

Report from Campaign Forward – November 2019

On behalf of the Campaign Forward Committee, we want to provide an update on renovations to the Sanctuary Building, which have been funded by the Capital Campaign we undertook together several years ago, and to offer thanksgiving for the work done thus far.

As you may remember, our Capital Campaign arose from the recognition that our historic Sanctuary Building was in need of significant exterior and interior repairs to make it safe, secure, and welcoming for this and future generations. In 2014, we began to discern whether and how to proceed with a Capital Campaign, which culminated in 2016 with a pledge drive to raise funds. Our Capital Campaign was based on the theme “Imagine More,” drawn from Ephesians 13:19-20. We set a goal of \$2.7 million, and ultimately raised \$2.3 million through pledges from individuals and families within our congregation and from the Memorial Church Fund.

To date, 113 pledges have been completed in full! This is a magnificent accomplishment, and we are grateful for the generosity of each of these members. We anticipate that less than 10% of the total amount pledged ultimately will be uncollectible, another notable achievement. We expect the remaining pledged funds to come in over the next several months, a testament to the faithfulness of our church family. In addition, we are continuing to receive gifts for the campaign, including a recent contribution in memory of a beloved church member, and a large pledge from a family with deep ties to Duke Memorial.

When we undertook the Capital Campaign, we expected that \$1.1 million would be needed for exterior renovations, with the bulk of the work focusing on the roof and gutters. We planned to use the remaining funds for interior work on the ground floor of the Sanctuary Building that would remove asbestos, improve fire safety, and bring infrastructure systems including electricity, plumbing, and heating and cooling up to current code standards. Although we dreamed of an elevator for the Sanctuary Building, funds for an elevator were not part of the original budget for the Capital Campaign.

Once the funds were pledged, the focus shifted to undertaking the work. The Campaign Forward Committee was created from the Capital Campaign Committee and other church groups and was charged with overseeing the work and the expenditure of pledged funds. The exterior work took longer than anticipated to begin, because of complications relating to assessing the work that needed to be done and finding the proper contractor to oversee the project. The project began in earnest in October 2018, and the exterior renovations were completed in July 2019. The work entailed removing every roof tile so that the substructure could be repaired, replacing copper gutters and roofing, restoring and replacing windows, repairing and repainting woodwork, remediating asbestos, and more. The work required a high degree of expertise from a host of trained craftspeople. Costs were higher than anticipated because of the presence of asbestos, the level of decay in roof structures, and significant repairs to the masonry. The final cost of the exterior work was approximately \$1.7 million, about \$600,000 more than budgeted. Some of that difference has been made up through the generosity of the Memorial Church Fund, which increased its pledge to the Capital Campaign.

While the exterior work was underway, we invited the congregation to dream about how the newly renovated interior spaces might enhance our ministry and mission and be welcoming to all. We developed Concept Plans approved by the Trustees and Church Council that went beyond the initial vision at the time of the Capital Campaign, most notably by the inclusion of an elevator, which many members have stated is a high priority. Initial estimates projected the cost of the full renovation of the ground floor to be around \$2.7 million, far in excess of the approximately \$1.1 million remaining after the exterior work. Through prayerful visioning, Campaign Forward worked to reimagine the project and drop the projected cost to around \$2.1 million, still far more than the funds available.

Over the last few months, Campaign Forward has worked to discern next steps, mindful of our need to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us and the historic property in which we worship. We recognize that other demands on the church budget, coupled with concerns about our move to full inclusion, counsel caution in undertaking a renewed capital campaign without a sense of strong congregational support. A question in the stewardship materials asked for

input about capital fundraising, and we will use the responses to that question to guide us as we move forward.

But we think it is important that we **do** move forward. As a result, Campaign Forward is exploring what we can accomplish with the funds available. While we do not currently have enough to complete all of the work, we believe we must take important first steps to make the building safer and more structurally sound. Our hope is that the available funds will allow us to ensure fire safety, comply with current building codes, remediate asbestos, repair infrastructure, and renovate bathrooms so the building will be secure, functional, and welcoming. In the immediate future, we plan to help Trustees fund improved internet capability throughout the Sanctuary Building, which will benefit everyone who uses these spaces. In this approach, we may see exposed ceilings and barebones spaces for the short term until additional funds become available, but we think this will best honor the commitment of this congregation and the work God does in these spaces every day.

Unfortunately, we currently do not have funds to install an elevator. We know how important this is to many in our congregation, and we will make sure that any work undertaken now will support the installation of an elevator as soon as funds become available. It is our prayer that the spirit of generosity that we have seen before will be evident again, so that together as a congregation we will be able to complete the vision God has given us of what we can accomplish if we continue to “Imagine More.”

Please keep this work in your prayers and on your heart as we move forward together. If you have questions, please contact one of the members of Campaign Forward. Email contact information for committee members follows.

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