December 1, 2021

Dear friends in Christ,

Last night, after many months of research, discussion, listening, and prayer, the Vestry voted unanimously to explore the option of ground leasing the property we call Fowler House. A ground lease, as we discussed as a parish in 2018, will allow a developer to build their own building on the parcel of land, paying us an annual “rent” for 99 years, money that will supplement our annual income (as the rent from our current retail tenant does), supporting the ministry we currently engage in and providing the opportunity to expand our offerings as we expand our income. Typically, the lease will be structured to include periodic rent increases to keep up with the consumer market. It is our intention--when we find a developer-- to “rent back” a portion of the new building that we can use for our own purposes.

The Vestry and I are fully aware that this decision will be disappointing for some who were hoping we would come to another conclusion about the best use of that property. It is our sincere hope that those who are disappointed or frustrated will stay present with our community as we reevaluate our existing properties with an eye to best serve the ministries we have and the great things we hope yet to accomplish. There is so much good work to do in this place!

Prayers of deep gratitude are extended to the Vestry, especially to Carol Donlan, Brett Levanto, and Anne Ramsey, our executive committee. The hard work of this body and its leaders led to a process that was thoughtful, joyful, educational, and loving. We are also grateful to those who led the process of Our Calling, Our Campus-- Emily Bryan, Angela Mills, Abas Adenan, Kathleen Hickman, and Anne Reed-- to help us listen to our parish and see what bubbled to the surface.

There is so much work still left to do. As we turn to Advent and walk with the Holy
Family toward Bethlehem, let us look with joy and anticipation to the possibilities ahead.

Blessings,
Noelle