



The Campaign For The Advent

Honoring Our Past † Ensuring Our Future

“... to secure to a portion of the City of Boston the ministrations of the Holy Catholic Church, and more especially to secure the same to the poor and needy, in a manner free from unnecessary expense and all ungracious circumstances. ”

Church of the Advent
Parish Charter 1844



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Dear Friends,

In 1844 a group of Bostonians established a new parish to put into practice the ideals of the Oxford Movement in England, which called upon the Church to return to its historic roots in the undivided Catholic Church, including a restoration of ancient and traditional liturgical practices.

These liturgical practices had fallen so far out of use in this country, that when Manton Eastburn, then Bishop of Massachusetts, made his first official visitation to the new Parish, he was so offended at the presence of a cross and candlesticks over the altar that he refused to come back unless they were removed! Both the altar and that original cross are now safely enshrined in our All Saints Chapel.

The Advent's founders had one other idea that was even more radical in mid-nineteenth century Boston than any amount of liturgical elaboration: they refused to follow the widespread custom of renting pews, whereby those who had the means leased the best seats often from generation to generation, and servants and the poor were relegated to places in the back or in the galleries. In those days, before Canvass Committees and Stewardship Campaigns, pew rents provided incomes for churches but also effectively excluded those who could not afford them, thereby enforcing social distinctions contrary to the essential nature of Christianity. Through their “freely” given funds, those first parishioners not only provided for the Advent’s early survival, but they also left an endowment that helps support us now.

Today, the Advent is a vibrant urban parish widely known for its liturgy, music, and its landmark historic building on Beacon Hill. Our programs reach out to the needy of the city and bring many visitors through our doors. These thriving activities, however, are threatened by the needs of our aging Gothic Revival building. The need for extensive repairs is extremely urgent. We the current parishioners are challenged to raise the funds necessary to complete these costly repairs if we are to preserve this holy and sacred place, not only for ourselves but for future generations.

We ask your prayers for Christ’s guidance and strength that we may succeed.

Faithfully yours,

Peter Madsen
Chairman

John Boyd
Co-Chairman



Questions And Answers About The Campaign

Q. What is The Campaign For The Advent?

- A. Our magnificent church building is unfortunately in dire need of repair and restoration — as the scaffolding outside, and roped-off pews inside attest. The Campaign is an effort to raise the funds necessary to complete these repairs and keep the doors of this historic and sacred place open for us and for years to come.

Q. How much do we need to raise?

- A. Approximately \$5.0 million will be needed for the repairs. Once that work is done, to ensure that our building can be maintained properly in the future, we hope to raise an additional \$5.0 million in endowment.

Q. How are we going to raise so much money?

- A. This campaign will succeed when everyone participates with a three-year commitment which reflects their capacity to give and their love for the Advent. The campaign committee will begin the process by looking for more substantial donations. The donations will give the campaign a healthy start and encourage additional contributions which will allow us to reach our goal.

Q. What's wrong with the church buildings? Why do we need to raise so much money?

- A. Our restoration work will focus on repairing the building's exterior and the stained glass windows; the interior will be cleaned as well. Weathering of the masonry and aging of the lead which binds the stained glass are interrelated urgent problems which have created an advanced state of deterioration. Much of the sandstone trim, especially where it faces the west winds off the Charles River, is seriously eroded. The mortar has failed in many areas, and "ice-jacking" from the freeze-thaw cycle has dislodged several football-sized pieces of stone. Some of the pointing of the brick has turned to sand.

The stained glass is held together with a lead compound that has a natural life of about 80 years; now, substantial portions of the lead have lost their strength endangering the security of the windows themselves. This deterioration is not unusual for an old, monumental structure, but the decay threatens the security of the building and, ultimately, the safety of those who use the church.



Questions And Answers (Continued)

Q. I already pledge money to the Church, isn't that enough?

A. The annual canvass provides a critical piece of the money needed to run the Church each year. As we tackle the urgent problems of repairing the church buildings, we still need to continue to run the Church's activities day in and day out, throughout the year. If money is taken from the canvass to support the capital campaign, then vital programs will be reduced or removed altogether. That's why the funds raised for the capital campaign are separate from the regular pledge each of us makes to the church each year.

Q. I thought the Church has a large endowment - can't the money come from there?

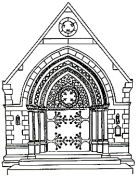
A. We are indeed fortunate to have a substantial endowment of approximately \$24 million, most of it provided by Advent parishioners who came before us. It is the interest and dividends generated by these funds that allows us to maintain our regular operating budget. In fact the income from the endowment provides nearly 2/3 of our budget! Currently, even with that support, we are still running an annual deficit (see Appendix A), although through our increase in stewardship (and some hard budget choices) over the past few years, we have narrowed the gap and hope to be at breakeven soon. As with all endowments, using the principal of those funds reduces the amount of interest income available each year, and weakens the long-term financial stability of the church. In addition, as you may know, the vast majority of our endowment is made up of gifts and bequests that prohibit the invasion of principal, for the same reason; to protect the long-term financial health of the Church.

Q. How will the money be spent?

A. In appendix B you'll find a breakdown of the costs of the major repairs.

Q. What if we can't raise the money?

A. As difficult as it may be to imagine the Church of the Advent shutting her doors, that sad day may not be far off. Several pieces of fallen masonry have sent an alarm. We have attempted to respond soberly; however, should the Church be deemed unsafe by the city's building inspectors, the sanctuary may need to be closed. In that case, we may have to move into temporary quarters, severely limiting our activities and services. Most important, this would prevent all of us from experiencing the profound peace and beauty that is found inside the Church sanctuary. Close your eyes and imagine one day not being able to walk into the Church to sit in prayer, meditation, or just quietly observing the space around you.



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Questions And Answers (Continued)

Q. I already pledge to the Church, and I just can't afford any more money - what else can I do to help the Church?

A. What is needed most for the church are the funds to make the repairs. But, we realize that each parishioner's financial situation is unique. What's most important is to remember that every little bit helps. Beyond that, what will also help the campaign is to spread the word about the Advent, her mission, activities, and her current needs. Tell friends and neighbors about upcoming concerts and events; volunteer to post flyers, take part in church events, and, most importantly, continue to join your fellow parishioners in prayer for the future of our Church.

Q. The Advent sits in the middle of prosperous Beacon Hill. Are we going to ask the neighborhood or other outside groups for support?

A. Yes, the committee will be contacting outside sources as part of the Campaign. However, we must secure commitments from inside the parish community first before we can reach out to friends, neighbors, and foundations. The amount we are able to raise from these external sources will depend on how much we can raise internally. That's why it's so important that all parish members come together early to show a healthy start to this campaign.

Q. Who can I contact to find out more about the Campaign for the Advent?

A. Peter Madsen, Campaign Committee Chairman, and John Boyd, Committee Co-Chair, can be contacted at any time about the Campaign for the Advent. Peter can be reached at 617-232-3311 or peter.madsen@edoessex.com. John can be reached at 781-894-9276 or jboyd@kobren.com