

Report of Property Committee to Vestry January 12, 2010 (updated)

The Property Committee has been considering a number of major property projects for this coming year and beyond, three of which were specifically referenced in the Wardens' letter to the parish in late November: renovating the heating system, and installing a fire suppression system and a sound system. In addition, of course, we have the ongoing renovations to the Rectory. Let us address each of these, with recommendations as to what seems feasible for the near term (2010).

- 1. Heating System:** With the involvement of a number of heating engineers, as well as an environmental audit by Massachusetts Interfaith Power and Light, we have solicited advice regarding renovation of our oil-fired steam-heating system. It is the consensus that a natural gas-fired boiler running a hot-water radiation system (as opposed to steam) is more efficient and less costly to maintain. Nonetheless, the current boiler is only about 15 years old and runs at about the 85% efficiency expected of an oil system. Changing the boiler to a state-of-the art natural gas hot water boiler and connecting to the existing radiation system would cost in the range of \$60,000-75,000, especially given the need to remove all of the steam traps (51) currently installed in the system and the likelihood that a larger gas line would have to be installed from the street. Moreover, the engineers question the feasibility of connecting a state-of-the art generation system to a radiation system that appears to be several decades old, and installing new piping and radiators could easily add another \$100,000 to the cost.

There is one aspect of the heating system that does require immediate attention: namely, the tendency of certain areas to overheat, even when their thermostats are not calling for heat (Parish Hall entry way, Chapter Room, Nursery School level). One of the engineers identified a linkage problem in one of the steam control valves that is the likely source of the problem. This can be repaired for \$1200. In addition, some manual control valves can be installed on individual radiators should that still be necessary after the valve repair: cost \$550 per radiator (labor and parts). **Recommendation:** approve the valve linkage repair for \$1200 and proceed with manual valve installation on the five or six overactive radiators only if still necessary.

- 2. Fire Suppression System:** We have received two estimates for adding fire suppression systems for the church and parish hall (including basement level), ranging from about \$130,000 to upwards of \$165,000. There is some debate in engineering circles whether a suppression system in historical structures ultimately causes more damage from water than the typical fire they are meant to suppress. All agree, however, that a necessary adjunct to any suppression system is an upgraded fire alarm system. The current system at St. Mary's was installed in 1977, with an upgrade to the control panel about 12 years ago. It is a zonal system, comprising four separate alarm zones—church, parish hall, basement

classrooms, and daycare center. The new code requirements call for an “addressable” system, in which each smoke or heat detector itself can be identified as the source of the problem, creating 50-60 “zones” so-to-speak. This allows for more directed intervention by fire and emergency personnel once an alarm sounds. While we are awaiting final estimates, it would appear from preliminary reports that an upgrade of the alarm system to meet all current code requirements would cost \$30,000-40,000. It should also be noted that any major renovation of the church or parish hall that takes place in the future might well trigger a mandated upgrade to the alarm system as part of the permitting process. **Recommendation:** hold off on the fire suppression renovation for the time being but approve upgrading of the alarm system to current code requirements.

3. **Sound System:** We have examined the installation of a sound system for the church twice in the past four years or so, at the request of a number of parishioners who have experienced difficulty hearing the services. We have received a detailed estimate providing for installation of an 8-speaker system for the church as a whole, as well a system allowing for up to 8 individual parishioners to access the sound system from the pews directly using wireless devices. All of this could be installed for approximately \$10,000. This would obviously improve the experience of worship and the enjoyment of our music programs for many of the congregation. **Recommendation:** approve installation of a sound system.
4. **Rectory Renovations:** We have completed much of the Rectory renovation: exterior painting (siding removal), new storm doors, removal of asbestos and leaking oil tank from basement, new living room three-bay window and restoration of sill, completely repainted kitchen and pantry, with new cabinet hardware. Some of what remains can be completed by volunteers, as occurred with the kitchen and pantry renovation: namely, interior painting of walls and ceilings in dining and living rooms and hallways, plus bedrooms; installation of ceramic tile kitchen floor; and painting of basement floor and walls. Leaving bathroom updating to the arrival of the new rector, what remains is some modest wood repair necessitated by water damage (mostly from window AC units); sanding and refinishing of the wood floors throughout the house; perhaps some radiator or thermostat work to correct the slow heating of the second floor; and professional painting of the wood trim (baseboard and windows upstairs and down). The volunteer work listed above should save about \$9,000, not including the cost of materials (about \$1000 for tile and paint). The wood floor work and the carpentry repairs should cost about \$6000; and repairs to the radiators, etc. perhaps \$2000. Professional painting of the woodwork will add \$6000 or so. If the bathroom renovations occur in the fall (after a new rector has been chosen and weighs in on the aesthetics), and leaving open the possibility of unanticipated repairs, completion of the renovations could take another \$22,000-25,000. **Recommendation:** approve a budget of up to \$25,000 to complete the Rectory renovations.