



Rise, O Church Update from Pastor Bradley E. Schmeling

Beloved Friends,

After streaming the service online last Sunday morning, March 15, it was clearer than ever how important public worship is to Gloria Dei and how important our sanctuary is to build community, and to connect us to God and one another. All of us, and I mean hundreds of us, trying to gather in unique ways in these challenging times, was like coming together and shouting out loud, "Rise, O Church!"

This is now so much more than a fundraising campaign. Grounded in faith and spurred on to truly make good things happen in the world for our families, our congregation and more importantly for the greater community, Rise, O Church is the calling card of a movement and at its heart, the Sanctuary Renewal Project is essential to that mission and the future vibrancy of Gloria Dei in a healthy, thriving neighborhood.

While we remain more steadfast than ever in our commitment to the Sanctuary Renewal Project, COVID-19 is requiring us to adjust our timing and schedule. With the church building closed, our plan for collecting pledges this Sunday, March 22, has been interrupted and the truth is, our ministry team must focus on immediate liturgical, pastoral and missional needs during this crisis.

At its March 17 meeting, the Church Council agreed that it is wise to extend the timeline for giving, gently pause the architects' work and move to the fall, the May congregational meeting at which we were to determine the scope and extent of the project. This gives us time to keep praying, planning, and making sure our core mission is strong and viable, while addressing the daily changing immediate needs of the congregation during COVID-19, too.

The virus will pass, but our need for community will remain. We believe Rise, O Church is essential to the future mission of Gloria Dei. How we are able to welcome people and who we are able to welcome matters. The renewed space addresses both how and who we can welcome by providing much needed accessibility.

At this unprecedented time, we recognize the need to be prudent with our funding and understand the challenges for many people discerning their level of commitment given recent market activity. We remain committed to fully funding it through the gifts and pledges. We also remain steadfast in our commitment to invite everyone to be part of this spiritual experience, that above all else, allows our congregation to experience the joy in generosity and the joy in our rising

together as church.

If you have already provided your pledge of discernment, thank you. If you have not yet pledged, I encourage you to be in conversation and prayer about how you feel called to be a part of this vision. You can find more information [here](#) and make a pledge of commitment [here](#).

Indeed, there is joy in our rising, there is joy in our welcoming others. It is a privilege to serve at Gloria Dei with you and I look forward to continuing the conversation about Rise, O Church with you.

Peace,

Pastor Bradley E. Schmeling



Gloria Dei is a [Reconciling in Christ](#) Congregation

[Bible readings for this Sunday](#)

Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

Saturday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

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