives both our efforts toward affordable housing and racial and economic diversity is our faith. We believe that the vision of the Kingdom/Reign of God announced by Jesus is one where creation is cared for and everyone has what they need for a dignified life. We believe that each person is created in the image of God and that diversity is a gift from God. At Christ Lutheran, we have enjoyed the immense blessing of being a community where people bring their diverse backgrounds and experiences to the table. We are so much stronger for it.

As a resident, I love this neighborhood. There is nowhere else I would rather live. Over the last 20 years, we have seen great change in our neighborhood and city, resulting in a diminishment of our racial and economic diversity. Along with my congregation, I see this project as an exciting opportunity to give more people, especially more families, the opportunity to enjoy this place where we have raised our children.

A few years ago, two parents with four young children came to the church looking for help. A series of tragic events had left them homeless. I was able to help them get an apartment, and one of the parents now has a job in a DC government agency. The family joined our church and have been great contributors to both the life of the congregation and our mission. Recently, to find housing that met their growing children's needs, the family had to leave the neighborhood. While they remain active members of Christ Lutheran, our neighborhood schools, community organizations and neighbors will no longer benefit from

The Reverend Renata E. Eustis, Pastor

Sharon Senghor, Council President

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their perspectives and involvement. The very affordable three-bedroom apartments proposed for this development would have made it possible for this family to stay.

We are impressed with the thoroughness of the process led by our ANC and appreciate the conditions they have attached to their approval of this project. Our hope is that the Zoning Commission will approve this project and allow it to move forward as quickly as possible. We are excited to welcome these new neighbors and celebrate the vibrancy they will bring to our neighborhood.

Sincerely,
Renata E. Eustis
Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church