



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

*For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:13-14*

Dear St. Bart's Family,

There is a new current flowing in our congregation. People are returning to church. They are sharing their thoughts and speaking up about their personal hopes and pains. In speaking our truth, we are finding reconnection. In so many ways, God is at work knitting our church family back together. It is a hope-filled time, an emotionally delicate time, and also a certain time. For as the psalmist says, *God knits us together to be wonderfully made.*

I come to you as your new rector with fresh eyes. I see the flowing of the new current juxtaposed on some other realities:

- Staff that is committed to St. Bart's but is stretched thin
- Deferred property maintenance and long-sought construction plans
- Ministerial strengths yet to be expanded

What does all this amount to? *Potential waiting to be fully and wonderfully made.*

The hopes and dreams of St. Bart's are ours to achieve, but only if we all answer God's call to come together. If you believe in St. Bart's as I do, *I ask you to join me in giving generously so that our church can boldly move ahead into the next chapter.*

In 2024, we seek to place St. Bart's on a solid operational foundation so that we can efficiently and effectively serve those seeking Christ in their lives. This vision for 2024 includes:

- Expanded programs for music, children, youth, and adults that reach into the community
- Adequate staffing with employee training and support
- Well-maintained and energy-efficient buildings and grounds
- Enhanced sanctuary and chapel spaces for worship and music
- A revitalization of St. Bart's strategic plan for the future

Once we fund the operational foundation of St. Bart's, we can look ahead to restarting the process of funding and constructing a new community center. I am as eager as you to begin this process. *First, help us put St. Bart's on a solid fiscal footing so that we can live into God's dreams for us for the future.*

The launch of our 2024 stewardship campaign, *Forward in Faith – Give for a Vital Future* is October 7-8. All parishioners will receive a letter and 2024 annual pledge card. You can pledge by return mail or on the St. Bart's website: www.stbartschurch.org/pledge. We will provide updates on our giving, and there will be parishioner personal testimonials as part of our weekly services. On November 19, we will bless all pledges during the *Forward in Faith* in-gathering service. *Please keep our congregation in prayer as we each pray to discern our gift for the future of St. Barts for the coming year.*

Our God is abundantly generous, passionately loving, and continually transformative. In reknitting us, God is reknitting the world. *I invite you to join your siblings in Christ and, together, let us move on to St. Bart's next chapter as we go "Forward in Faith".*

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Mother Nina Bacas
Rector, St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church