

OUR VISION STATEMENT

restore • renew • reach out



Transforming St. Paul's for a new day and age

Growth from the beginning

Shortly after the settlement of Rochester in 1817, Methodist preachers arrived to spread the gospel message. In 1858, the people of Rochester founded St. Paul's to proclaim God's love in Jesus Christ as part of the Rochester and Stoney Creek circuit. In the next 100 years, we moved from homes to buildings on Walnut "and Romeo Streets.

In 1972, St. Paul's faithful were bursting at the seams, so we expanded to the east, including:

- A larger worship space (now known as Hickey Hall)
- More rooms for children, youth and adult classes and meetings
- Expanded choir rehearsal space
- A library, resource room and additional offices

In 1988, church growth from those programs led us to expand into our current Sanctuary, including one of the largest pipe organs in the state of Michigan. It also accommodated local school and music organizations, including the Rochester Symphony Orchestra and middle school choir concerts.

Challenging times

Since 2020, revenue has only minimally increased (with fewer members), and church staff and leaders have worked diligently to reduce expenses in an environment of increasing costs. Staffing reductions and realignments met our ministry plan budget, but programs have functioned on the grace of volunteers and minimal funding.

In 2020, our church Trustees engaged a Rochester architectural firm that prepared a facilities assessment to identify our aging facility's repair needs, which it estimated would exceed \$2 million. Lacking this funding, we only allocated funds from the annual budget and reserves for some of the critical recommendations to ensure our church would remain dry, heated and cooled.

Gaining focus

In 2023, the Administrative Board approved a strategic plan to focus our mission to inspire people to live and love like Jesus. With substantial input from the congregation, we identified our key areas of strength in music and worship, children and youth ministries, and a commitment to missions. In that

process, we adopted several goals to achieve by 2027 to facilitate the well-being and growth of St. Paul's.

We've already begun to see results of the strategic plan by improving the following programs: children's music ministries, adult discipleship, family programming beyond Sunday mornings, and filling the preschool program (which now has a waiting list).

Even amid good news, we have been forced to make critical repairs to our facilities. This work has depleted all church building reserves and siphoned key program dollars from our ministry plan.

Funding our future

Our strategic plan recognized the critical infrastructure needs of our facilities and called on St. Paul's to organize a capital campaign. Our Trustees have identified critical work required over the next three years to maintain, repair, and improve our facilities, enhance security, and improve energy efficiency. To see the list, please refer to the Transforming St. Paul's Plan 2025 in this packet. Building a dedicated funding source for these capital projects will allow St. Paul's to retain its viability and embark on new ministries to better serve our community.

Goal: We propose to raise \$1.5 million with this capital campaign to meet our goals. To see the list, please refer to the Transforming St. Paul's Project List at the back of this packet.

Request: We invite you to learn more. Pray about it with us. And plan to make a commitment this March for what you plan to donate over the next three years.

St. Paul's is at a crossroads

Similar to most other churches, St. Paul's has experienced slowing membership growth over the past several years, increasing expenses, and only modest increases in pledges and donations. We must provide capital for our facilities to ensure our continued ability to sustain and grow our ministries. This capital campaign will address our deferred maintenance needs and improvements to attract more people to our ministries. In addition, it will enable us to allocate our annual offerings where they belong: to our ministry and programming activities.

As St. Paul's history has shown, lives are transformed when we share our resources to maintain the facilities our predecessors have invested in over the years for our benefit. We continue to see more people returning to church and new faces connecting with us. The time is now for us to make a critical investment in our facilities that gather people together to inspire others to live and love like Jesus.

We need to invest in our church to continue God's ministries. We hope you will join us as we step boldly into the bright future God has envisioned for us!