



First United Methodist Church

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# Campaign News

## Our Path Ahead

By John and Ronda Marshall,  
Church Council Co-Chairs

Our mission statement animates our life together and guides our actions: *First United Methodist Church exists to welcome people in love; equip people with a faith that works; and send us in service as disciples of Jesus Christ.*

We have come to recognize that aspects of our facility are barriers to us living out our mission together. In 2007 the congregation voted to proceed with a plan to renovate our facility. We are now beginning plans for a fundraising campaign to support those renovations.

We enlisted the assistance of The Church Development Foundation (TCDF) to assess our readiness to conduct a successful campaign and to help us implement our plans. They presented the results of their assessment at the July meeting of the Church Council. Key findings are presented as part of this newsletter and a full copy of their report is available for review in the church office.

Much of what TCDF shared with us was good news. People appreciate our church's ministries and see leaders who care for the future of their church. There is widespread recognition that elements of our facility need attention. Additionally, a strong majority of our congregation indicated a willingness to make a financial gift to a capital campaign. TCDF's judgment is that First Church is well-positioned to proceed with a campaign and that the fundraising goal we are considering (\$1.25 million) is within reach for a church like ours.

Our hope is that we can remain focused on the mission that unites us and our shared commitment to the long-term vitality of our church. We understand that many of you continue to have questions as you consider your possible participation in a capital campaign, and we look forward to joining you in conversation and discernment in the weeks and months ahead.

After reviewing the findings of the readiness assessment, the Church Council unanimously reaffirmed our decision to proceed with a capital campaign this fall. We will begin organizing campaign teams in August. **We urge you to consider sharing your gifts as a member of one of our teams and to join us on August 23 for our Volunteer Organization Meeting.** This is a chance to learn more about our fundraising and renovation plans, to meet leaders who will guide the campaign, and to consider how you might help in planning and implementing our campaign.



### Save the Date!

#### Volunteer Organization Meeting

Sunday, August 23, 2009  
12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

#### Inside:

##### Our Plans for Renewal

##### Readiness Assessment Report

##### Survey Results

##### Campaign Teams

##### Members' Thoughts

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# Renewing Our Church

**Our current facilities impact our ability to meet the needs of members and to extend hospitality to newcomers. The renovations being planned will preserve the beauty of our worship space, provide improved access to upper levels for members with limited mobility, enhance a spirit of community by expanding gathering areas, make our entries more welcoming and inviting, and provide a suitable space for food preparation. Improving and maintaining our facilities will provide new possibilities to help First Church remain a vibrant faith community for generations to come.**

## **Elevator..... \$250,000**

Our elevator was first installed in 1969. It is too small and slow to adequately accommodate those who depend on it and is reaching the end of its useful life. The elevator's operating license will expire in 2010, and it would require extensive renovation to conform to current codes.

## **Narthex..... \$245,000**

Expanding the gathering space at the rear of the sanctuary will encourage informal fellowship and improve access to entrances. Plans call for incorporating movable walls in the Upper Room to open it on Sunday mornings and moving the rear wall of the sanctuary forward several feet to increase our narthex from 3,000 sq. ft. currently to 10,000 sq. ft. Renovation plans also include adding a much-needed second restroom on the second floor.

## **Kitchen..... \$125,000**

Our kitchen is cold in the winter, hot in the summer, out-of-date, and inefficiently designed. Renovations will bring an improved workflow, updated appliances, expanded storage, and new climate control systems.

## **Entranceways..... \$76,000**

The entries of the church are dim, dark, and make a poor first impression to newcomers. Renovations would include new lighting, signage, and décor.

## **Stained Glass Windows ..... \$200,000**

The windows of our sanctuary require significant maintenance to re-lead panes and replace failing supports. The Rose Window required the most immediate care and is already in the process of being re-installed.

## **Contingency ..... \$90,000**

A contingency fund prepares us for unforeseen developments during construction.

## **Professional Fees ..... \$140,000**

In undertaking such a major project we have requested professional guidance from Neumann Monson Architects and The Church Development Foundation.

## **Tithe to Missions ..... \$112,500**

A tithe of the money raised will support increased outreach ministries by funding a mission endowment for First United Methodist Church.

## First United Methodist Church **Readiness Assessment Report**

The Church Development Foundation (TCDF) presented their report to the Church Council at their July 7, 2009 meeting. Their readiness assessment was based on interviews and surveys with 208 church members. The full 49-page report is available through the church office.

### **Summary of Findings**

1. Respondents expressed general satisfaction with First Church's effectiveness in meeting spiritual needs (75%) and providing opportunities for fellowship (74%).
2. Only 30% of people rated church finances as strong or very strong. This result suggests a need to educate members further, as church leaders perceive stewardship and financial management as areas of strength that have further improved in recent years.
3. The scope of projects envisioned as part of First Church's plans are within the range TCDF typically sees similar churches raise in a three-year capital campaign. When asked, however, most interviewees saw this as an unrealistic goal and assumed that a significant long-term mortgage would be required if all of the projects were undertaken currently. It has been over twenty years since the church conducted a major capital campaign, and members are skeptical of the fundraising potential of the congregation.

# Our Campaign Teams

4. Members were asked to share their support for individual projects being proposed as part of the campaign – replacing the elevator, renovating the kitchen, expanding the narthex, renovating the entranceways, and repairing the stained glass windows. The strongest support was for the elevator (82%) and the windows (81%). The lowest appreciation for the need for renovation was regarding the narthex (34%) and entranceways (47%).
5. There is a need to engage members in dialogue regarding the narthex portion of the project. Many core leaders see this as critical to impacting people’s experience of the church and in embracing “radical hospitality.” However, there is currently a lower level of support for this aspect of the project within the overall congregation.
6. A strong majority of respondents (81%) offered financial support a capital campaign. Over \$350,000 in potential gifts were offered by 136 households, including ten gifts of \$10,000 or more.
7. When asked to identify factors that might prevent a successful campaign, by far the most frequently cited concern was the current economy. While this is a more challenging time to raise funds, TCDF has continued to see successful campaigns undertaken by churches over the past twelve months.
8. Fifty-nine (59) people indicated an interest in considering a planned gift as a way to support First United Methodist Church financially.

In the months ahead, First Church will be asking members to consider a special gift to the church to enable us to care for our facility and prepare ourselves for more effective ministry. In preparing for that day, we would like to invite each of you to consider a short-term commitment to help in planning and implementing this project.

Please consider sharing your gifts with the rest of our congregation by joining one or more of the teams described below. Committees will likely meet just 3-6 times and their work will be concluded in less than six months. Thank you for your consideration.

The **Prayer Team** keeps the focus of our campaign on discerning God’s will for our church community. They will do that by writing a campaign prayer, preparing reflections on stewardship, and planning prayer activities.

The goal of the **Events Team** is to invite every member to learn more about the church’s plans by attending informational and dialogue events, such as dinners and group meetings. They will also plan a celebration event at the end of the campaign.

The **Thanks Team** will make sure we honor all of the supporters of our campaign, whether they make a financial gift, volunteer, or keep the church in their personal prayers. They will write acknowledgment notes and consider tokens of appreciation.

Our children are both our present and our future. The **Youth Team** will find ways to involve the youth of our church in meaningful and visible ways throughout the campaign.

The **Ambassadors Team** will recommend the most appropriate ways for us to invite financial support for the campaign. They will also consider making personal contact with church members to answer any questions they have about the campaign before making a pledge.

The **Communications Team** keeps our congregation informed and engaged throughout the campaign. They will develop a campaign slogan, design a campaign graphic, and assist in preparing newsletters and brochures.

## SURVEY RESULTS

### Meeting spiritual need

Effective.....75%  
 Neutral.....16%  
 Not Effective .....9%

### Opportunities for fellowship

Effective.....74%  
 Neutral.....17%  
 Not Effective .....9%

### Confidence in leaders

Confident.....66%  
 Neutral.....23%  
 Not Confident.....11%

### Proceed in near future

Urgent .....60%  
 Neutral.....21%  
 Not Urgent.....19%

### Willing to support financially

Yes.....81%  
 No.....19%

**To learn more about our campaign plans and the work of our teams, join us Aug. 23, 2009 at noon for our Volunteer Organization Meeting. We will provide a simple meal and adjourn by 1:3 p.m.**

**In Our Own Words.** The following thoughts were shared by members who responded to First Church's readiness assessment study:

*"There is a long history of strong pulpit ministry and good music at First Church. People enjoy coming to church. Unfortunately, it is too easy to be a Sunday morning Christian at a downtown church. People have to work a little harder to participate in this church because of logistics."*

*"There are all kinds of opportunities for fellowship at our church. I have seen improvement over the past 4-5 years. I particularly like the Affinity Groups. It has made it much easier to meet people."*

*"The success of the rose window project gives me confidence. We seemed able to raise that money easily. Our finances are average compared with other churches. I have trouble understanding our financial condition..."*

*"I teach Sunday school classes in the kitchen. The oven doesn't work, there is no handle on the conventional oven, a layperson can't light the oven without the custodian, and cabinets are falling apart. The dishwasher works, but it is not very user friendly and doesn't operate properly."*

*"The stained glass windows are treasures, and we can't afford to ignore the need to maintain them."*

*"We go downstairs when we want to socialize, but I am willing to admit that the area at the rear of the sanctuary is very crowded after worship. I think the Upper Room is a special space and I am hesitant to lose access to it."*

*"The expansion of the narthex will be the toughest sell. Personally, I totally support this. The physical structure of this church promotes leaving, not gathering."*

*"If we're going to implement the Five Fruitful Practices, this project needs to be part of that effort."*

*"I'm astounded by the generosity I see here. However, we need to be careful not to make those who are not able to financially support this not feel guilty."*

*"Some would support a campaign because this is their church and it is the right thing to do; some because it is a campaign and people like to give to some THING that has a goal and a purpose. Others would be unable to financially support it now because of the hardships in our community. Still others would never be financially able to support it and instead wish to offer themselves as volunteers or share other skills. There will be some that are change averse. Finally, without a larger proportion of members behind the overall concept, it may be difficult to gain momentum."*



## You're Invited

Please join us in considering the response to our readiness assessment and our plans to move forward with a comprehensive campaign this fall to invite both annual and capital support from church members.

- **Keep the church and its future in your prayers as we discern the direction to which we are called.**
- **Continue to listen, read, and participate as we share our thinking and decisions.**
- **Read the full readiness assessment report, available in the church office.**
- **Join us on Sunday, August 23 at noon for our Volunteer Organization Meeting. This will be an opportunity to learn more about our plans and to consider joining one of our six campaign teams.**

First United Methodist Church