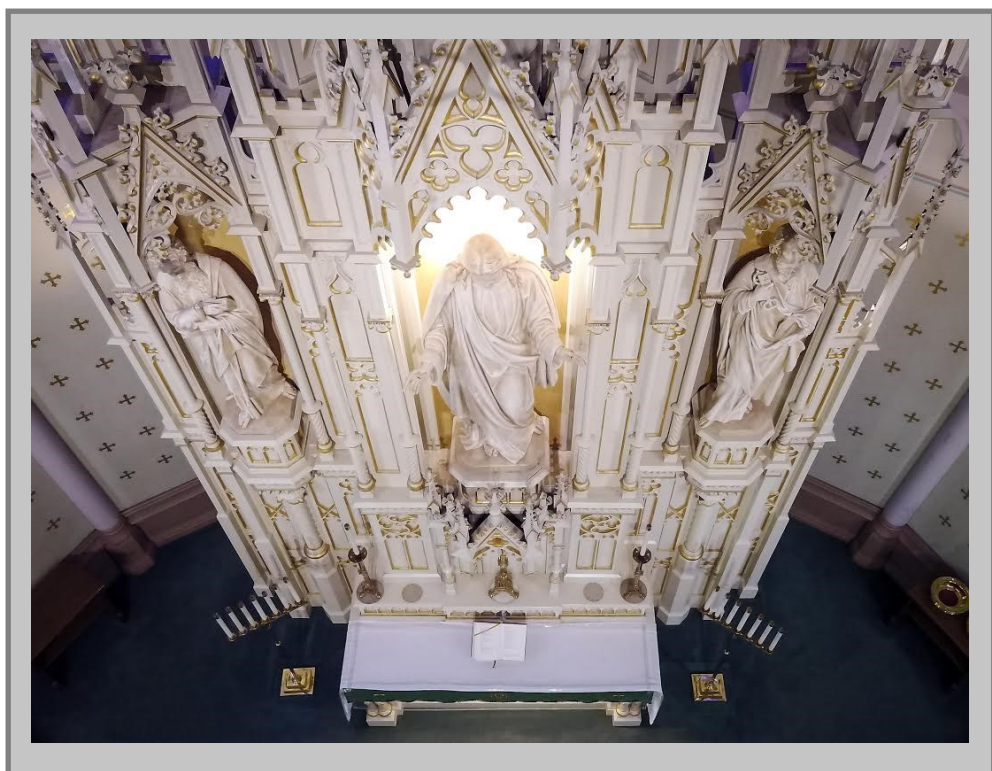




GATHERING
IN *Christ*



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran
Church & School
Fort Wayne, Indiana

A few historical markers

- ◇ 120 years ago the members of St. Paul's stood outside their glorious church building and gazed on the charred ruins following the fire of 1903.
- ◇ Nearly 70 years ago, faithful members of St. Paul's stepped forward in faith to build a first-rate parish hall, the building we call Heritage Hall.
- ◇ Just 20 years ago—has it been that long?—the congregation resolved to prepare its school facilities for the 21st century through a thorough remodeling under the campaign theme “Teaching the Faith.”

Some present-day realities

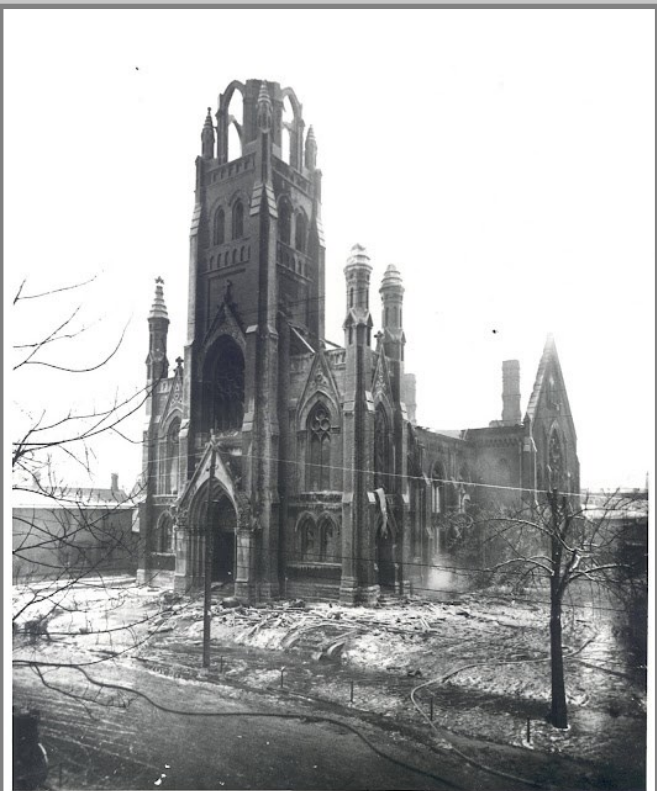
- ◇ The church building is as solid as the foundation it's built on. While there are constant maintenance checklists, anyone who enters through our doors knows that they have arrived at a special place as the beauty of our sanctuary points to the God who is present here with his gifts of life and grace.
- ◇ The school renovation has served us well these past two decades. To be sure, educational needs are constantly changing, but the building has adapted well to those needs.
- ◇ Heritage Hall, on the other hand . . . well, let's just say that its time has come.

Some pressing needs

Anyone involved in the upkeep of Heritage Hall will tell you the same thing: after 70 years, there are parts of the building that are literally falling apart. A few examples:

- ◇ Plumbers were hesitant to replace the toilets upstairs out of fear that the pipes would simply fall through the floor!
- ◇ Far from being even minimally energy efficient, some of the windows are actually falling out!
- ◇ The bathrooms lack ventilation and air-conditioning, are not handicap accessible, and are terribly out of date. On top of that, they are hidden and hard for visitors to find!
- ◇ The electrical service is not up to code. Just ask anyone who has learned not to plug more than one crockpot into an outlet lest they blow a fuse!

*To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout
all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21)*



More than physical needs

Even if we were to spiff up Heritage Hall by thoroughly remodeling it, there would still be one thing missing: a conveniently located gathering place. Our church probably has more exits than any other in the Synod. Plus, we have long, straight hallways that efficiently move people in and out. What's missing?

- ◇ A convenient space where a group of folks can stop to talk without getting in the way of others.
- ◇ An easily accessed space for receptions after services.
- ◇ An attractive space that highlights the beauty of our church architecture while inviting us to stay a while and enjoy the company of fellow Christians.

An underutilized treasure

The courtyard situated between the church and Heritage Hall is in a prime space, located near both the narthex and the north transept. Most of us pass by it every Sunday. It presents, however, significant limitations. While it's a beautiful setting, it's unusable for more than half of the year. Plus, it's inaccessible to anyone unable to negotiate steps.

The solution

The solution to our lack of a gathering space is, quite simply, to bring the courtyard *indoors* so that it can be used all year round! And the time to repurpose this space is right now as we tackle the long overdue renovation of Heritage Hall. The strategic plan that the congregation adopted in 2017 identified as one of our priorities the need to deepen a sense of community among us. That's pretty hard to do if we can't hang out together.



This is an artist's rendering of the new gathering space where the courtyard presently lies. This view is from just outside Pastor Cage's office window. To the far left is the cloister that connects Heritage Hall to the narthex. To the far right is the northern exterior of the church, which will be fully visible through the large bank of windows. We're literally bringing the courtyard indoors!

A stretch

No doubt, this will be an expensive venture; any building project these days requires a lot of resources. The project that we have outlined will very likely stretch the congregation. Yet, the response to the question, “Can we afford to do this?” can be met with another question: “Can we afford *not* to do this?”

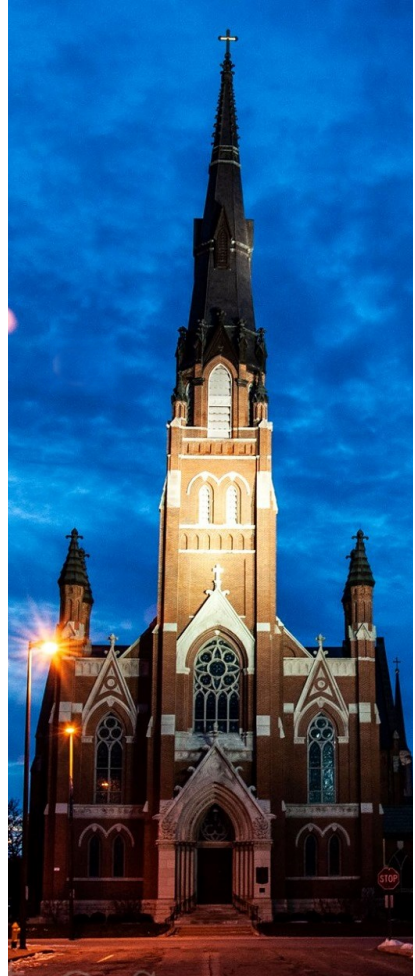
The Lord’s abundance

In every generation, St. Paul’s has faced challenges: a charred sanctuary, an outdated school. Heritage Hall is the challenge of our time. So the question isn’t whether we can afford it—though, to be sure, we’re making careful, prudent decisions every step along the way. Instead, the question we really need to ask is how God can and will work through the present challenge to propel the congregation toward its 200th anniversary just fourteen years from now.

All aboard!

No one will deny the fact that something this monumental will require an all-hands-on-deck effort. And one that will invite us to consider once again what sacrificial giving looks like. You’ve probably heard the stories of how our forefathers rebuilt the church after that devastating fire in an era when there wasn’t insurance to cover the damage. Some folks took out second mortgages on their own homes in order to free up extra cash. One person remembers his grandfather taking his paycheck to the grocery store every Friday, buying enough food for the coming week, and then donating the rest to the rebuilding effort. Many chose to make do without what we would probably consider to be the bare necessities.

What that will look like today *only you* can say. But as we hear each week of the God whose only Son made the greatest sacrifice of all—the redemption of the world—we can enter this campaign in the confidence that he will crown our efforts with his every blessing.



What, in a nutshell, is the plan?

The proposal recommends a thorough renovation of Heritage Hall, along with an expansion that encloses most of the courtyard and creates in that central location a large gathering space. Features of the proposal include:

- ◇ Relocating offices to the back of Heritage Hall;
- ◇ Bringing the restrooms closer to the entrance, making them easier to find;
- ◇ Relocating the church secretary's office and a dedicated workroom closer to the entrance, thus allowing for a more secure entry point.

While the second floor will not see major structural changes, the Nerger Room and kitchen in particular will be remodeled to make them more functional and inviting. Additionally, the heating and cooling systems of both the church and school will be modernized.

The Timeline

Our capital campaign, Gathering in Christ, will proceed through this fall, with special events planned in October and November, culminating with three-year pledges made on Commitment Celebration Sunday on **November 12**. God willing, construction will begin in the Spring of 2024.

What can I do?

In the coming weeks, our many campaign volunteers ask two things of you. First, stay informed. Read the materials we provide. Ask questions.

Second, pray. Pray for the success of our *Gathering in Christ* campaign. Pray that God would send a spirit of cooperation among all our members. Pray that he would grant us wisdom. And pray that he would give us generous hearts, not just through our financial gifts, but as we offer our very selves in service to each other and for the spread of the Gospel.

