

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH - 150TH SEASON OF CELEBRATION

Prepared for the Annual Parish Meeting, January 22, 2023

INTRODUCTION

The anniversary of our 150th year in this church building has given us an obvious and wonderful opportunity to remember and renew our historic relationships, and to reach out to build new connections. This 'season of celebration', this gift, has again revealed new ways to share what we've been given.

Our hope and expectation is that the meaningful outcome of the entire project will be the same as the methods we employed... to build and strengthen relationships with each other and our neighbors. We recognize that the 150th anniversary process is not really about a stone building. The project is simply a vehicle, a tool, and an opportunity to renew, rebuild, and perhaps find new ways to open doors, welcome neighbors, share gifts, and build community.

STEERING COMMITTEE FORMATION

Conceived in pre-pandemic days, the notion of celebrating 150 years at this intersection was shaped by the historic connections between St. Paul's and many or most of the community's most recognizable organizations and institutions. Our early work included individual invitations and private church tours for representatives of those neighbors, reconnecting and renewing these historic ties.

In November of 2021, Father Don and the vestry authorized the establishment of a small workgroup to consider and plan for the celebration of our 150 years in this historic, sacred space.

- How could we recognize and share the abundant gift of our parish history?
- How could we remember and share the stories of our historic role in the community?
- How and why would we decide to do this work?

It now seems wonderfully obvious that this project would ultimately turn out to be always and only stewardship and relationships, through recognizing and sharing our abundant gifts in community.

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PRIORITIES: RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

It clearly would not do, to simply invite our neighbors to visit and learn about us and our history. There would really be little point in a celebration that looked inward: by us, for us, and about us.

The value and impact of our anniversary celebration would only be found in sharing the effort, and welcoming the enthusiasm, interest, and involvement of our neighbors. So, the work of our 150th team was centered on **relationships** and built on a commitment to **collaborate** at every opportunity.

2022 'SEASON OF CELEBRATION EVENTS

'Season of Celebration' was arranged to run for fifteen months, corresponding with the 150th anniversary of the period between the 1872 setting of our cornerstone and the official opening of the 'new' building in 1873. Six 'anchor dates' during this period were selected for special events to commemorate historically significant events, Cornerstone Day, Rector's Day, All Saints' Day, Founders' Day, Groundbreaking Day, and First Service Day.

In addition to these special dates, the group sought to support our traditional site-based events such as ARTWALK, Transgender Day of Remembrance, and Music in the Heart of the City, as well as reaching out to support broader community initiatives including Back to the Bricks, Pride, Crim Festival of Races, Juneteenth, and the variety of other downtown festivals.

THE CELEBRATION!

Groundbreaking Day - On Saturday, May 14, 2022, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of groundbreaking day for our building. Ground was indeed broken again, and new relationships were built as parish and community members worked side-by-side to spruce up, plant our garden, and pick up debris well beyond our home at the intersection... all the way from City Hall to the river. St. Paul's served as the host site and sponsoring partner for this volunteer downtown cleanup day. Our building served as headquarters and supply station for the project, along with our partners from Keep Genesee County Beautiful, Flint Development Authority, Flint Public Arts Project, Greater Flint Arts Council, Friends of the Alley, and What's Up Downtown Flint.

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Cornerstone Weekend - On Saturday, May 21, the parish kicked off a weekend of events to commemorate with the 150th anniversary of the day that our cornerstone was set at the intersection of S. Saginaw Street and E. Third Street. St. Paul's opened our doors for tours, organ demonstrations, and photo opportunities. The Saturday highlight was the service of Evening Prayer, said at 4pm, just as it had been 150 years before. On Sunday, we were blessed by the visitation of the Right Reverend Prince Singh, who presided at the rededication of the cornerstone. The events of the weekend were capped off as we again welcomed the Bishop and the Diocese of Eastern and Western Michigan for a Diocesan service of Confirmation.

Rector's Reunion and Open House - On Saturday, August 13, 2022, we commemorated the 1839 arrival in Flint, of missionary priest and first rector of St. Paul's, the Reverend Daniel Ebenezer Brown. Our August 'Rectors' Reunion and Open House' was another collaborative event, during which St. Paul's partnered with a local nonprofit organization to organize an ice cream and hot dog picnic in our front yard. Inside, music was provided by the bell choir and organist, setting the tone during tours and visits.

All Saints at Glenwood - The final 'anchor' event of 2022 took place on October 30, when St. Paul's partnered with other churches and community groups to sponsor a community-wide All Saints' event at Glenwood. The afternoon included self-guided walking tours with docents and storytellers stationed near selected gravesites, specifically those with significant historical ties to the churches and congregations. The highlight of the afternoon was an ecumenical, community wide 'All Saints' Memorial Service' with congregations and clergy from all four Crossover Outreach churches. True to our stated priority of building relationships and working collaboratively, we left the comfort of our own space for this special day in the community's most historically significant cemetery. This was truly a collaborative effort, including the Glenwood Board, University of Michigan-Department of History, the Genesee County Historical Society, and Crossover Outreach.

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THE SEASON CONTINUES / SLOAN MUSEUM EXHIBIT

Our 2023 calendar is still under development, but we look forward to another collaborative 'groundbreaking' downtown cleanup event in May.

We are thrilled to announce that we are partnering with the Sloan Museum of Discovery, to develop and present a 'St. Paul's - 150 Years at the Intersection' exhibit in their newly designed 'Community Exhibit' space. We are honored that St. Paul's is the first community organization to be involved in such a collaborative project with Sloan. This exhibit is scheduled to run from May through September 2023, and we look forward to scheduling some sort of 'grand opening' and reception.

THANKS AND RECOGNITION

We are grateful for everyone who took part and supported the project; the vestry and Father Don, volunteers who actually made the events happen, all of the ministries and committees that planned and worked on special events, and parish personnel who worked so hard in support of the effort. We are looking forward to continuing the celebration and special events in 2023, including August 27th 2023, when we'll celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the first service ever held in our building.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Current Members of the 150th Steering Committee are:

Member: Barb Mannor

Member: Tim Grant,

Member: David Taylor

Member: Susumu Inoue,

Member: Edythe Peake,

Member: Celeste Lord

Member: Joel Arnold

Member: Jelecia Geraghty

Member: Audrey Stephens

Member: Holly Richardson

Chair: Walt Peake

Peace,
Walt