

Gilsenan, Michael

From: Millner, Natalie [DEPNET1/DEPGPO3/NatalieM]
Sent: Friday, March 22, 2002 11:10 AM
To: Gilsenan, Michael; Gilsenan, Michael (ex)
Cc: Sturcken, Charles 001
Subject: FW: Closing of St. Paul's

Mike: As we discussed. Thanks.

Ms. Lila Meade

PII

cc: Asumowicz@cityhall.nyc.gov;badurate!us.ibm.com

Dear Mr. Meade:

Thank you for contacting Ms. Alessandra Sumowicz to register your concern about the closing of St. Paul's Chapel. Ms. Sumowicz had referred your e-mail to this office as the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the City agency that conducted investigations of the Church and its premises soon after the tragedy of 9/11.

In early October, visual investigations were made of properties in lower Manhattan. It was determined that the facade of Trinity Church was covered with a (fine dust and the outside area contained some rubble and other debris?). At that time, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sent the Church an Advisory for a required building facade cleanup -- as they did to countless other buildings in the neighborhood. This notification informed the Church that they were responsible for an environmental cleanup of its facade and grounds where indicated. There was no directive that St. Paul's Chapel nor any indoor Church premises be closed. In January, a follow-up inspection by DEP inspectors, observed that no clean-up had taken place and another communication was sent to the Church asking them to abide by the request.

As we learned in mid-March, the Church announced that it would close (including St. Paul's Chapel) after Easter Sunday. We had conversations with John Allen, Director of Communications of the Parish of Trinity Church who informed us that the decision to close St. Paul's was entirely their own, due to the Church's determination that there was a need for a thorough house cleaning indoors as well as that required by the City.

I hope this will clarify some of the issues for you and once again thank you for writing to us.

Very truly yours,,,

/s/ JAM ???

From: Sturcken, Charles
To: Millner, Natalie
Subject: FW: Closing of St. Paul's
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2002 5:34PM

can you draft a response to this e-mailer ?

-----Original Message-----
From: Sumowicz, Alessandra [mailto:asumowicz@cityhall.nyc.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2002 2:18 PM
To: Sturcken, Charles; Chapin, Diana
Subject: FW: Closing of St. Paul's

FYI - what is the status of this, do you know.?

-----Original Message-----

From: Lila Meade [PII]
 Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2002 1:35 PM
 To: Asumowicz@cityhall.nyc.gov; badurat@us.ibm.com
 Subject: Closing of St. Paul's

Dear Ms. Sumowicz:

I've attached a copy of an article I have submitted to the NY Times for publication on the closing of St. Paul's for their oped page.

Please, please...whatever pressure your office can put on the EPA to halt the closing of the chapel for the rescue workers until their work is finished (1- 2 months) would be appreciated by the thousands of workers who come into the chapel each day for replenishment of their spirits.

Below is a copy of the interview on NY1 yesterday's program, interviewing some of the rescue workers.

So many thanks for your help. Lila Meade

Here is a transcript of the story....NY1 Newscast report: 3/19/02

---Church Serving As Refuge For WTC Recovery Workers May Temporarily Close Its Doors

MARCH 19TH, 2002

St. Paul's Chapel weathered the World Trade Center attacks but its respite center may not withstand the rest of the recovery operation.

Its home parish, Trinity Church, is closing the chapel March 31 for a top-to-bottom cleaning.

"If this place closes it's like, I would feel like they're making us all orphans," said Fire Safety Director Mike Bellone, one of thousands of firefighters, police, sanitation and iron workers who have leaned on St. Paul's since September 11. "I visit the chapel here twice a day. Once in the afternoon for mass and once at night when I go to sleep. I sleep here four nights a week."

But it's more than a bunker. Volunteers serve food and coffee, offer shoulder rubs or shoulders to lean on.

"This is a family down here," said sanitation worker Joe Bracety. "It's become a family. We've gotten quite close with the workers, with the volunteers and we do need their support. They provide a warmth for us that we really need."

When operating engineer Jim Traynor of Local 15 first came to the site it was a five-story pile of rubble. Now, it's a seven-story basement. Traynor said the further they dig, the lower he sinks emotionally and the more he relies on St. Paul's.

"Sometimes you get caught in a spot in the hole where they're digging up bodies and you see things that you really don't want to see in your life," Traynor said, "and it's just a place to go and reflect and sit and be quiet and pull your thoughts together."

"This church has been like a safe haven for us," said sanitation worker Anthony Palmeri. "It's been fabulous, it really has. And they shouldn't close it - we depend on it too much."

But the church said the decision to do the \$500,000 clean-up is coming from higher up. According to John Allen, of the chapel, the city environmental authorities gave the church a notice to clean the building.

"We really respect the feelings of those many volunteers and others who are upset about the closure of the chapel/ministry in its current form," said John Allen of the chapel. "They've given us a notice to clean it and to do that we have to close the chapel down."

Allen said St. Paul's will be reopened to volunteers and the public as soon as possible. Those who work on the site say that's little comfort.

"We've been down here, we feel like we're part of this here," Palmeri said. "And it's really going to be a sad day if they do it. I really wish they wouldn't."

At this point, it seems unlikely the chapel will stay open. But those who rely on it say they won't stop fighting until the day the doors are closed.

--Rebecca Spitz



NYTIMES letter
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Regarding the closing of St. Paul's Chapel, New York City

"YOU CAN'T CLOSE, WE'RE NOT FINISHED YET."

Trinity Church announced this week that St. Paul's Chapel will be bringing its special ministry to the rescue workers at Ground Zero to a close as of March 31, 2002.

Within each 24 hour period, since the week following the tragedy, more than 1,300 uniformed men and women enter St. Paul's. They go there not just for a hot meal or cup of coffee, which are also offered for free at the well-organized Salvation Army operation located around the corner. They go to St. Paul's for solace, for a respite from the inhumanity of their tasks, for a chance to sit quietly in a safe and sacred space. The volunteers regularly report hearing from workers that they do not know how they would have faced the ordeal of their roles in the clean-up without the emotional support provided at St. Paul's.

The decision to close comes even as workers continue to find bodies of police officers, firefighters and civilians. This horrific process of cleaning up the remains that were once the World Trade Centers is predicted to be completed by early this summer. Why, then, is it necessary to abruptly end the vital and unique support offered by the round-the-clock volunteer operations at St. Paul, rather than seeing the cleanup through to the end?

The volunteer operation at St. Paul's, directed by Reverend Lyndon Harris along with a staff of five, is a remarkable one. Volunteers have poured in from churches, synagogues, and corporations from all over America to help give back to the rescue workers. One of their most essential functions is simply to lend an ear to listen or a shoulder to lean on. In addition, clergy, chiropractors, massage therapists, counselors and musicians all offer their skills to help workers relieve the stress of their painstaking work. Money, food, clothing, over the counter drugs and loving, heartfelt messages from children have been donated from around the world. The sum of all these efforts, which is so much greater than its spectacular parts, is the true magic of the volunteer operation at St. Paul's..

Much has been said recently in the media about the toll the inhuman job of clean-up at Ground Zero has taken on the lives of the men and women performing the work. That work and the volunteer support efforts along with it, will all come to an end in a matter of months. Trinity Church should reconsider its decision to close down St. Paul's until the work is fully completed. We must also consider what we are planning to do as a city, state and nation to address the long term emotional and psychological effect of the WTC attacks on our uniformed men and women.

I am not sure if I will ever forget speaking with Steve (name changed,) a machine operator who has been at the attack sites since 9/11 with a scant five days off. He is a big, burly man whose large presence is always somewhat intimidating to those around him. Steve shed tears in front of six volunteers when he heard the news of the closing of St. Paul's to rescue workers. "You *can't* close, we're not finished yet!" he said. Amen.

Lila Meade
St. Paul's Chapel Volunteer