

11 June 2018

Dear Parish Family,

I would like to thank you all for remaining unified and prayerfully optimistic during our long, legal waiting game. We have waited patiently for a miracle. We had hoped that the US Supreme Court would grant our petition for a review in our property dispute against the national Episcopal Church. We are disappointed to say that our petition has been denied. No one is sure what this really means for our future home on our current property.

Because there is no clear, applicable opinion right now that would mandate the immediate transfer of property, the outcome remains unresolved. The diocese believes that the “answering of those questions may take us back before the S.C. Supreme Court, with strong legal grounds for a positive outcome.”

So don't lose faith. Don't lose hope. There are still many details to be worked out, some of which may allow us to remain on our current property, if it be God's will. Please pray for God's will alone in this. Also, remain open to the possibility that God's will may include going to places that stretch our faith and cause us to fully depend on God alone. Abram and Sarai knew this well. May the Holy Spirit blow us where it wishes (John 3:8).

Remember too, the enemy is not T.E.C.. Our true enemy is the Evil One who “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (I Peter 5:8) Lions seek to divide the herd up, to scatter the sheep, and to attack their weaknesses. Our future depends on us all being committed to staying together and to fighting the good fight in faith with God as our champion. Let's remain steadfast in that!

If, sometime in the future, a court order to release ownership of our property were to come, rest assured that your financial contributions to St. Paul's ministry will remain protected. Due to the hard work of Bob Armstrong and the finance committee, we now have a separate and protected 501 c3 into which we may make our future contributions, if that court order comes. This will allow us to keep our ministry funds protected and for our ministries to continue unabated no matter where we set up for church. SO PLEASE, don't stop giving to the work of Christ through St. Paul's.

Finally, I will be away studying at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, England beginning June 13 and I'll be returning on June 23. Fr. Tyler+ will be available for any counsel he might be able to give you in the meantime. As more details come forth and more direction from our bishop is given, we will keep you abreast of the situation. I will be available upon my return to address you all in a few weeks on Sunday, July 1 at 9 am.

Leslie and I remain steadfast in our commitment to our parish family. We will see our way through to the other side together and under God's amazing grace. St. Paul's clergy, staff and vestry remain of one accord on this as well.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

God's Grace and Peace to All,

Tripp+