



# HOLY COMFORTER

## EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Greetings My friends,

Almost a year ago, many of us were surprised to learn that Holy Comforter's anticipated deficit was far worse than expected. This reality forced us to eliminate two staff positions and reduce the compensated hours of our remaining staff. You responded in true Holy Comforter style through increased gifts of money and offering countless hours from your already busy schedules to help stabilize our congregation. Because of your efforts, I am pleased to tell you that financially, we are holding our own; money coming in about equals the money going out.

Early this year, a group of experienced and gifted parish leaders stepped forward to assist the vestry and staff. Calling themselves the "Pathfinders," they are leading the congregation through these difficult financial times while searching for a mountain pass to the promised land. Through their efforts we now have more reliable ways of anticipating financial shortfalls. Our data base of people participating in the life of the parish is now up to date. By preaching, teaching, and faithful practice we are deepening our understanding of living lives as faithful stewards of all of God's blessings. Other individuals and small groups have stepped forward as well, and our faithful compensated staff have graciously responded to our need to "Do more with less."

In short, these efforts have "bought us some time" to find and implement plans for a vibrant future. We know that our present bare bones budget is not sustainable. We still miss Logynn and Natalie and their contributions. While we are comforted that they have found new employment that allows them to use their gifts in challenging ways, their absence has placed an unfair burden on our remaining staff.

Further, merely breaking even places us in a position that any unexpected loss of income or extraordinary expense has the potential of putting us back into crisis mode. Finally, the mortgage on our building is scheduled to be restructured in the fall of 2024. Given today's higher interest rates, our monthly payment will undoubtedly increase.

With these things in mind, in consultation with our Pathfinders, the vestry has identified three financial priorities:

First, we must provide fair compensation to our remaining staff.

Second, we must build up our financial reserves.

Finally, we must address the long-term debt secured by our building.

It will likely take several years to accomplish these tasks, but we have been given the gift of time. It is now up to you and me to make the best use of that time to strengthen the financial foundation of our spiritual house.

As you consider making your 2024 pledge, I encourage you to stretch your budget and increase your giving during this important time.

Ministries here at Holy Comforter continue to grow and it is essential that we support them with a solid financial foundation. Your help will assure our present and future ministries thrive. While the road forward is still difficult, our path forward is beginning to clear.

I want to close this letter with a few comforting words from that old hymn, *How Firm a Foundation*:

“Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed! For I am thy God and will still give thee aid.”

**Thank you for your gifts to Holy Comforter in the past. Will you join the lively community of Holy Comforter pledgers as we build that foundation?**

Yours in Christ Jesus,

The Rev. Kelsey Hogue for  
the “Building a Firm Foundation” Pledge Committee