

EQUIPPED TO BROADCAST

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and to the ends of the earth.” - Acts 1:8b

April 16, 2021

Dear Friends,

Within a month of my arrival at Christ Church, we began to prepare for livestreaming services. With a lot of hard work, problem solving, and some creativity, we began in time for All Saints' Day, November 1.

The initial response to these offerings has been strong. Engagement in the 10:30 a.m. service is up 60% compared to pre-COVID levels. People are joining us from beyond greater Dayton - Illinois, Massachusetts, Arkansas, Florida, and New York. A class offered in January and February for those interested in becoming Episcopalians (offered only online), had eight attendees. Others have contacted me directly about becoming members as COVID subsides.

Live-streaming offers distinct advantages for worship which need to be retained while preparing to return to in-person worship. It is an “easy point of entry” for those who are exploring becoming members. It permits asynchronous worship for those whose schedules do not allow them to be physically here on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning. It engages the shut-in and sick. It allows traveling members to join us. And it brings old members who have moved away back to us. Simply put, it broadcasts the Gospel beyond the limitations of our building.

So far, our live-streaming has been accomplished with the simplest, and least expensive tools: existing cell phones, cheap tripods, and a plug-in microphone. While they represent a low cost, efficient way to begin engaging in this ministry, they do not have the durability, scalability, or technical specifications for making this part of our standard, on-going offerings. That will take something more.

Over the past few months, a committee met to consider what kind, and quality of equipment would be most appropriate, considering cost, capacity, and durability. Working with audio/visual vendors, the local public access station, the Diocese, and other congregations building their own live-streaming programming, we have set a goal for this campaign of \$50,000.

60-70% of this budget relates to one-time, non-recurring costs for whenever Christ Church commits to offering high quality, accessible digital worship. Because of the quirky, layered construction of our building, wiring the Nave to broadcast in reliable high definition includes two costly infrastructure improvements: (1) updating the physical lines from the street into the building to receive high-speed internet and (2) getting those lines into the Sanctuary. Neither were imagined during the remodel in the middle of the last century. Retrofitting this work is significantly complicated and expensive. The good news is that it will only need to be done once. Also, additional staff support is required this first year for project management during installation, volunteer training on equipment use, and providing friendly assistance to members who need help getting connected. MaryJane Plote, who has recently joined us, is expected to fill these roles.

The remainder of the budget goes toward the pieces you might already imagine: cameras, lights, integrating our current audio system, and a control station. The equipment we are considering represent a good value, nothing extraordinary. But it does allow us to make several necessary improvements. It integrates sound between in-person and livestreaming, allowing both groups to receive the same dynamic, rich tones the Nave offers. It evens out the light, allowing the sacred actions at the high altar, and faces of servers and readers, to be clear for those outside the building. It will add visual interest and high-quality images with better definition. Together, this equipment represents a modest production suite, focused on value, expandability, flexibility, and durability.

By September, our goal is to have this improved livestreaming capacity installed and operational. By that time, COVID permitting, we will be able to return to something which looks more like a complete, in-person worship schedule. When that happens, our current patchwork of broadcasting equipment will no longer be viable. Offering high quality, hybrid church, means getting ready now so that all worshippers, both those here in the building and those online, have as close to the same experience as possible.

This campaign runs for a short time, just four weeks, allowing us to get down to the details. To get on the schedule with the internet utility provider. To select vendors. To make final equipment selections. To finalize layout and design. To arrange dates for installation. And to begin testing and training. It will be a full summer!

As part of the season of Easter, every Sunday we read a piece of the story of the Acts of the Apostles. They, after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, found themselves in an unusual and unexpected season. Unprepared, they were commissioned to be the bearers of God's message of love, reconciliation, grace, and new life. Somehow, they embraced the challenges, going out into the world, sharing the Good News.

In this season of Easter, we too have a similar responsibility. Still called as witnesses to the world, in our own unusual and unexpected season. And we can witness without leaving home! Thanks to the blessing of technology, through livestreaming, we can broadcast our message of love, reconciliation, grace, and new life right from our Nave. All we need are the right tools. To get prepared. To be Equipped to Broadcast.

I ask you to prayerfully consider making a generous gift to this campaign, as we look to join with all the blessed faithful who have come before us, sharing the Good News to the ends of the earth.

Yours in Christ,



The Rev. Peter Homeyer

Rector



20 W FIRST ST, DAYTON OH 45402 • 937-223-2239 • CHRISTDAYTONOFFICE@GMAIL.COM

WWW.DAYTONCHRISTEPISCOPAL.COM